

MOVIE CENSORSHIP PLAN CRITICISED

Warner Opposes Movement of Wilmington Ministers.

Warner North Carolina Motion Picture Exhibitors Declares Censorship Not Needed—Movie Theaters Are Already Burdened

The adoption of resolutions by the Wilmington Ministers' association at their recent meeting, endorsing the idea of creating a state board of censors for motion picture films to eliminate objectionable "shows," is the subject of an interview given out at Lexington by Henry B. Varner, motion picture theatre owner and secretary of the North Carolina Exhibitors' association, who strenuously opposes the proposed legislation.

Since the local ministers approved the idea, the North Carolina Methodist conference, in session last week at Goldsboro, approved the plan and resolutions bearing on it, were presented by Rev. M. T. pastor of Grace Methodist church of this city. The plan will be taken to the next general assembly of the conference, which is being held at a later date.

Mr. Varner's statement is as follows: "My attention has been called to a movement started by the Ministerial association of Wilmington advocating a state board of censors to pass on all motion pictures before they are exhibited in North Carolina.

"Few people have any idea as to the number of producing companies that send pictures to this state and just to all productions, it would be necessary to have a board composed of very large theatres and some every phase of production, and endowed with peculiar qualifications for passing upon the varied delicate and conflicting difficulties that would naturally arise. It has been estimated a thousand times that a censor with equal claims to authority and character, have directly to the question of what should be admitted. In fact, it is a very result has been so prevalent that censorship has been tried in every instance led to confusion and trouble, and in cases has long since been repudiated and abandoned by thinking, conservative people everywhere. If the people are capable of self government, other respects, if they can get along without a censorship of the press, why not the same rules under the same laws already provided sufficiently to protect the public in regard to the press?"

"Programs exhibited today in Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina and Georgia are tomorrow exhibited in North Carolina because of the interference of established censorships and conflicting state censorships naturally confuse and disrupt the distribution of eligible films for exhibition, and thereby utterly destroy from a well established and useful industry. The value of the screen has been recognized by the federal government as an indispensable agency for the dissemination of public information and has been used as one of its most powerful agencies during the war and its assistance, no less than, has been invoked for obvious purposes in the days of reconstruction confronting us. Whatever may be the real purpose prompting this movement, it is apparent to all right thinking people who have made a study of the situation that it is a backward and not a forward prospect that should be promptly, positively and resolutely opposed to the junk heap.

"I regret that this agitation has set up again; yet I am not surprised as some people are not happy when they are busy regulating some class morals or running his business. I know the men who exhibit motion pictures in the state, and I have no objection in saying that they are the best in character and ability and love their country to any class of our citizens, and they do not exhibit pictures of a questionable character. I have the highest regard for the members of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and what the average preacher doesn't know about motion pictures would fill several big volumes. The reason for this is the fact that very few ministers are of any kind of show, and if you attend a picture shows regularly you naturally know very little about it.

"The public that patronizes the theatre is the best censor. The people are not the exhibitor who undertakes to put off immoral, questionable pictures on the public is usually committing business suicide and will be forced to close his doors for lack of patronage and friends. The exhibitor in company with a party of manufacturers and distributors, including Wilson at his summer home at Shadow Lawn, N. J., in October, 1916, to find out his attitude on federal censorship. And we were delighted to find that President Wilson, the deep thinker and broad-minded man that he was, was opposed to federal censorship, and distinctly remember his illustration. He said that if you had a fool friend and you wanted to get rid of him, the best thing to do was to hire a hall and let him make a speech and he would kill himself. He was of the same opinion about moving pictures. If a man was fool enough to produce pictures of questionable character, and an exhibitor was unwise enough to exhibit them they would soon destroy themselves with the public.

"Frequently agitation for a board of censorship is started for the purpose of creating an office for some feeble-minded citizen who has been unable to make a living, at anything else and thinks that now is the opportunity to get a fat job at the expense of somebody else.

"I note that the idea is to either tax the theatre or put a special tax on the film to pay the board of censors. In other words, tax the theatre, create a useless office to support some parasite. The public may not be aware of the fact that the motion picture theatre today is paying more state tax than any other business in the state according to capital invested. For instance, every theatre owner pays his ordinary taxes like any other citizen to the city, county and state, which he should pay. In addition to this ordinary tax the theatre pays a heavy special privilege tax to the city, county and state, which is very burdensome. Then comes along the United States government and collects an annual licence tax on the theatre, which has been paying since 1914 which we consider very unjust. In 1917 the federal government put a special tax of five per cent on the value of all films used. And last, but by no means least, we pay special war tax of from 10 to 14 per cent on gross receipts from admissions, which amounts to about fifty million dollars per year. There is a proposition before congress now to double the tax on films and admission. If this should pass the small theatres would be put out of business, and the large theatres would have to at least double their price of admission.

"Do you think that any special line of business should be selected and taxed to death? Is that fair, is that equal rights to all and special privileges to none? Isn't that the spirit that we have been fighting to destroy so that every citizen would have equal chances in life?"

"On account of these discriminatory and burdensome taxes thousands of theatres in the United States have been forced to close their doors during the past year, and to my personal knowledge quite a number of theatres are suspending business in North Carolina during this period, and many others have barely made a living for their owners.

"Instead of having useless burdens saddled on the motion picture theatres we naturally expect the fair-minded men of the next general assembly to lighten these burdens that we have been carrying, and treat us with the same justice and equity as any other legitimate business.

"No class of men have done more or better patriotic war work than the motion picture exhibitor, not excepting the press. They have worked unselfishly from the beginning of the war to back up our boys. Every theatre in the state has given up its stage and its screen to the four-minute men for propaganda work. They have been in the forefront of every campaign for the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. and have contributed liberally of their means. They have bought Liberty bonds and war savings stamps to the limit. There has not been a slacker in the business. They have done their duty as men.

"Knowing the members of the general assembly as I do, and knowing the spirit of fairness of the people of North Carolina, I can not believe that there will be any considerable number of people who will stand for the attempt to further cripple the motion picture theatres of this state, who are doing so much to educate, elevate and uplift their citizens. The motion picture has become exceedingly popular and is not only the poor man's amusement, but is the amusement of the great majority of our people. The people of North Carolina are an intelligent people and they are better qualified to censor the picture shows of the state, and will do it better than any two or three autocratic feeble-minded citizens who have been unable to make a living at anything else. I feel confident that the moving picture theatres will not be burdened by any further taxation or discriminatory legislation."

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"The Cape Fear Machine works, at the foot of Church street, which was taken over sometime ago by the Liberty Shipbuilding company and operated under the construction department exclusively for the shipyard, has been made a separate department of the concrete shipyard and will now do machine work for the public in general, according to announcement made last night by W. G. Broadfoot, who has been placed in charge of the works.

Peter O. Knight, vice-president and general counsel of the American International Shipbuilding corporation, recently gave out an interview in Philadelphia on the future of the merchant marine, which, by reason of the position of Mr. Knight and his knowledge of the subject, is worthy of reception. Mr. Knight takes an optimistic view of the shipbuilding possibilities in America, but declares that there must be some radical changes in laws governing American shipping if the United States merchant marine is to compete with the trade carriers of other nations.

"The needs of the world's shipping," said Mr. Knight, "call for the construction of thirty-five to forty million tons immediately. The world's tonnage today amounts to about 40,000,000, having been reduced to that figure by the submarine sinkings. You may be sure that, with the materials, resources and man-power that there are in the world and the necessities of the reconstruction of Europe, and in carrying on the activities in this country which were necessarily interrupted by the war, it will take eight or nine years to supply the deficiency in ships. After the deficiency in ships has been supplied the future of shipbuilding will depend upon the ingenuity, resources and brains of the country.

"Now the trouble is that the people of this nation have been too provincial and they are not aroused to the necessity for maintaining the shipbuilding industry and of our country having a sufficient merchant marine to take care of its commerce. How to arouse them to the necessities of the situation is the most important question confronting the country. When the people once are satisfied that the shipping industry must be maintained and that the American citizen must be able to own and operate a ship under the flag of his country, all of which will be for the benefit of the nation at large, then the question of repealing burdensome legislation will be a mere detail that will be taken care of very quickly."—Emergency Fleet News.

Washington, Dec. 17.—Delegates were chosen by the national colored equal rights assembly for democracy in session here today to attend the "conference of the darker races of the world," which will be held in Paris at the same time as the peace conference. They are: Rev. M. A. N. Shaw, Boston; N. S. Taylor, Greenville, Miss.; Rev. R. H. Singleton, Atlanta; Rev. W. T. Johnson, Lynchburg, Va.; Bishop L. W. Kyle, St. Louis; Rev. J. R. Ransom, Wichita, Kan.; Monroe Trotter, Boston; Ida B. Wells, Barnett, Chicago; C. J. Walker, New York City, and Rev. Wm. T. Carter, Seattle, Wash.

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The purified calomel tablets that are entirely free of all sickening and salivating effects.

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With Wilmington Shipbuilders Doings of the Men Who Are Building Spans in Pershing's Bridge of Ships.

Leaving last night for Savannah, Ga., Peter J. Van Geyt goes as a representative of the Liberty shipyard to the organization convention of service and employment managers of shipyards along the south-Atlantic and gulf coasts. The convention will be in session tonight and tomorrow, probably closing tomorrow night. Called together by H. H. MacGowan, special representative of the industrial section of the Emergency Fleet corporation for employment and service work, the delegates attending the convention will endeavor to effect an organization which will have as its chief purpose the promotion of service work among the shipbuilders of the south. While service and welfare activities among industrial workers have been in vogue only a comparatively short time, the idea has been developed to a far greater extent by industrial plants of the north than by employers of labor in the south. The northern plants have reaped a great reward from their efforts along this line by gaining the loyalty of their workmen, by keeping their employes interested, by reducing the labor turn-over in their industries, and by promoting plant efficiency generally.

The south, with an era of commerce and industry such as it has never enjoyed, before looming upon its horizon, is making up to the advantage of developing the personal side of its working men. Managers of industrial plants in the south are beginning to realize that it is to their interests to treat the employes of their plants as human beings rather than as cogs in a piece of machinery. Hence the meeting in Savannah tonight and tomorrow to perfect a closely united group of employment and service managers of shipyards of the South-Atlantic and Gulf states. Industrial managers of the south, however, have never been inclined to deal with their employes as impersonally and machine-like as employers of labor in the north, when perhaps accounts for the fact that they were longer in feeling the need for distinct branches of service in their plants. The service convention will be held in the Savannah hotel, convening tonight and adjourning tomorrow. Mr. Van Geyt is among those slated for addresses during the session. He expects to return from Savannah Friday.

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THEATRICAL

A new bill from beginning to end and their Boys and Girls from Dixie put on their second bill musical comedy bill.

New specialties and dance and song numbers will be among the things to be expected from this show, but the features will include some new things Monday and Tuesday and will include a new roller skate specialty by Rollo who created such a sensation the first of the week. The comedy work will be in the hands of Al "Skeeter" Berger.

Tremendous scenes—situations in which the spectator is enthralled—following swift succession in "Just a Woman," the powerfully dramatic six part production converted to the screen by the eminent director Julius Steger, adapted from the successful play of the same title by Eugene Walter and starring Charlotte Walker, on

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GOODMAN'S The House of Fashion and Quality Ladies' Garments THE HIGHER TYPE ONLY Beg to announce the arrival of Silk Dresses in taffeta and georgette crepe in the very newest shades navy included. These dresses are all new Spring models made up for early spring wear and we made an effort to get them in before the holidays. We shall be very pleased to have you call in to look over same. GOODMAN'S



NEGRO DELEGATION WILL GO TO FRANCE FOR CONFERENCE

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WOODEN SHIPBUILDERS OF SOUTH CONFER WITH BOARD

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FEEL MISERABLE FROM THAT COLD?

Colds and coughs are quickly relieved by Dr. King's New Discovery

BIJOU

"HANDS UP" Ninth Two Reel Chapter of Thrills. Screen Magazine The Universal Reel of Knowledge

Nestor Comedy It's a Scream From Start to Finish!

HOLIDAY BAZAAR

29 SOUTH FRONT STREET. Auspices of Stage Employees, Motion Picture Operators and Musicians' Unions. SATURDAY, DEC. 21st, TO WEDNESDAY, JAN. 1st. AMUSEMENTS THAT ARE DIFFERENT. "Mysterious Ruth," the Eighth Wonder of the World. "West That Was," a reproduction of the Days of Old. "Highly West," who baffles locksmiths. GOOD MUSIC—FREE PRIZES—GOOD DANCING. Doors Open at 7:00 P. M. Admission, 15c.

NUXATED IRON. I believe my own great physical activity is due to my personal use of Nuxated Iron. says former Health Commissioner Wm. R. Kerr, of the City of Chicago. "From my own experience with Nuxated Iron I feel it is such a valuable blood and body building preparation that it ought to be used in every hospital and prescribed by every physician in the country. Nuxated Iron helps to make healthier women and stronger, sturdier men. Used by more than 3,000,000 people annually in this country alone. Increases the strength and endurance in weak, run-down, nervous folks in two weeks' time, in many cases. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. At all good drug stores."

CHICHESTER'S PILLS. Ladies! Ask your Druggist for Chichester's Diamond Brand Pills in Red and Gold metallic boxes sealed with Blue Ribbon. Take one each. Buy your pills from the DRUGGIST who has the DIAMOND BRAND PILLS, for 25c you know as Best, Safest, Always Reliable. SOLD BY DRUGGISTS EVERYWHERE.

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ROYAL AL AND GERTRUDE BARNARD and their Boys and Girls From Dixie In a New Musical Comedy extravaganza with new specialties and new songs and dances. FATTY AND MABEL In a New Keystone Comedy Romp.

GRAND MISS CHARLOTTE WALKER IN JUST A WOMAN Eugene Walter's Greatest Success Since "Paid in Full." A Spectacular Seven Reel Special Attraction.

SANTAL MIDY SUPERIOR TO COPAIBA & INJECTIONS CAPSULES RELIEVES IN 24 HOURS Read Star Business Local.