

7th February, 1951

I do not envy you your responsible position. You and I are probably rather old-fashioned in our outlook and personally I would very much rather not see plays which are based upon the theme either of homosexuality or Lesbianism.

I suspect, however, that I am Victorian in my outlook and I feel fairly confident that the young people of to-day know about these things and do not shrink from hearing them discussed.

I think we Victorians are always apt to confuse innocence with ignorance. They are, of course, wholly different. I have formed a very high impression of the girls of to-day. I think they would be revolted by an indecent discussion on these matters even though they know all about them. If I were asked to express an opinion about the course you should pursue - and indeed you do ask me - I should say that everything depends upon the treatment and not the subject matter.

I should not personally ban a play because its theme was either of these two matters. I should consider rather the way in which the play treated these matters.

I should, therefore, answer your question whether you are justified in withholding permission for these two subjects to be mentioned on the stage that it must depend upon the way in which they are mentioned. If they are mentioned in a crude and indecent fashion then I should forbid the play, but

Catalogue Reference: LCO/2/4705

save in this case I should allow it.

I should not forbid a play merely because it mentioned these matters. I am afraid that this conclusion would make your task more difficult, for a discretion is always more difficult to administer than a hard and fast line. I have tried to answer your question but I doubt whether you could have put the question to anyone less qualified to give you a satisfactory answer. I hardly ever go to the play and I certainly should not go to plays if I knew that they dealt with these topics.

I think, however, the censorship frequently defeats its own object and that under modern conditions there is much to be said for free and open discussion.

T
2

The Right Honourable
The Earl of Clarendon, K.G.,
Lord Chamberlain

Catalogue Reference LCO 2/4705