

the patrons. Invariably he gets an occasional request from a regular and valuable patron for a Trade show ticket. If he refuses he may lose the patronage not only in the specific case but also in that of other people with whom the offended patron is associated. The exhibitor may object to the practice, but unless he is more than a born diplomat he has no option. The case of the broadcasting of Trade show tickets by renters is rather different. Here it is done (and there are a few notorious cases) for the purpose of ensuring a packed audience. That in itself is not eminently unreasonable, but when it means, as frequently it does, that the exhibitor is crowded out, and even, in some cases, asked to vacate seats to make room for the renter's friends, it is a bad practice. In any case, as it means showing a film to a public audience before it is released, it is unfair to the potential booker.

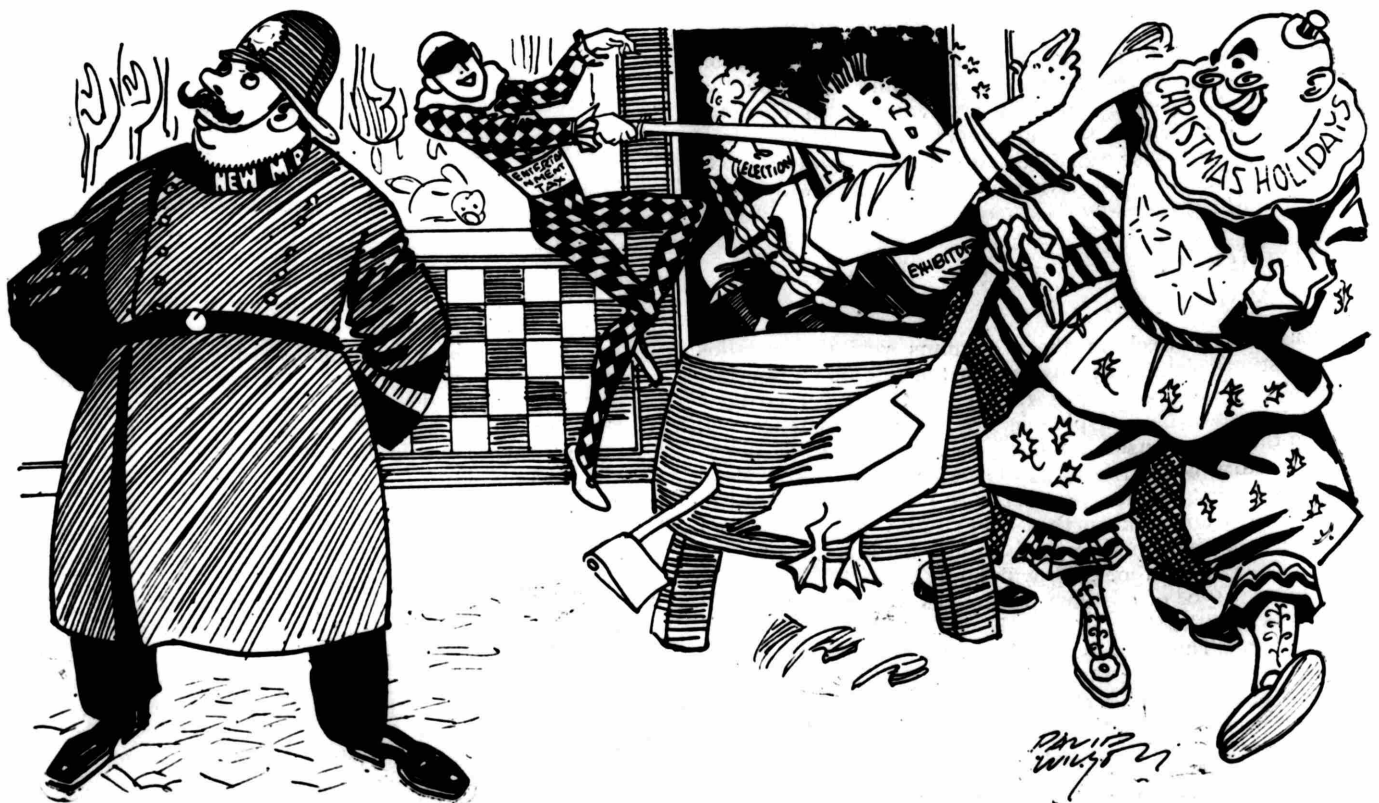
An "All-Shorts" Program

The Embassy Theatre, Holborn, now under the control of New Era Films, has just begun an experimental departure in the shape of a program entirely consisting of short pictures. We welcome this departure. Originally the kinema owed its popularity partly to its mere novelty and partly because it was a form of entertainment which could be enjoyed by the spectator who could enter and leave at almost any time. The increased length of pictures has largely destroyed this advantage, and the two-feature program is to-day the positive bane of a large proportion of the kinema public. Many showmen seem to ignore the patron who suddenly decides to spend an hour in a picture theatre, and who prefers not to sit through many unintelligible reels of a long "feature" already started; but it is certain that many persons would prefer an "all-short"

show for several reasons. The Embassy's excellent program included Nature films, an interesting explanation of automobile construction, and "Fallen Leaves," one of the finest two-reel Quality Plays.

Greater Variety

Why should a short-feature bill be almost entirely educational? We should like to see a theatre in the West End making a prominent display of the fact that no film showing lasts longer than twenty minutes, and availing itself fully of the enormously varied material of one and two reel length now on the market. During the last year or so it has been a common experience to meet numbers of people who openly admit that they only visit the kinema to see subjects such as "Felix the Cat" or a Buster Keaton comedy. In practice it is often extremely difficult to find where such subjects are being shown. We heartily approve of any attempt to establish a theatre which specialises in these short subjects, which often redeem even a single-feature program. Such a theatre is not feasible in every locality, but every large city should find one a good proposition. The Embassy Theatre, we are aware, has announced its specialisation in instructional subjects; and although this is a step in the right direction, we still await a showman with sufficient initiative to exploit his theatre on broader lines as a home for short variety. The theatre has its counterpart in the shape of the music-hall, which always contains as a section of its audience those who for some reason or other have been unable or disinclined to regard punctuality as a part of their entertainment. The short-subject kinema should catch a large proportion of these people, who at present regard entering a kinema in the middle of a long and heavily padded feature as being as disappointing as entering a theatre halfway through a play.



W H A T A P A N T O M I M E !