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The Primitive Methodist Church built in 1862 on the site later occupied by the Regent Theatre in Queen Street, New Plymouth. It was replaced early in the century by another church which served as a theatre for a time before the present theatre was erected in 1915.

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# REGENT THEATRE HAS CLOSED DOWN

The regent Theatre, New Plymouth, has closed.

The final screening was on Saturday night.

The theatre's owners, New Plymouth Picture Theatres Ltd., decided last week to close temporarily, the secretary, Mr. C. H. Wynyard, said yesterday.

"Whether we reopen or sell the theatre is in the lap of the gods," he added.

Due to the effect of television and the winter weather, attendances had fallen off so much that it was not economical to keep the theatre running even two days a week, said Mr. Wynyard.

Screenings were reduced to two days a week—Friday and Saturday—at the beginning of June.

The restricted screenings were still drawing audiences but not enough to make the theatre pay, said Mr. Wynyard.

### Not Announced

He said no announcement of the decision to close the theatre was made prior to Saturday because of the possibility of young "larrikins"

causing a disturbance on the final night.

This leaves New Plymouth with three pictures theatres, of which one, the Opera House, is frequently booked by touring stage shows.

The managers of the other theatres yesterday reported that television did not appear to have reduced their audiences to any great extent but that there had been a recent drop, due to several factors, including influenza, television and stage performances.

People were turning up for the better class of picture in larger numbers than ever, one manager said. However, they would not attend the "second rate" films screened at many double feature houses because they could see that type of film on television.

## Off Road



No-one was injured when this milk tanker left the road at the Mangawhero bridge near Riverlea about 9.30 a.m. yesterday.

The tanker was in a collision with a topdressing truck and trailer which swerved to avoid a car which stopped suddenly at the approach to the bridge.

The trailer of the truck caused extensive damage to the cab of the tanker.

A second topdressing vehicle hit the first truck's trailer but little damage was caused.

### Church Site

There were three churches on the site in Queen Street where the Regent Theatre now stands.

The first was the home of the Rev. Richard Ward—a reed hut—which served as a church on Sundays.

The Primitive Methodists built their church there in 1862 and it was replaced in 1904 by a bigger and better church.

This building contained a memorial window to Mr. Ward which was later removed to the Methodist Church, Fitzroy, where it can still be seen.

The Methodist and Primitive Methodist church later combined and sold the church to a theatre company.

### Sat In Pews

The first film on February 12, 1915, was J. Oxenham's "Hearts in Exile," and on the opening night approximately 500 people were turned away.

Charges for stalls were women 6d, men 1s. The pit seats were 6d and all reserves 1s.

Then, and for many years afterwards, it was known as the People's Theatre. For the first two years, films were screened in the church building and the audience sat in pews.

The present building was built around the church while screenings continued and then the theatre was closed for a short period while the old building was demolished and the interior finished.

For many years it was used for general and political meetings but in recent years it has not been in demand for this purpose.

## Setting In

Facturers are doing their best to meet the demand. Already, two firms have topless, halter-strap bikinis and front-scooped, one-piece sunsuits in the shops, and two leading wholesalers are turning out topless dresses as fast as they can be cut.

The Tailor and Cutter, the fashion magazine which calls itself "the authority on style and clothes," warned that the surest way to encourage a new style is to try to kill it or legislate against it.

One designer who is willing to go along with any of