

DAD COMES TO OUR SELECTION FOR A CHANGE

(By GORDON MIRAMS)

DAD was lying down resting in his room at the St. George when I called to interview him—taking it easy after his trip on the Awatea, preparatory to starting a strenuous round of personal appearances with the new Cinesound film "Dad and Dave Come to Town."

For Dad—or Bert Bailey, as I suppose one should call him, though it is hard to think of him as anything but Dad—is not a young man in years. Twenty-six years now he has been playing that role; and except that they're

We discussed television and we discussed film reviewing. He wanted to know about droughts in New Zealand, theatres in New Zealand, whether there was much interest in repertory, how radio was run over here, and what reception from Australia was like.

But that came later. For the first half hour, Dad answered questions and talked about Australian films in general and the "Dad and Dave" characters in particular.

"This character of Dad which I've been laying continuously now for 26 years is a real man to me, not in any way a caricature," said Bert Bailey, looking so much like Dad that you simply couldn't doubt his word. "Steele Rudd, the author, based him on a composite of two or three men he knew, including his own father. Rudd's first books were written about 40 years ago."

"There's a whole lot of humanity in the old chap—he governs his family and he always thinks he's right. He's representative of a general type of man—the fellow who has made good by dogged perseverance. He hasn't had much education, but he's got practical commonsense which is often worth more than a university training."

Auckland-Born

Bert Bailey was born in Auckland, but left New Zealand when only a few months old. He started playing the role of Dad in "On Our Selection" on the Australian stage in 1912. In that year he

characters of Dad and Dave; but if there wasn't some merit in that class of entertainment, how on earth could it have held the public for so long?"

There didn't seem to be much answer to the question when put like that, especially when Dad pointed out, with regard to "On Our Selection," that no film in Australia has ever drawn the public so continuously to the box-office. They keep on reviving it, and it always does big business.

Better Films

For all that, continued Dad, he was sure that Australian pictures were much better now than they

were in the days when "On Our Selection" was filmed. Australian technique and equipment were vastly improved, and their directors and actors had benefited enormously by experience.

Of course, in Australia they still had to watch costs closely. They couldn't spend anything like the amount on a film that Hollywood did. The idea was to make a good picture that would please the public of Australia and New Zealand first, and after that they put it on the overseas market.

"And I must say I'm grateful to the New Zealand public for the support they've given the pictures I've been in," said Dad.

"Do you get much fan mail?" I asked.

"Well, now, that's a funny thing, but do you know that I could count all the fan letters I've received on the fingers of one hand. I don't know whether that means I'm not popular," replied Dad, with the merry twinkle in his eye particularly noticeable.

Having mentioned that it was the ambition of Ken G. Hall,

director of Cinesound Productions Ltd., to make a film in New Zealand, utilising our wonderful scenery and romantic history, Dad branched off on to a wide selection of topics.

When I had arrived in Dad's room I had told him that I only wanted a few minutes of his time for a short interview, because I knew he must be tired after his trip. It was only when I got outside the room again that I realised we had been talking for a full hour.

Dad's parting words were typical of him: "For goodness sake, young man, whatever you do, don't make me sound conceited. I'm only an actor doing his job."

PUZZLE PIE.

In a number of copies of the "Radio Record" of October 28, "Puzzle Pie" No. 273 appeared instead of "Puzzle Pie" No. 269. We regret this error and advise all those competitors who submitted entries for No. 273 that their entries are being counted as entries for this week's puzzle (No. 273).



BERT BAILEY.—And the whiskers are genuine.

not quite so luxuriant, the venerable white whiskers and sweeping moustache which you see on the screen are the same as you would see if you met Dad in the street. They're as genuine as the man himself.

Though Dad's body was taking a rest when I saw him, his mind certainly wasn't. I started by interviewing him; he finished by interviewing me. With that merry twinkle in his eyes that we know so well, he showed quite youthful curiosity on a wide variety of subjects.



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visited New Zealand—but between then and now he hasn't been over here.

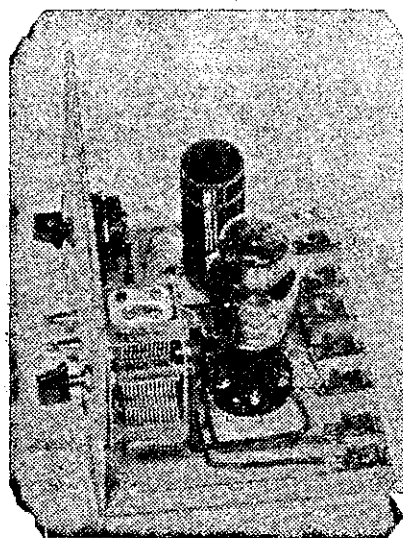
"You'll notice a lot of differences," I suggested.

"Yes, I expect I shall, but the theatres and music-halls were pretty good even in those days," replied Dad. "I've always wanted to come back, and now when I had the chance I was glad to take it and bring my daughter along to show her your country."

"You know," he went on, "a man is extremely fortunate to have been able to get a role like Dad Rudd and hold on to it. As I've grown older, Dad has grown older with me, and it's made no difference to the part. Instead of having to put false whiskers on, as I once did, I now grow them for myself. I don't know of any other part which it has been possible for an actor to handle for such a number of years."

"And not many fellows have a chance to star in pictures at the age of over 65."

"Yes, you do hear some criticism from some people about the



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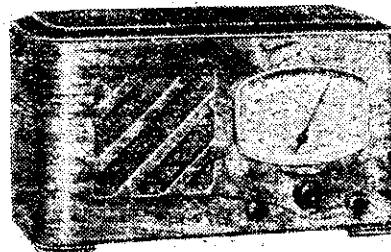
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