

REPERTORY MEANS HARD WORK

(By Salamander.)

IT has been said by some that New Zealand could not support any reasonable number of top-ranking stars commanding high salaries.

The truth or otherwise of this statement could form the basis of a discussion, in which many aspects of entertainment in NZ could be explored. Present population, public taste, and other factors would have to be considered. It is worthy of note that during 1940-41 31,491,811 people in New Zealand paid L2,198,403 to go to the cinema.

The expenditure of this comparatively large annual sum by picturegoers is probably due to the fact that the public has very little opportunity to enjoy other forms of theatre presentation.

True, there are such concerns as the Fuller's circuit which represents a definite but specialised form of entertainment, and serves the purpose for which it was created. There are, of course, the regular concerts which, despite protestations to the contrary from some quarters, do not attract a great section of the public.

There is also the odd touring company which reaches New Zealand usually after a long peregrination throughout South Africa, Australia, and all points en route.

It is a fact that these companies do not always represent the best in histrionic ability. This observation is not made in any derogatory sense to the company personnel; but financially speaking, it would just not be a paying proposition for a really first-rate team of players, who could earn much higher salaries at Home without the discomfort of moving over the face of the earth, to tour NZ.

That these strolling companies often receive a reception worthy of more accomplished groups is largely because New Zealand audiences generally have too few opportunities for comparing their own standards of performance with that of a really first class company.

Admittedly, the great and near-

great of the theatre such as Sybil Thorndyke, Noel Coward, G.B.S., Harry Lauder, Galli-Curci, Richard Tauber, Laurence Tibbett, and others have visited New Zealand over past years. But usually they come as individuals and their public appearance had more of a social character than otherwise.

The only exception to this is the case of musicians such as Poushinoff and Yehudi Menuhin who appear solely in their own right and hardly come within the scope of the theatre.



There are, in New Zealand, a number of Repertory companies which in many instances stage productions that are quite praiseworthy efforts—up to a point. Perhaps it might be as well at this juncture to examine the real purpose of Repertory in its original conception.

Fundamentally, it was designed to give aspirants to the theatre an opportunity to develop whatever latent talents they may have possessed, in the guise of a hobby.

It developed and there came into being a number of Repertory