

"Standing Room Only" Sign Long Forgotten

Roxy Closing Ends 30-Year Movie Era In East Kildonan

By D.O.B.

Last week's terse announcement that the Roxy Theatre on Henderson Highway would close brought nostalgic memories to many residents of Elmwood and East Kildonan who had looked upon the solid brick "home of talking pictures" as their entertainment centre for the past 30 years.

The theatre at the corner of Montrose avenue opened Christmas Eve 1929. The Herald of December 19th, in announcing the premiere, noted that "residents of this district have now, within the bounds of their own community, what ranks among the most modern and up-to-date suburban theatres . . . in Canada and which will present 100 per cent talking pictures" — a rather prosaic statement designed to ensure a full house on opening night, but which would leave most of us at home watching our television sets or journeying to our summer homes today.

For this new age of leisure has rung the death knell on the suburban movie house at 35 to 50 cents

a seat. And yet, strangely enough, the downtown houses, which captivate theatre-going audiences with "spectaculars," are able to keep fairly respectable houses at one dollar per seat.

Why have so many suburban houses closed their doors to open, in many instances as thriving super markets or clubs and, in the case of the Roxy, as a 20-lane bowling alley.

People have more money to spend on more elaborate entertainment today; our youth is kept busier at school and at extra-curricular pursuits; we have our own form of movie entertainment in our homes; the customer wants to see the latest in first runs.

Developments in wide screens and audio developments made the introduction in suburban theatres a questionable economy. But above all the automobile has given to us a mobility that was enjoyed by few in the thirties so that the "local" no longer is the sole entertainment available to the ubiquitous motorist.

So the carpenters have moved into the Roxy to tear out its atmospheric ceiling that created the illusion of spaciousness and the open air even when the thermometer read 20 below!

They have removed the exteriors of the quaint Spanish houses that lined the walls and the 1,200 seats on main floor and balcony have been dismantled. What stories these fixtures could tell in 30 years of catering to the entertainment-minded public!

By this fall, 20 spanking new bowling alleys will grace the length and breadth of the old Roxy. Perhaps a new generation of entertainment-conscious young people will take over the building and make it ring with happy chatter and pleasantries unlike the imported kind that blared forth from the screen for these many years.

It will be a different Roxy, but it will continue to fulfil its function as entertainment centre for Elmwood-Kildonan. Everyone will watch the revitalization process with renewed interest and hope that the new venture will live and prosper as long as the first.



REV. DAVID HESLIP

Rev. David W. Heslip was installed as ordained missionary in Elmwood Presbyterian Church at a service last Thursday conducted by Rev. Gerald Rennie, moderator of Winnipeg Presbytery. Rev. G. A. Peddle, of St. John's Presbyterian Church, preached the sermon.

Mr. Heslip, who commenced his duties at the morning service Sunday in Kent Road School, graduated from Knox College, Toronto, in 1953.

He was for three years missionary to the Indians at Elkhington, and

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