

Mahatma Gandhi: No Stranger to Hollywood Movies...

by Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr.



Movies gave him very
queer ideas

TO show you also that even India's great little man has his ideas about motion pictures, here is an amusing incident that happened when I interviewed Gandhi at the outdoor prison at Poona, in southwestern India. To all questions submitted, Gandhi, the Hindu mystic, remained silent. It began to look as if the eighty-five hundred mile trip had been made in vain; then, just as I was about to leave him, the interpreter said that India's great man wanted to ask *me* a question. I listened attentively to the almost inaudible sing-song of his voice. Finally the interpreter spoke forth: "I know little about America, sire," said he, "except from what I see from the occasional motion pictures I attend. To what class there, sire, do you belong?"

My first impulse was to tell him that, as far as I knew, America had no classes. But instead, I decided to ask him first to clarify his statement.

"Well, sire," came back that even-leveled, age-old voice, "are you a gangster, gentleman, or cowboy?"

Amusing? Yes—and perfectly understandable, too, when you think of the type of film foreign exhibitors choose from our home producers.