

Putting Ourselves On The Screen

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The first result of the addition of staff to the Miramar studios has been an increased output of newsreels. The war has created a rush of news material. The presence of New Zealand troops in other countries has made imported newsreel film especially important to New Zealanders. A clearing house for this material was a necessity. Miramar has become that clearing house. From the British M.O.I., and from New Zealand's own camera unit in the Middle East, comes material which at Miramar is edited and re-assembled in short newsreel form.

The Best Proof Possible

But there's a war on in New Zealand too. Army, Navy, and Air Force units are busy training here for home defence or service overseas. Factories are swinging into line. All the people are being gathered into the war effort. In this, the moving pictures can play a very large part. It is not enough to say that New Zealand is organised for war. The film record of an achievement is the best proof possible that achievement is taking place. More than that, used properly, it can encourage greater achievement. The film can show to the men in the camps, in ships, or in the air, that the efficiency and business of the factories will ensure that they are supplied with what they need. Or it can show the factory worker that his or her product is going to its destination. It can show Mrs. Smith how many socks Mrs. Jones has knitted, and excite Mrs. Brown to greater effort by picturing Mrs. Green

at the telephone switchboard of an E.P.S. station.

Newsreels and Documentaries

Along these lines, the National Film Unit plans to develop the documentary film. During the last few months, the output of newsreels has been speeded up until the distributing agencies have been supplied with at least one a week. The visit of a hospital ship to New Zealand waters, pictures of H.M.N.Z.S. Leander, New Zealand troops at an athletic meeting in Cairo, the launching of minesweepers, troops embarking for overseas—these and many other subjects have been turned out as newsreels.

The available material is usually cut down below 200ft., supplied with a pithy commentary, and issued as a topical story with plenty of punch. Brevity has been regarded as a virtue, but with some unfortunate results, in that it has occasionally inspired an exhibitor to cut this material into an imported newsreel. This regrettable tendency will no doubt cease when it becomes clear that New Zealand audiences want to see their own news turned out by their own organisation.

However, newsreel production is being reduced to routine, and the National Film Unit staff has under production more ambitious works. The public will soon see longer films covering munitions manufacture and troops in training. These promise excellently, but even so are not the final aim of the unit. So far, it has been content with reporting. Later, its members hope, will come more ambitious products, in which reporting will be illuminated and the production



REAL EVENTS, real people, are the main business of the National Film unit, but a studio set is occasionally used to amplify an idea.

of documentaries grow beside an increased output of newsreel production.

What is the documentary film? The New Zealand public has seldom seen one. It is a film in which the characters are people and the story the life they lead.

New Zealand makes a story and its

people the characters for a romance which should inspire exciting results. New Zealanders will watch with interest to see what those results may be. Much may be expected from a National Film Unit which is all out to bring about the best possible results.

"RAMSAY OF BURNTWOOD"

Prize-Winning Centennial Radio Play

A STORY of the beginnings of a New Zealand sheep station is told in *Ramsay of Burntwood*, a radio play by Russell Reid, which won a first equal place in the Centennial competitions, and which has just been produced by the NBS. It will be heard from 2YA at 9.27 p.m. on Sunday, Octo-

ber 26, and later from the other NBS stations.

The events in *Ramsay of Burntwood* might have happened on any sheep station during the early pioneering days. The story is told by Malcolm Ramsay, old and crochety owner of Burntwood, who, before his powers fail him, is dictating the history of Burntwood. It is a record of hard, back-breaking work, and of an insatiable hunger for more land on the part of his father, John Malcolm; also of the secret the son shared with his mother, Janet Ramsay, who had not been carved from the same tough timber as many other pioneering women, and who, one drought-parched summer, decided to return to England and green fields again.

The climax of the play is a bush fire which sweeps through John Ramsay's land and threatens to destroy his homestead. When the wind providentially changes and the fire has been diverted, Ramsay finds that what nearly meant his ruin has saved him the costly job of clearing scrub and bush from a large tract of newly-acquired land. And it is this fire which gives the station its name.

Russell Reid, who wrote *Ramsay of Burntwood*, was formerly a member of the staff of the NBS Drama Department. He is now an assistant-producer at the Miramar Film Studios, Wellington.



RUSSELL REID
Author of the play

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