



Husky Miller (Glenn Bryant), the champion, surrounded by his manager (E. L. Tyler) and his trainer (Richard Montgomery)



Carmen Jones (Muriel Smith) exercises her sultry wiles on Don José, now known as Joe (Luther Saxon), who goes A.W.O.L. to show his love

CARMEN JONES

BY KYLE CRICHTON

PHOTOGRAPHS FOR COLLIER'S BY GUNTHER-FROST

It was a headache to put together, and nobody ever heard of the members of the cast, but Billy Rose's version of Bizet's opera is a hit that may run just short of forever

THE oldest chestnut on Broadway is the Cinderella story. Some press agent is forever charging up breathlessly to cry that Sally Vanderbilt (known last year in Gimbel's basement as Emma Dumbosky) is the toast of the cafés, the darling of the critics, the salvation of the Shuberts. She was totally untutored, she was inhaling a black-and-white soda in a drugstore, and the agent saw her, signed her, threw her into a cast that was stumbling pitifully. And now Ethel Merman is jealous!

Known far and wide as a man who never does things by halves, Billy Rose has produced Carmen Jones, the Negro version of the Bizet opera, and there are

a hundred Cinderellas in the cast, both sexes.

The first Broadway scouts who saw the show open in Philadelphia came back on the midnight train, screaming.

"It'll last a hundred years," they cried, trampling people in Lindy's.

"Who's in the cast?" asked one of the more hard-boiled.

"Nobody's in the cast. Everybody's in the cast!" shouted the enthusiasts.

Only one member of the cast was ever on the legitimate stage before; only a few were known more than eight blocks outside their family circles. It is a miracle of show business, a vindication of every harassed press agent that ever lived. It will make Billy Rose a million dollars and prove to all men that going straight is a paying business.

Oscar Hammerstein 2d got the idea for the show while hearing a concert version of Carmen at Hollywood Bowl. He saw that the opera had a dozen song hits and was pure melody from start to finish. He also saw that each aria was a complete story that carried the plot forward. Forth-

William Dillard, the Brazilian Panther, enjoys the adulation of the ladies while awaiting his bout with Husky Miller, the world's champ





Cozy Cole beats out with the drums in the wild scene based on the famous Habanera theme. Jessica Brazil is on the floor by the drum, June Hawkins is solo-dancing. Ballet which follows is the most spectacular in any show in town.

The girls repeat the well-known card-playing scene from Carmen, which provides the nine of spades for Carmen and forebodes the sad end for the haughty lady. The singers give out with good Bizet music, no swing, no hotcha.



Lindy Lou is the new name for Micaela in this version and the renowned aria is now sung by Carlotta Franzell, and brings down the house, as usual.

with, he wrote a new book and new lyrics, keeping the music intact in a most religious fashion. His first idea was to make the toreador a swing-band leader, but he later changed that to a heavyweight prize fighter—one Husky Miller. Instead of a cigarette factory, he made it a factory running up parachutes for aviators.

That much done, he started looking around for a cast and a producer. Although he is the most successful figure in the musical field with such hits as Show Boat, Desert Song and Oklahoma to his credit, producers didn't fall over themselves to get to him. When Billy Rose finally showed interest, the possibility of a production hinged on getting the proper performers. After three months of auditions which turned up nobody usable, everybody concerned was ready to quit. It was a question of doing the show as a musical comedy, hotchaing it up and losing the Carmen flavor, or of dropping it.

It was then that John Hammond, Jr., scion of one of New York's famous families, came into the picture. His hobby has been swing music and Negro entertainment, and it was plain that if he couldn't find the talent, it wasn't to be had. He wouldn't touch the job till he saw the script.

"If it's that old crap-shooting Holy Roller stuff, count me out," he said.

He came back in two hours with his eyes popping, crying that it was great.

"I'll give you two hundred a week to round up the cast," said Rose.

"Nothing do," said Hammond. "If you want to pay my expenses, all right; but if you don't, I'll pay my own. This is the greatest chance the Negroes ever had, and I'm not taking money for it."

For two months auditions went on without finding a single actor good enough for a part.

"Hot singers, hot dancers," moaned
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TROUBLE ON THE TRAIL

BY JIM MARSHALL

MAP BY LT. ROLF KLEP

The Alcan Highway turned out to be not so good. Now there is a battle for another road to Alaska, shorter and better

HOLD onto your hats, boys and girls. That little war in Europe may or may not be nearly over, but it's going to look like a family spat beside the battle looming up in the West—ours and Canada's—over the Alaska Highway.

If you think that the building of that road from Dawson Creek to Fairbanks settled anything and that you'll soon be touring over a speedway at sixty miles an hour, just forget it. The battle is only just starting. On one side are intermountain Canada and our own Middle West. On the other are southeastern Alaska, British Columbia and our three West Coast states.

The Alcan Highway, as it is occasionally called, was planned and built to get war material to Alaska in safety, even though the Jap fleet controlled the eastern North Pacific and Jap planes were based around Dutch Harbor. There was a time, if you remember, when these gloomy situ-

ations seemed distinctly possible. It was the Jap plane menace that located the road east of both Coast and Rocky Mountain ranges, instead of on the much shorter route west of the Rockies.

In 1941 Canada built a chain of air bases between Edmonton and the North, and when war came it became necessary to link these by road. This was another reason for the present location of the highway.

These bases are being used both by Canada and by us, and it is quite likely that some of them will continue to be used after the war for commercial flight between our Middle West and Alaska. So the road still will have its uses.

As insurance, the \$100,000,000 road was worth while, it assured a flow of munitions to Alaska in safety, no matter what success the Japs had at sea. But as a means of transporting war material from Pacific Coast plants to Alaskan bases, it has two drawbacks: (1) It goes more than a thousand miles out of its way; and (2) with the Navy in command of the eastern North Pacific, it is much simpler and cheaper to ship directly by sea from any Coast port to any Alaskan port.

By the land route, a piece of war equipment gets from a Coast factory to

Edmonton by rail. Then it is transferred to a secondary railroad and dragged west nearly five hundred more miles to Dawson Creek. Here it is transshipped to trucks and trundled slowly up through Fort St. John, Fort Nelson, Watson Lake and Whitehorse to Fairbanks, 1,574 miles away. At Fairbanks, it still is more than two hundred and fifty miles from tide-water by rail. From San Francisco to Seward, Alaska, by water, is less than two thousand miles; by the present Alaskan Highway route it is more than four thousand miles.

Dubious Investment?

All that Canadians around Alberta are praying for is that the road will be finished before the war ends, fearing that, with peace, we might lose interest, and that American taxpayers might figure that paying taxes to build speedways through sparsely inhabited stretches of this section of Canada was not the best way to spend money.

However, Edmonton, a town of many booms, is having another one, on the theory that it is to become a crossroads of the world and the aerial gateway to the North. There is a huge new air base there, and there also is a huge pile of war freight that the little Northern Alberta Railway is trying to move along 495 miles of shaky track to the southern end of the highway at Dawson Creek. The road, in its timetable, promises to get passengers over the stretch at 23 miles an hour, and occasionally does. But it was built mainly to haul grain out of the Peace River country, and the present glut of freight is so great that last spring it had to clap on an embargo for a while.

Despite all these troubles and handicaps, the boys and girls of Edmonton are hell-bent for the booming boom on the continent in the postwar period.

Mr. A. B. Watt, Collier's Alberta correspondent reports: "Edmonton has been dreaming great dreams for a long while about what the North Country is going to do for it. There has been a complete transformation in its life since the highway was started. The town is now being proclaimed 'The Crossroads of the World.' Air and highway traffic are expected to pour through it in the postwar era." It is expected the territory tapped by the new road will yield mineral and oil wealth in a volume large enough to make the city one of the principal centers of the continent.

"The immense airport development in and near Edmonton, people here say, surely has been planned by the American and Canadian governments with only immediate military purposes in view. . . . Edmonton seems firmly established as the aerial gateway to the Yukon and Alaska, and through them to Asia."

When these and like triumphant boastings from the Canadian prairies began to be heard on the Coast, Chambers of Commerce from Skagway and Juneau down to Los Angeles and San Diego suddenly sat up and took notice.

Here was the old intersectional battle again, a joyous revival of the knockdowns and drag-outs that preceded the building of the railroads across the West following the War Between the States.

The present road to Alaska is shown here, with the dotted line from Prince George, north, as an alternate, shorter route

The battle centered in Seattle, traditionally the home town for Alaskans ever since the old Portland sailed in with the first ton of northern gold in the summer of '97. But soon, every other Coast city had jumped into the fight, and there were outpourings of speeches, briefs, maps, pamphlets and editorials, all demanding a new, shorter and better road to Alaska.

The Edmonton boys retorted with advice to "look at the map." The map showed that an air line from our Middle West to Fairbanks did indeed pass right spang through Edmonton.

But the Coasters, for whom the civilized world ends abruptly at the crest of the Rockies, came back with new arguments. Mr. Foster L. McGovern, of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce, pointed out several facts:

If Alaska is to be fortified and defended permanently, the supplies will come mainly from West Coast plants and bases. Over the present route, via Edmonton, these would have to travel 3,089 miles from Seattle; over a more direct route, just east of the Coast Range, the distance would be only 1,996 miles. Even heavy machinery and weapons from the East probably would come around through Panama by boat to a Coast port and then take to the road.

"Assuming it costs 30 cents a mile to run a truck," said Mr. McGovern, "every round trip between Seattle and Fairbanks will cost \$600 more than over a direct road. About three thousand trucks were used on the present road last summer, and the extra hauling cost runs into millions."

To say nothing, he added, of the time wasted in running an extra thousand miles north and the same distance south again.

Edmonton boosters retorted that there was fifty times as much potential business east of the Rockies as west of them, and they asserted that the Coasters were trying to divert this from "its natural channel," which, strangely enough, ran right through Alberta.

No Need for a Highway?

The fight was going hot and heavy when certain aloof persons, including steamship men, introduced the thought that there was no need for a highway to Alaska, anyway.

Nearly all the territory's trade, they pointed out, is concentrated on its southeast coast, from Puget Sound one thousand miles north to Skagway, where the White Pass and Yukon Railway starts into the interior; and around to Seward and Anchorage, from which the Alaska Railroad runs to Fairbanks.

Alaska's exports are mainly fish and minerals; her imports mostly machinery and canned goods. None of this is likely to go by air for some years, and neither trucks nor trains can compete with ships on a cost basis.

In the heyday of the Matanuska colony, it cost more to ship Matanuska vegetables down the few miles of railroad to Anchorage than it did to ship them by sea up from Seattle.

The highway boys came back with the idea of building their new road parallel with the Coast, just east of the first range, and then running lateral roads down to Alaska and British Columbia ports. The steamship men pointed out that the entire population of Alaska is less than that of Binghamton, New York, in normal times; that Alaskan cities are little more than

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