

Oldtime Stage Play 'The Drunkard' Enjoys Long Run

By HUBBARD KEAVY
(For Bob Thomas)

HOLLYWOOD — I have just talked with a man who holds a unique distinction: he has been to "The Drunkard" 183 times.

"The Drunkard," that theatrical phenomenon, was 21 years old last night. Seymour Hess, an extrovert whose business is reviving ailing business firms, was there — for the 7,816th performance and his 183rd.

For the benefit of a few folks lately arrived from Siam and for some more who have leached to read since my last annual report, "The Drunkard" has astounded everyone by running so long. It is not improbable that a play would go on for 21 years; it is impossible. But "The Drunkard" has done it. It paints in the broadest melodramatic terms the evils of drink.

Hard drink, that is. Beer is served free throughout the performance to all spectators over 21.

I will not try, again, to explain "The Drunkard." Maybe champion Hess can:

"There is nothing else like it in the world. It is a play in which the audience takes part by cheering the heroine and hissing the villain."

After Hess paid his way into 150 performances, producer Mildred Ise gave him a gold lifetime pass. Now he gets in for free, but he always takes guests. Last night, he got in for free but bought 48 tickets for his friends.

Why does he go so often? Because, more than any other spectator, he takes part in a large and loving way in the goings-on. Through the years he has devised 11 ways to cheer the actors and amuse the other spectators. When

the heroine spreads a shawl over her baby, Hess yells: "Don't smother it!" When the same girl, in dismay, claps a hand to her breast, Hess pops a paper bag. To the hero taking a final drink, he shouts: "You'll be sorry!" Everyone, including players, likes Hess' comments so much that an actor out on his ear. But "The Drunkard" is different.



PAUL C. PHELPS, right, member of the Suburban Volunteer Fire Department, was named "Fireman of the Year" and presented with an engraved wristwatch in recognition of his outstanding work during 1954 at the annual graduation banquet of the department held June 26. The award was made by W. P. Roble, deputy state fire marshal, Salem.

— Photo by Miller-Williams

Suburban Fire Department Holds Graduation Dinner

With no harm to interrupt a well arranged program, the volunteers of the Suburban Fire Department held their annual firemen's graduation banquet in the spacious recreation room of the department's station house June 26. Diplomas were given to 22 members of the volunteer force, who had completed 100 hours of practice in handling equipment under simulated fire conditions, as required by the Oregon State Firemen's Training Program.

W. P. Roble, deputy state fire marshal from Salem was present for the occasion. Mr. Roble, in addressing the membership commended on the remarkable progress being made with special praise to the departments disaster car. He stated the car should be placed on an exhibit tour of the state, for the personnel of other fire departments to inspect.

During the program a great deal of speculation, that had been going on among the volunteer firemen for the past year, was brought to a close, when the name of Paul C. Phelps was announced by the deputy state fire marshal as being Suburban's most outstanding member for 1954. Phelps won the department's annual award, a handsome engraved Coultre wristwatch, through his fine record of service to the department throughout the year.

Creating a dramatic picture in assuming that the train wreck, which recently happened in the Midwest, injuring 75 people, had occurred here in Klamath County, Otto L. Smith, chairman of the Klamath County Disaster Committee, and guest at the firemen's banquet, pointed out how difficult it would have been to carry out rescue operations with the limited number of emergency vehicles available in Klamath Falls. This handicap in the quick removal of the injured to a hospital, could have resulted in loss of life from the delay in receiving the proper medical attention.

In view of the fact that the Suburban Volunteer Fire Department has taken an active part in preparing for just such an emergency, it is unlikely a situation as serious as this would ever happen. Mr. Smith expressed his deep satisfac-

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