

ENTERTAINING THE TROOPS

Touring Parties From New Zealand

(From the Official War Correspondent, N.Z.E.F., New Caledonia)



DURING their tour in New Caledonia, the concert and repertory parties entertaining New Zealand troops have been repaid for their efforts by the enthusiastic appreciation expressed by their big audiences. These two parties from New Zealand total 20 men and women, and what with rehearsals, travelling to and from various camps, and nightly performances, they have had a strenuous time.

The six members of the repertory party have put up a remarkable record in producing no fewer than six one-act plays in three weeks. They left New Zealand at short notice, so that there was no time to rehearse before landing here, and they spent their first week rehearsing the first two plays, finding stage properties and so on.

"It has been different from anything I anticipated," said the producer, Bernard Beeby, Supervisor of Production, National Broadcasting Service. "When they told us we would play in huts we did not realise the 'huts' were only native bures.

"It reminds me of the old 'fit up' days of touring. No backcloth. No proscenium. We have travelled a backcloth with us. Hessian and cloth and so on have been 'scrounged' in the best Army style, and we're used to making up now with elbows digging into one another's ribs.

"There had been one or two amusing incidents. A black-out is a necessary part of some plays, and generally hundreds of torches are immediately shone on to the stage from the auditorium, some quite innocently coming to our assistance," smiled Mr. Beeby, "and some with foul design."

The concert party has made a hit in all its shows, and it has found that there is real appreciation of a wide range of musical items. A feature of its work has been the arrangement for voices of many popular numbers by Henry Rudolph. The party's happiness in the knowledge that the boys were enjoying the shows was expressed by Jack Maybury, of 3ZB, the compere for the show.

Henri Penn, who has given piano-forte selections before each of the plays, has done some excellent work in coaching and getting together musicians among the troops.

Members of an NBS Concert Party visiting the Pacific under the auspices of the Army Education and Welfare Service: Back row (left to right): C. Turner, D. Gamble, P. Jeffries, M. Wright, F. Evenson, G. Vincent, B. Beeby, S. Harvey. Middle row: J. Maybury, Audrey McNamara, Sylvia Devenne, Dorothy Kemp, Jessie McLennon, Merle Gamble, Doreen Calvert, Yvonne Andrews, H. Penn. Front row: H. Painter, H. Rudolph, W. Marshall.

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