

This Week's Special Article

Gordon Mirams Is Too Honest A Critic For Columbia Pictures!

THIS is the sad but honest face of Gordon Mirams, our film critic, bearing up from the shock of being told by Columbia Pictures that in future he would not be allowed to darken the doors for their preview screenings. The reason? Because as a critic he was honest enough to say what he thought about Grace Moore's film "I'll Take Romance." ("Radio Record," April 22.)

We employ Mirams as an honest and capable critic, who has specialised in film work for many years, to write sincere views on forthcoming films for the guidance of nearly quarter of a million readers. In that work, the interests of our readers come first. They look to Mirams for a genuine and sincere expression of opinion. Neither he nor we claim his judgment to be infallible—not even the film producers themselves can predict accurately how any picture will appeal to the public—but we are prepared to guarantee it to be honest and sincere. Otherwise there would be no purpose in his work. The "Record" will always welcome the views of readers, either agreeing or disagreeing with our critic's judgment. Honest controversy never did anyone any harm.

The film interests as a whole have been most helpful and appreciative of the space the "Record" gives their art and business, and have been glad to co-operate. They are broadminded enough to appre-



ciate that a true critic must be free to express his honest view, and none has hitherto attempted either to bribe or browbeat our critic to distort his genuine opinions. We greatly appreciate that high-minded attitude on their part. It shows confidence in themselves and in the merit of their films; and we are sure our readers endorse our appreciation, and value the service of candid reviews of new films which their attitude enables us to provide.

We make mention of this incident with Columbia now merely to record our refusal to subordinate our criticism of any film to commercialism. The fact that a particular firm has cancelled advertising and withdrawn customary courtesies to our critic is of no moment in relation to readers' interests, except in so far as it will be impossible—while Columbia maintains the ban—for us to publish advance reviews on Columbia pictures. However, whenever possible, we shall continue to review Columbia pictures—honestly and without bias—by attending screenings after public release.

It is difficult to understand why a New Zealand publication should be singled out for the honour of being banned by Columbia. To be consistent, the company should surely also bar from its previews the representatives of several independent and influential publications overseas, including the film industry's own leading authority, "Harrison's Reports," which described "I'll Take Romance" as the worst picture Grace Moore has made to date.

Even the "Record's" critic had not quite the temerity to say that!

THE EDITOR.

In the Wake of the Week's Broadcasts

Valuable tributes were paid by 2YA on successive Sunday afternoons to two celebrities who have just died. A short recital was given on April 24, in which the contribution

"LET US NOW PRAISE FAMOUS MEN"

made by the late Sir Richard Terry to British music was outlined and appropriate recordings played. On May 1 the late Sir Henry Newbolt was honoured in a similarly appropriate way and records of some of his most popular songs were heard. "Drake's Drum," by far the best-known poem by Newbolt, gained him the close friendship of a

one-time Poet Laureate, the late Dr. Robert Bridges. It first appeared in a London evening paper in 1896, at the moment when the British Government had replied to some menacing words of the Kaiser by ordering a special service squadron to put to sea. When Bridges read the poem he murmured: "Awfully swell, awfully swell." Looking the author in the face Bridges added: "You'll never write anything better than that—it isn't given to man to write anything better than that. I wish I had ever written anything half so good." That encounter on the front steps of the home of Dr. Bridges at Yattendon was a turning point in

Newbolt's life, because on the advice of the older poet, Sir Henry quitted the Bar for good and went in for literature.



Listened with real interest to Rita Stone, Auckland soprano, when she sang from 4YA the other Saturday night. As she has been given the lead in the Dunedin Operatic Society's costly venture, "The Vagabond King," it seemed not unreasonable to think she possessed a remarkable voice. Candidly,

SWEET SINGER BUT IS SHE THE TYPE?