

Kingswood Minstrels Entertainment

(Contributed by a Patient, Pte. F. Hoole)

Sergeant Linfoot one day early in January was smitten with the brilliant idea of giving a Minstrel Show, the performers to be drawn from the patients and staff of Kingswood.

This idea rapidly took form, and a meeting was called in the "Prince Charlie" Room, when it was definitely decided to start practising. Immediately a rough outline of programme was drafted, and different members of staff and patients were requested to assist. The list of performers is as follows:

Sgt. Linfoot, 4th Battn. (Conductor).

" Hishin, 47th "

Cpl. Caffery, 3rd Battery R.G.A.

Pte. Parks, R.C.R.

" Chalmers, 10th Battn.

" F. Hoole, 72nd (Seaforths)

R. S. M. Foley, C.A.M.C.

Pte. Hopkinson, 4th Battn.

" Aldridge, 14th Canadians.

" Ladds, 26th Battn.

" Bowran, 127th

" Anderson, C.A.M.C. (Pianist)

The practices proceeded with considerable vim, and the work of rehearsing was made much easier than it might have been by the excellent playing of Pte. Anderson, our pianist. We were certainly most fortunate in securing his assistance. Sgt. Linfoot also accompanied one or two songs admirably, and was a most painstaking conductor, very helpful to the troupe, especially over chorus work. During the first week, practices were held every other day, but the last week the troupe had to work hard every day. They were rather handicapped by having to practice within earshot of their future audience, as there was only one piano available, i.e., that of the Recreation Room; however, as most of the boys were out in the afternoon owing to the fine sunshiny weather, they were not much inconvenienced.

With regard to the performance on the evening of 29th January, the opening chorus, "Alabama Jubilee" went with a swing that warmed the audience up and was loudly applauded. The Finale to the first part of the programme, "Yaaka Hula Hicky Dula," and especially the dance with which it concluded, was received with approbation.

But the best chorus was undoubtedly the opening chorus to the second half, composed mainly of Trench Songs learned by the boys in the trenches in France. As usual, they were

chiefly humorous, and consisted of upwards of sixteen songs and choruses, smoothly following each other, which were continually interrupted by bursts of laughter and applause from the audience when the points were particularly appropriate.

Sambo (Pte. Ladds) sang "There's a Little Lane Without a Turning," and later "Mandy from Tonypandy," both good songs with catchy choruses, and he acquitted himself well. In this connection we should like to take the opportunity of stating that the rumour which has got about that the corners of his mouth met at the back of his neck, is quite untrue, and we hereby wish to contradict it. The Troupe's dancing during the chorus of "Mandy" caused considerable merriment.

Rastus (Pte. Parks) followed with "Where the Black-eyed Susans Grow," and "I'm Silly Dick." In the latter song he gave his experiences in so life-like a manner that the audience loudly demanded more. He certainly has "some" voice.

Tambo (Sgt. Hishin) next took the floor with "Sue, Sue, Sue," taking us into his confidence about his love affairs. His collar was of the largest size (though sometimes inclined to choke him), and his grey waistcoat and clawhammer coat with brass buttons, captured all hearts. His pants being somewhat on the short side, disclosed a pair of slim ankles enclosed in light blue embroidered socks. The audience had another chance of admiring him in "Johnny Boy" the Knut.

Jake (Pte. Aldridge) next inflicted "Calling Me Home to You," and later "Way Down Yonder in the Cornfield," the latter being encored. Being encouraged by this, he changed his sex (and clothes), and appeared in a duet, "Walking Out with Margarine," with Mr. Jones (Pte. Hopkinson). The dancing in this number really deserves special mention, as it was undoubtedly one of the best turns on the programme. It was noticeable that the feminine portion of the audience was intensely interested in "Margarine's" white dress, wreath of roses, green necklace, yellow stockings, tiny (!!) feet and lingerie, which aroused loud applause. There was some trouble in securing sufficient attire for Pte. Aldridge, who is by no means small, and a satisfactory result was only obtained by ransacking the wardrobes of all the Sisters.

Brother Jones (Pte. Hopkinson) in "Hello Hawaii" and "Massey-Harris I Love Thee" was loudly encored. The latter song is a topical