

# British Films

## England Comes to the Front Whole World Flocking to British Talkies: Many Fine Films Promised from B.I.P. During 1935

When the talkies were introduced the British film industry was but a puny infant beside the Colossus of Hollywood. But when sound came to the screen, the English film forged ahead, and to-day it stands shoulder to shoulder with the American product and, in some cases, is miles ahead of it. But it was not the waving of a magic wand that brought this change about; hard work, a careful study of production methods, attention to public likes and dislikes, and the sympathetic handling of the stars have all contributed toward placing the British film industry in the enviable position in which it finds itself to-day.

"The first British talkie was 'Blackmail' and was made by my company at Elstree," said Mr. R. L. Grant, New Zealand manager for British International Pictures, in an interview with the "Radio Record." "Blackmail" was followed by another big success, 'Atlantic,' and the public response to these two films so heartened the producers that

film that enjoyed splendid seasons—it had in the cast John Batten, the young Auckland, and brother of the famous Jean.

"In the early days British talkies had to be 'sold' to the public by means of 'flag-waving' and appeals to patriotism. That is to say, the picture-going public had grown used to seeing silent British pictures that were definitely inferior to the American, and the British talkie had to overcome this formidable hurdle. But gradually the public came to realize that the British talkie was equal, and often superior, to the American—especially in the matter of voice and accent—and now a picture from the English studios can stand on its merits—and does! Pictures like 'Henry the Eighth' and 'Blossom Time' are head and shoulders above anything from Hollywood."

"Great Britain, too, does not lag behind America in the matter of salaries. Gracie Fields, probably the most popular star in the Empire to-day, receives £65,000 for each picture she makes—a salary that can't be touched by any American star. She has just completed 'Sing As We Go,' a film for which the scenario was written by no less an author than J. B. Priestley. 'Sing As We Go' is to be released in New Zealand early in 1935."

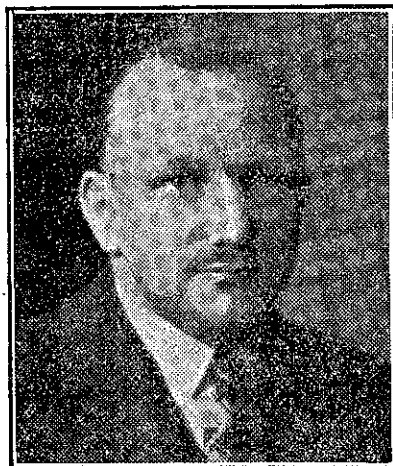
Mr. Grant went on to discuss the films that his company will be releasing in New Zealand in the near future. In the forefront is Richard Tauber's first English film, "Blossom Time." This picture was recorded on B.I.P.'s latest recording system known as "Ambiphono," and all who see this film will agree that anything nearer the actual sound would be almost impossible to achieve.

Next on the list is a production that promises to put all previous musical shows to shame—"Radio Parade of 1935." A great story has been written for this show, which will contain all the radio stars who are so well known in this country through broadcasts of their recordings.

A third spectacular production which is now under way is "Abdul Hamid,"

which features beautiful Adrienne Ames, the American actress-millionaire, and wife of Bruce Cabot, well-known young film star. Nils Asther is included in the cast, and so is Fritz Kortner, the actor who made a big hit in "Chu Chin Chow," and who also played a small but impressive part in "Little Friend."

Gertrude Lawrence and Douglas Fairbanks, junior, have been signed for



**SEEN INDUSTRY GROW.**—Mr. R. L. Grant, New Zealand manager of British International Pictures, who has seen the British film industry grow from its humble beginnings to the mighty organization that it is to-day. An interview with Mr. Grant appears on this page.

they immediately set about laying more ambitious plans for the future. The talkies caught the American companies 'on the hop,' as it were, and the early Hollywood efforts were made in studios that were not meant for sound. England had not advanced far in the silent field so that, when talkies became established, the producing companies were able to go ahead with the erection of special sound studios. Under the Greenwood Tree' was another B.I.P.



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