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succeeds better than such attempts to cash in on an early success usually do—or deserve to.

Barry Fitzgerald is Dr. McRory, a crusty but much-loved old Irish G.P. in a small American town, who spends most of the picture trying to take a well-deserved vacation. On the train returning from Boston, where he has gone to engage a locum, he runs foul of a brash but well-meaning young man (Bing Crosby) who, of course, turns out to be Dr. Pearson, chosen to hold the fort while the old man goes on holiday. From this inauspicious introduction, they wrangle their way through the first half of the picture, until the young fellow insinuates himself into the old boy's good graces by successfully removing his burst appendix (Good touch: Dr. McRory, mistrusting his colleague's skill, insists on being given only a local anaesthetic and then, by means of a mirror, carries on like a back-seat driver throughout the operation).

After this, though still argumentative, the two are as warmly friendly as they were previously antagonistic, and the script-writer and the director are consequently hard put to it to spin the story out to feature length. They do what they can to supplement the interest by making Bing sing one or two songs, and by introducing Joan Caulfield as a pretty schoolmistress in order that Dr. Pearson may fall in love, Dr. McRory may play Cupid, and there may be jealous dirty-work on the part of the jilted town-chemist. They also, probably unintentionally, provide one or two rather unflattering sidelights on American medical practice (no Social Security there: fees are a worry to doctors as well as to patients!), as well as on social conduct (for example the sleigh-ride, an unblushing pretext for public love-making). But everything, of course, really depends on the stars. By exerting their personalities to the full and using all the tricks of their repertoire—including the brogue of Barry Fitzgerald, who can "make extracts from the Medical Journal sound as if they had been written by Sean O'Casey"—these two actors manage to turn *Welcome Stranger* into an agreeably amusing, if undistinguished, movie.

## MY FAVOURITE BRUNETTE

(Paramount)

IN the Bing Crosby film just reviewed there is a reference to Bob Hope which is supposed to raise a laugh and at the end of *My Favourite Brunette*, which stars Bob Hope, there is the familiar old joke based on Hope's rivalry with Crosby. This is symptomatic; in the latter film in particular the material is very thin indeed. Basically, the idea was sound enough: a burlesque of the ultra-tough school of crime melodrama which is currently popular, with Hope portraying a bewildered innocent embroiled in a fearful mess of villainy and violence. But *My Favourite Brunette* (the title, naturally, refers to Dorothy Lamour) makes two basic mistakes. One: mental asylums are scarcely a fit setting for comedy, and much of the action of this film takes place in an institution of this type. Two: it is fatal to comedy when a player's style of humour becomes so familiar that you can anticipate almost every move he makes and nearly every quip he utters.

This doesn't mean that *My Favourite Brunette* is entirely without laughs; there are probably enough bright moments to prevent your feeling that the evening has been entirely wasted. But it does suggest that Bob Hope should either think up some new ideas and gags with which to vary his style, or else that he should go into retirement for a while. I've no objection to his retaining Dorothy Lamour; she's ornamental, if little else.

### ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

"Wellingtonian": As far as we know the enterprise is carried on legitimately, but if you have any doubts you could take police or legal advice.

John R. Best (Wellington): Thanks for letter; but still no information available about that book.

H. S. Houston (Wellington): Comments and enclosure appreciated.

### NATIONAL FILM UNIT'S Weekly

Review No. 315, released throughout the Dominion on September 12, will feature three items: "British Immigrants Arrive," an interview with the first party of immigrants to arrive from Britain; "Cobalt Spraying," which deals with a new idea in farming in the Taurarunui district, cobalt being sprayed from a plane on hilly country that is deficient; and "Dominion Basketball Championships" played in Nelson.

## GATHERING AT RUATORIA

### Recordings of Hui Ceremonies

SOME fine Maori carvings are displayed in the East Coast district of the North Island. Those in the Takitimu Hall, Wairoa, are an example. Now another hall distinguished by fine Maori carving has been built at Ruatoria, 84 miles by road north of Gisborne. This is to serve as a memorial to the men who died in the late war while serving with the Maori Battalion.

The new hall is to be opened officially this Friday, September 12, when about 700 Maoris will attend the ceremonies. The party of visitors from Wellington will be augmented by Maoris from Horowhenua, Manawatu and Hawke's Bay as the train goes through. Among those who will attend will be technicians of the NZBS who will take the mobile recording unit to record parts of the ceremonies. This van, which has been operating for more than a year, has already made programme recordings of life in the Taranaki and East Coast districts. It is proposed this week to record, mainly, a combined welcome by school children to the Governor-General, Sir Bernard Freyberg, and Lady Freyberg, and the assembling of the tribal representatives.

This Saturday, September 13, at 7.10 p.m., listeners to Station 2YA will hear 20 minutes of the opening speeches. On the following Friday, September 19 (at 9.20 p.m.) they will also hear a 2YA broadcast of selections of Maori music sung at the hui. The ceremonies will be directed by Sir Apirana Ngata.

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