

Special Section on the Magnificent New  
**“Chicago Theatre”**

“Movieland’s Wonderhouse”



Impressive exterior of "The Chicago"

# New Chicago Theatre Surpasses All in Grandeur

## Represents Close to Four Million Dollars

Awe inspiring through its size, magnificent in its architecture, and of surpassing luxury in its furnishings and decorations, Balaban & Katz's new theatre, The Chicago, stands a monument to the vision, courage and enterprise of these master showmen.

In Chicago it already is known as "the Wonder Theatre of the World" and motion picture notables gathered for the brilliant opening, gave it the palm for grandeur and splendor over all motion picture palaces hitherto erected.

The Chicago, as it stands today, represents an investment of close to four million dollars and incorporated within its walls is every known device to promote comfort and pleasure of its patrons and to insure the best in projection and presentation.

Unlike many other down town theatre properties, the Chicago Building is exclusively for theatre purposes and the box office alone must

be looked to for revenue.

The seating capacity of the theatre is five thousand, twenty-six hundred on the main floor, five hundred in the mezzanine and nineteen hundred in the balcony. This capacity could be increased to fifty-five hundred under New York ordinances, thereby surpassing the capacity of any theatre in that city or in the country.

The auditorium proper covers a greater ground area than any theatre in the country, being a half block in width and one hundred and sixty feet in length. The exterior on State street, which contains the principal entrance, is a monumental design carried to a height equivalent to a seven-story building, in granite and polychrome terra cotta, with a frontage of sixty feet.

The State Street property is used exclusively for a lobby and runs east ninety-six feet to the auditorium proper, which runs north and south

for one hundred and seventy feet, with its north end on Lake street.

Messrs. C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, who are the architects responsible for this splendid building, have followed the French style of architecture of the Louis fourteenth period throughout the interior and have made the exterior what is declared by Henry Wacker, chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission, as the handsomest building in Chicago.

The Chicago is another triumph for C. W. & Geo. L. Rapp, as well as for Messrs. Balaban & Katz, for whom they previously had built the Central Park Theatre, The Riviera and the magnificent Tivoli Theatre. They are known from coast to coast as the architects of splendid theatres in many cities and their work extending over a number of years has been the result of both having had extensive study and travel in Europe and the Orient. Their efforts have been to embody the finest in European examples which are regarded as monuments of the ages in American theatres and from these examples The Chicago and the other houses built by Rapp and Rapp have taken on greater lines and proportions, surpassing the European examples and with modern improvements meeting American demands. As in all the work, the interior of The Chicago is carried out in a definite style and period of architecture and they also include the scheme of decoration, lighting fixtures and all interior equipment, so that these lines are in perfect harmony and color.

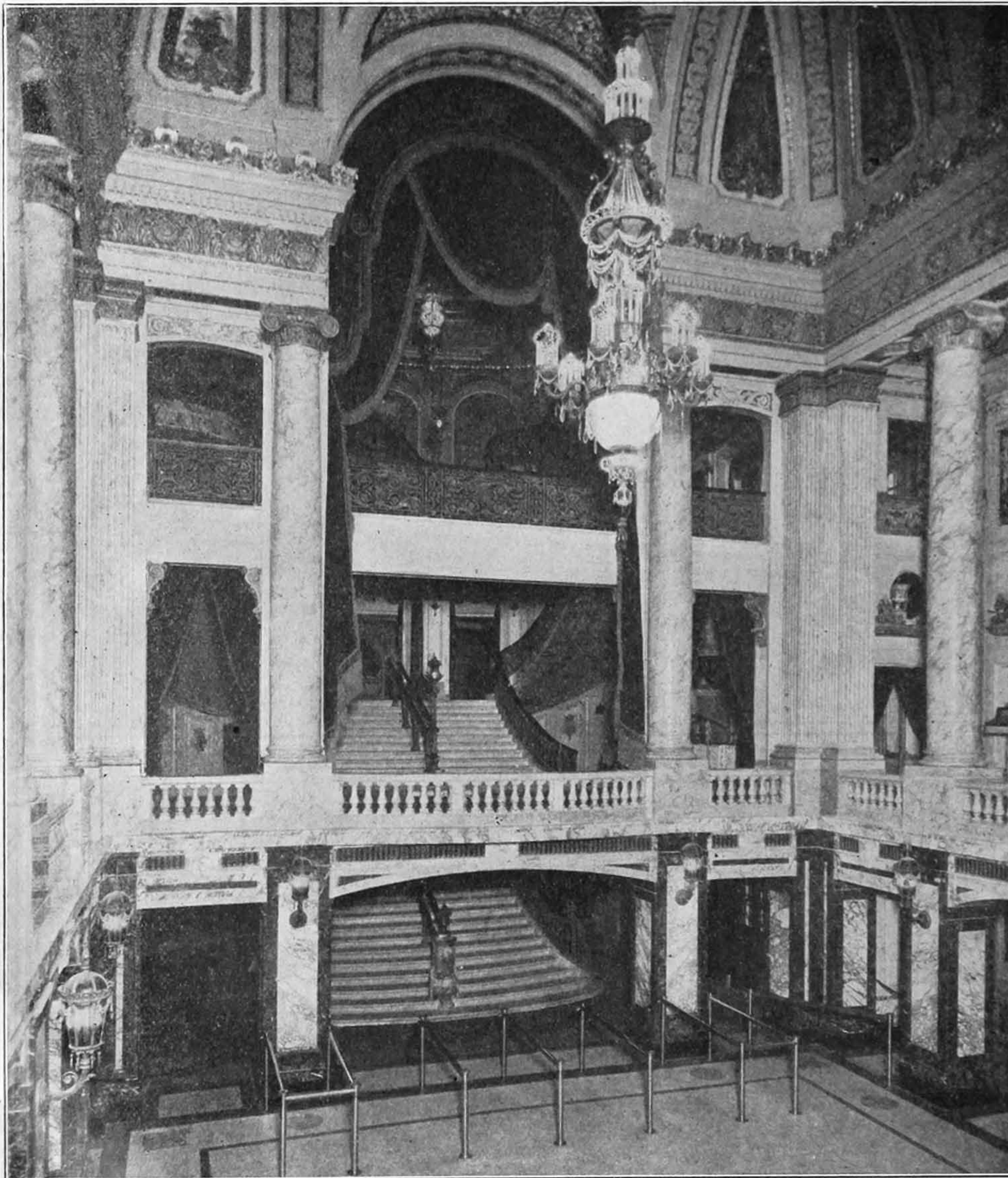
Entering from State street, the visitor to the Chicago is ushered into a lobby treated in extremely elaborate design with a huge marble colonnade supporting a rich vaulted ceiling, which towers over him at an unobstructed height of sixty-five feet. This area is devoted entirely to the public as a promenade and entrance to the theatre. At the end of this lobby is a grand marble stairway, eighteen feet in width, which extends up to the mezzanine floor, continuing to the upper mezzanine promenade intermediate balcony promenade, upper balcony promenade and the top floor of the balcony. Patrons using this stairway are at all times in view of the main floor of the grand lobby, thereby avoiding the usual narrow entrances and passageways to this portion of the theatre.

In the grand lobby there also is a grand promenade at the mezzanine floor level extending around all sides with a width of fifteen feet. This promenade is richly furnished with divans, heavily carpeted and with splendid oil paintings on the walls. The promenade is again repeated at the upper balcony level, giving the patrons of the balcony the same conveniences.

On the orchestra floor at right angles to the grand lobby and extending the full width of the auditorium is the grand promenade, which has a width of twenty feet and extends to a height of thirty-seven feet on the main axis of the theatre.

The seating arrangement on the orchestra floor proper is laid out on a European horse shoe plan, in which the minor promenade extends around all sides, terminating at the proscenium boxes. This contour or shape of the main floor gives a series of arches which are

(Continued on page 2870)



Main lobby of the Chicago theatre looking toward the grand staircase. Note the magnificent crystal chandelier

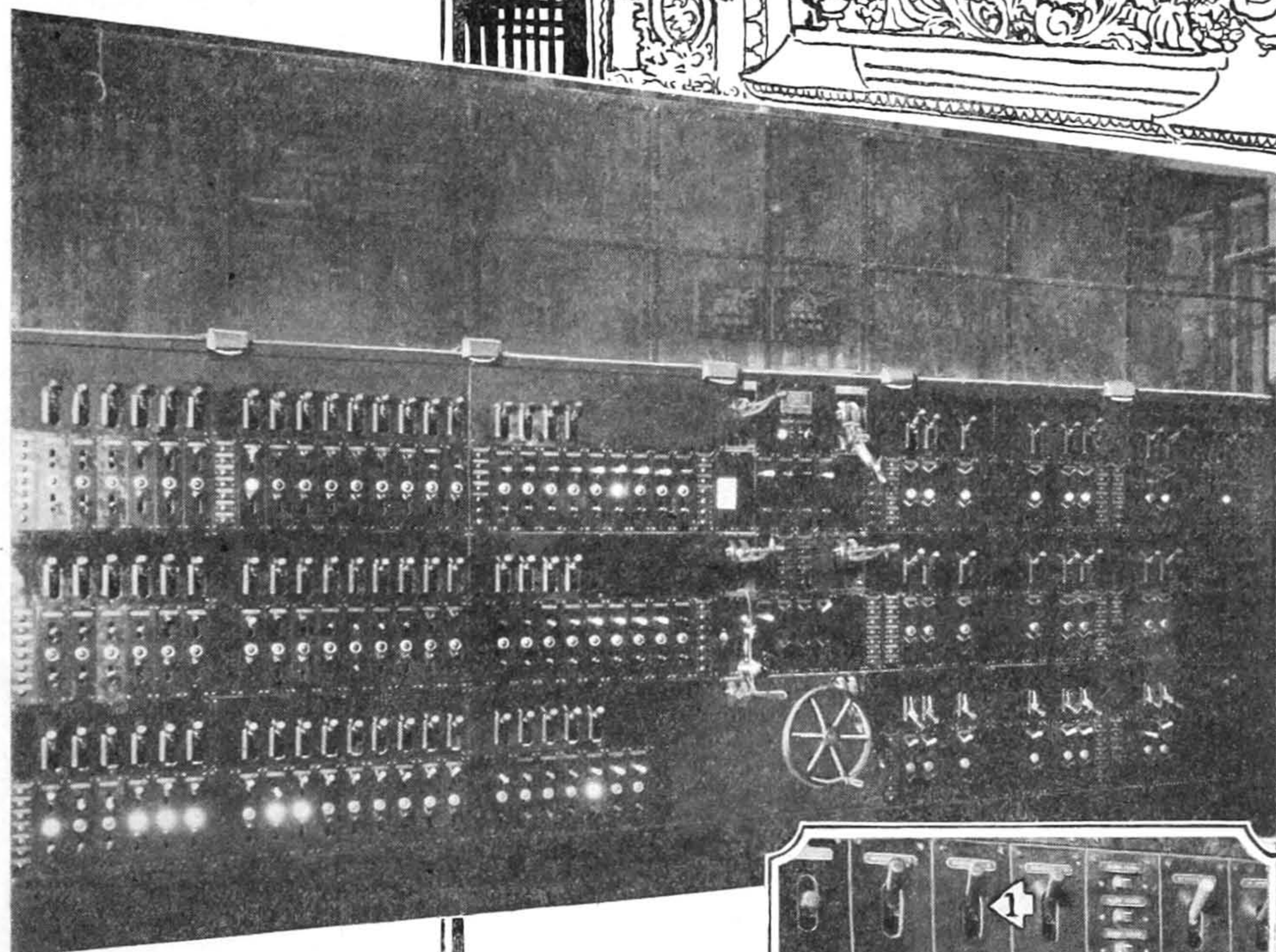
# A Double Achievement The New Chicago and The New Major Switchboard

Here is a switchboard that is as much a marvel among switchboards as the magnificent New Chicago Theatre is among theatres.

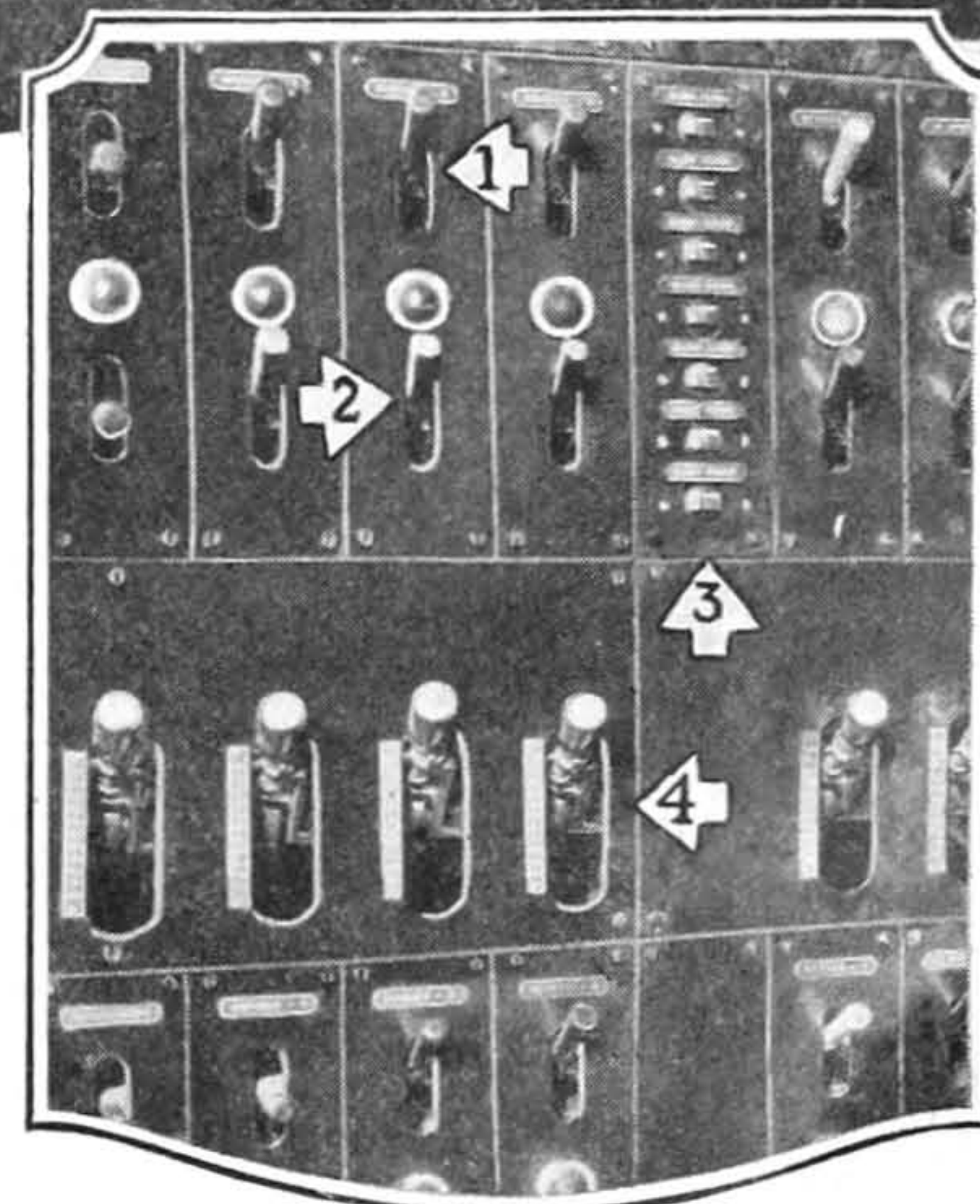
Lighting effects of surpassing beauty on the facets and cornices of the elaborate auditorium embellishments are easily accomplished. Unsurpassed flexibility that places in the hands of the electrician the minute control of the smallest circuits of lights both for brilliance and blending.

This has been true of all Major Switchboards. The new design that lifts this Major Combination Pilot and Dimmer Board above the others is the placing each dimmer lever directly below the pilot switch for the lights they dim. Added to all of the other Major features—unequaled for theatre lighting control—is this new and revolutionary feature of absolute compactness.

Major Pre-Selective Remote Control Switchboards are being installed in the newest palaces of the theatre world as well as making modern the obsolete lighting of many of the fine long established ones.



Balaban & Katz  
Owners  
C. W. & George L. Rapp  
Architects  
Chicago



- (1) This lever closes the circuit.
- (2) This lever opens it.
- (3) These tumbler switches subdivide the circuit.
- (4) This dimmer handle dims the lights of the switch just above it.

**THE MAJOR SYSTEM**

*Pre-Selective Remote Control*

# Another Great Stride in Theatre Lighting Control

## New Major Combination Switchboard a Real Improvement

In building the huge and magnificent Chicago Theatre, Balaban and Katz impressed the world with a dazzling achievement. Quite as impressive, particularly to those interested, are the mechanics that made such a brilliant accomplishment possible. The lighting control is one of the outstanding features of these "behind the scenes" mechanics.

To understand fully the vast improvement obtained and the skillful engineering necessary to accomplish the one man control of such a huge electrical equipment, some comparison must be made to older methods and existing conditions. Under the open-knife switchboard plan a switchboard fully forty-five feet long would have been necessary to control the great number of circuits. In addition to this knife switchboard control the dimmer bank or group would have had to extend almost an equal distance beyond this or be placed over it on a "second story" level. This old type of switchboard, which is used today in many old theatres, would have taken four or five men to control the lights of the Chicago Theatre, during the performance. As all of the equipment would have been in the stage, it would have occupied a great deal of valuable stage space. The fire hazard would have been materially increased, and flexibility would be a nearly minus quality.

It should be remembered the most highly successful theatre switchboard is not the largest but the smallest that can be built to do the work. The Major Pre-Selective Remote Control Switchboard installed in the huge 5,000-seat Chicago Theatre is only twenty feet long! It seems impossible to believe the statement that the switchboard itself takes absolutely no additional stage space other than that required for the dimmer bank alone, but that is literally the truth. The major board is built to fit into the spaces left around the dimmer handles. This at once cuts the space required down to that needed for dimmers alone. When you realize in addition it can be "set up" for three scenes in advance and that changes can be made from

one position, by one man, the equipment is really marvelous.

It is a new design of Major board. It contains all of the proven points of excellence the other Major Switchboards have and is built on the basically right principle of Pre-Selective Remote Control, the great improvement is one of combining the pilot switches with the dimmer controls on the same board and each contiguous to the other.

To make this clear we will take one unit switch. In the upper part of the unit is the "on" position lever, four inches below this is the "off" position lever, both of which are also pre-selective levers. Between these two is the pilot light that shows the condition of the circuit controlled (whether the lamps are lighted or not). Just below the lower lever is the handle of the dimmer plate that dims that particular circuit. There is a scale marked along the slot through which this dimmer handle protrudes that shows by position how much the lights are dimmed.

This entire unit is repeated again and again for as many circuits as need be controlled. Further division of circuits is made with tumbler snap switches in several panels, one panel along side of each set of pilot switches. By all of this you can see that the board is marvelously flexible as well as unusually compact.

The main control switches, the main dimmer levers and the big slow wheel drive dimmer control are all located at the center of the board within reach of one man. From this point the electrician makes all of his light changes. Between changes he goes to other parts of the board to "pre-select" his successive scenes.

Figures are usually dry affairs, but the following high spots should be interesting. There is a total current load on the stage switchboard of 390,220 watts. Of this the stage uses 202,800 and the Auditorium 187,420. This is divided into a total of 384 circuits and is controlled by 103 pilot switches. The circuits are

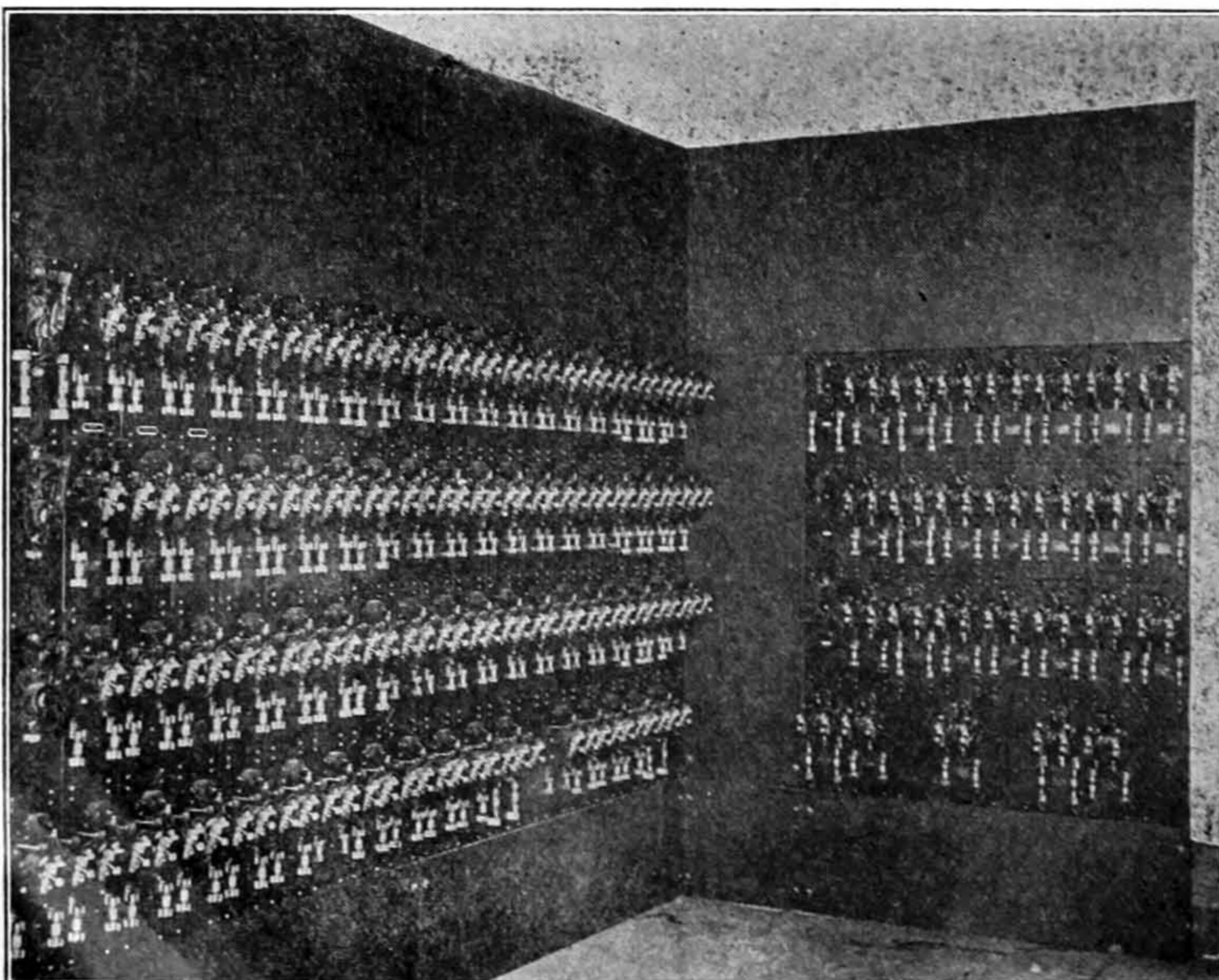
further subdivided by 153 Tumbler switches. Practically every circuit in the theatre is on dimmers and approximately 147 dimmer plates were required. These are constructed in bank, six high, directly behind the pilot board. Dimmers handle in the top row is within easy reach. The entire stage pilot board and dimmers occupy a floor space of only 4 ft. 7 in. by 20 ft. This is exactly the space the dimmer alone would occupy.

In the foregoing we have taken for granted that it was clearly understood that the Major System is a Pre-Selective Pilot Board with Remote Control. The heavy current is broken on a large remote magnetic switchboard in an enclosed room in out-of-the-way space in the basement. This remote board is in itself well worth pages of description.

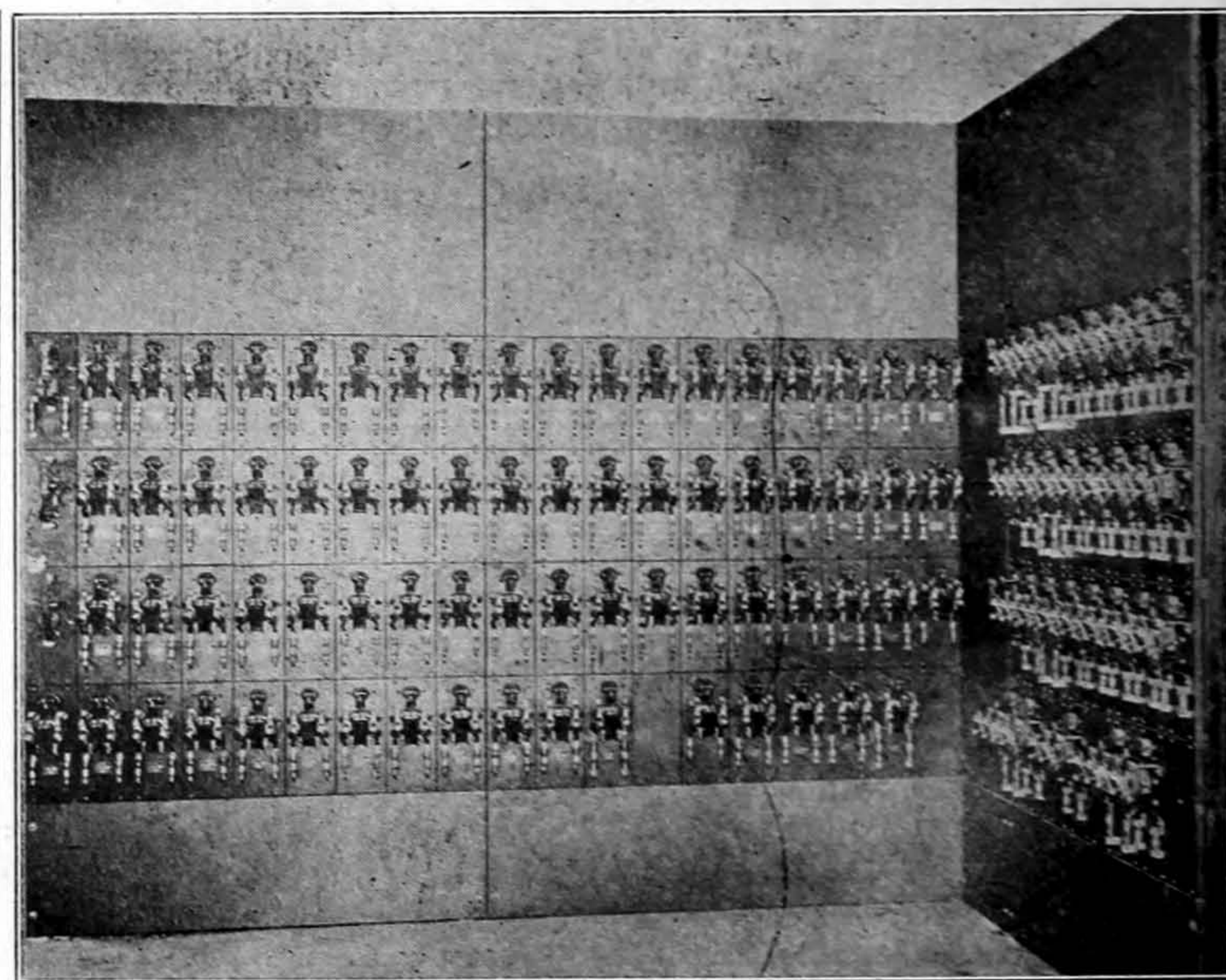
The switches are manufactured specially for the Major system by the Cutler-Hammer Mfg Co., and all board connections are made with bus bars, no wiring used. Of greater value than the saving of stage space and the flexibility and ease of control is the elimination of fire hazard. Only 7/10 of one ampere is broken on the stage and that behind steel plate and slate. No one can possibly damage the stage board by "shorting" and the entire apparatus can be locked against unauthorized meddlers. Should any one "tamper" with the switches no harm can be done, as there is but one path for current to travel at any one time.

Another factor that makes for the safety of the audience is the extended remote control of house lights. With the Major System house lights can be turned on from any desired point or points in the house by a simple snap switch in a glass enclosed case.

See Photograph of Magazine Panel on Page 2870



Major remote control board in basement under the stage



Another view of the Major remote control board in the Chicago theatre

# The master MUSIC

incorporated in  
the new CHICAGO theatre

Balaban & Katz appreciate the fact that their high type of picture presentation needs the highest class music.

The successful transposition, from the head to the heart, of the ideas projected on the screen, can only come through the music of an organ built to reach the hearts of its hearers and not the discount demands of its purchasers.

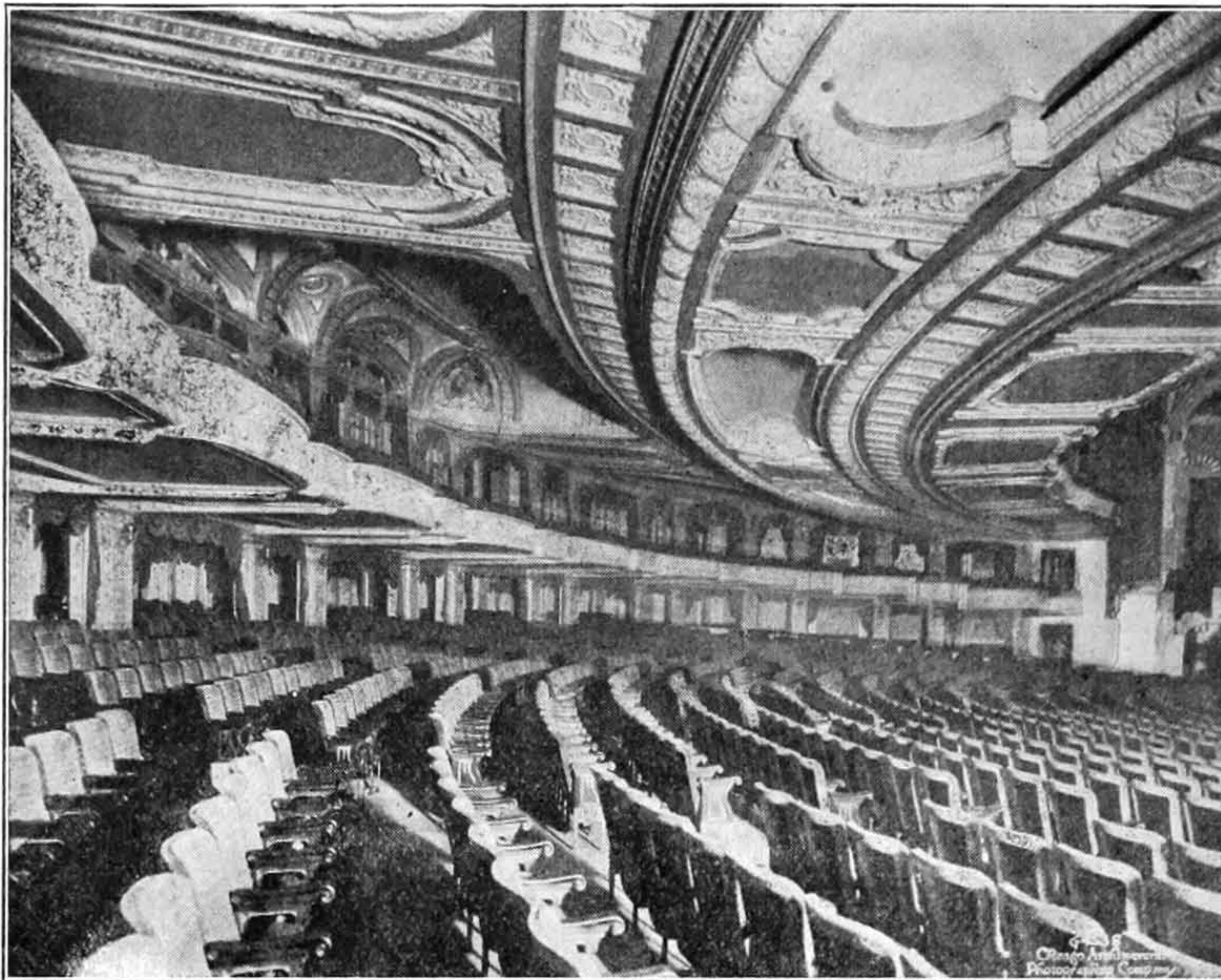
COSTLY  
MAGNIFICENT  
PERFECT

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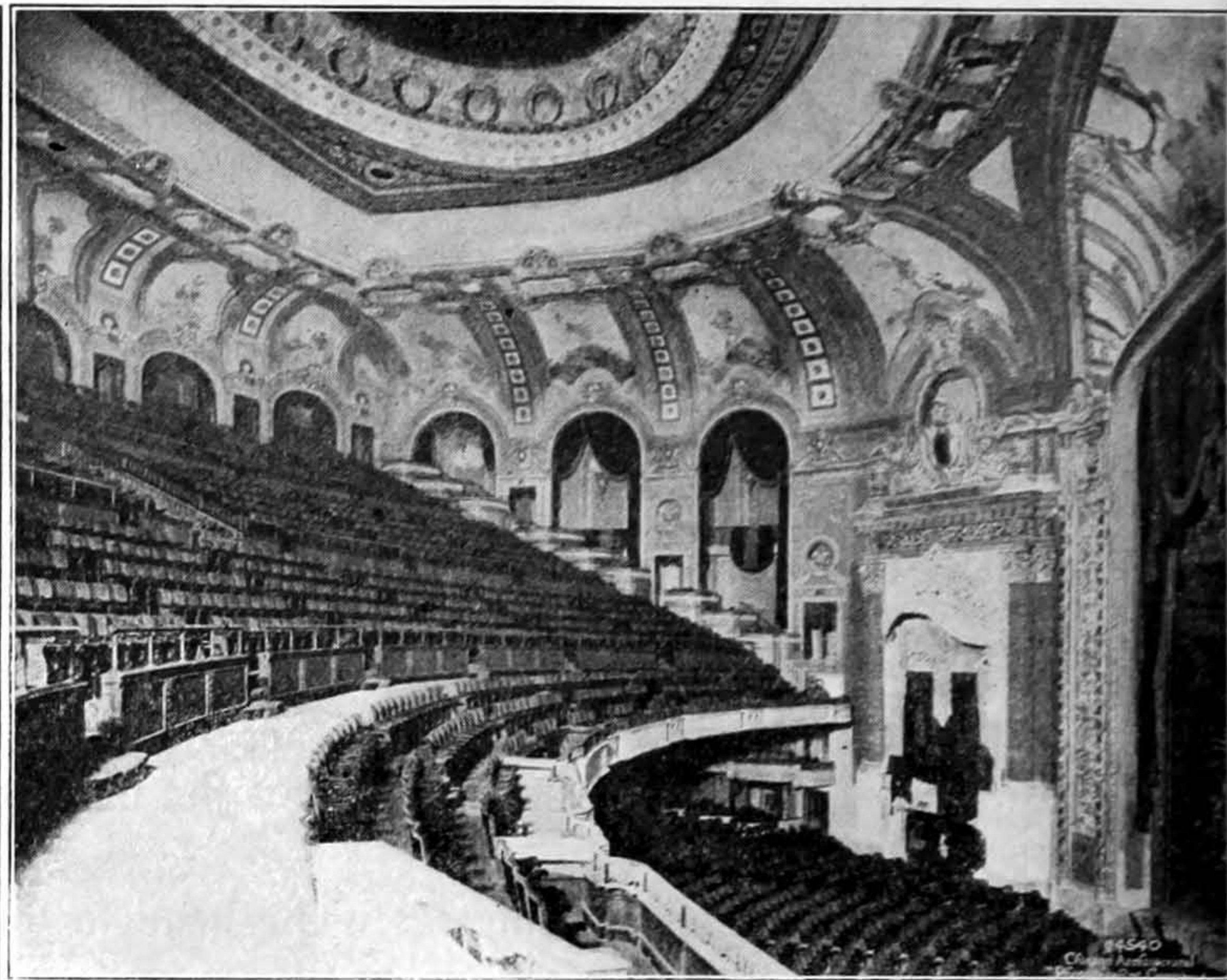
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# UNIT ORGANS





View of the mezzanine boxes under the balcony



The balcony, showing wall paintings and decorations

# Equipment of Chicago Theatre on Par With House

## Nothing Left Undone to Obtain Perfection

While the splendid architectural and lighting effects, beauty of hangings, heavy carpeting and general air of luxury which distinguishes the Chicago, brings forth admiration from everyone entering the theatre, quite as impressive, particularly to theatre men, are the mechanics that make such a brilliant accomplishment possible.

The electrical system throughout the Chicago was installed by the Hub Electric Company, of Chicago, many of the instruments and devices used being manufactured specially for this theatre by that company. The magnitude of the electrical equipment may be realized from the fact that more than ten thousand electric lights are used to illuminate the interior of the house, and thousands of lights in addition are used on the exterior. The cove lighting throughout the house is of the three color system, amber, red and blue, with the colors independently controlled by dimmers. There is a perfect blend of one color into another every twenty minutes with the diffusion so gradual that it is hardly perceptible. Electric drive pumps, blowers, and a heating system in which electricity plays an important part, are also part of the Hub Electrical Company's contribution to this great theatre.

An interesting feature of the installation is the thermostat method of temperature regulation. In a closet adjacent to the manager's office is a control board which indicates the temperatures in various parts of the Chicago Theatre and enables the manager to set the various thermostats, distributed about the house, at proper degree of heat. From this board, also, is operated the opening and closing of dampers and ducts, that is the fresh air damper may be set half open and the return air half open. Also foul air exhaust dampers may be regulated. It also provides for the regulation of the coils and the heating system. Other indicators show the velocity at which the various fans are running and there are controls for regulating their

motors. There is a complete inter-communicating system of house telephones and an electric flash system of reporting vacant seats to the chief usher, who has a board before him whereby he can determine the location of vacant seats in any part of the house.

The lighting control is one of the outstanding features of the "behind the scenes mechanics" and is accomplished through the use of the Major Pre-Selective Remote Control Switchboard.

The projection room in the Chicago is equipped with a battery of three Simplex Machines, Stereopticons, etc. The installation of the Peerless Automatic Arc Controls in the projection room, was accomplished through arrangements with the J. E. McAuley Manufacturing Company, Chicago, who also manufactured the controls in use at the Senate, Rivera, Tivoli and The Roosevelt, which play such an important part in the perfect projection of pictures at these houses, eliminating as they do the annoying colored lights, the semi-dark screen, and other undesirable conditions practically unavoidable with hand fed arcs.

A Raven "Haftone" screen manufactured by the Raven Screen Corp., New York City, is an important part of the Chicago's equipment.

On one of the upper floors over the lobby of the Chicago, is provided a full sized stage with complete system of stage lighting, etc., for use of the presentation department, which here prepares elaborate prologues and other scenic effects used on the Chicago stage. The musical director also is provided with a room where he can view the pictures and arrange the musical settings for them before they are seen on the screen of the Chicago.

The large general offices of Balaban & Katz also occupy one of the floors over the lobby and are considered one of the handsomest suites of offices in the city.

The wrecking of the buildings which stood on the present site of the Chicago was completed

in record time by the W. J. Newman Company of Chicago, who also made quick time with the monster excavation for the foundation and basement structures of the theatre.

### Col. Fred Levy to Erect \$250,000 House

There is no gloom or fear of the future in certain of the Kentucky motion picture circles. Close on the heels of the opening of the new "Kentucky" in Louisville Col. Fred Levy, original Associated First National franchise holder for Kentucky and Tennessee, has completed negotiations for the erection in Lexington, Ky. of a new theatre, to seat 1,500 and to cost approximately \$250,000.

The name of the new house has not been determined, but it is to be one of the finest theatrical structures in the state and the management will seek to obtain patronage of the highest class. Construction is to start in November, and the house will be opened next April, it is expected. It will be the home of Associated First National attraction in Lexington. It is stated that every comfort of the modern theatre will be provided and a pipe organ will furnish the music. The main floor will seat 1,200.

### Show Movies in Church

The Jamestown, N. Y., Baptist Church has installed a \$2,000 equipment for the showing of motion pictures. The pastor is now giving movie sermons every Sunday night.—TAYLOR.

# BALABAN & KATZ

*Announce the Opening of*

# THE CHICAGO

Wonder Theatre of the World

(C. W. & GEO. L. RAPP, Architects)

*On October Twenty-Sixth*

## CHICAGO THEATRE

—Another—

# HUB ELECTRIC COMPANY

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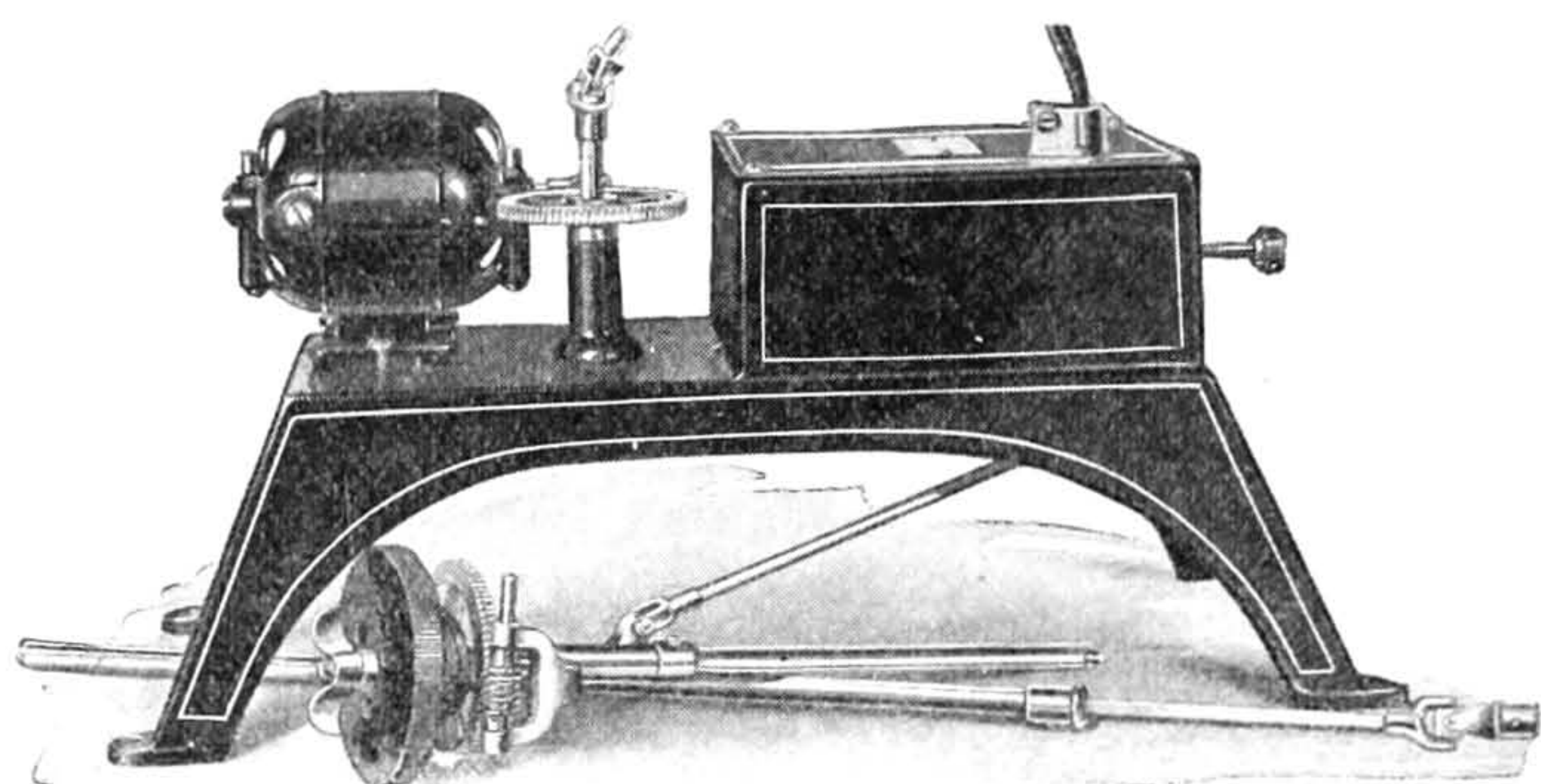
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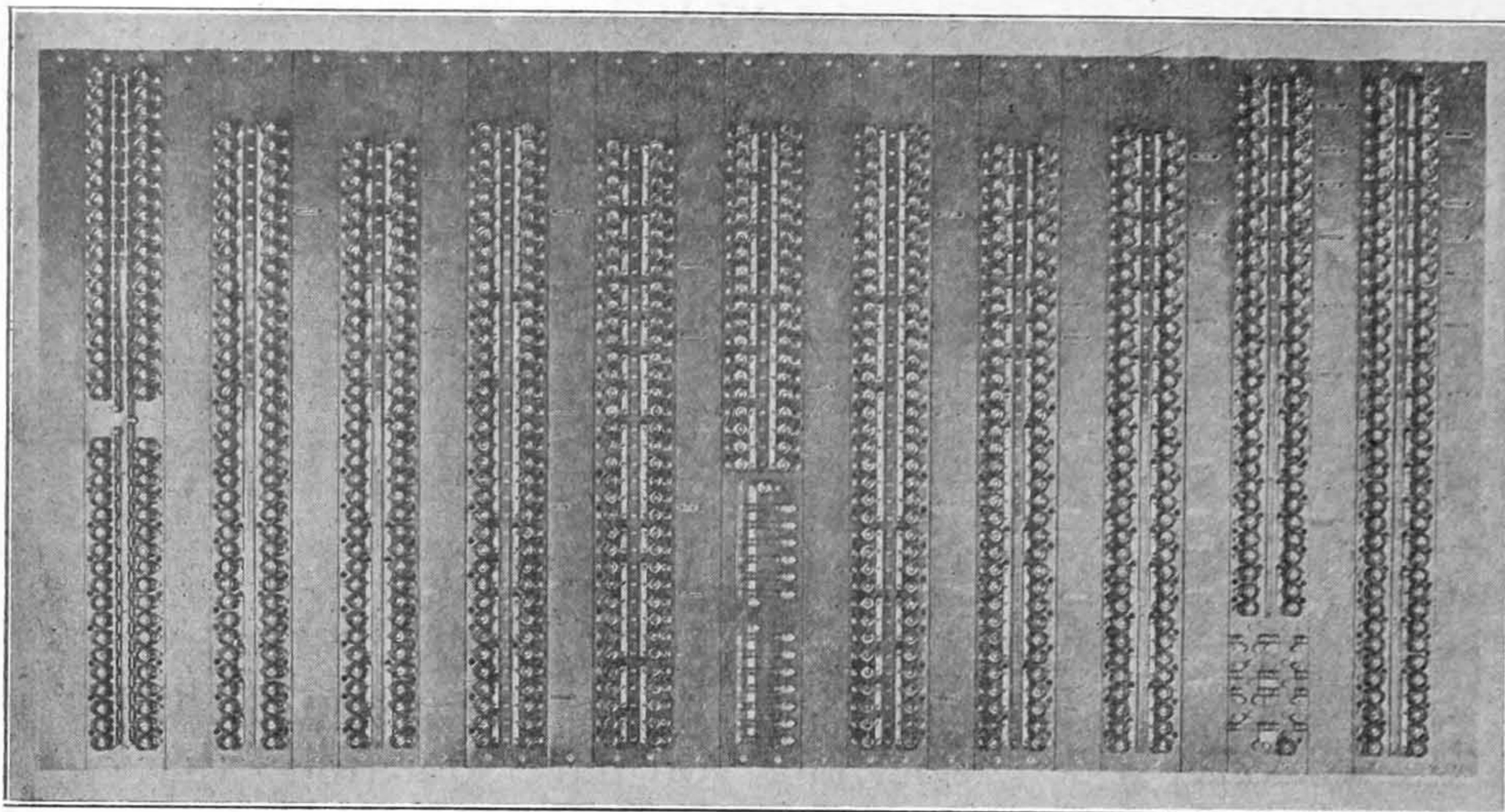
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Magazine panel on stage behind Major combination pilot and dimmer control board

### Completing Erie House

Work on the interior of the new Perry theatre is fast nearing completion in Erie, Pa. Painters last week began putting the finishing touches on the decorations and the work of placing the huge electric sign in front of the theatre is being rushed. Marble setters will soon start work in the lobby. Special pains have been taken by Rowland and Clark to make the lobby of the Perry attractive. Jerome Casper, general manager for the company, will soon announce the opening date.—Taylor.

### Are You Reading the N. A. M. L. Forum?

### New Theatre Surpasses All

(Continued from page 2850)

richly draped, and extending out from these arches on each side of the auditorium are commodious loges. Between the orchestra floor and the balcony there is the mezzanine floor,

the contour of which is the same as that of the first floor, and the seating arrangement is in boxes only, there being twenty-five in number.

On this mezzanine floor are women's rest rooms, retiring rooms, etc., which are elaborate treated, but on a somewhat smaller scale than the main floor.

In the balcony ceiling directly above the mezzanine boxes in the rear, are three elaborate oval shape domes forty-eight feet in length and twenty-five feet in width. These are brilliantly illuminated in the diffused color lighting, which benefits the main orchestra floor as well as the mezzanine.

The main balcony is constructed on a very slight incline, giving excellent view of the entire grand orchestra on the main floor, as well as the stage. This balcony is again treated on similar lines to the main floor and mezzanine, by a series of arches which extend on the side walls, the entire rear giving the promenade. On the auditorium side of these arches are twenty-six loges which are stepped down with the contour of the balcony, giving in turn a perfect side wall as well as a rich architectural effect.

The proscenium opening is flanked on either side by a treatment in marble and plaster columns.

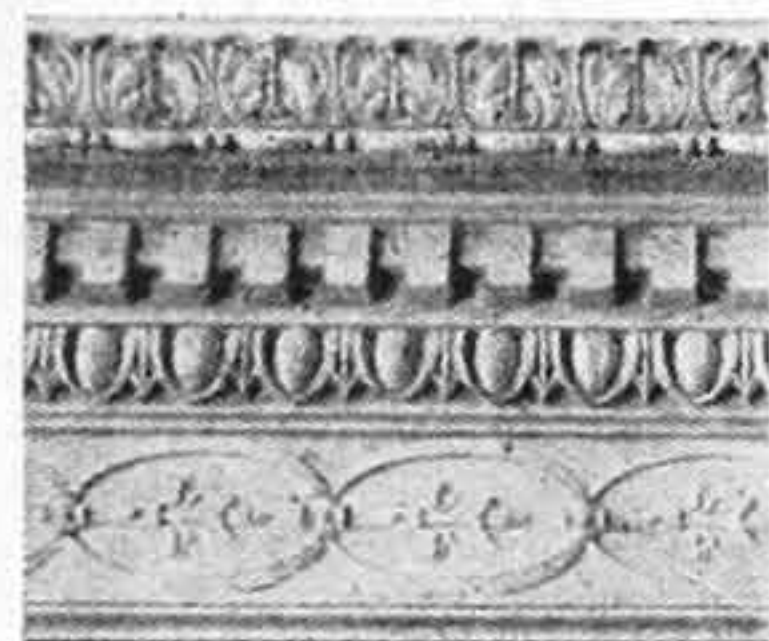
By the proscenium boxes is a fountain of marble and statuary which extends to a height from the stage level of twenty feet. To the rear of this statuary above the mezzanine level is the organ loft, which contains the largest organ installed in Chicago, a Hope Jones, built by the Wurlitzer Company

The stage is of great size, being large enough to accommodate grand opera.

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