

## A NEW ZEALANDER VISITS ELSTREE

### Rapid Strides Made By England's Hollywood

MY first experience of a visit to the famous Elstree Studios was to call with my letter of introduction at the head office of the company at Film House, in the famous film row of London—Wardour Street—writes Geoff T. Dunne in the "Otago Daily Times." From here we were whisked away in a handsome limousine northwards through the beautiful Middlesex countryside to the Garden City, England's Hollywood—Elstree.

Arriving at the gates, we were of course, held up by the sergeant-at-arms who has definite instructions to keep all sightseers and busybodies from entering the grounds, but on showing our passes we were made very welcome, and were here met by another friend, Mr. Clarence Elder, who is the company's supervising art director.

We commenced our tour, through the beautiful grounds, past the tennis courts and flower gardens: the general routine for taking visitors around was not adhered to in our case, as, being from so distant a country and being personally acquainted with the heads of the studios, we were given a real insight into the entire business. No stone was left unturned to see that we were shown every possible phase of the manufacture of a modern talking picture.

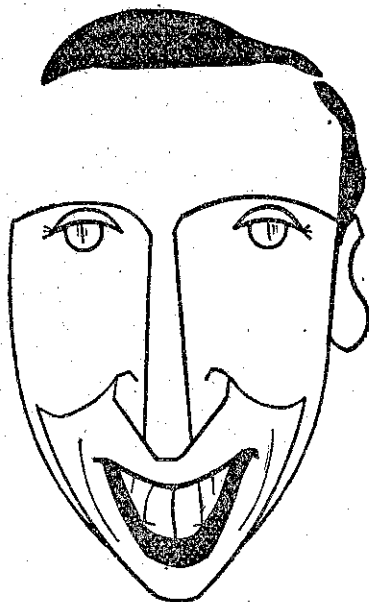
"Blossom Time," the famous musical story of the life of Franz Schubert, was the major production on the sets during our visit, and on being introduced to Herr Tauber, the famous star of this attraction, we were surprised at the command of English this celebrated tenor has. During our conversation we asked Herr Tauber if he enjoyed making pictures in which the greatest portion was singing, and we were interested at his reply, which was in his own words: "I sing because I love to sing."

The settings to this picture were an eye-opener to us, and the wealth of detail that the studios go to in the preparation of the sets, and the speed with which they are prepared is something of which the average picture fan has no conception. We suggested that some of the beautiful settings in "Blossom Time" would have been ideal had they been in colour, but the studio executives advised us that at the moment the Spicer Dufay system, which the company is using, was not quite ready for this attraction, and so, rather than have any hold-up, they were producing this film in black and white, but that their next picture, "Radio Parade of 1935" would be produced at least 50 per cent in colour. When we saw a few hundred feet of film on this system, which is of the three-colour variety, we were convinced that when it is seen by picture-goers they will be amazed at the remarkable strides made in colour photography.

Lunch at the famous restaurant was one of the sights that in itself would have been well worth the trip to Elstree. Here seated all round us were celebrit-

ies of all phases of life. Some as butlers, others as kings and queens, and all dressed according to the various parts which they were playing.

Sitting on the right of us at a table was the rubber-faced comedian Leslie Fuller in the snappy clothes he wears in his picture "Doctor's Orders." We later saw him acting on the set, and this is one of the funniest films, if the scene we saw was anything to go by, that has ever been made. We laughed so heartily during one of the sequences that we were requested to get off the set, and had to disentangle ourselves from the mass of electric leads which conduct the power to the powerful arcs and the sound equipment, and found ourselves outside looking at the remainder of this show through one of the sound-proof windows. Back again in the restaurant, we saw seated on our left a bevy of 10 beautiful girls, also appearing in the Leslie Fuller film, and persons who think that all the beautiful girls live in Hollywood need



IMITATION.—Sonnie Hale, the English screen comedian, whose imitation of Jan Kiepura is one of the comedy highlights of the British film, "My Song for You," in which he and the famous tenor are starred. "My Song for You" has just finished a successful three-weeks' season at the Plaza Theatre in Wellington.

only a trip to Elstree to convince them to the contrary. In the foreground was no less a person than Richard Tauber partaking of a small mid-day meal, and with him was his boyhood friend, the director of the film, Paul Stein.

Permanent employment is given at these tremendous studios, which cover the space of something like 50 acres, to about 1400 men and women daily, and thousands and thousands of actors and actresses and extras during the course of a year.

The films, of course, after being taken and recorded, are printed in the B.I.P. laboratories, which in themselves for anybody at all interested in this class of thing are a real eye-opener, and the miles and miles of feet of film which every month pass through those laboratories is again proof positive of the tremendous strides made by this ever-increasing industry in Great Britain.

## NEW B.I.P. STAR

### Richard Bird in Mystery Picture

A NEW star has been introduced by B.I.P. in the person of Richard Bird, who was featured in the film "What Happened Then," privately screened in Wellington recently. This is a mystery film with an unusual plot and though the story has not been handled as skillfully as it might have been, the performance of the star is an excellent one. Mr. Bird is well known on the London stage, and his pleasing personality made it difficult for the audience to visualise him as the half-mad murderer of the film. However, when the time came for him to show his true colours as a madman, Mr. Bird's acting won immediate recognition for his great abilities. Lorna Storm, who was playing the feminine lead, also gave a good performance, but the film lacked the "snap" which Hollywood always manages to bring into productions of this type, and moved too slowly to hold the interest continuously. For those who appreciate good acting, however, there is a splendid performance by Richard Bird to admire; more will certainly be heard of this attractive star.

WILL HAY, the famous schoolmaster of the Music Hall, is now starting upon his third starring vehicle for B.I.P. Hay's new film is titled "Dandy Dick," and is based upon the play by Sir Arthur Pinero. It will be made under the direction of William Beaudine, one of Hollywood's cleverest and best directors of comedy. At the same time Hay will be finishing off his last shots of "Radio Parade of 1935," in which he is playing the role of the Director-General of a broadcasting station. The success of "Those Were the Days," which introduced Will Hay to cinema-goers, proved that typical English humour is still the most popular form of entertainment. In "Dandy Dick" he will play the role of a village vicar who sets out to raise funds for his church steeple which sadly needs reconstruction. To complicate matters and to give opportunity for rich comedy some of his "racy" relatives arrive upon the scene with a racehorse. Esmond Knight and Nancy Burne have the romantic leads.

IN Devonshire, the B.I.P. unit, who are filming exteriors for "McGlusky the Sea Rover" there, are finishing off the last few shots. Jack Doyle is playing the title role, and those who have seen his first work on the screen predict film stardom for him and an early place in the affections of all film goers. Tamara Desni has never looked prettier than in "McGlusky the Sea Rover" as Yula Taiyibi the Arab dancing girl. Henry Mollison is playing the role of Captain Mazarin, the dago ship's captain, who causes considerable trouble by persuading Miss Desni to leave her sheik and elope with him. Sequences have been filmed of the Arabs thundering over the sand in pursuit of Jack Doyle and Henry Mollison. Both have proved themselves expert horsemen and fortunately have not had to be doubled.