

"SHOOTING" NEW ZEALAND IN A HURRY

Time Marches On At The Double With Victor Jurgens



V. J. JURGENS

IT was said of Sir John Foster-Fraser that he would travel through a country by express train and then write a book about it.

V. J. Jurgens, "March of Time" cameraman, who has been visiting New Zealand, isn't quite as superficial as that, but he certainly doesn't waste any time when he is on the job. He came to this country for the specific purpose of exposing 10,000 feet of film (eventually to be edited and cut to 1,900 feet, "March of Time" length) and he had rather less than two weeks to do it in.

Allowing an average working week and an average working day, that would be, say, 1,000 feet of film per day and 120 feet of film per hour. And when you consider that Mr. Jurgens has to chase up his subjects before he can "shoot" them, that isn't bad going at all.

"A Real American"

Mr. Jurgens has left everybody who met him breathless. An interview with him? Well, hardly. "You've not idea how he hustles round. We could hardly keep up with him. He's a real American you know. It's not likely he'd have time for an interview. . . ."

However, a trap was set for Mr. Jurgens the afternoon he was to leave Wellington for Auckland and the Pan-American clipper on his return home, and before he knew where he was he was being interviewed.

No hoary newsreel veteran is Mr. Jurgens. He is young and blond and tall and pleasant and disarming. A college boy grown up. He is married and lives in New York, but hasn't been having much home life lately. ("Guess I get round to seeing them about once a year.") But now he is on his way home, and if all goes well, he'll be there for Christmas.

Started as Office Boy

He has been with the "Time" organisation pretty well ever since he has been in long pants. He started off as office boy on "Time" and "Fortune," grew up in the production and advertising departments, and when "March of Time" was started six years ago he was moved up.

He didn't start off as a cameraman, but he had always been interested in movie cameras, and once he was given a break

he went ahead. During the past few years he has shot a good few miles of film.

From the start, "March of Time" set out to supply something that Henry Luce of "Time" thought was lacking in ordinary newsreels—significance, drama, punch—call it what you will.

Take the instance of Mr. Jurgens's first assignment outside the U.S., the "covering" of Alaska. Any newsreel man could go to Alaska and expose a mile or two of rivers and mountains and Eskimos. "March of Time" wanted more than that. The rivers and mountains and Eskimos were only background for a dramatic presentation of one of the greatest colonising schemes of modern times. That was the theme, the colonising of Alaska.

Alaska was his first foreign assignment, but since then he has been travelling constantly, though never yet to Europe. He was in China two years ago, in Mexico just before flying down to Australia and New Zealand.

He allowed himself three months for his present trip. Nearly eight weeks in

Australia, two weeks in New Zealand. Two weeks of travelling. That's plenty, as he flies everywhere, and has used trans-Pacific clipper and trans-Tasman flying boat.

His New Zealand Angle

He is chary about admitting he spent more time in Australia than in New Zealand. Diplomatically he says he would have liked to stay much longer here.

In Australia he was chiefly interested in the magnitude of the Commonwealth's war effort; the angle to his New Zealand story is the Dominion's social legislation and the fact that we are one of the world's greatest larders.

Not Interested in Scenery

Scenery didn't interest him; State houses and dairy farms definitely did. In all, he has exposed 10,000 feet of film, and it may be from three to six months before this particular issue of "March of Time" is released. The date of release depends on production schedule and just how soon editors and com-

mentator can get to work on the film he has exposed.

Mr. Jurgens uses only one camera, a 35 millimetre Eyemo that you can "put in your hat"; when flying he keeps his luggage down to 90 pounds, nearly all of it camera and film; he was at work "shooting" the State houses at Orakei within half an hour of disembarking from the trans-Tasman flying boat, astounds everybody by starting work at four o'clock in the morning; he thinks he has had remarkably good co-operation from the New Zealand Government—officials from the Internal Affairs and Publicity Departments hustled him through the country at a quite satisfactory pace; the "March of Time" staff numbers some 90 people these days, though recently, when the full length feature "The Ramparts We Watch" was being made, it went up to over 200; Henry Luce takes a keen interest in "March of Time," though the direct head of the organisation is Louis de Rochemont, an old newsreel man who produced "March of the Years" in the newsreel parent of "March of Time."

HEDDLE NASH HAS TWO WORRIES FEWER

A VERY relieved Heddle Nash arrived back in New Zealand last week. On the face of things, he did not seem to have much cause for relief. Before he went to Australia he had completed an exceptionally strenuous tour of New Zealand with the Centennial Orchestra, singing day after day, practising hour after hour with the different musical groups in each centre visited. In Australia, the Australian Broadcasting Commission had kept him busy still, although concert performances were cancelled and all his work was done in studios.

Back in New Zealand, he had another strenuous tour to look forward to. Soon after he arrived, the NBS snapped him up and submitted a busy itinerary for his approval. The results are already evident in the programmes, and his broadcast work was to be added to with performances for choral societies in Christmas music.

But Heddle Nash was nevertheless relieved. It was not that his voice is showing no signs of strain—he takes work as if it were play and believes his voice was meant to be used. It was not that he has successfully given up smoking—at the behest of Andersen Tyrer. It was not that he is back in New Zealand—where, he says, he loves the country and the people.

Sons From England

It was that, in Melbourne, Mrs. Nash now had under her eyes their two young sons, who had been marooned in England when the air raids began.

He told *The Listener* that they had been most anxious about their family, and had had to decide between some weeks of possibly dangerous sea voyaging, and months or more of danger from air raids, with their parents absent.

They decided for the sea voyage and, luckily, chose the sea route via the Cape of Good Hope. While their sons were travelling that way, evacuated children were being torpedoed on the Atlantic route. Now they are safe in Melbourne, and settled into school.

Melbourne His Headquarters

Because Australia offers more opportunities for him, Mr. Nash has decided to make Melbourne his headquarters while he is in the Pacific. So Mrs. Nash has stayed behind there. He expects to be in New Zealand for two months, possibly more, but must return when the waning heat of summer brings music back to life in Australia.

During his recent stay there he travelled extensively for the ABC, and sang under Sir Thomas Beecham and Schneevogt. Sir Thomas he had known, of course, before, and paid a tribute both to his personality and to his musician-

ship. He said that Beecham really had been appreciated in Australia. His audiences had been large and enthusiastic, and he had been thoroughly well liked and very much admired by all the choirs and orchestras that worked under him.

When Mr. Nash travelled across Australia by train to Perth, Sir Thomas was one of the party. On the train they organised a musical party. There was quite a good piano, and Sir Thomas played for the singing of the others.

Gum Trees and Wild Flowers

While he was talking, Andersen Tyrer came into the 2YA studio. The conversation turned to gum trees. "Gum trees!" said Heddle Nash: "I like them." Mr. Tyrer suggested that there might be a few too many gum trees for him to be completely enamoured of them as scenery, but Mr. Nash was off on another tack. He said he had been fascinated by the Australian wild flowers. In Western Australia, when Sir Thomas Beecham bought a book covering local botany, they picked some to identify them; and found too late that this was illegal.

Now aware of the regulations, Mr. Nash said he knew there were the same restrictions in New Zealand and both he and Mr. Tyrer laughingly agreed when a reference to imported pests was explained as applying only to rabbits.

By now the singer is busy once again, and still thoroughly enjoying himself. He looks forward to sampling more of a hospitality he has already experienced, and to singing again to audiences whose standard in music, he says, is wonderfully high.