

MOVIE COMES TO TOWN

Tent shows are major source of amusement in rural U. S.

Two million Americans have as their principal form of visual entertainment, nomad movies run by some 3000 roadshowmen who present their motion pictures in tents, auditoriums or village churches. Few city folks realize that this is the way in which entertainment is brought to about 5000 U. S. towns of less than 1000 population. And with the shows come messages about buying war bonds, conservation and other national efforts.

Posters tell the countryside all about the news that a new movie is coming. Roadshowmen say the favorite films are fast-action westerns and occasional comedies. Mushy love scenes are boxoffice poison among their clientele. During the harvest seasons, when customers can best afford the 10 to 25 cents admission charge, these showmen take in between \$75 and \$150 a week.



POSTERS announcing the movie tent shows are put up on trees. Note cotton bales in background.

Typical of these exhibitors is Jake West of North Carolina. With a car, a trailer-home and a truck, Jake brings his 16 mm. shows all through the Southeast. His route follows the harvests: strawberry regions in May and June, potatoes in July, tobacco next, and so forth.

Jake is his own publicist, projectionist and between-shows announcer. His staff consists of Mrs. West and two helpers.

Some operators change locations nightly, covering a regular route. Others, including West, may stay in one spot for two weeks, with a different program every day. They draw return business by including successive chapters of thrill-packed serials in programs. Most road-shown movies are at least four years old; yet they're the only entertainment many members of their audiences ever have—and they're gratefully received.

MOVIES



THERE'S EXCITEMENT IN WADE, N. C., WHEN THE SHOWMAN SETS UP HIS TENT MOVIE FEATURING WESTERNS, OWI RELEASES, SERIALS AND 11-CENT SECOND SHOWS



MOTHERS WITH BABES IN ARMS, RURAL BUSINESSMEN, FARMERS—ALL TURN OUT WHEN MOVIE COMES TO TOWN



BOX OFFICE SELLS ADULTS' TICKETS FOR 22 CENTS, CHILDREN'S FOR 11 CENTS. TYPICAL TURNOUT: 250 TO 300 PEOPLE