

Victoria, B. C., Theaters

A Visit to Picture Houses in the Provincial Capital—Eight Fine Theaters Inspected—Only One of Them a Five-Cent House—Ten-Cent Seats Found More Popular Than Fifteen-Cent Seats.

By E. S. Thomas, Vancouver Correspondent of Moving Picture World.

VICTORIA, B. C.—The correspondent of the Moving Picture World took a trip to Victoria, B. C., recently, for the purpose of calling on the exhibitors of that city. It was found that while business is not all that could be desired, everyone is optimistic regarding future business. There are some fine theaters in the city, and very good programs are the rule. It was noticed that where admission prices are 10 and 15 cents an unusually large proportion of 10-cent tickets are sold.

The Dominion.

The Dominion theater, on Yates street, was the first house visited, and the Lasky feature, "The Golden Chance," was the attraction. J. M. Robertson is the manager of this theater, which has a seating capacity of 900, and is one of the leading houses of the city, with the exclusive franchise for Paramount subjects in Victoria. Mr. Robertson called particular attention to the large rest-room over the lobby, where patrons may sit until seats are available in the auditorium—an innovation that is typical of the attention given to patrons at this house. Business is reported as good, and the theater would probably have been more crowded when visited had not the streets outside been lined with people waiting for the passing of a military parade. In this connection it is stated that the principal difficulty experienced by the management is in keeping a staff of ushers, twelve having enlisted since the beginning of the war.

Through the efforts of Mr. Robertson the Victoria Daily Colonist has just commenced to run a Sunday page of photoplay publicity.

Music at the Dominion is supplied by a pipe organ, played by John Thill.

The Royal Victoria.

The Royal Victoria, next visited, is a really magnificent theater, built two years ago at a cost of \$450,000, and seating 1,554. The house is constructed without stairways, and inclined runways reach the balcony at two different levels. Manager Clifford Denham conducted the World man over the entire building, and onto the enormous stage, underneath which is installed an automatic heating and ventilating plant, and a series of especially fine dressing rooms for the accommodation of the road shows which occasionally play the house. A large, clear picture is projected from the rear of the balcony, with a throw of 140 feet to the screen. Although slightly away from the main business section of the city, it is not far enough out to have this fact materially affect the attendance, and Mr. Denham is expecting increased patronage with the Triangle program, which is about to be installed in the Royal Victoria. This house is controlled by the National Amusement Company, of which W. P. Nichols is managing director.

The Variety.

The Variety, on Government street, is the principal Victoria customer of the Universal, and has recently begun the showing of Bluebird Photoplays. This house, which is owned by L. J. Quagliotti, was recently reopened after extensive alterations, and a \$10,000 organ has been ordered from the Karn Morris Piano & Organ Company, of Woodstock, Ont., although an orchestra is being used at present. Mr. Quagliotti intimated that he might leave Victoria for an indefinite stay, and would turn over the management of his local houses to his brother Hector, of the Colonial theater, in Vancouver. Seating capacity of the Variety is

678, and the house was comfortably filled. The following was displayed prominently in the foyer: "Notice to Patrons. The management desires to promote the comfort and convenience of its patrons in every possible way. Any suggestion tending to this end will be gladly received."

The Columbia.

When the World man approached the box office at 10.20 p. m., the startled cashier almost fainted.

This house, located on Government street, is controlled by the National Amusement Company, and is under the management of M. B. Maysmith. At present four acts of Fischer small time vaudeville are shown in conjunction with moving pictures, but the future policy of the house is problematical, and it is considered likely that exclusive picture programs will be shown hereafter. Seating capacity is 704, and a three-piece orchestra is used. Good business is done at 10 cents admission.

The Romano.

A store show, located on Government street and controlled by L. J. Quagliotti. Admission is 10 cents, and the seating capacity is about five hundred. Universal programs, including Red Feathers, are shown.

The Majestic.

Manager C. E. Bailey is just giving up this house, which will in future be conducted by B. S. Heisterman, the owner of the property. The house (a store show) seats 520, and has recently booked General Film service. Mr. Bailey, who was formerly proprietor of the Rex, at Esquimalt, expects to leave soon for Calgary.

The Empress.

This is another of the houses on "Quag-Hotti Row," and is the only 5-cent theater in town, with a large trade among the Chinese and other foreigners. It was also the only house which was observed to be "standing them out" during our visit. Universal pictures are used.

General Manager W. P. Nichols, of the National Amusement Company, was on the same boat with us going to Victoria, and also on the return trip to Vancouver, and we had some interesting talks with him regarding conditions generally. Mr. Nichols stated that late in April the National Film Service would confine its attention to the Triangle releases, which start on April 17. Seven reels per week will be brought in until May 8, when fourteen reels will be the weekly importation, and all will be shown at the Rex and Globe theaters, with the Rex taking first run. For some weeks large advertising space has been taken in local newspapers advertising this program, and these houses expect to start off to big business.

Manager Not Permitted to Operate.

Victoria, B. C.—C. E. Bailey, manager of the Majestic theater, appeared before the works committee of the city council recently to complain of the examination provided by the by-laws for moving picture operators. He explained that he had taken the examination and had failed because of certain technical electrical questions which were asked. He claimed that this knowledge was not needed by an operator. His operator being sick, the manager had taken his place in the booth, and Chief Davis had issued a summons against him. It was decided that the regulations must be enforced, and Mr. Bailey was advised to secure a qualified operator. How-

ever, as he has practically decided to go to Calgary, the matter will be dropped.

Confer on Operators' License.

Vancouver, B. C.—A committee, consisting of J. O. Thomas, vice president of Vancouver Local No. 348, I. A. T. S. E., and E. J. Huttelmayer, business agent, went to Victoria recently, and were joined by a committee from the operators' union of that city in a consultation which had been arranged with Premier Bowser relative to a change in the laws governing provincial operators' licenses, along the lines set forth in the Moving Picture World some weeks ago. It is stated that the premier was favorably impressed with the suggestions of the unions, and that legislation covering the proposals will probably be undertaken in the near future.

Clifford Denham, Picture Pioneer.

Victoria, B. C.—Clifford Denham, manager of the \$450,000 Royal Victoria theater in Victoria, B. C., is one of the real pioneers of the moving picture industry in Canada. Twelve years ago he was sent out from England by Charles Urban's Bioscope Company, and spent four years taking pictures throughout Canada, both for the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Dominion Government. These films were exhibited all over the British Isles, and were a great factor in the colonization of Canadian territory. In England Mr. Denham was also associated with the Moss & Thornton theaters, now known as the Moss & Stoll circuit.

Settling in Victoria, Mr. Denham exhibited the first moving pictures in that city in the open air, at Gorge Park, and later became manager of the old Victoria theater in the palmy days of the province. On the completion of the Royal Victoria two years ago he was placed in charge of this house, in which road shows were played for a time, but where for the past year moving pictures have been presented, under the control of the National Amusement Company.

Mr. Denham has made many friends in Victoria through his policy of giving benefit performances in aid of local charities. He has just agreed to donate thirty per cent of his receipts each Monday night to the local Red Cross fund, and many local artists are always at hand on these occasions to assist with their services.

Western Canada Notes.

Vancouver, B. C.—This city's first Charlie Chaplin contest was held recently at the Columbia theater, and brought out eight entries, including two young ladies and a Chinaman. The amateurs appeared several times during the evening and all attendance records at the Columbia were broken.

Calgary, Alberta.—The Naomi Mothers' Society is planning a Child Welfare Week here in the near future, and local exhibitors have promised to help in every way possible—either by the exhibition of special films, or by allowing short speeches to be made in the theaters, dealing with the movement.

Victoria, B. C.—During the three-day engagement of the Vitagraph comedy "Green Stockings," at the Royal Victoria theater, Manager Clifford Denham arranged with a local store to display green stockings in a prominent show window. One theater ticket each night bore the name "Green Stockings," and the holder of the lucky ticket was presented with an order on the store for a pair of the emerald hose.

Edmonton, Alberta.—The first local house to adopt the Saturday morning matinee for children is the Monarch. Manager Max Allen will give a special performance at ten o'clock every Saturday hereafter, and will show a variety of films especially suitable for children. One of the first pictures to be shown is "Cinderella," with Mary Pickford.