

Curtain falls for last time at a York theatre

AFTER 54 years of show business the Empire Theatre, York, which began in 1902 when the converted Corn Exchange was opened as the Grand Opera House and Empire with a pantomime starring the late Florrie Forde, closed down on Saturday night.

Before the curtain came down for the last time at the end of the second house, Mr. J. J. Cullen and members of the theatre staff gathered on the stage to say thank you and farewell to the audience.

Then the staff, arms linked, and the audience sang "Auld Lang Syne." In the audience was Mrs. Florence Powell, aged 72, of Cherry Street, York, a regular attender at the theatre since the second week of its opening in 1902.

On behalf of the staff Mrs. Ann Lievesley, the secretary, presented a wrist watch to Mr. Cullen. Later there was a staff party.

THE REASONS

Outside the theatre a bill was posted giving the reasons for closing down. It read: "This theatre has been closed by the crippling entertainment tax and unfair, untaxed entertainment by television. Television pays no tax. Television presents music-hall shows seven days a week, including Sundays. The theatre is not allowed to open on Sunday.

"Losses sustained by television are made up out of your (the tax-payer's) pocket. No other business in the country can survive under such deliberately unfair competition. Where is British fair play?"