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SIXTY CROWDED MINUTES

Radio Personalities Appear In Centennial Film

SEVERAL people who are well known in radio, play parts big and small in the Centennial film "One Hundred Crowded Years." One of the two feature roles, that of the young pioneer who emigrates from England to make a home for himself and his wife in the N.Z. wilderness is played by Bob Pollard, production supervisor at Station 3ZB. Mr. Pollard toured New Zealand with the Gladys Moncrieff Musical Comedy Company two years ago, and was at 2ZB before going to 3ZB.

The part of Governor Hobson, who is seen presiding at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi is taken by Bryan O'Brien, well known to ZB listeners for his children's talks. The commentary is spoken by Bernard Beeby, of the NBS, and a small part is taken by Major F. H. Lampen, who frequently talks over the YA stations.

Una Weller, who is the pioneering wife, appeared last Sunday in a radio version of "Romeo and Juliet," from Station 2ZB.

Ambitious Project

"One Hundred Crowded Years" has at last been released. It was shown publicly in Wellington for the first time the other week to what is usually described as "a large and distinguished audience." It was received with applause, and capped by a speech from the Minister in Charge of the Tourist and Publicity Department, the Hon. F. Langstone.

The film takes an hour to screen, and is undoubtedly an impressive bit of work, remarkable if for nothing else for the ambitious nature of the project. Those 100 crowded years certainly become 60 crowded minutes.

I am sure that the Miramar Film Studios, who made "One Hundred Crowded Years" would be the last to claim that they completely succeeded in achieving their object, and the first to welcome the reactions of a person who can legitimately describe himself as an average picture-goer.

First of all then, let me say that my first impression was that the film attempted to do far too much. After all, a fair amount does happen to a country in 100 years, especially to a young country like New Zealand. Was it not a little too ambitious to try to crowd Wakefield, Hobson, the signing of Waitangi, a voyage from England on an early immigrant ship, the struggles of a pioneering family, the Maori wars, the gold rush in Central Otago, the discovery of refrigeration, a review of modern amenities and recent social legislation, and a survey of the Maori problem (and that doesn't exhaust the list either), all into one hour?

It was only to be expected that something would suffer, that some parts of the story would be sketchily told, while some parts would be over-emphasised.

On the Credit Side

But let's take some of the excellences—the period atmosphere (suggested especially by the photography of the ball on the windjammer); the New Zealand "feel" in the scene showing a party landing on a beach from a ship's boat; the well-acted Wakefield; the pleasant face and trim figure of the pioneering wife; the inspired shot of a boy with a sun hat; the well-spoken commentary; the lively tempo of the ending; the generally good photography.

It is, of course, ridiculous to expect anything like the standard of an overseas production. Even Australia, which had a long start on this country, is still in cinematic swaddling clothes.

And in view of the difficulties with which the Miramar film unit apparently had to contend, the results are not so bad after all. For one thing, "One Hundred Crowded Years" was a long time in filming, principally for the reason that the Miramar studios have been busy with a multitude of other jobs—anti-waste films, general war propaganda shorts and general newsreel work—that could not be postponed.

"On Location"

Again, many of the ideas were ambitious enough to tax the ingenuity of the technical staff of a much larger enterprise. The greater part of the story of the pioneering couple was filmed at Mount Maunganui, near Tauranga, and at Mount Maunganui a party of actors and technicians went "on location" in the approved Hollywood manner.

The people of Tauranga rose to the occasion nobly, and turned out day after day as unpaid extras. Pioneering spirit was stimulated by an "1840 ball," which brought to light many genuine old period

(Continued on next page)

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