

"49th PARALLEL"

Advance Notes On A Film With A History

(Written for "The Listener" by E. S. ANDREWS)

FOR a film so much gossiped about on both sides of the Atlantic, the Gaumont-British production, *49th Parallel* has come to New Zealand

with a surprising lack of fuss—though if G.M. will pardon the brief intrusion into his line of business, I myself think that the fuss will be made soon enough by audiences clamouring to see it. I remember the picture when it was little

more than a gleam in the eye of Canada's newly-appointed Film Commissioner, John Grierson, in the early months of the war.

Grierson (then visiting New Zealand) spoke of Canada with a deep affection; of its size and its variety and of its outstanding diversity of peoples. His imagination had seized upon the romantic and practical implications of the great

unfortified border-line stretching right across the North American Continent between the United States and Canada—the 49th parallel. He, being what he was, was dead-set to make a film about it. Largely, I think, through his influence, the Films Division of the British Ministry of Information was persuaded to put up an initial £25,000, and the job was soon under way.

* * *

FOR a government department to subsidise commercial film production was not entirely without precedent, but money as big as this is real money, and the proposal did not escape criticism. In its own words, the House of Commons Select Committee on National Expenditure, then (1940) distrustful of any expenditure on intangibles like propaganda, regarded "this kind of venture with the gravest misgivings." But troubles did not begin or end there. The Austrian-born Elisabeth Bergner, well-known for her sensitive and moving acting under the direction of her husband Paul Czinner, was chosen to play in the film, and actually set off for Canada to do location work. By this time a great deal of energy, money, and film had been expended and nobody was made any the happier when Bergner, for reasons of her own, refused to return from Hollywood to England to complete studio scenes. What really caused the hitch I cannot guess from the press controversy which raged at the time. But hitch there was, and it held up production and ran up costs. I have long been a Bergner admirer, but I freely admit that the substitute, Glynis Johns, has done as good a job for the film as Bergner could have done.

* * *

THE story of the film is credited to E. Pressburger and Michael Powell, and those fortunates who have read Powell's *200,000 Feet on Foola* and have also a sense of style will quickly realise when they see the film that, so far as the dialogue is concerned, the story credits are given in the right order, with Powell a very belated second in a field of two. As a one-time film critic I am brazen enough to confess that I do not know E. Pressburger, but he obviously knows his stuff. Powell, to judge by his book, is the complete extrovert, with a disarming frankness of statement which does not stop short of naive description of his girl-friend Frankie, or open and near-libellous criticism of his cameraman, all done in the most big-hearted fashion. He is not, I think, the author of much of the pungent dialogue of *49th Parallel*. For that matter, if everybody got his due, I should guess that the most striking patch of talk in the whole film owes more to Grierson than to the Pressburger-Powell combination.

* * *

HOWEVER, writing dialogue is not Powell's job; production and direction of films is his business, and *49th Parallel* puts him straightway into the top class. He made *Edge of the World*, a film which, falling a little short of box office success, was a real *succes d'estime*, a prestige picture still much talked about among the knowledgeable. The difference is that *Edge of the World* tended to be a coterie picture, whereas *49th Parallel* is going to hit the great mass of its



GLYNIS JOHNS
The substitute for Bergner

audiences just where they like it most.

Powell has that rarest of all gifts among directors—the ability to define and emphasise a mood in outdoor location shots without dragging the scenery in by the scruff of its neck. When his characters walk out of a door one feels at once that they walk into a real world of hills and roads and trees stretching all across the globe, instead of those interminable clausetophobic plaster walls and lacquered floors.

The broad sweep of the Canadian scene seems only to have enlarged his talents in that direction.

I haven't seen anything like it for *plein-air* atmosphere and tension since John Ford made *Stage Coach*; and that's getting to be ancient history as movies go.

Film Reviews by G.M.

MARRIED BACHELOR (M.G.M.)



THE state of bachelorhood, especially in its more unusual forms, has been a fruitful source of inspiration to Hollywood, introducing us at various times to bachelor mothers, bachelor fathers, bachelor girls, bachelor wives, and bachelor husbands. So far as I know, only bachelors of arts have been overlooked, probably because they are usually, thought not necessarily, quite respectable and to Hollywood therefore seem dull. Not, of course, that there is anything actually disreputable about most of these bachelor mothers, fathers, wives, and husbands; in general the idea is that "bachelor" is a discourtesy title only and that, though the fact may have to be kept hidden, the state of matrimony really exists all the time. Yet such is human nature that it seems to help a film at the box-office to be given a name which suggests, suggestively, that somebody is getting away with the best of two worlds.

Hence presumably *Married Bachelor*, a lively little comedy which treads the well-worn path of marital misunderstanding with delicacy and some sense of direction. It is a bachelor husband (Robert Young) who is the subject of the story: an irresponsible young man

(Continued on next page)

On Duty through the Blitz

Lady CAROLYN HOWARD is in the
Auxiliary Transport Service



Lady Carolyn Howard, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, is now an Auxiliary Driver. Despite the day-in, day-out strain, Lady Carolyn Howard still has time to care for her complexion, and she is enthusiastic about Pond's Creams. "I started using them before the war," she says, "they have made my skin much softer and finer."

Lady Carolyn Howard has thick, wavy hair of a glorious auburn shade, and large expressive deep green eyes.

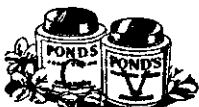
"Just a few minutes daily grooming with Pond's Creams keeps my complexion lovely," says

LADY CAROLYN HOWARD

Pond's two creams can do as much for your complexion as they have for Lady Carolyn's! When you use Pond's two creams together, their effect is truly marvellous. Follow the same beauty method as Lady Carolyn Howard. First, use Pond's Cold Cream for thorough cleansing. Pond's Cold Cream sinks right down into the pores and

floats out all the dust and powder that has accumulated there. Your skin becomes clearer. Those little "worry" lines vanish.

Then, smooth on Pond's Vanishing Cream, and away go those tiny bits of dry skin that roughen and dull your complexion. Your skin looks delicate, clearer—and it feels definitely softer. Pond's Vanishing Cream gives a lovely matt finish that takes powder with exquisite smoothness—and holds it for hours. Always use Pond's Cold and Vanishing Creams together as a complete beauty method.



Sold at all stores and chemists in 9½d. tubes for your handbags, 1/6d and 2/1 jars for your dressing table. (Prices including Sales Tax.)