

# Repertory Society In Play of North

The stage assumed an entirely Australian atmosphere at the Princess Theatre last night, when the Brisbane Repertory Theatre Society presented "Men Without Wives."

The play, which was written by Mrs. H. Drake-Brockman, well known as a novelist, was the prize winner in the Centenary Play Competition, in which there was no restriction as to subject or locale, hence it is to be presumed that merit in conception, characterisation, and writing was the only consideration.

The scene was laid in Northern Australia a few years ago, with such characters as one has read of in the work of Mrs. Aeneas Gunn and her many successors. The main difference between the people one meets in "We of the Never Never" and those in "Men Without Wives" is that in the play those depicted had lived through the years of glamour and had reached the stage where, through years of hardships and disillusionment, they had become philosophical or cynical, or so attached to their lonely world, where work is the only joy, that, as Mrs. Gunn has said, they "never, never want to leave it."

## FINE CHARACTERISATION

Of such was Mrs. Bates, played magnificently last night by Mrs. Agnes Cullen.

The second best piece of work was that of Mr. Ludovick Gordon, as Joe Bates, her husband, a real "bushie." When his first laugh was heard he was made for the evening.

Miss Joyce Dowling Smith was charming as the bride, who arrived full of dreams of a happy future; and convincing as the disillusioned wife.

Mr. Ray Kelly played a manly part as John Abbott, the husband; and Mr. Gordon Marshall that of Lovatt, perhaps as manly but less circumspect. Miss Merle Dinning, as Channa, a young gin; Mr. Eric Keik, a station cook; Mr. Jack Bow, station assistant; Mr. Tom Hearle, one of the boys of

the Bates family, all played neatly. The two Bates girls, Clara and Lulu, were well played by Miss Milba Lowes and Miss Lorna Watt.

Mr. Ley Outridge, as Jecks, did good work as a gay young man of supposedly Oxford experience, which was perhaps the most difficult to play convincingly, for the lines written were the least natural. Mr. Allan Ward was hearty and persuasive as an insurance agent, and Mr. Allan Burke, self-collected and precise, as the young Dr. Lucas Jones.

Miss Barbara Sisley won credit as producer, and Mr. Eric John conducted the society's orchestra in overture and entr'actes.