

## FILM REVIEWS

(Continued from page 21)

noisy Uncle Chris, the three aunts, Jenny, Sigrid, and Trina, Peter Thorkelson the undertaker — and the Norse-American English which Mama uses. But the story is told so well, the casting is on the whole so good, that any sense of strangeness wears off quickly. The cast is diverse enough, in all conscience—Edgar Bergen and Rudy Vallee rub shoulders with Irene Dunne, Cedric Hardwicke, Barbara Bel Geddes and Oscar Homolka—but everyone fits in admirably. The story is unashamedly sentimental (I could hear the sound of hard-worked handkerchiefs all around me in the dark), but the sentiment is skilfully managed and behind the sweetness there is a quality of strength. Irene Dunne as Mama is, naturally, the star turn. At one or two points I had the feeling that Mama was being remembered "with advantages," but on the whole the story is thoroughly credible as well as captivating. Like Mama, in fact, the film is well worth remembering.

### ON AN ISLAND WITH YOU (M.G.M.)

I DON'T expect anyone will believe me when I say that I went along to see *On An Island with You* simply because Jimmy Durante was in the cast, but that is no less than the truth—or very little less, anyway. Unfortunately

**BAROMETER**  
 FAIR TO FINE: "I Remember Mama."  
 OVERCAST: "On An Island With You."

Mr. Durante was not as funny as I had hoped he would be. His jokes were laboured and his little ditties fell far short of the classic comedy of, say, *The Lost Chord*. That left me with Esther Williams who spent most of her time wearing a heavy sub-tropical make-up and a swim-suit that looked as if it had been put on with a spray-gun. I would be the last to deny the charms of Miss Williams, so long as one is not exposed to them for too long, but the very thought of being cooped up on an island with her leaves me fatigued. The film was not without its minor attractions—some attractive water-ballet sequences, a neat piece of fancy ballroom dancing by Cyd Charisse and Ricardo Montalban, and for those who liked Latin American noises there was Xavier Cugat and his orchestra—but these were only minor attractions. The *tout ensemble* left me yawning.

#### NATIONAL FILM UNIT

THE National Film Unit's Weekly Review No. 385, which will be released on January 21, contains three items: "Lifting and Tumbling," in which experts give some demonstrations of muscular co-ordination; "Children's Rural Club," showing children gathered at Karori to see and take part in a display of pets and farm animals, and a waterfront item. This third item, "New Fishing Vessel," shows the launching of the biggest seine-fishing boat ever built at Auckland.

## See New Zealand First

GENERALLY speaking the programmes broadcast by Radio New Zealand, the shortwave station of the NZBS, are intended for overseas ears, and are not of particular interest to local listeners. However, one of these programmes, which has been presenting over the past few months a dramatized radio picture of New Zealand's scenic attractions (designed to interest prospective visitors and tourists), will shortly be broadcast from Station 4YZ Invercargill. Perhaps the idea is to lure holiday-makers up from the Deep South to take a look at North Island attractions like Rotorua, Waitomo, or Ngauruhoe—and vice versa. Or perhaps it just aims to tell listeners in an entertaining way a bit more about their country than they already know. Whatever the reason, the first episode of *New Zealand—Pacific Playground* will be heard from 4YZ at 8.20 p.m. on Monday, January 24.

Ancient Maori legends, episodes from early history, and a general description of the scenery, sporting facilities, and other features likely to attract tourists are included in the early programmes. Succeeding episodes deal with some of these things in detail. Episode Five, for

instance, is called "Thermal Wonderland." It starts off by retelling (with sound effects) the legend according to which the glowing volcano of Ngauruhoe was set alight by the gods to warm an ancient Maori chief who was overtaken there by a storm, and goes on to describe the Geyser Valley at Wairakei, and, of course, Rotorua.

Episode Six is about the Marlborough Sounds, Episode Seven describes the Waitomo Caves, and Episode Twelve is on Milford Sound. History is not forgotten either, and one episode is devoted to an account of the early gold-mining days in the South. Others give a nut-shell version of the development of some of the main cities, from the time of earliest colonists to the present day.

Because *Pacific Playground* was originally intended for overseas listeners it may seem at times to our more knowing ears to state the obvious, and to present its material from an oversimplified point of view. But there is still plenty in it that will be new and interesting to most people. *Pacific Playground* was produced by the NZBS with the assistance of the Tourist Department.

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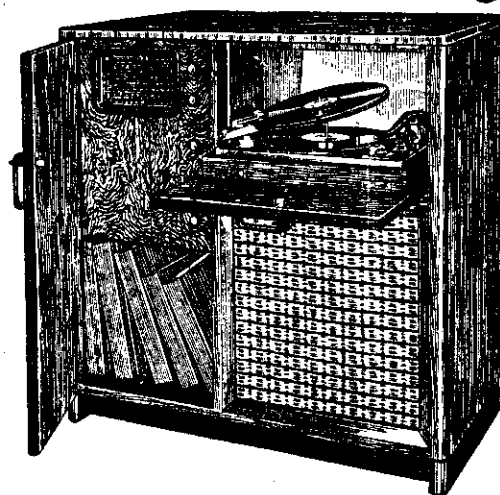
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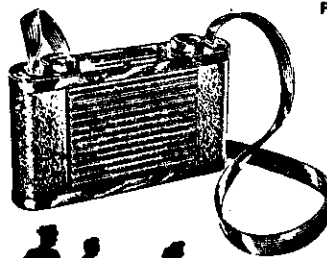


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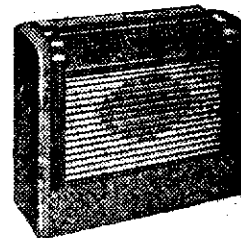
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