

greeted by cheers and applause

By MITCHELL REID

THE curtain went up in Aberdeen last night on a glittering Royal Gala to celebrate the long-awaited reopening of His Majesty's Theatre.

Crowds began lining the street outside the refurbished theatre's sparkling facade more than an hour before the performance.

And when the Prince of Wales arrived just five minutes before the scheduled "curtain-up" he was greeted with cheers and applause by several hundred Aberdonians.

The kilted, smiling Prince, greeted by Lord Provost Alex Collie waved to the crowd before entering the foyer where he was met by theatre director Mr James Donald.

There, he was introduced to the Lady Provost, Mr Donald's wife, Anne, and Councillors William Fraser, Roy Thomson, Gordon Adams, Henry Rae and their wives.

Theatregoers last night were joined by two of the workers involved in the health dispute. Enrolled nurse Lesley Crerar (20) and domestic Mrs VI Forbes, both from the Royal Cornhill Hospital, were attending the gala as guests of Labour Councillor David Clyne.

Councillor Clyne, amid controversy had handed his free tickets over to the health workers.

The two workers, both in their uniforms, handed out leaflets telling people attending the gala that their two tickets, worth £50, would have cost them a week's wage, had they paid for them.

There were other special guests inside the theatre, however — exactly 100 of them. They were the lucky recipients of tickets handed out by the Lord Provost and distributed by Voluntary Service Aberdeen.