


## MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET

(20th Century-Fox)

 THIS comedy-drama, one of the "surprise" box-office successes of the current season, gives the impression of having been made by somebody who knew exactly how to sit on a fence and keep his tongue tucked into his cheek the whole time. Only this would seem to explain the film's curious, but by no means unattractive, blend of cynicism and sentimentality. At one moment it is taking a swipe at Big Business, with such a statement as "There's a lot of bad 'isms floating around these days and one of the worst is commercialism"; at the next it is pushing Big Business's barrow up Broadway by photographing the Macy Christmas Parade and many of the activities inside the actual Manhattan department stores of Macy's and Gimbel's. There is a lot of sound talk about the perversion of the Christmas spirit in the interests of salesmanship; but in the outcome it is made pretty plain that this sort of salesmanship pays good dividends and is therefore adequately justified.

Yet, however muddled *Miracle on 34th Street* may be in its moralising, it has the benefit of an idea for its plot which makes it a pleasant and often

ingenious diversion, with more than an average share of wit, several sequences of genuinely tear-jerking quality, and one or two elaborate performances. The "miracle" is performed by an old fellow with genuine white whiskers and a very warm heart (Edmund Gwenn), who turns up in Manhattan just before Christmas and insists that his name is Kris Kringle. Nothing will shake his assurance that he is the one and only Santa Claus, in person: he maintains his identity against the pitying disbelief of a "modern" mother (Maureen O'Hara) and her more openly scornful little daughter (Natalie Wood), the active vindictiveness of an outraged psychiatrist (Porter Hall), and even in the face of a public trial for his sanity. The general attitude seems to be that he is "only a little crazy, like poets, painters, composers, and some of those men in Washington." But most of the scoffers he eventually converts; and the sanity trial, by an ingeniously logical device, becomes a legal triumph in which the Courts of New York, backed by the Federal Government, are forced to acknowledge that there really is a Father Christmas.

Before this happy though rather embarrassing finale, the old chap has had a rare opportunity to practise what he preaches by playing Santa Claus in R.

H. Macy and Co.'s toy department during the Christmas rush. He packs in the customers; he raises a lump in the throat by suddenly talking in Dutch to a shy little refugee from Holland; and he raises a storm by advising customers to go to rival stores if they can't get exactly what they want at Macy's. The storm quickly subsides when it is seen that the old chap's innocent honesty is paying handsome dividends in hard cash and goodwill. Stores all over the country start to adopt his policy. "From now on (explains 'Mr. Macy') we are going to place public service before profits—and consequently we are going to make more profits than ever. After all, you can't argue with success."

Oh yes, you can; but for once I'm not inclined to try. *Miracle on 34th Street* is a preposterous piece of whimsy, of course—but somehow it comes off.

### NATIONAL FILM UNIT

THREE items comprise Weekly Review No. 321, issued by the National Film Unit and screening at principal city theatres throughout the Dominion during the week beginning October 24. "Ski Tow" shows the new tow-line for skiers at Queenstown; "Aid for Britain" gives an idea of what is being done by makers of farm implements and fertilisers to hasten the Aid for Britain campaign; and "A Maori Gathering" gives highlights of the Maori Hui and sports held recently at Ruatoria.

## SHORTWAVE HIGHLIGHTS

THERE has been a slight change in the schedule of the United Nations Broadcasts from Lake Success both in the time and frequency of the stations, and since the activities of the General Assembly and other committees are well to the fore in world interest at the moment, the new schedule is presented below. All three U.N. stations are being heard at quite good strength at present in New Zealand.

**Stations, Frequencies and Wave-Lengths:**  
KRHO, 17.80 mcs., 16.85 metres; KNBI, 15.25 mcs., 19.67 metres; KNBA, 9.65 mcs., 31.09 metres.

Opening its Far Eastern and Australasian transmission every night (except Monday) with the news in French, the United Nations presents, at 7.50 p.m., news in English of proceedings at Lake Success, following at 8.0 with a talk by one of the leading delegates. Sir Carl Berendsen is frequently heard at this time giving the New Zealand point of view on various topics under discussion.

Each Sunday night, in addition to its regular schedule, the Canadian Shortwave Service broadcasts at 9.0 p.m. a commentary on the week's proceedings or a talk by one of the delegates. These may be heard from stations CHOL (11.72 mcs., 25.60 metres) and CKLS (9.61 mcs., 31.21 metres) at very good strength.

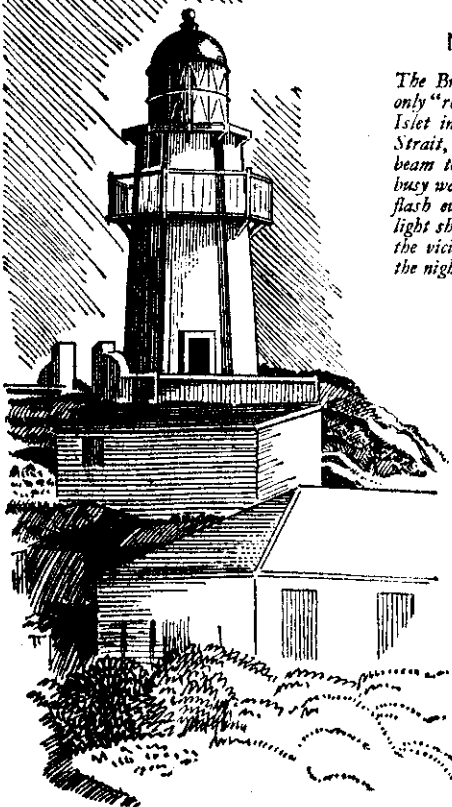
PCJ Hilversum, Holland, broadcasts to the Pacific every Tuesday evening on 15.22 mcs., 19.71 metres, the programme being announced under the title of the "Happy Station." The programmes consist of selected recordings, and run from 9.0 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. with the news of the Netherlands at 9.30, followed by a postscript on the news.

## NEW ZEALAND LIGHTHOUSES

### No. 8 THE BROTHERS

*The Brothers Lighthouse is New Zealand's only "rock station". Perched on a small rocky islet in almost the narrowest part of Cook Strait, 'The Brothers' flashes out its warning beam to the multitude of shipping using this busy water highway. The light shows a white flash every ten seconds. Also an auxiliary light shows a fixed red ray over Cook Rock in the vicinity. The Brothers was first lit on the night of 24th September 1877.*

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