

SPEAKING CANDIDLY

REAP THE WILD WIND

(Paramount)

IN the publicity posters with this film, Ray Milland is presented as a young man in unmistakably modern dress, a fact which draws attention to a curious and significant mental attitude on the part of many Hollywood producers. They want to use historical themes—indeed, they are forced to by shortage of other material—but they've got the idea that the public fights shy of "costume" or "period" pictures, and so time and again their publicity goes out of its way to cover up the powder and patches in the plot. When this is impossible, they strive to give history an analogy with modern times, presenting Pitt as the equivalent of Churchill, and likening what Nelson did to the French with what we are going to do to the Germans.

In spite of Mr. Milland's up-to-date publicity wardrobe, there is nothing modern about *Reap the Wild Wind*. It is the same kind of film as Cecil B. De Mille has been making for the past 30 years and it deviates not one whit from

his well-worn, well-tried pattern. Produced at a cost of nearly two million dollars, it has almost everything in it but the kitchen stove—and that wouldn't have added much to the entertainment. The harvest that picture-goers will reap from the wind that blows across the treacherous Florida coastline in the year 1840 is a story about villainous wreckers (led by the deep-dyed Raymond Massey), courageous sailors and salvagers, and a tomboy heroine (Paulette Goddard) who has sweethearts (Ray Milland and John Wayne) in both groups; a succession of Simply Colossal Spectacles (all in technicolour) featuring storms, calms, ship-wrecking, head-breaking, trial scenes (in the best modern American divorce-court manner, with everybody talking at once), stately mansions, low dives (above ground and under water), a monkey, a mulatto, and a giant octopus; and a climax (almost rivalling that in *Hamlet*) which leaves practically everybody in the film dead on the quarterdeck.

Whatever else he does, Mr. De Mille certainly gives us an eyeful, but although this is his 66th attempt, I doubt if he has yet reached de millennium.

TO THE SHORES OF TRIPOLI

(20th Century-Fox)

THE introduction informs us that the film's purpose is to show just what makes a United States Marine. We must confess that we have always had some respect for the Marine Corps, but now that we have seen for ourselves the prodigious outpouring of effort and emotion required to produce one individual marine, our admiration is all the greater.

The individual is John Payne. Admittedly, as the son of a retired officer and himself a retired playboy, he suffers a double disadvantage. The influences brought to bear on him are briefly (1). 166 years of Marine Corps history—a negligible influence. (2). A martinet sergeant (Randolph Scott), who has a contrariwise influence. (3). The beautiful Maureen O'Hara, a ubiquitous nurse, who tells him she only marries marines—certainly a disturbing influence. Yet the fact that John Payne finally and irrevocably becomes a marine is due to none of these, but to the fact that he happens to be riding in a taxi with a radio and the wrong woman and thus hears the news of Pearl Harbour. He then leaps out of the taxi, on to a troopship, and into the arms of Nurse O'Hara. All of which is highly satisfactory from the Boy-Meets-Girl angle, but we doubt its application to the marine-in-the-street.

Some insight into the training of marines as a whole is provided by frequent shots (in technicolour), of marines marching, marines having rifle inspection, marines dancing with debs. Apart from this, no Vital Secrets of Marine Corps Training are revealed, so that while we have no hesitation in billing *TTSOT* as average entertainment for adults and children, we have also much pleasure in announcing that it is Definitely Unsuitable for Fifth Columnists.



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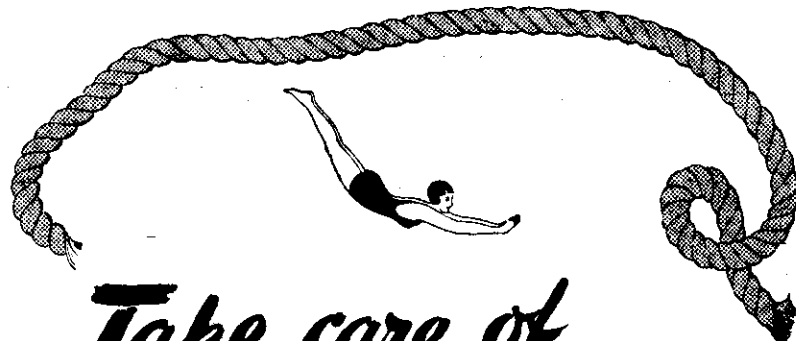
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- 5 Avoid rough or abrasive surfaces.
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- 8 Do not use cleaning solvents yourself. These should only be applied by professional cleaners.
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