

VOICES FROM HOME

British Parents Speak to Their Children in New Zealand

BRITISH evacuee children in New Zealand are to have the thrill of hearing their parents speak to them through the BBC. A quarter-hour feature "Hello, Children!" is being broadcast from 1YA, 2YA, 3YA and 4YA on alternate Thursdays at 5.15 p.m.

The first five minutes of the session is devoted to news from the Homeland, and then follow 10 minutes of personal messages. The Children Overseas Reception Board in London advises its representative in the office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in New Zealand a few days in advance by cable, of the names of the parents who are sending the messages in each session, and the Wellington office has time to send telegrams to the homes concerned.

For the first session on Thursday, May 8, all the messages came from parents in Glasgow, representing 13 children in nine New Zealand homes, so the BBC is apparently preparing the programmes in their regional stations in rotation. Altogether, there are 200 British evacuee children in New Zealand.

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trucks so that they could be *de facto* as well as *de jure* owner-drivers—always straining every nerve to keep ahead of rival drivers and the finance companies.

Thus far the film was good. Warners have a credible crowd of extras, George Raft is engagingly tough, Humphrey Bogart—for once an honest citizen, if a sleepy one—is equally good though relatively non-belligerent. There is a first-class fight which should satisfy the most exacting critic of strong-arm tactics and a couple of nerve-racking truck crashes.

But when, not quite halfway through, the film gets off the road it gets off the rails too. As long as it was a film about truck-drivers and their own particular struggle for existence it was good and, to a great extent, it broke new ground. But, unfortunately, Bogart crashed his and Raft's truck. He lost an arm and Raft left the road to take a white-collar job and from then on the film slides rapidly down from the highroad of realism into the morass of melodrama. Mind you, as melodrama, it's quite good melodrama, but tacked on to such a fine beginning it seems trashy stuff and a more than twice-told tale, with the Eternal Triangle eternally jangling in the background. What I imagine was intended as the climax of the film—a courtroom scene in which Ida Lupino has hysterics and confesses to murder—seems very flat in comparison with one or two scenes from the earlier part of the film.

As I have said, George Raft and Humphrey Bogart are good, and so is Alan Hale as Ida Lupino's infatuated husband. The redoubtable Miss Sheridan, much to my disappointment, appeared to have slimmed (or sloughed) off most of her oomph and as for Ida Lupino, she looked positively two-dimensional. The first half was really worth a clap but the second definitely spoiled the average. Still, we sat up and were interested for, after all, it was an interesting experiment, and maybe Warners will do better next time.

A similar feature has been operating from the BBC for children in America, Australia and Canada, and in some cases, two-way conversation has been arranged between the parents and children. The NBS would like to provide a similar service in New Zealand, but the lack of direct shortwave connection between this country and England prohibits this.

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