

A Rosy Future for Drama in New Zealand



THE time has arrived again for this year's judging and the Wellington branch of the British Drama League presented several New Zealand plays in the groups played by Wellington amateurs on four evenings last week. In an interview with a "Radio Record" representative this week Mr. Victor S. Lloyd, treasurer of the New Zealand Branch of the British Drama League and a dramatist of some note (his "Quiet Weekend" was produced by the Wellington Repertory Society recently), said that the "Radio Record" and the "Dairy Exporter" trophies had done much toward fostering dramatic art in the Dominion. Several years ago the chances of a New Zealand playwright having his own plays presented or published was remote, but since the publication of "Seven One-Act Plays" by this journal—a collection of plays by Dominion playwrights that was warmly praised by Dame Sybil Thorn-dike—and the stimulation afforded by the British Drama League, writers and players had been coming forward and the future of the theatre in New Zealand was very bright.

OUR little country might be forgiven if its people lacked a "sense of the theatre," for the production of good plays by professional companies is infrequent. But New Zealand, judging by the plays staged by repertory societies, lacks little talent in the acting or play-writing spheres. Everything is being done to foster an appreciation of dramatic art—repertory is in a flourishing state, the British Drama League, with branches throughout the country, is giving our budding playwrights and players all the assistance in its power, and the amateur operatic companies are giving of their best to appreciative audiences. In this fostering of dramatic ability, the "Radio Record" is playing no small part. Last year this paper donated a trophy for the best one-act play from a New Zealand writer. The entries were many and the trophy was finally awarded to Mrs. V. Targuse, of Christchurch, for her plays "Fear" and "The Touchstone," placed equal.

"There has been criticism of New Zealand plays in the Press lately," said Mr. Lloyd. "Letters have pointed out that a local play should have a local setting before it was

eligible for competition in a New Zealand competition. I don't agree. The rules of competition distinctly set out that while the play must be written by a New Zealander its setting can be anywhere at all—Babylon, the North Pole—or Mars, if the writer chooses. I am concerned with only two things—firstly, the dramatic value of the play, and secondly, its literary value.

"The New Zealand plays in this year's group are set in various parts of the world. 'A King Goes By,' by Margaret Pearson, is a sound story of a familiar subject—the pursuit of Bonnie Prince Charlie in the Highlands. 'The Signal,' by Helen Gordon, is another; 'Touchstone,' which won the 'Radio Record' trophy, is in



ADJUDICATOR IN DRAMA LEAGUE FESTIVAL.—Miss Kiore King, who passed judgment on the plays and players in the British Drama League's four-day festival at Wellington last week. Miss King, who hails from Hawke's Bay, is producer for the Canterbury Repertory Society, and is an actress of considerable experience and ability. One of her greatest repertory triumphs was her portrayal of Eliza Doolittle in Shaw's splendid play, "Pygmalion," presented in Christchurch in April, 1932.

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