

"To the Girls I Leave Behind"

Paul Cullen's Farewell Message

Dear Girls,—

When I heard the farewell community sing to Paul Cullen over the air the other week in the De Luxe Theatre, Wellington, I fervently wished that I had been on the spot to see some of the fun.

On behalf of all his fair fans throughout New Zealand, Paul was presented with a miniature life-saver, just big enough to pop his head through, a little life-belt and a tiny bottle of whisky. It was only when Mr. E. Palliser, who is prominently associated with Wellington's community sings, said who they were from that I realised how much you girls would appreciate a letter telling you a few personal details about Paul. "I'll interview him this afternoon," thought I, and as soon as possible I dashed along to the theatre.

"He's just gone," said a rather charming usher, when I breathlessly asked to see Paul. She looked me up and down, so I hastily reassured her by telling her that I was only a harmless reporter and not another fan wanting to devour poor Paul. "Oh!" she said, and looked relieved.

"You should have been here to see the fun just now. All of we staff girls came and stood around the organ in our hats and coats, before we had changed into our theatre uniforms for the afternoon session, and when Paul had received the presentations he kissed us, and the women in the packed audience said, 'Oh, the lucky things!' They didn't know who we were, and afterwards hundreds of women crowded around Paul to speak to and kiss him. As the theatre had to be cleared quickly for the afternoon session, Paul and the crowds had to be pushed out into the side street! Are we sorry he's leaving? Of course! He's wonderful. It will seem so strange without him. He's always so bright and breezy."

"Yes," said a serious-looking attendant standing nearby, "We'll miss him. He's a fine chap and treats us all just the same as he treats the manager."

"He'll be back again to-night to pack his things," said the pretty usher. "You could see him then."

When I called back that night, Paul was in the office with Mr. Eyre, the manager.

"If you want to know something about Paul, I can tell you that he snores atrociously," said Mr. Eyre.

"Don't you believe it," laughed Paul.

"It's true," continued the horn-rimmed tell-tale who winked and said that he had shared digs with Paul when he first introduced the budding artist to the public up north in 1928. "He also chews his cuff-links, which is the reason we presented him with a set of new ones to-day. He is also looking for a wife with —," but here Paul decided that it would be safer to give any details himself, so he answered my questions like a lamb, remembering that if he didn't, Mr. Eyre would probably do so with picturesque additions.

I started off by asking of his favourite hobbies. "Hiking," he said, "and tennis." He likes cats; intends to get a fox terrier pet one day soon. His favourite colours are blue, heliotrope, fawn and brown. Yes, he has received

enough ties and hankies to last him for the next ten years. Any knitted ones? No. I was tempted to offer to knit Paul one. I haven't knitted since I was in kindergarten, but I am sure that Paul would wear anything if it would please a girl. He is like that, you know: very nice and kind-hearted, and he simply adores children. He finds them even harder to resist than girls. When his nieces and nephews heard that he was going to visit his home in Ashburton the other day, they all begged to be allowed to meet Uncle Paul on the railway station. As Uncle Paul is the youngest of a family of eleven, it happened that there was quite a collection of worshipping nephews and nieces.

I asked Paul if he had a photo taken when he was an infant that I could let you girls see, and he said no, but his mother had one. "I look terrible. Positively ugly and squashy faced," said Paul. Of course, that is what most people say about photos of their early days, but as there is a saying that the ugliest little 'uns make the most handsome grown-ups, Paul is probably right. His mother is naturally sorry to see her son leave New Zealand, but she

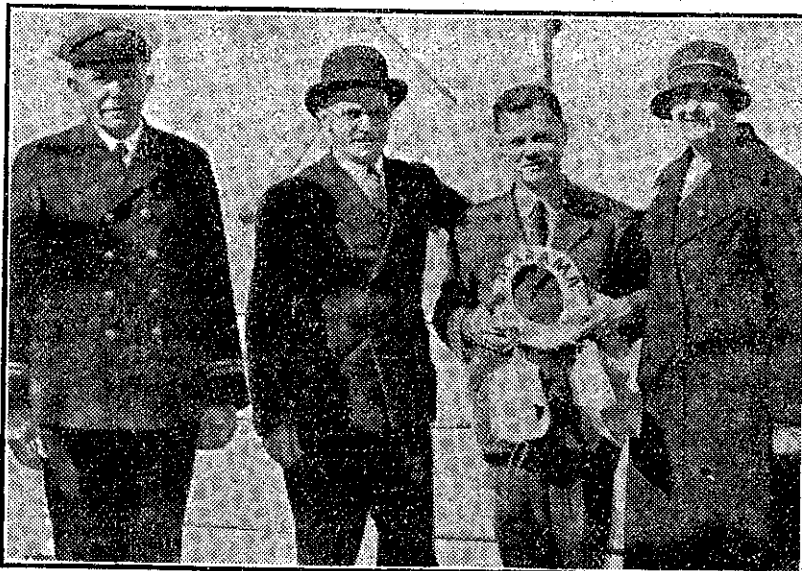
is happy that he is going on to greater success. Paul will probably remain in Australia for twelve months and will then return to New Zealand to see all his friends and fans, and will then leave direct for England or America, where he hopes to attain his ambition of becoming a star in the movies in his own particular line. He intends eventually to return to New Zealand and settle down. During his present visit to Australia and playing in various Sydney theatres he is going to make gramophone recordings.

I went down to the boat to see him off and it was fun being in the "official" party to see Paul off.

To cheer us up a little he gave us a tiny spot from his diminutive bottle of whisky. When we arrived at the boat there were hundreds of people waiting to say good-bye, and after Paul had signed autograph books, shaken hands with and kissed the lucky ones, he was safely piloted to the top deck with a big inflated rubber fish, around which was a placard telling the world that this was "The catch of the season and this is no fish story!" This was presented to him by the girls from the De Luxe Theatre.

"Wouldn't it be fun to be travelling with Paul," whispered numbers of women on the wharf, and if others didn't say it, they certainly thought so. Countless other girls in shops and offices must have thought the same thing as they watched the clocks at three o'clock and looked faraway and all forlorn because their Paul was going away. This state of affairs is surely enough to make the male population have a firm hatred of Paul. I heard of one girl who gazed rapturously at him as he was singing in the theatre one night, "Isn't he marvellous?" she whispered to her escort, who promptly got up and left her, saying, "If you think so, he can take you home!" I asked Paul whether he thought this was true, and he said that he really couldn't say, because the girl hadn't come and asked him to take her home.

Apparently it would be impossible to picture Paul without at least one fair admirer. While he was standing on the top deck of a group of (Continued on Page 50).



Paul Cullen (holding the miniature lifebuoy) on board the Marama a few moments before she sailed from Wellington for Sydney. Mr. W. T. Eyre, manager of the De Luxe Theatre, is in the bowler hat. Mr. Cullen has several musical engagements in Australia, and will probably go on to America and England next year.