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But without one professional full-time company of New Zealanders, to provide high standards for comparison, and a future for the real talent among the amateurs, Mr. Swan feels that drama in New Zealand cannot come to much: an amateur society's producer is up against the shortage of time for rehearsal; spare time is not enough, and he invariably has an indifferent hall and stage to work in.

"We have a first-rate educational instrument in the theatre," he said, "and we ought to use it. Audiences are not as ready to-day to accept indifferent stuff as they were five years ago. On the other hand, when real talent appears locally—as it does now and again—it gets say, two leading parts a year to play, and it dies away for lack of development, or else it leaves the country."

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IN Dunedin, we were informed, the position is even better than in Wellington. There, we were told by Miss Bessie Thompson, who happened to be in Wellington, the membership of the Repertory Society is 1250. Four major plays a year are produced, and there are "one-acters" evenings every month. One of the major plays is presented for the benefit of patriotic funds, and this year the sum of £1000 was raised by the production of *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. Other plays this year were *The Corn is Green*, by Emlyn Williams, and *By Candlelight*, a translation from a German play. Next on the list is *Flare Path*.

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THE Hutt, which has been a city for nearly five years now, recently established a repertory society of its own, which is already a going concern. It plans one production a year, with evenings of "one-acters," readings, lectures and so on. Its leader is Mrs. Craig Mackenzie, who was well known to Wellington playgoers as Mary Cooley.

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THERE are, of course, other flourishing repertory societies, whose activity we have not had the opportunity to hear about in detail. Christchurch, Palmerston North, Wanganui and Napier are all going ahead, according to Mr. Swan. In Auckland, conditions differ from those in other centres, because activity is diffused, but the scattered groups are busy.

RELIGIOUS DRAMA

ONE interesting aspect of the present ferment in the amateur theatre world is what one might call the discovery, or rediscovery, of the drama by church people as a medium of religious expression. In Wellington, for example, there is now a Religious Drama Society, which holds fortnightly play-readings, and which this week is presenting its first public production, *A Man's House* (John Drinkwater's play about a family in Jerusalem at the time of the Crucifixion).

The Wellington Religious Drama Society is also sponsoring a modern morality play which will be performed this month in the Wellington Town Hall to inaugurate Wellington's "Christian Order" Week. The play, which has been specially written for the purpose of dramatising the essential "message" of the week, lasts about 45 minutes, and its action will lead up to the main address for the evening.

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MODERN MORALITY PLAY: Richard, the young New Zealander in search of the purpose of life, argues with War and Death in the morality play "Youth Wants to Know," written for Wellington's "Christian Order" Week.



SHAKESPEARE IN CHRISTCHURCH: A scene from "Othello," staged in the Little Theatre at Canterbury College, under the direction of Ngaio Marsh.



STEINBECK IN WELLINGTON: Curley's wife and Lennie, in the Unity Theatre group's production of "Of Mice And Men."