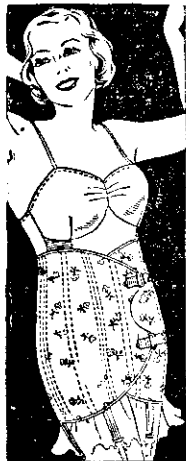


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TWO BRIGHT BOYS

(Universal)

This might well be awarded the "Worst Title of the Year" prize. But take no notice of the label—the picture itself is good. I have, hitherto, regarded the much-lauded acting ability of Freddie Bartholomew with some apathy, but in this show he plays the part of an English boy remarkably well. As his father, Melville Cooper is equally good, and you should get plenty of laughs out of their adventures in an American oil town. These two innocents abroad become entangled with an unscrupulous oil king (Alan Dinehart) who is trying to acquire a farm under which lies a rich oil field. The owner of the farm, Rory O'Donnel (Jackie Cooper), will not consider selling his property and keeps all the negotiators away with a gun.

Chosen by Hallet (the oil king) to be his emissaries, the luckless Messrs. Bartholomew and M. Cooper go to the farm, there to strike up a warm friendship with the O'Donnells.

Father and son begin heartily to dislike the idea of being crooks, and make ineffectual attempts to get away from the town. Hallet and his men do a lot of dirty work to stop Rory finding his own oil, but in the end the precious fluid comes gushing in, and the story ends among general jubilation, notwithstanding the fact that Melville Cooper has to go to gaol for forging a cheque. This he does with a cheery grin, and you, gentle picturegoer, need have no fear that any soft-hearted Hollywood producer will leave him there for long.

UNEXPECTED FATHER

(Universal)

This picture does not aim high, and does not get very far. It is quite without pretensions—a happy, harmless, simple, straightforward story built up round Sandy and Mischa Auer, with



"Golden Boy," which is perhaps the most successful play Clifford Odets has written, has been filmed by Columbia Pictures. It is the story of a brilliant young violinist, who is also a champion boxer, and who breaks his hand on an opponent's head. This scene shows William Holden, an unknown actor, who plays the leading role, with Adolphe Menjou and Edward Brophy.

Dennis O'Keefe and Shirley Ross popping up here and there. The last two are really the principal players; but Sandy, as he should, and Mischa Auer, in spite of Hollywood's persistent "typing" of him, attract most attention.

The plot is innocuous. Sandy becomes an orphan. The State prefers that his guardians should be married. Competition for who should have Sandy becomes competition for who shall get married first. The problem hits Shirley Ross and O'Keefe in one of their bad moments, and she nearly marries the wrong man. Sandy saves the situation with a breathless crawl after a toy balloon along a parapet ten stories up.

As a picture, "Unexpected Father" does not merit very high praise. It does, in fact, contain many of those faults to which Hollywood is prone whenever it sees any chance to be sweet and sentimental. There is no doubt that this is expected and accepted by many film fans. Yet those who like their chocolates sugar-filled will not be alone in their appreciation of a most remarkable baby.

Sandy definitely has what it takes. He is, indeed, so very attractive that he strengthens my Victorian conviction that New Zealand parents are fortunate to have legal compulsion encouraging restraint in the matter of child exhibitionism. Yet the paradox must be admitted—Sandy's undeniably attractive screen personality makes it very difficult to keep this argument as grim as—for Sandy's sake as well as our own—it should be.

HAWAIIAN NIGHTS

(Universal)

More ballyhoo for "swing," and even harder on the ear-drums than usual. Johnny Downs apparently enjoys himself while disturbing the sound waves with his idea of music, but shows up a bad second to the real Hawaiian music—which is, at least, nice and soft and inoffensive. Best scene: The islanders holding a "do" under the leafy trees in the light of a sentimental Hollywood moon. Typical humour: "Hawaii?" "Fine, how are you?"

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