

Cecil B. de Mille
Famous Hollywood
Film Producer

whose picture appears on the right, recently completed 30 years of making films, including many of the screen's biggest spectacles. To mark this occasion, he was the guest of honour at a luncheon given by the Associated Motion Picture Advertisers in New York. In the course of his speech, which was broadcast, de Mille

Said

AS Shakespeare (a good advertising man) once put it: "What's past is prologue," and what you and I are interested in to-day is the great saga that lies ahead of us. But let's not make the mistake of dismissing the past as of no further use to us. Confucius had some good advice about this. He said: "Study the past if you would divine the future." So I might recommend a study of the Roman Empire.

We've already made some of the mistakes that led to the burning of Rome and the fall of the Empire, and unless we correct them quickly and effectively, history may well repeat itself. But one fiddle would probably not be enough for us. We'd have to have a symphony orchestra made up of some very fine political musicians, and the results to us would be proportionately hotter.

But since I once burned Rome myself, that brings us to motion pictures, and the great part they must play in the present drama.

Worth Many Thousand Words

Our wise and gallant allies, the Chinese, have a saying to the effect that one picture is worth a thousand words. Multiply that by about 176,000 (the number of single pictures that make up an 11,000-foot motion picture), and you begin to appreciate the potentialities of this industry in putting across to the nation ideas that it needs to-day—needs so much and so deeply for its own salvation.

I don't need to enumerate those ideas, those principles, which we must hang on to if we are to come through this deadly crisis without mortal wounds. Freedom is a simple word, and so familiar — so familiar that, like the main-spring of a clock, we're not conscious of it until it stops. We just can't conceive of not being allowed to speak as we please, to work as we please, to read what we please, to listen to whatever radio programme we please, and to kneel to the God who made us, in whatever church we please.

Hollywood At The Front

I am not sure that we have fully realised that this is a war against civilians, and the part that civilians must play in it. This is the first war in which the entire population of the nation is on the



THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CINEMA

front, because the front goes completely around the world, nor is there any place to which we can retreat. Never before has every newly-born baby and every bent old man been on the field of battle.

Don't laugh when I say that Broadway and Hollywood are as much a part of the front as Pearl Harbour, because remember there was a young man there who laughed and refused to believe when they told him Japanese planes were coming.

This nation needs to get mad, forget hours and profits, roll up its sleeves, spit on its hands and go to work. Not until the unity, power and determination of the people replaces with modern, streamlined organisation the outmoded, inefficient, wasteful, and wishful thinking of the past tragic years of self-admiration and self-satisfaction can we rightfully pay for our brave wounded—and our dead. . . .

None But the Brave—

Liberty is a woman, ladies and gentlemen—a beautiful, desirable, and very jealous woman. No woman likes to be taken for granted. Look at her out there in your harbour. No Hollywood glamour girl can equal her attraction as she stands there holding her torch aloft, with the ocean at her feet, and the stars in her hair. She's not to be won by idlers—nor held by complacency. She is America's sweetheart, and she demands a courageous offensive against hate, and cruelty, and barbarism. She demands an offensive against intolerance and bigotry. An offensive against the savage dictators—and the petty racketeers who would be dictators. She demands an offensive that combines the pride of the past with the might of the present to end, for all time, invasion against the rights of the free men, who protest their love for her.

Those are her terms, and none but the brave deserve the fair.

The job of motion pictures is to help bring home a full realisation of this crisis and of the deadly peril that lurks in internal squabbles. Hitler and the Mikado think they can conquer the world, but we, motion pictures, have already conquered it. We have invaded every country, not to bring it death and destruction, or take from it its wealth, but to bring it our wealth which is humour and drama, and science and art.

We have invaded not with armed forces and smashing tanks, but with romance and music and beauty.

To-day, motion pictures hold the same place in the war effort that a standard-bearer does in an army. Ours is the task of holding high and ever visible the values that everyone is fighting for. I don't mean flag waving, but giving the embattled world sharp glimpses of the way of life that we've got to hang on to in spite of everything. In the midst of battles and convoy departures to foreign lands, of bombing raids and disturbing headlines, we have it in our power to show a lonesome soldier what home looks like, to mirror to him and to all men, the joys of freedom. We can give harassed America relaxation and rest and occasionally, even an hour of peace and laughter. The world knows us and likes us. Only the other day, a member of the Dutch press told me that she had received a cable from Batavia while that outpost of freedom was in the midst of a bombing raid. The people of Batavia wanted to know who won the Academy awards.

I read that Donald Nelson said "I'd give anything in the world if just one night I could finish a leisurely dinner, walk out on the street, drift in the crowds, footloose, drop in to a movie when it caught my eye." I think that shows

Composer On Top Of A Pyramid

ON Tuesday of this week, June 16, the NBS Orchestra conducted by Andersen Tyrer, played the first movement of "New Zealand Symphony" a work by a young New Zealand composer, Alan Heathcote White. This is not the first time that Mr. White's music has been performed over the air. In 1937, the Choral Society gave a presentation of his "Coronation Ode" in honour of the Coronation of George VI. This ode was written during the author's first trip to Europe and was actually composed in Trafalgar Square with the pigeons fluttering round and Nelson looking down from his column. Another of his symphonies, the "European Symphony," was composed during a bicycle tour round Europe, through Belgium, France, Holland, the Rhineland, and Austria. Perhaps this was something of a pilgrimage as well as a tour. "I stood in a room in Beethoven's house," Mr. White told *The Listener*. "I visited the place where Schubert lived, and I went to Weimar and saw Goethe's house. All the time, in every place, I was composing. I even composed a song on the top of the pyramid at Gizeh when I was in Egypt!"

On his first visit to Europe, Mr. White visited Palestine, and this inspired him to write another work, the "Eastern Symphony." "The work that I think is my most important," said Mr. White, "is 'The Triumph of Christ.' This is an oratorio, and embodies my idea on all that has happened in recent years and the new world of hope and peace that will be established."

The "New Zealand Symphony" was written in 1937, and was to have been published in Vienna, but the project had to be abandoned on the eve of the Munich crisis because the Jewish head of the publishing house had to flee from Europe.

very poignantly how people everywhere in these times of turmoil and distress look to Hollywood for diversion and relaxation, and even a little bit of glamour. It is a touching tribute and a magnificent responsibility.

The Fifth Estate

In medieval times, nations were divided into three estates—the clergy, the nobles and the common people. Then Edmund Burke bestowed upon the press the title in which it has gloried ever since. He christened it "The Fourth Estate." To-day, we can speak with equal justice of the motion picture as "The fifth estate," and of radio as "the sixth estate." For the press, pictures, and radio are powerful forces of the people, and bear a sacred trust.

As for the future of the motion picture industry, your guess is as good as mine. But whatever its future may be, it's bound up with a free America. And America will last, ladies and gentlemen. It is the oldest country on earth. It was conceived in the mind of the first man to wear chains, and before that, in the Mind of God.