

COPY

Los Angeles Jan 22, 1921

File 46

Mr. A. J. Dickinson,
Passenger Traffic Manager,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dear Sir:

Confirming my wire date in reply to yours of the 21st. I called on Mr. Pete Smith, Publicity Director for Marshall Neilan Productions Co. of Hollywood, California. He showed me quite a number of photos taken in Glacier Park on their trip there last fall and will say there are quite a number of beautiful scenes in the lot. It seems their object is to have them handled through their publicity department in newspapers and magazines; and if it is your desire we will ship same to you for your selection at no cost to you. Their only desire is that we will use these pictures in our publicity department, such as magazines and publications gotten out by the Great Northern. You can make your selection and return the ones you do not consider fit for your use. Kindly wire me if this is satisfactory and we will send the pictures.

Yours truly,

J. W. Phalon

157
St. Paul, Minnesota,
January 25, 1921.

Mr. W. P. Kenney:

Thanks for the clipping. Suggest you turn
this over to Mr. Dickinson and see if he cannot arrange
with the Blackfoot Indians as talked with Bob Mills.

L. W. Hill.

SEES RETURN OF BIG SPECTACLE

Marshall Neilan Points to Current
Successes to Prove Truth
of His Assertion.

PUBLIC WANTS BIG EFFECTS

That the American motion picture public is ready for the return of the spectacular film production and that the year just started will mark the release of many big pictures seems an established fact borne out by the success of such films as "Passion," "Kismet" and other similar screen offerings. Among the other big subjects to be seen before the new year is much order are "Foolish Wives," "The Queen of Sheba," "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" and several other big films now in the making.

Further indication of the trend toward super-spectacles, so-called, is the fact that producers who have consistently met with success in the presentation of pictures in which the story called for small casts and limited physical properties are now devoting their efforts to spectacular subjects.

Prominent among such producers is Marshall Neilan who, in the production of "Bob Hampton of Placer"—an adaptation of the Randall Parrish book of that title—is staging the most pretentious picture he has ever undertaken.

In a recent interview with Mr. Neilan on the matter, he said: "There is no doubt in my mind that the public is ready for the return of the spectacular film. Some four months ago I made inquiries along these lines among exhibitors in different parts of the country. The consensus of opinion was that the big film would be most welcome at this time. For years I have been holding 'Bob Hampton of Placer' waiting the right time to produce it in a manner that would be a credit to this wonderful conception by Randall Parrish.

"At that time it was evident to me that as soon as the foreign market opened there would be an influx of this elaborate motion picture entertainment and that it would behoove the American producer to get busy along these lines.

"Work on 'Bob Hampton of Placer' was then commenced and this picture will shortly be ready for distribution. Thousands of persons appear in this film and for spectacular sets I have chiefly used nature's own backgrounds, although a number of big frontier streets were necessary. The mountains of Glacier Park, Montana, and the flat country of Arizona, with its many sunlight effects, are the 'pretentious sets' of my new picture, the stages on which three thousands enact the scenes of the story. Thus, instead of building palaces, gardens and other artificial effects, I have used some of the best sets nature has to offer.

"In the meantime we have had striking examples of the fact that the big drama of the screen has again become the powerful attraction with the American public. 'Passion' and 'Kismet' have come and conquered. Others of a similar magnitude are to follow.

"In 'Bob Hampton of Placer' I believe the exhibitor will find an attraction of particular drawing power aside from any merits the picture may have, due to the fact that this is the first spectacular film in years with American historical facts as the highlights of the story. This tale

of American frontiers in 1876, when the Indians gave official Washington much to worry about, leading up to the famous 'Custer's Last Fight' is a theme that is perhaps nearer the hearts of the American motion picture public than other big productions dealing with either foreign, allegorical or supernatural affairs.

"The 'selling' of these spectacular productions to the motion picture public—if I may suggest it—is of particular importance and will have much to do with the length of time this type of picture will be in vogue. In the last presentation of big subjects to the public some five years ago many of the nearly-great productions were highly oversold with the result that the motion picture patron soured on the pictures that were advertised as super-special, super-spectacular and super other things. In the epidemic of big productions, cheap imitations were ground out and heralded throughout the land with thousands of dollars spent in advertising. After the first few truly big productions, there were no more real dramatic conceptions of this type. The public, after a taste of the real thing, found others poor substitutes and the result brought about the taboo of spectacular offerings."

N.Y. City Jan 23, 1921
[Morning Telegraph]

January
Twenty-fifth,
1921.

Mr. Pete Smith,
c/o Marshall Weilan Productions,
6642 Santa Monica Blvd.,
Hollywood, California.

Dear Mr. Smith:

Upon my return to the office I find your letter of January 14th. I wish to thank you for your many kind expressions and suggestions contained therein.

Our General Passenger Agent, Mr. A. J. Dickinson, has wired our representative at Los Angeles to see you, and we will be very glad to co-operate with you in any way that we can. The local theaters in St. Paul and Minneapolis have in mind bringing in some Blackfoot Indians for the opening week of "Bob Hampton of Placier," and we will be very glad to co-operate with them on this, as no doubt the staging of a fine prologue would be helpful and we would like to co-operate in other cities, if the producers think it worth while.

You ask the name and address of our publicity man. I would suggest that addressing Mr. Dickinson, our General Passenger Agent, would be the best way of reaching our Advertising and Publicity Department, and I have already spoken to Mr. Dickinson and showed him your letter, so I presume he is in touch with you by this time. Our local man, as you asked for, has already called on you, I believe.

Again thanking you,

Very sincerely yours,

(sgd) Louis W. Hill.

cc to-
Mr. A. J. Dickinson

15-7
St. Paul, Minnesota,

January 25, 1921.

Mr. A. J. Dickinson;

I enclose copy of letter I have today written
Mr. Smith of the Marshall Weilan Productions.

I would be glad to have you follow up with the
Capitol theater people, through Mr. Bod Mills, The idea
of having some of the Blackfoot Indians come here, and
taking up with the producers the question of arranging
to have some other Blackfoot Indians appear in other
cities. We should be able to dead-head the Indians to
any point on the Burlington, and presumably the producers
would pay their fares to any point east of Chicago or
St. Louis, if they think the plan worth while, which I
believe they would if properly presented to them.

L. W. Hill.



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