

## film descriptions program 2: **the productive colony**

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### *The productive colony (50')*

original title DE KINACULTUUR translated title THE CULTIVATION OF CINCHONA

**NL (Koloniaal Instituut) 1912/[1923] | J.C. Lamster**

**HD DCP | b&w | 137m | 6' at 18fps | Dutch titles**

The cinchona tree, native to the Andes, was imported to the colony in the 1850s. Valued for the medicinal qualities of its bark, notably in battling fever, it was cultivated in close cooperation with international scientists, industries, and governments. This laid the foundation for the Netherlands East-Indies' world monopoly (over 90%!) on quinine—used for malaria treatment—during the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was one of the export crops that filled the coffers of the Dutch government and paid for Holland's modernizing infrastructure.

original title IN DE WERKPLAATSEN STAATSSPOOR TE BANDOENG translated title IN THE MECHANICAL PLANT, NATIONAL RAILWAYS, BANDUNG

**NL (Koloniaal Instituut) 1912-1913/1923 | J.C. Lamster**

**35mm full frame | b&w, tinting | 138m | 7' at 18fps | Dutch titles**

**print DK7703**

A phantom ride shows the plant's departments for the construction, assembly, maintenance, and repair of rolling stock, and its indigenous workers. The Colonial Institute's films were meant to attract prospective Dutch emigrants to work in the colony, but precious few sites were filmed where they would actually come to work. This film is one of many that shows where they would *not* be employed. The text of its accompanying

lecture explains why, in familiar racial stereotypes: The large numbers of indigenous workers in this plant are needed, because they underperform (“calm”, “slow”) compared to their European counterparts. The latter, however, would be unable to keep up the heavy work, while their standard of living is too high for what the plant pays. Conveniently, they are only fit for skilled, supervising or managing positions.

**original title THEECULTUUR IN WEST-JAVA translated title THE CULTIVATION OF TEA IN WEST JAVA**

**NL (Koloniaal Instituut) 1912-1913/[1923] | J.C. Lamster**

**35mm full frame | b&w, tinting | 189m | 9' at 18fps | Dutch titles  
print DK2051**

In its initial version this film was considered inadequate. First of all, the filmmaker had arrived at a moment in the cultivation process when the seed-bearing stage was already over. Furthermore, important details, such as ways of tea-picking, had apparently been difficult to record. And, finally, certain phases in the product's processing had simply been skipped. Hence the insertion of additionally filmed prints and photographs. Nonetheless, this is the only film that gives a sense of the magnitude of a plantation. Not a successful crop under the Cultivation System of forced indigenous labor in the 1820s, tea's economic success only came with the system's gradual replacement by privately run plantations since the 1860s.

**original title STRAFGEVANGENIS TE BATAVIA translated title PRISON IN BATAVIA**

**NL (Koloniaal Instituut) 1912-1913/1923 | J.C. Lamster**

**35mm full frame | b&w, tinting | 130m | 7' at 18fps | Dutch titles  
print DK2057**

Like so many public institutions in the colony, prisons, too, were largely segregated (only women were incarcerated irrespective of ethnicity, there being only one women's prison in the entire colony). Traditionally, being sentenced meant a period of forced labor. But in this prison the products made by indigenous inmates were considered to be in keeping with their skills. Clearly the duties shown were normally performed inside, but the equipment was moved into the open air to allow filming. Of course, one has to imagine them as taking place inside or else the intertitle “Prisoners are given regular airings” would be meaningless.

original title **IMMIGRATIE IN DELI** translated title **IMMIGRATION TO DELI**

**NL (Koloniaal Instituut) 1917 | L. Ph. de Bussy**

**35mm full frame | b&w | 434m | 21' at 18fps | Dutch titles**

**print D8146**

The economic exploitation, since the late 1860s, of the so-called outer regions (i.e. outside Java and Madura) led to the spectacular growth of plantation industries on Sumatra's east coast. Companies flourished thanks to a government-supported system of indentured labor, implemented in 1880, which relied on imported coolies from Malaysia, China, and Java. These cheap, expendable employees were kept in systematic serfdom, subject to the companies' total control, which didn't stop short of excessive corporal punishments. With no administrative or legal enforcement to speak of in these newly opened up areas, the colonial government had not only implicitly transferred responsibility to the companies, but also condoned their inhuman practices for the sake of prosperity. Conscious of mounting criticism, the recorded people-processing scenes were apparently considered acceptable for the film's window-dressing.