

Cavalry), the land is ploughed up, drained of its water and, with the passage of years, becomes a desert.

Meanwhile, erosion has been going on also in the sphere of human relationships. Mr. Tracy, who took Miss Katharine Hepburn from a cultured home and planted her in the prairie as his bride, has proved himself rather too stern and ruthless a husband for her entire liking; and for one night in Denver City she has succumbed to silken dalliance with her husband's enemy, Attorney Douglas. This is very discreetly managed, to spare the censor's feelings: the outcome is, however, that Mr. Tracy acquires a son whom he accepts and brings up as his own, but shows his displeasure by throwing the erring mother into the cold hard world.

Thereafter, as the film uncoils its weary length with the tortuous lethargy of an overfed python, Katherine Hepburn becomes greyer and more miserable, and both Tracy and Douglas also contrive to look as if the years were an intolerable burden to them. It isn't until the son (Robert Walker), grown to wild manhood, has expiated his mother's sin by getting himself shot by the sheriff's posse that we are allowed to go home.

This sorrowful saga is acted, directed and photographed with great earnestness, some touches of imagination, and often with an eye for pictorial beauty. The scenes on the prairie have spaciousness, and Tracy and Miss Hepburn put more into acting their roles than the roles actually deserve. There is also a neat little performance at the end by Phyllis Thaxter, as the cattle-king's young daughter. But Elia Kazan, the director, who made such a good job of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *Boomerang*, seems on this occasion to be floundering. He can't decide whether the film is primarily interested in Romance or Erosion; and after about an hour you begin to wish heartily that somebody would take a scythe to that Sea of Grass and cut it down a bit.

THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR

(20th Century-Fox)



HERE is another woeful case of a director who did not know how to make a good end. For a fair part of its length, this is an agreeable, light-weight fantasy about a pretty English widow (Gene Tierney) at the turn of the century, who rents a haunted seaside cottage and falls in love with the ghost of its former owner, a salty sea-captain (Rex Harrison). This handsomely-bewhiskered seafarer had gone to sleep one afternoon in his bedroom and accidentally kicked on the gas-jet; his peevish spirit thereafter guards the place from intruders until the comely widow turns up and shows such courageous determination not to be scared that he lets her stay. Later he even collaborates with her in a scheme to relieve her of money troubles, dictating to her his briny memoirs, which she types down and sells to a delighted but rather bewildered publisher who finds it hard to associate the book's pungent style with its demure sponsor. The volume, however, is a best-seller; sufficiently so, in fact, to keep the widow for the rest of her days in comfort, together with her maid (Edna Best), her daughter, and her turn-of-the-century cottage. Even for a turn-of-the-century book by a genuine ghost-writer, this seems pretty good going.

Much less easy to resolve is the widow's romantic dilemma, when she finds herself falling in love with the ghost. There are obvious difficulties in such a situation; but the producer of the film could, I feel sure, have thought up some acceptable solution, however implausible. He could, for example, have supplied a satisfactory substitute in the flesh by making George Sanders portray a likeable type instead of a mincing ladykiller. Or he might even as a last resort have hastened the heroine off this mortal coil and into her ghostly lover's arms by causing her to drown herself or be careless with the gas-jet. As it is, the film all but ruins itself entirely in a prolonged and utterly banal attempt to reach a solution which will satisfy everybody—the ghost, the widow, and the audience. What does happen is likely to satisfy nobody—certainly not the more discriminating members of the audience, who will be looking at their watches and wriggling in their seats long before the final foggy fade-out.

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

IT is a far cry from radar research to the family wash, but the National Film Unit covers both these subjects in Weekly Review No. 317 now screening in the principal cities. "Motorised Laundress" shows a woman in the South Island doing the washing in quick time—and she brings her own washing-machine with her on her motor-cycle. "The Canterbury Project" shows what is being done in New Zealand in important radar research. Two other items in the reel are "Underwater Electric Supply," a Dunedin project, and "Russell, Bay of Islands," giving some interesting glimpses of New Zealand's first capital.

SHORTWAVE HIGHLIGHTS

THROUGH the facilities of five U.S. West Coast transmitters and a Honolulu station, the "Voice of America" programmes, originating in New York, may be heard at good strength here during the evening.

A new station of 50 kilowatts power has begun relaying these programmes to the Far East from Manila, but Morse interference rather mars reception of this station.

Stations, Frequencies, Wavelengths (9.0-11.0 p.m.): KNBI, 9.47 mc/s, 31.61 metres; KNBA, 9.65, 31.09; KCBR, 9.75, 30.77; KGEX, 11.73, 25.58; KNBX, 11.79, 25.45; KRHO, 15.25, 19.67; Manila, 11.84, 25.34. The transmission begins each evening at 9.0 p.m. with the Programme Review, followed by the news and a commentary.

Sunday: 9.30 p.m., Woody Herman Show; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Radio Forum; 10.30, Our Foreign Policy.

Monday: 9.30 p.m., Popular Keyboard Artists; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Commentators' Digest; 10.30, the U.S. at Work.

Tuesday: 9.30 p.m., Gateways to Music; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Commentators' Digest; 10.30, New Roads in Science and Education.

Wednesday: 9.30 p.m., California Melodies; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Commentators' Digest; 10.30, the U.S.A. in World of Art.

Thursday: 9.30 p.m., C.B.S. Symphony Orchestra; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Commentators' Digest; 10.30, Here Are the Answers.

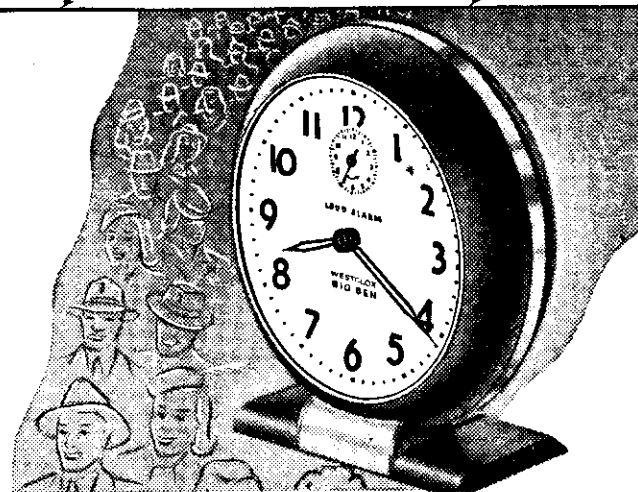
Friday: 9.30 p.m., Piano Playhouse; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Commentators' Digest; 10.30, This Land and Its People.

Saturday: 9.30 p.m., This is Jazz; 10.0, News and Press Opinion, U.S.A.; 10.15, Commentators' Digest; 10.30, Story U.S.A.

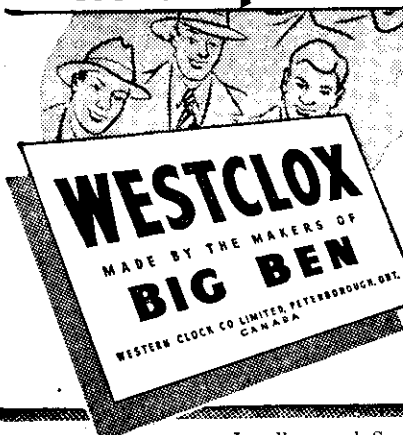
Canadian Programmes

DETAILS of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's shortwave programmes for Australia and New Zealand this Sunday evening (September 28) are: 7.45, Listeners' Corner; 8.0, News; 8.15, Canadian Chronicle (Pacific edition); 8.30, Sunday evening concert; 8.45, Cross Section. Frequencies: 11.72 m/c/s, 25.6 metres; 9.61 m/c/s, 31.22 metres.

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