


SPEAKING CANDIDLY

PRIDE OF THE YANKEES

(Goldwyn-R.K.O. Radio)

 THIS is the life story of the late Lou Gehrig, who was a completely ordinary person in every respect but one — he could hit a ball harder than anybody else in America. This accomplishment has provided Sam Goldwyn with the excuse to produce a full-dress movie and Gary Cooper with the chance to win the Academy Award for the best performance of 1942 (it's just been announced). Since baseball as yet means nothing in my own life, it did not provide me with any reason to leap from my seat in excitement, but I can well imagine that in the U.S.A., where Gehrig was apparently as big a national figure as the President, this screen biography must be as soul-stirring to the average citizen as a film about Nepia would be to the average New Zealander. It's just a question of the shape of the ball and the way you knock it about; and on the face of it I suppose it's also as reasonable for Cooper to win the industry's highest award by portraying a man who played in 2,000 consecutive ball-games as it was for him to win a similar honour last year by portraying a man who captured 132 Germans single-handed.

Not that Gehrig was half as complex or interesting a character as Sergeant York. He was born, he grew up, and he died (at a fairly early age). He didn't drink, smoke, swear, or go with fast women. He was a very good son to his proud parents, and an excellent husband to his proud wife. (He was never, apparently, a father). In between, he smacked a ball about all over America, made home runs for the Yankees, and became famous. Only a cynic would deny my assertion that, baseball apart, Lou Gehrig was a completely ordinary person. As presented by Cooper, he is not dull, but obviously he is not the colourful material of which movies are customarily made, and it is good to see that even Sam Goldwyn has come to realise that there is some dramatic merit in a plain recital of domesticity. At the same time, I cannot myself see an Academy Award in Cooper's performance. He is becoming the Apostle of Ordinarity, and I think is in some danger of being martyred for it. His acting is beginning to follow a stereotyped pattern, so that you know in advance when he is going to do a Mr. Deeds, or when he is going to remind you of Dopey in the Seven Dwarfs. Simple souls may be very lovable, but they can become monotonous. Better deserved, I would say, was the Academy Award to Teresa Wright as "the most outstanding and promising newcomer of the year." She plays the role of Gehrig's wife, and gives it freshness as well as simplicity. Good, too, are the actor and actress who portray Gehrig's doting parents.

"INFILTRATION"

Dear G.M.—We are worried about your "letter" in reply to the obviously "pink" Bruce Mason (Jan. 22). For years we have been following your

An Oscar For Greer Garson

ACCORDING to a radio report just picked up from America, Greer Garson has won the Academy Award for the best performance by an actress in 1942 for her role in M-G-M's "Mrs. Miniver." Well, it's nice to be proved a true prophet these days when soothsaying is so often a risky pastime. Reviewing the film on January 8, I said: "... If I now predict that Miss Garson will win an Academy Award, I think I have as much chance of being a true prophet as I had last year about Gary Cooper in "Sergeant York!"

Cooper has won the corresponding men's award again this year for his performance in "The Pride of the Yankees," a baseball story—but as you can see from the review opposite, I wouldn't have been right about that! Walter Pidgeon is reported to have been the runner-up for this Oscar, by seven votes to five.


An award for the most promising outstanding newcomer to the screen in 1942 has been won by Teresa Wright, who played the heroine in "The Pride of the Yankees," the young bride in "Mrs. Miniver," and the daughter of the house in "The Little Foxes."

No other awards have yet been announced.

"nags" and now your "little man" with the happiest results and now, at this late hour, you start "infiltrating"—or did you always? We hoped you would remain (and if possible enlarge), as a superlatively good judge of a picture and a story: politics and the new order are things apart, and frankly, whenever we have time to spare from Home-guarding - papering-the-living-room-and-mowing-grass, we think how pleasant it might be to live at Beldon with a cook, a car, and canoe.


F.B. Auck., F.A. BOWN (Auckland).

[Politics and the new order are no more apart from films than they are from books, newspapers, Home-guarding, and lawn-mowing.—G.M.]



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