

Montevideo, 1st October 1954

Mr. Michael Huxley
The Geographical Magazine
91 St. Martin's Lane
London, W.C.2
England

Dear Mr. Huxley:

I am sure you must wonder why three months have elapsed without my writing an answer to your kind letter of the 25th June. First, I was away from Montevideo "sans laisser d'adresse" until the end of July, by doctor's orders. Second, when I came back I spent many weeks trying hard to locate some stills such as the ones you asked for. I was about to give up, when I was informed, quite by chance, of the existence of a collection of more than 10.000 stills in the most unexpected place: the workshop of a toy-industry firm. I have gone through every item in it, without very satisfactory results.

I feel that an explanation is due about what seems a strange fact. Film societies in Latin America are very recent. Even if some of them were founded about 1932, an absolute contempt for local or continental production marked their activities. We deeply regret now that snobbish attitude. No still-library is well organized in any of them, partly from that cause, partly because films which are shown commercially shift from one cinema to another and the stills with them, until both films and stills are destroyed by distributors owing to contracts. We are now trying very hard to stop that manner of dealing with such materials and to start preserving those things who could be useful for future film-history.

Another point is latin-american film distributors care very little about advertising scenery, architecture or artistic values in films. They send for stills reflecting mainly actor's personality. This is a constant motive of despair to the ones who deal with specialized magazines.

Those are the main reasons for my -I ought to say "our", because many among my colleagues have tried hard to collaborate in my task- failure to supply you with the requested materials. However, I have managed to obtain some approximate stills that may satisfy your demand. Re the items you specially asked for, I will follow your order:

(1)- Stills from one of the earlier Argentine films "containing a true pictur of Argentine life". Unavailable. The only specialized film-magazine in Argentina has been unable to print them. I am sending a still from a later film, made in 1948, ("Juan Moreira") adapted from a popular epic drama about the Gaucho, more or less true to tradition.

(2)- A still from a film influenced by the official policy of the present regime in Argentina. I am sending two stills, but I am afraid it is not in a still but in film continuity that the policy before mentioned is perceptible.