

BEHIND THESE WALLS

(Byron Pictures)

I CAN'T recall having seen anything from the Byron Pictures studio before and I doubt if, in a month or two, I will recall much of *Behind These Walls* save a general impression that flying it out to New Zealand for the world premiere (I quote from an advertisement) did not put it in world class. In any case, it is wrong to imagine that this is a new picture. It is the French film *Jericho* (made in 1946) with the addition of English dialogue. It is also a salutary reminder that not all films which come out of France are good ones. *Behind These Walls*, based on a true story of the French Resistance, rarely rises above melodrama. It is characterised by stereotyped tricks and hackneyed devices of direction, by inept editing and cutting, and at times by considerable straining after effect (e.g., the ruthless realism of the prison-cell complete with dingy lavatory-pan). But when the general level of a film is low the occasional virtue protrudes. For example, in a lengthy procession of over-acted German types, most of them caricatures, there is a strangely sympathetic and restrained picture of a German army chaplain; and a sequence showing an R.A.F. Mosquito squadron going into action at low level is excitingly photographed. But between the high points the story sagged sadly and the fact that I was in on a world premiere of sorts didn't lighten the depression.

Happiness Club's Tenth Birthday

A LITTLE more than 10 years ago Dorothy Wood established her 12B "Happiness Club," with the idea of bringing together a number of women to work collectively for deserving causes. The group has now, we are told by 12B, a membership of over 14,000, with 21 branches reaching from Nelson to Whangarei. Since its foundation over £35,000 of its funds has been contributed to charitable activities in New Zealand and in addition many thousands of parcels were sent to the Forces during the war. Now the club is sending food parcels to Britain, and raising approximately £3,000 a year for charitable purposes. Its most important single gift was a completely-equipped mobile hospital trailer presented to the St. John Ambulance Association.

The directorship of the club was taken over by Joan Sutherland in 1939 when

the membership was 6337. During the centennial celebrations in 1940 two special trains were run from Auckland to Wellington to enable members of the Auckland branch to attend the festivities and the opening of the Wellington Happiness Club branch at 22B. The trains carried 870 women and the club paid £2000 in fares. In 1943 the club established the Children's Transit House which arranges for children of sick mothers to be sent to private homes for two or more weeks as required. At Oneroa Beach, Waiheke Island, a large City Mission Children's Camp has been established by the Happiness Club, and here children less fortunate than others are given annual holidays. There is also a club choir, which is often heard from 12B. The club's 10th



JOAN SUTHERLAND

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

IN Weekly Review No. 347 the National Film Unit presents an item which will touch the heart of every New Zealand citizen. "United Nations' Appeal for Children" shows the desperate plight of starving children in other countries, and cannot fail to bring realisation of the urgent need for help. Other items in the reel include "Grand Prix," in which motor-cyclists compete at Caut, Cantebury, and "Anzacs from Australia," showing the arrival in Wellington of the Australian servicemen who came over here for Anzac Day.

birthday will be celebrated on Sunday, May 9 ("Mothers' Day"), at 8.0 p.m. in the 12B Radio Theatre, when the programme will be officially opened by the Mayor of Auckland (Mr. J. A. C. Allum).

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