

# SPEAKING CANDIDLY

## OUT OF THE FOG

(Warner Bros.)



OUR little man found himself in something of a quandary over *Out of the Fog*. It is one of the most interesting—and most irritating—films he has seen in months, and there were moments when the transition from stand-up claps to sit-down slumps was so rapid that a casual observer might have thought he was indulging in some obscure variety of Swedish drill.

Adapted (but apparently only to a minor degree) from a stage-play called *The Gentle People*, by Irwin Shaw, the film is a foggy affair, strongly reminiscent in this respect of *The Informer* and *Winterset*. And there are one or two scenes which could rank with any in those classics. The unfortunate thing is that hardly one of these good scenes but is spoiled by some error in taste, timing, or psychology. Humour or farce is introduced too soon, in an attempt to relieve dramatic tension, and at times—and particularly in the ending—one feels that a half-hearted attempt has been made to compromise between realism and sentimentality. The fault, however, lies with Anatole Litvak, the director, and not with the players.

*Out of the Fog*, therefore, is not truly an "A" grade show, but for those who like art as well as entertainment from the cinema, and who can stand the dramatic flaws for the sake of the virtues which make them more apparent, this picture should be a "must". In the thankless part of a small-time "protection" racketeer, John Garfield is splendid. Ida Lupino, as the thrill-hungry girl who succumbs to his fatal attraction against her conscious will and the moral sanctions of her upbringing, is very much better than she had any chance of being in *High Sierra*—though her role is not so dissimilar. The chief supporting players are Thomas Mitchell and John Qualen, who were last seen together (with Rita Hayworth) in *Angels Over Broadway*, an equally interesting film with a similar crepuscular atmosphere. And those who saw that Hecht production will not be surprised when I add that the real star of *Out of the Fog* is Mitchell, who turns in a performance that would get him an Academy Award if the film was likely to be a success at the box-office. Which, I'm afraid, it isn't.

## RIDE 'EM COWBOY!

(Universal)



THIS latest Abbott and Costello farce is like all the other films they have made—good entertainment on the whole if you simply want to laugh and are not worried about digging down into your sub-conscious to find out why you laugh. As usual, the jokes are a bit dog-eared and the situations were by no means new when Chaplin was a boy, but still the laughs come across, and I am not going to be over-critical. And—to be

fair—there are one or two good jokes that haven't been cracked in my hearing before.

There are, of course, others in the cast besides Mr. Abbott and Mr. Costello. There is Dick Foran, the Singing Cow Boy. There is, it is true, no singing cow, but the Merry Macs are heard at regular intervals, and Ro-mantic Interest is provided by a Miss Anne Gwynne, by bathing and riding beauties, Red Indian squawks, and so on. *Ride 'Em Cowboy* is, in fact, rather like an American sandwich—satisfying, if you don't object to a bit of ham.

## THE TUTTLES OF TAHITI

(R.K.O. Radio)



CHARLES LAUGHTON'S acting is up to standard in this film, but the film itself isn't quite up to the standard of Charles Laughton's acting, if you follow me. Clad in a battered straw hat, a stubbly beard, a dirty singlet and a dirtier pair of pants, the old maestro has a character-actor's field day as the patriarch of a half-caste Tahitian family, but the story is as straggly and strung-out as his countless progeny, and like them it also seems lacking in any purpose except to serve as a background for the antics of Papa Laughton. Not that one should expect much purpose in such idle people as the Tuttles. Any energy (except for improvident enjoyment) which they may have inherited from the Massachusetts forebear who originally went beachcombing, has long since evaporated under the Pacific sun, and their primary economic need is for a few francs monthly to buy enough petrol to go fishing to earn enough francs to buy petrol to go fishing to . . . etc. When the fish fail, the local doctor has a kind heart. Far more important to the Tuttles than the sordid business of working for a living is the sport of cock-fighting. When one of their more adventurous scions (Jon Hall) returns from America with nothing to show for his roaming but the acquisition of a prize-black rooster, the Tuttles put their singlets on his victory over a neighbour's bird. When the Tuttle champion is ignominiously defeated, the Tahitian sky is temporarily overcast; but they survive this debacle almost as light-heartedly as the subsequent discovery that the family has, in one glorious spree, run straight through a small fortune in prize-money acquired when some of the Tuttle boys salvage an abandoned ship.

As you may gather, the film's feckless philosophy won't do much to encourage an all-out war effort: at least not if you start thinking, as I did, how pleasant it might be to join the Tuttles on Tahiti—provided the Fighting French would let you land. The Tuttles themselves would never notice the extra one; they'd accept you without question as one of the family who was somehow missed in the last census. But the film's chief appeal will not be to the occasional

lotus-eaters nor to the regular consumers of Hollywood hash, but rather to the connoisseurs of Laughton. They should enjoy this repast almost as much as they enjoyed his offering in *The Beachcomber* (the flavour of his performance is almost exactly the same). But *The Tuttles of Tahiti* is almost a one-course meal: the side-dishes of *The Beachcomber* are missing.

## ICE-CAPADES

(Republic)



IF you are interested in seeing some good skating—by Megan Taylor, the English champion, and several others who are apparently just as expert but whose names escaped me—then *Ice-capades* will probably interest you. Most of the cast, with the natural exception of those entrusted with the comedy relief, seem quite at home on the ice. It's when they get off the ice that the rot sets in. And after all, you can't have ice occupying the centre of the stage all of the time. Even an iceberg keeps nine-tenths of itself (or is it five-sixths?), out of sight. At any rate, while some of the sequences did convince me that skating rather than dancing is the poetry of motion, the show in general left me a trifle cold.

**Defence First**

New Zealanders—to a man, woman and child—realise that the War Services have first call on everything they need. Dry batteries play an important part in the work of the men manning our anti-aircraft defences. In the Army, Navy, Air Force and other war services, dry batteries are needed for torches, radios, and many other uses. We know that you, like your local retailer, will remember these facts if you experience a temporary shortage of Eveready Batteries.

A National Carbon Company Product.

ER/42/828

**EVEREADY**

TRADE-MARK

**TORCH and RADIO BATTERIES**

Serving the Nation