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same idea) that one almost begins to get the impression that having only one child is the normal, and therefore approved, pattern of conduct of American parents. In this case especially, the film's intention is clearly to present the characters and their background as typically American. Is it, then, "typical" for the typical American family to consist of only three people? Now some of us know that statistically it isn't, just as we know that the one-child family does occur in a great many real cases. Similarly we recognise, those of us who stop to think, that the only-child theme is a legitimate device for producing dramatic emphasis and is therefore frequently exploited on stage and screen. (In the present instance, the heartbreak of the parents depends on it: no man who had other children would be likely to feel such a sense of complete loss as the father does in *Happy Land*). Yet when all this is said, and allowing for the exceptions, may there not come a point where the screen is not merely reflecting a social outlook but is also helping to create one? If so, the experts may one day come to the conclusion that the Hollywood movie has some bearing on the population problem.

Meanwhile, when I hear characters in this and so many other films talking about defending America, and the American way of life, from the Japanese menace, etc., I sometimes wonder whether it makes very profound sense, since at this rate the Japanese may eventually get the place anyway, by sheer force of biology.

And that goes for us in New Zealand too, of course, but with this slight difference: we aren't responsible for making these pictures; we only look at them.

Geographical Note: If visitors to *Happy Land* have the feeling that they have been there before, it will not be surprising. The Middle West town which we see as the setting of this film is actually the same town as we saw in *Shadow of a Doubt*, and as we shall soon be seeing in *The Sullivans*, and other films. It is Santa Rosa, California (pop. 10,636), which up till now has been known chiefly as the home of Luther Burbank, but is now achieving much wider fame through its adoption by Hollywood as the typical American town. The cinematic possibilities of the place were first discovered by Alfred Hitchcock and Thornton Wilder when seeking a setting for *Shadow of a Doubt*.

SONG OF RUSSIA

(M-G-M)



REPENTING of their former obscurantist attitude towards Russia, as displayed in *Ninotchka* and the Clark Gable film *Comrade X* (which was not released in New Zealand), Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer herewith fall into line and proffer this as their special all-star, 98-minute, big-gun salute to their great Soviet Ally. It must be confessed, however, that if any national barriers are blown down as a result the credit is due less to M-G-M than to Peter Ilyitch Tchaikovsky, whose music was stirringly conducted off-screen by Albert Coates while Robert Taylor was going through the motions in front of the cameras. The Tchaikovsky-Coates combination at least ensures that most of the salute is eminently worth listening to.

Taylor is supposedly an American maestro who is on a goodwill tour of pre-war Russia, conducting the works of Tchaikovsky with a preference for the piano concerto. He meets Susan Peters who, we are assured, is "just an ordinary little Russian girl from an ordinary

Russian village," and a few scenes later is passionately proposing marriage. Momentarily, she is inclined to be cautious (they're realists, these Russians). It might not work, she hints; after all, their social, cultural, and economic backgrounds are somewhat different. This slightly jarring ideological note is quickly silenced by Maestro Taylor. There will be time enough to think about that later, he says, and goes on to declare, with more fervour than originality: "All that matters is that I love you. We have known each other for ever, and I'll never let you go."

So the marriage is Orthodoxly celebrated in the heroine's little Russian village of Tchaikovskoye and then the happy pair continue their musical mission. But Adolf Hitler pretty soon intervenes to mar Soviet-American bliss and, impelled by Stalin's Scorched Earth oration (delivered in broken English by an actor with a heavy moustache and an American accent), the heroine returns to help scorch her native village, while the hero goes on conducting Tchaikovsky to aid the war effort. Eventually they are reunited amid the ruins of Tchaikovskoye, and the picture ends with them in the United States still busy cementing international understanding by means of the piano concerto.

To what extent this pretentious but naive fable achieves its secondary purpose as a tribute to the Russian people may be an open question (its primary objective, of course, is the box-office). But it does at least give thousands of picturegoers the chance to hear some really good music for a change. In time they might even be prepared to accept Tchaikovsky straight without the sugar-coating of Taylor.

BBC Pacific Service The Week's Highlights

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5

- 6.15 p.m. *Pillars of Freedom: "The Christian Understanding of Man"* (Talk by Rev. F. D. V. Narborough).
- 7.45 *Art for Everyone: "Good Design in a Public Utility"* (Talk by Noel Carrington).
- 9.15 *A Service from the Armies in the Field.*

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6

- 6.15 p.m. *"As I See It"* (Talk by Ralph Wightman).
- 7.30 *War Report.*
- 8.15 *Talk: "Science Notebook."*

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7

- 7.30 p.m. *From All Over Britain: "Quarrymen of North Wales."*
- 8.45 *Soviet Music: 27th Anniversary of October Revolution.*

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

- 6.15 p.m. *Talk: "Anzacs on Tour."*
- 7.45 *Russian Commentary by Alexander Werth.*
- 8.45 *War Review.*
- 9.00 *London Symphony Orchestra (Karl Rankl).*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9

- 6.15 p.m. *Carnival Concert: London Philharmonic Orchestra.*
- 7.30 *Radio Theatre: Harold Brighouse's "Lonesome Like."*

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10

- 6.30 p.m. *Feature: "Story of Phosphorus."*
- 8.45 *War Review.*
- 9.00 *BBC Orchestra (Raybould), BBC Chorus (Leslie Woodgate).*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

- 6.15 p.m. *Talk: "Calling New Zealand."*
- 6.30 *Polish Independence Day.*
- 7.00 *Chopin recital by Paderewski.*
- 7.45 *"World Affairs": Wickham Steed.*
- 9.00 *Brains Trust.*

TO SAVE THE CHILDREN

"TO feed the hungry, to nurse the sick and to relieve the distressed." These are the terms of the charter of the Save the Children Fund, which, started 25 years ago, has worked for the relief of child distress throughout the world.

After the last war, the fund provided help for many thousands of children in Central and Eastern Europe, in Northern France, and in the Near East, and was responsible for the organisation of relief during the famine in Russia in 1921. Its present post-war plans include the sending of relief units to Europe in co-operation with the British and Allied Governments, and of mobile kitchens which are now being used to feed the evacuated children in Britain.

Junior Clubs and Play Centres, Nurseries and Nursery Schools are just part of the organisational work of the Save the Children Fund, which has active branches in most countries. In 1922 a local committee was formed in Wellington through the efforts of Mrs. Margaret Stables, who is still actively connected with the work, and this movement, which was extended to the whole Dominion, was responsible for the sending of £47,000 to London for relief purposes. By a special effort in July this year, Chilton St. James School at Lower Hutt was able to hand over to the fund £280—the total proceeds of a sale of work.



With the ravages of this war, however, the child refugee problem is now more acute than ever, and to continue the work of the fund, to provide doctors, nurses, radiographers and specially trained social workers and teachers to work in the liberated countries, the support of the public as a whole will be needed. Mrs. Stables is still the representative of the fund in New Zealand, and was thanked personally for her work by the Earl of Listowel, a member of the council of the fund in London, on his recent visit to New Zealand. Anyone willing to help should communicate with Mrs. Stables at No. 6 Grass Street, Oriental Bay, Wellington.