

Engage Americans for England

THE British National Pictures, Ltd., of London, of which J. D. Williams, formerly general manager of First National Pictures, Inc., of New York, is managing director, has engaged several Americans with the idea of making better English pictures.

The company has completed an arrangement with Samuel Goldwyn whereby Frances Marion is to write the continuity for "Madame Pompadour," in which Dorothy Gish will be featured. It will be directed by Herbert Wilcox, who made "Neil Gwyn." Miss Gish is at present in Paris conferring with costume designers for the film.

Hampton Del Ruth, a comedy expert, accompanied by his wife, left for England last week. Mr. Del Ruth is the man responsible for many of the Keystone Comedies, having been Mack Sennett's production chief for several years. His work in England will be to inject humor with an international appeal into the British National company's comedies.

The British concern's organization at present includes Dorothy Gish, who is to star in three pictures; R. Field Overbaugh, the camera man who photographed "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," "The White Sister," &c., Shaw Lovett, formerly production manager of Inspiration Pictures, Inc., and J.

W. McConaughy, film editor, former associate of William Le Baron at the Cosmopolitan studio.

English directors, supporting players and technical people, are being engaged. Alfred Hitchcock, a young British director, whose first production, "The Pleasure Garden," was recently exhibited in London, has been engaged on a long-term contract.

Camera work on "London," a special screen story by Thomas Burke, author of "Limehouse Nights," has been finished. This production now is being edited and titled by Mr. McConaughy. The scenario was written by Adrian Johnson, an American scenarist.

Roosevelt Impersonator

FRANK HOPPER has been chosen to portray the character of Theodore Roosevelt in the forthcoming production, "The Rough Riders." The selection was made following an exhaustive investigation by a committee composed of Hermann Hagedorn, biographer of Roosevelt and secretary of the Roosevelt Memorial Association; Lewis Maverick of San Antonio, Texas, Vice President of the Rough Riders' Association, and Victor Fleming, who is to direct the picture. The final selection was made following screen tests of the seven men who

were considered the most appropriate. Mr. Hopper was the unanimous choice of the committee. His selection was the result of a strange chance. Mr. Hagedorn, who is collaborating with Lucien Hubbard on the screen story of "The Rough Riders," sent out an appeal for a search. It was the desire of Famous Players to obtain other than a well-known actor for this important rôle. A small item to the effect that a \$500 reward was offered for the first person who sent in the name and photograph of the man who would be judged best suited for the part was inserted in the program of the Million-Dollar Theatre, in Los Angeles. Mrs. Dorothy Dodd, manager of an apartment house in Los Angeles, went to the theatre and noticed the item in the program. As she left she found herself face to face with Mr. Hopper, who was passing the theatre with his family. She was startled by his likeness to Roosevelt. She spoke to him and asked him whether he would mind if she suggested his name for the contest. Mr. Hopper gave his consent. Mr. Hagedorn sent word requesting photographs and a personal interview. A screen test was arranged, and, although the likeness was remarkable, it was said that Mr. Hopper was about twenty-five pounds too heavy. Mr. Hopper declared that he could take off a lot of weight and the committee withheld its decision until it was assured he could really do it. Mr. Hopper was told that he would be paid \$5 for every pound he took off. It is said that he has lost the twenty-five pounds and now weighs 186. Mr. Hopper was on the stage for many years and then went into business in Montana. His business fell off during the war, and subsequently he went to live in California. At the time he was selected he was working as the representative of a book concern.

Florenz Ziegfeld is to choose sixty beautiful girls for the motion picture, "Glorifying the American Girl," which is to go into production at the Astoria studio in a few days.

Robert C. Benchley, dramatic editor of Life, has been engaged by Jesse L. Lasky to write for Paramount Pictures. Mr. Benchley will leave this week for Hollywood, where he will spend several weeks writing comedies and titling films. It is expected that Mr. Benchley's first story will be a vehicle for Raymond Griffith.

Rowland V. Lee is to direct Pola Negri in a picture after she finishes work in her current production, "Hotel Imperial."