

IT is only natural that a building of such importance as the New Tivoli should be the theme of many rumours, the latest is that it will open with "The Covered Wagon," which Hubert Miller has acquired, and for the presentation of which it is said Dr. Hugo Riesenfeld will be responsible. This picture may or may not be screened on the site of the once famous music-hall, but despite all sorts of announcements to the contrary no definite date has yet been fixed for the opening of the kinema.

Artistic advertising is making huge strides and has attracted the attention of all sorts of notable people, including the Prince of Wales, who recently referred to its importance at a semi-public luncheon. The finest artists in the land are designing theatrical and ordinary business posters, but Wardour Street seems determined to stand aloof in the march of progress. A walk in Film-land at any time will reveal the old crude colouring, bad draughtsmanship and inartistic conception which constitutes much of the wall-stuff issued to exploit films, even some of the best.

Talking to a *Kine*. representative the other day a prominent poster-printer put it down to the niggardliness of the renters and the fact that the average exhibitor accepted anything offered to him without demur. Yet the cost of good printing is little more in hard cash than that of bad. On the other hand, renters seem to be vieing with each other in the "staging" of good eye-catching window displays, a feature of advertising copied by them from the big business houses, and latterly copied from them by at least two of the big West End theatres.

LEGISLATORS AND THE TAX

About two hundred members of Parliament attended a meeting in the House of Commons last Wednesday to consider the appropriate representations to be made to the Chancellor of the Exchequer before the Committee Stage of the Finance Bill in relation to a reduction of the Entertainments Tax.

P. J. Hannon presided, and a motion in the following terms was submitted by T. P. O'Connor, and seconded by Sir Walter de Frece:—"That the total abolition of the Entertainments Tax shall continue to be pressed for, and that the minimum of our demand can only be satisfied in the terms of Sir Walter de Frece's amendment to the Finance Bill in Committee." Considerable discussion took place on the motion, and amendments were moved for the complete abolition of the tax, and for the abolition of the tax from seats below sixpence.

L O N G

When Quality Film Plays, Ltd., started production of short plays 18 months ago, under the direction of George A. Cooper, it was stated that the object of the company was to demonstrate that it was possible to produce in this country film plays that would stand comparison with any productions in the world, and at the same time offer a clean, healthy entertainment that would be satisfying to all class of patrons.

The release of the first thirteen of Quality Plays in this country and the attention with which the playlets have been received, have justified the company's ambitious contention. This, however, is not the whole of Quality's success. The company has disposed of its first thirteen plays in the American market at a substantial figure for cash.

The American rights of the plays have been bought outright by the largest distributing house in the United States, and the report upon them is to the effect that the direction, quality of production, lighting, and acting is on a par with the best American productions, and, furthermore, that there has never before been presented to the American market a series of British films that has equalled these Quality Plays. The third series of Quality Plays is now complete and will be shown to the Trade at an early date.

One of the prevailing complaints in Wardour Street is that British pictures fail to draw and that the

The meeting, by a large majority, decided to adopt Mr. O'Connor's resolution.

Sir Walter de Frece's proposition is that the tax shall be a halfpenny on sixpenny seats, twopence on shilling seats, sixpence on two-shilling seats, and ninepence on three-shilling seats, the scale rising to two shillings on seats from ten shillings and sixpence to fifteen shillings, and afterwards by sixpence for every five shillings or part of five shillings. The movement for a reduction of the tax having been last year hampered by a difference of view between the theatrical and the kinema interests, efforts are being made to secure agreement on suggestions to be placed before the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

It is satisfactory to know that in well-informed circles much more sanguine hopes are being entertained about the susceptibility of the Chancellor to the demands of the Trade. We could say more, but now is not the time.

ordinary public is antagonistic to them, even to the extent of turning away from the box-office when one is showing. True, we have several bad British pictures for every good one, but the answer to this is that the exhibitor who knows his business should only book the good ones.

Many British pictures have reached a high standard, but there is a prevailing tendency to copy the worst traits in the machine-made American picture and ignore the good. A "super" requires very much more than gaudy staging and huge crowds before it is one—it requires sincerity, acting, and the touch of artistry which can make the *bizarre* and unnatural appear real.

The old saying that Englishmen take their pleasures sadly is not really a *bone-fide* excuse for the apparent dearth of British-made comedies and comedians. Every now and again some far-seeing producer goes out and makes a big comedy bearing the hallmark of genius for players and producers alike, as witness "A Sister to Assist 'Er," and other productions which contain cameos of true comedy-acting.

Of the "short" feature, the little picture which gets the laugh between the big features of lurid melodrama, sombre "problem," or morbid "sob-stuff," we appear to have none. When anyone does go out this side to make short comedies he appears to set out with the intention of keeping audiences out of kinemas. He gets no story and he gets the worst players possible, as often as not the man who puts up the money tries to produce himself, or the lady who puts it up decides she'll be her own "star." In either case the "com" is successfully taken out of comedy.

We have comedians as good as any America can offer, but, having discovered they are good, America gets them without first asking them to hang about Shaftesbury Avenue in the hope of a day's work for mighty little money in a picture which will probably never see the light of day.

"And the first shall be last, and the last first," as W. and F. said to E. A. Baugham.