permitting a man with one eye blind and the other with 50 per cent. vision to be in charge of a ship.

[This appears to be an error. The Board of Trade originally accepted the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on Sight Tests, which were that the vision of one eye should be 6/6, and that of the other not less than 6/12. As the result of representations from the trade, the Board of Trade subsequently, on its own responsibility, altered the test to 6/6 with both eyes open; i.e., if one eye has 6/6, the other may be blind. This is the regulation which at present obtains for masters and mates in the mercantile marine. Presumably it also applies to pilots.—ED.]

The Marine Board of Victoria has now to settle the question, and the Chief Secretary will hear the views of a deputation from the Victorian Branch of the British Medical Association. The Med. Jl. of Australia, (April 21, 1917) professes to have no doubt as to the result. L. W. Bickle (Med. Jl. of Australia, April 28, 1917, p. 369) protests against tests made except under ordinary working conditions—in other words, under the action of a cycloplegic. He cites the case of a man who had been at sea for some years, and had passed the sight test on three occasions. Wishing to remain in Australia, he applied for work to one of the largest shipping firms, and was referred to the oculist attached to the firm. The pupils were dilated with homatropin, a small amount of hypermetropia was found, and "the eye man turned him down for this." It is of interest to note that the rejected man later passed the Naval examination, and is doing good service on active duty.

The Cinematograph and the Eye

Now that there is a tendency in some quarters to look upon the cinematograph as a serious means of education, it becomes important to enquire what, if any, effect it has upon eyes exposed to its influence.

The answer is furnished, partly at any rate, by certain authors who have recently written upon the subject. The National Committee for the Prevention of Blindness (New York) has investigated the question, which receives attention in the Second Annual Report of the Committee, published in November, 1916. The conclusions reached by the acting secretary of the committee are published in another part (page 586) of the present issue. Dr. J. Kerr read an important communication dealing with the effect upon the eye of varying degrees of brightness and contrast before the Illuminating Engineering Society, on February 20, 1917, and he touched in the course of his remarks upon the cinematograph theatre. With the probability that use will be
made of the cinematograph for education purposes and that, as a consequence, attendance will be compulsory for children, it was evident that all possible care should be taken to avoid injury to the eyes. Constant attention with the eyes in a dark adapted condition soon gives rise to strain. The question of the length of such entertainments for children is therefore of importance, and the practice of remaining in the hall and of seeing the same series of films over and over again should not be allowed. The best position to view the pictures is between 20 and 30 feet from the screen, on a level with the centre. If viewed from nearer than 20 feet or from below or the side, futile efforts at accommodation are induced. The amount of flicker depends a good deal upon the skill of the operator and the quality of the film.

As regards the question of lighting, Kerr makes the following suggestions:—

1. *Illumination of the screen.* The illumination of the screen will be found to vary from 0·5 foot candles to 1 foot candle or more. It has been suggested that the standard value should be fixed at a minimum of 1 foot candle. The illumination of screens is easily tested and it should not be difficult to arrive at a reasonable value by observations in typical halls.

2. *Material for the screen.*—This is essentially a matter for experts. I believe that it is generally agreed that a good matt-white screen gives the best effects. Screens composed of aluminium powder have been introduced on account of the greater brilliancy obtainable and consequent economy in the consumption of light. Such screens, it is said, are apt to give rise to inequality of brightness according to the direction from which they are viewed, and to inconvenient moving shadows. As they are still in the experimental stage it would perhaps be better not to adopt them for entertainments for children.

3. *Illumination in the theatre.*—Extreme contrast between the screen and the general surroundings is objectionable. The ratio of 1 to 100 would imply brightness of surroundings of, say, not less than 0·01 to 0·02 foot candles. In practice, this value can easily be obtained. A certain amount of illumination on the seats has also been considered desirable to enable people to find their places. A value of 0·02 to 0·05 foot candles has been suggested for this purpose. By careful design, probably it could be arranged that the provision of this extra illumination would not materially affect the brightness of the screen, and would therefore not impair the brightness of the image. Any lights or illuminated notices indicating exits, etc., should be carefully screened, so that their brightness does not exceed 3 c.p. per square inch. This is ample for the purpose in view, but not enough to cause glare. The illumination of the theatre should be controlled by dimmers, so
that it can be gradually diminished before films are shown, thus avoiding the painful effects on the eyes of suddenly switching on and off the full illumination. The illumination in corridors should have a value intermediate between that outside and the theatre. An illumination on the floor of 0.5 foot candles would be sufficient. Here, again, all lights should be shaded. The convention employed in the early tube days, namely, that going towards green lights leads to safety or exits, and that departing from red lights indicates the same procedure, might be adopted.”

N. Bishop Harman (Brit. Med. Jl., February 17 and March 10, 1917), while he admits that it is difficult to give figures as regards evil effects upon children’s eyes directly due to the cinematograph, considers that the increasing number of children that fail to pass the visual tests at the schools, and yet are found to have no eye defect, and are able to pass the test at a later period, may have something to do with excessive indulgence in “picture shows.” Tibbles (Brit. Med. Jl., March 3, 1917) agrees that fatigue caused by the glare and flicker of the cinematograph may be responsible for the class of case described by Harman. W. B. I. Pollock (Glas. Med. Jl., April, 1917) believes that by frequent attendance at cinematograph displays, younger children (from 4 to 8 years of age) develop a tendency to convergent squint, in the absence of errors of refraction, and older ones congestion of the optic nerve and complaints of eye-strain. He therefore objects to the introduction of the cinematograph into school-teaching, except at rare intervals.

Tennent Chair of Ophthalmology at Glasgow

Dr. Gavin P. Tennent, a well-known general practitioner in Glasgow, who died in 1913, left the large sum of £25,000 in Trust for the formation of the “Tennent Fund.” It has now been agreed between the University of Glasgow and the Tennent Trustees, with the approval of the University Committee of the Privy Council, that there shall be in the University of Glasgow a Tennent Chair of Ophthalmology, in connection with the Western Infirmary of Glasgow.

The essential points of the conditions attached to the Professoriate are that the salary shall be £500 per annum, that the professor “shall not himself be required to give instruction to undergraduate students,” but shall apply himself to the promotion of higher studies in ophthalmology and to research, and that the professor shall be allowed to hold office till the end of the academical year in which he shall have completed the sixty-fifth year of his age but no longer, and shall thereupon be entitled to a pension.

An important reservation is that the first professor shall not be