


SPEAKING CANDIDLY


JOURNEY FOR MARGARET (M-G-M)

 AS propaganda, *Journey for Margaret* has probably reached us about three years too late. That is to say, if its primary propagandist intention was to arouse our sympathy for the blitz victims of London, it would obviously have been more effective if we could have seen it before the Allied air forces started to bomb Germany harder than the Germans have ever bombed Britain. But as a dramatic portrayal of the misery and bewilderment suffered by the innocent victims of air terror anywhere, *Journey for Margaret* is as moving as it is appealing, as harrowing as it is sentimental. What the picture does supremely well, and does in spite of some stumbling and fumbling, is to bring home the essential tragedy of the young child in modern war—his desperate quest for security, and his acceptance of such wartime emergencies as blackouts and air-raid shelters as normal conditions of living. It is able to do this for three chief reasons: because an American war correspondent, William L. White, adopted a little London girl who had been made an orphan in the 1940 blitz, took her home with him to America, and wrote a book about her on which the film is based; because M-G-M were able to find for the role a five-year-old child who already seems to have forgotten as much about acting as the average adult player has ever learnt; and because the studio entrusted the direction of the film to someone who understood the ways of children.

Robert Young plays the role of the U.S. war correspondent with considerable finesse, and Laraine Day is good as his wife, who goes back to America after her baby dies in an air-raid; but it is the child stars—William Severn as four-year-old Peter, and especially Maxine O'Brien as Margaret—who make *Journey for Margaret* well worth the price of your ticket.

A MUSICAL STORY

(Artkino)

 THE story of this Soviet film is as naive as its title, but the music certainly isn't. It is all grand opera—mostly, but not entirely, by Russian composers—and the singing is remarkably good, though the synchronisation of voice and movement is occasionally not up to standard.


Though the music is naturally the dominating factor, there are several other reasons why I found this one of the most interesting Russian films that I have yet come across. For one thing, the emphasis seems to be on entertainment rather than on propaganda: the producer doesn't get up on a soap-box and extol the glories of the Soviet way of life. But he does give us a glimpse of that way of life which up till now we have seldom seen on the screen. We see modern Russian men and women at work and at play, making love and making jokes. And on appearances, it looks to be a pretty good way of life; though, of course, that might simply

mean, after all, that the producer has been a more subtle propagandist than the average.

Then again, as a background to the story (taxi driver becomes famous singer and wins heroine after series of misunderstandings), there is a succession of extremely interesting character types; some of them may be exaggerated, but they do impress one as being far more real than the people encountered in most Hollywood productions.

SUVOROV


(Lenfilm)

 NOW that we are seeing a few Russian films, it is becoming possible to identify the players in them, not yet by name, but by the parts which they have played in previous pictures. For instance, I immediately recognised the leading girl in *A Musical Story* as having been the nurse-heroine of *Natasha*, while the ebullient singing-master of the former film was easily identifiable later in the guise of the great General Suvorov. If this process continues, and Hollywood's influence still remains strong, people may soon be wondering what Russian star is divorced from whom and whether People's Artist Ilonya Pskov is a genuine platinum blonde or not. On the other hand, if the influence of Soviet films increases with the supply of them, we shan't be interested in any such things, for if there's one thing the Russian film has no time for, it's glamour in the Hollywood sense.

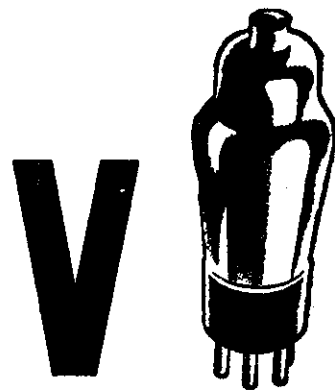
In *Suvorov*, to take a case in point, there is no heroine; there's hardly even a woman of any kind in sight anywhere. Only soldiers and battles, and forced marches, and one long and practically unbroken oration on the theme of "glory." For this is an account of the Russian general (late 18th century) who, we are repeatedly assured, never lost a battle. Yet while I have nothing but admiration for the vast spectacular sequences, the genuine "period" atmosphere, and the performances of the leading players, and have no complaints about the lack of glamour, I must confess I became increasingly restive as the propaganda wore on, and found myself wishing that Suvorov would suffer just one defeat so that they would have to vary the theme.

MR. LUCKY

(P-K-O Radio)

 THE old story of the wicked, selfish but supposedly likeable fellow who becomes an unmitigated hero when subjected to the twin influences of love and patriotism. This time it's Cary Grant; he's a loud-mouthed gambler of Greek pedigree, who shamelessly evades conscription while worming his way into a war relief organisation and the heart of a society girl (Laraine Day), in order to abscond with all the money he can lay hands on. In the outcome, he joins the Merchant Navy.

The film is a hotch-potch of comedy and melodrama, with many jaded old situations and a few new ones that are not much livelier. Hardly anything in it makes either good sense, good fun, or good taste.



... for Victory ... for Valves

Victory and Valves — particularly Radiotron Valves, are very much wrapped up together.

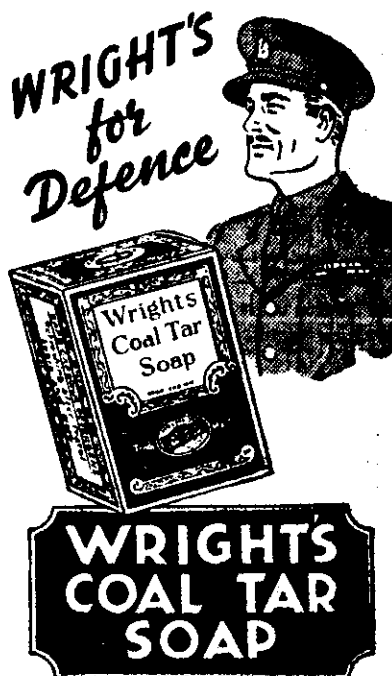
Radiotron Valves are in such huge demand for vital war work that only a few can be spared for civilian use.

But Radiotrons are well worth seeking. They put new power and fidelity into your radio, and give such excellent results over such long periods.

Radiotrons

The LONG-LIFE VALVE

N.Z. Distributors:
THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL AND
ENGINEERING CO. LTD.
Branches all Main Centres



N.Z. Agents: S. A. SMITH & CO. LTD., Auckland