

Emergency Exits in St. John's Theatres.

Editor Evening Telegram.
Dear Sir:—My attention has been drawn to a letter appearing in Wednesday's issue of the Evening Telegram under heading of "Emergency Exits" and signed "Parent." The letter deals with a matter of public importance, but as it refers directly to Moving Picture Theatres, and as I manage the St. Patrick's Nickel, the Casino and Crescent Theatres I want to make a statement as to these and to place the facts definitely before the public.

I do this because in his letter "Parent" states that it was lucky that a recent fire took place near the Majestic Theatre rather than any other, thereby implying that the other theatres were more dangerous in the event of fire to those who patronized them. It is needless for me to say that I have no desire whatever to say anything as to the Majestic Theatre, as I have no interest in it, and merely refer to it because the writer of the letter thought it well to draw attention to the theatre in the manner that I have described.

I have had very considerable experience in the management of theatres and in all matters bearing upon same, and in particular with the protection and care of those who attend theatres, and I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the Nickel Theatre at St. Patrick's Hall is as safe from fire and the evils resulting therefrom as is possible. The Hall can accommodate at the most seven hundred and fifty (750) people, the greater number of whom are on the main floor. There are altogether six exits in different directions and it is an easy matter for theatre-goers, even when the Hall is filled, to make an orderly exit and have the Hall empty in a very little space of time.

With reference to the Casino Theatre: This has been for very many years a popular hall. There are four doors on the side and one in the rear by which people can leave the Hall. The boiler to which reference is made in "Parent's" letter is always very carefully attended to when a performance is in progress. The Crescent Theatre can be emptied in an exceedingly short space of time and I consider that there is absolutely no risk to theatre-goers who patronize this building. They can file down the aisles directly to the exits and there is little possibility of a panic leading to congestion at the entrance.

It must be borne in mind that a panic is a panic and that if people become excited and a sufficient number rush to one exit there is bound to be confusion, no matter how big or small a hall may be. In the event of a fire if there are twenty-five exits and there is a panic there is bound to be some congestion at one of the exits. The whole question comes down to the ability of theatre-goers to keep their heads and to keep cool. Notwithstanding what "Parent" has said in his letter I am fully convinced that anyone of the three theatres managed by me could have been emptied as promptly and as easily as was the theatre to which he refers in his letter.

I feel sure I can speak for all theatre managers in the city when I say that they are the parties who are most concerned in this matter. If there is a panic at any time and loss of life results it will be to them that the general public will look for proper explanation, and it is to them that theatre-goers look for protection. For many years letters such as "Parent" has written have appeared at different times in the Press. As I have already said nobody can object to precautions being taken, but I resent very strongly the implication that the theatres managed by me are less safe to the general public than any other theatre in the city. Thanking you Mr. Editor for your space.

Yours truly,
J. P. KIRBY.

Oct. 12, 1922.

Fox Star Scores Hit in Photoplay.

Dustin Farnum scored a very positive hit at the Majestic Theatre last night in "The Primal Law," a William Fox photoplay which provides the popular star with splendid opportunities to appear at his best.

The thrilling story, filled with nerve fighting and fast action, begins with the delightful portrayal of a friendship between a big, strong man and a sentimental small boy. It is because the interests of the boy are attacked by a gang of murderous plotters that much of the fighting later occurs.

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The play is ably supported by Mary Thurman, Harry Dunkinson, Philo McCullough, Mme. Marston, Frankie Lee and others. The work of directing the production has been performed effectively by Bernard Durning.

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