

EALING'S NEWEST CINEMA OPENED.

**Inaugural Speeches By
Sound Film.**

AVENUE THEATRE.

OUTCOME OF WALPOLE'S SUCCESS.

THE AMUSEMENT amenities of Ealing had an important addition on Monday, when the Avenue Theatre, Northfield-avenue, opened its doors to waiting queues and accommodated 1,500 people at the first performance.

The theatre was formally opened by the Mayor (Councillor H. J. Stowell), who had the novel experience, while occupying a balcony seat, of listening to his own speech and watching himself introduce directors and officials of Walpole Hall, Ltd., the company responsible for the building and control of the Avenue.

How was it done? The Mayor and the others taking part in the ceremony had appeared before the camera in advance of the opening day, and it was a talking film of what they said and did that served as the public "send-off" of the new theatre.

The Mayor recorded well—quite as well as Mayor Walker, of New York, who figured in the news reel that was shown later. His voice was beautifully clear and loud as he congratulated Northfields on being provided with that fine new cinema, beautiful, comfortable, convenient, and a great addition to the entertainment facilities offered in the Borough of Ealing. He went on to say that he was born in Ealing and had spent the whole of his business life there. He had known Mr. T. B. Percy, the managing director of Walpole Hall, Ltd., for many years, and it seemed to him that it was the natural outcome of the outstanding success of the Walpole Cinema that the Avenue Cinema came into being.

OUTCOME OF SUCCESS

Mr. Percy said he had been associated with the entertainment life of Ealing for a quarter of a century. In 1908 he was one of the promoters of the original Walpole Skating Rink which, after many vicissitudes, was in November, 1925, converted into the Walpole Cinema. The success of that venture exceeded all expectations—so much so that the Walpole had become a household word among the amusement seekers of the Borough. Development was generally the outcome of success, and therefore when it was decided to extend the Piccadilly Tube to Northfields, he secured the site on which the Avenue Theatre stood.

He believed that the growing population near the theatre and the accessibility of such places as Hounslow and Acton would receive for the Avenue a wide circle of patrons.

The site having been obtained, the next move was to secure an architect possessing the necessary experience to enable him to design a cinema that would bear comparison with the best theatre in the West End. The choice fell upon Mr. Cecil Masey, who, everyone would agree, had produced a beautiful theatre.

GREATEST PRECAUTIONS.

With this, Mr. Percy introduced Mr. Masey who, after indicating the warmth, attractiveness, and comfort of the Spanish style in which the theatre was designed, said that even more precautions had been taken than were required by the very stringent regulations of the Middlesex County Council. Everything humanly possible had been done to eliminate the possibility of fire, panic, or other untoward happening.

Mr. H. J. Horswell, the works foreman, who next appeared on the screen, referred to the building of the Avenue as "a good job," made the more interesting because direct labour had been employed with great success.

Mr. H. Usher, a director of Walpole Hall, Ltd., and manager of the Walpole Cinema, said the Avenue represented British capital, British material, and British labour. The same policy would, as far as possible, be carried out in the films that would be presented and he looked forward to the day when it would be practicable to present All-British programmes. The Walpole and the Avenue were sister theatres and in a few weeks there would prevail at the Avenue the same homely atmosphere that had been developed at the Walpole.

The people Mr. Usher introduced were Mr. T. V. Comer, manager of the Avenue, and until lately his assistant at the Walpole, and Mr. Clement Livingston, chief projectionist at both theatres, another old hand duly promoted. Many of the audience would have taken advantage of the opportunity to inspect the theatre and see the intricate machinery for which he was responsible. Lastly, Mr. Usher introduced the theatre's mascot, Dinkie, a dog who barked a message of good luck.

Then the Mayor re-appeared on the screen, formally declared the theatre open, and expressed his wishes for its success.

LUCKY HEATHER.

All those featured in this film attended the opening performance, together with Mrs. T. B. Percy, Mr. J. D. Percy (director), Mrs. Usher, Mrs. Comer, and Lady Bull. Many congratulatory telegrams were received from notable people in the film world, and two firms "said it with flowers." A large horseshoe of heather, sent by National Screen Services, stood in the vestibule.

Trumpets from Kneller Hall sounded fanfare and 1,500 voices joined in singing the National Anthem.

Everyone was pleased with the Avenue Theatre. The interior is colourful, but not overpowering. In fact, it is true to say that of the variety of colours employed, not one offends, all being part of a scheme which produces a feeling of warm comfort. The lighting is soft rather than severe, although no fewer than 3,000 electric lamps are employed.

During the opening performance the audience saw something of the stage lighting resources, which can be made to yield surprisingly beautiful effects. The draperies all react to the Holograph colour lighting system, and it is claimed that no installation could produce greater variety of effects than are obtainable at the Avenue. The curtain is of the "colour music" type and has been styled The Tapestry of Dreams.

Much was heard of the Compton organ, played by Mr. Bertram Orsman, F.R.C.O., L.R.A.M. It is more than a pipe organ; a large number of instruments can be operated from the console and many effects which are not strictly musical, but none the less pleasing, can also be produced.

The light and sound projection at the Avenue are excellent. The sound system is the Western Electric.

EXCELLENT ENTERTAINMENT.

The opening programme, with "The Honourable Mr. Wong" and "Lord Babs" as the principal film features represented excellent entertainment, and if future programmes do not fall beneath this standard, the Avenue should be assured of good business. On the stage were Michel and Arnova, acrobatic dancers, who showed a careful appreciation of the type of "turn" needed in a cinema programme—fast-moving and spectacular, without being too long or over-elaborate.

Many who attended remained to take tea in the cafe or the balcony foyer.