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ARE THE FILMS DOOMED?

A Hollywood Producer Is Gloomy

ACCORDING to Arthur Hornblow, the motion picture producer, the film industry is being "deliberately torpedoed," says the *Christian Science Monitor*.

"Nothing short of dire," was his description of the industry's plight, as reported from Washington, where he had been making his views known to Government officials.

"In another year, if things keep on as they are going, there won't be a motion picture industry to worry about."

The immediate object of Mr. Hornblow's alarm is the possible drafting of the "not more than 25" key personalities of the motion picture industry to



JAMES STEWART: what should be his job in the U.S. war effort?

serve in the armed forces. This began, it will be remembered, with the induction of James Stewart, and has been followed by the enlistment of some of the other male stars, notably Clark Gable. Potential Army or Navy service is now facing most of the other stars, including Robert Taylor, Spencer Tracy, Gary Cooper, James Cagney and dozens of others—if not by actual drafting, then by public questioning of their right to stay at home and make pictures while other young men of their age and physical fitness go away to war.

This may not seem too severe a fate to the millions of other young men who have already taken the same course, but this, Mr. Hornblow contends, is not the issue. The issue is one of determining actual usefulness to the war effort, and to the peace which is to follow. In his radio broadcast, Mr. Hornblow said:

"Post-war Americans must know more than we knew (after the last war). Their ideals must be higher than ours were, their purposes more resolute, their understanding of what it's all about much wider. Hollywood is equipped to co-operate with the Government, with the schools and colleges and with parents in this job of education in Americanism and human relations. As troops in the field are trained for war,

For the next few weeks "G.M." will be on holiday. In his absence our film review section will be discontinued.

the Army behind the field should be trained for the peace. Most people agree that the screen provides a powerful bulwark in fighting the war itself. Its uses in the realms of morale, information, and entertainment are known. But when it comes to what we once called peace which is in reality but a suspension of the shooting, our apathy and ignorance take over. Our blackest national years followed the Civil War, and our accomplishment in 1918 as we abandoned victory step by step."

On his theme that there is now grave danger that Hollywood will not be allowed to do what it can best do, because of the loss of personalities who are capable of attracting large audiences, Mr. Hornblow says:

"This idea of a pitchfork Army is as old-fashioned as the buggy. We must climb out of the concept that if you don't wear khaki you must wear a white feather. This is a war of specialists, and motion picture stars are the only specialists in their field. They are as important to the motion picture as steel is to the steel industry. We are already cancelling pictures all over the place because the players will not be available for them.

Example by Mrs. Miniver

"When *Mrs. Miniver* was made, and seen by the President and Mr. Churchill, the industry was requested by them to release it to as many theatres as possible at the lowest rates possible. This was done, and it is admitted everywhere that this picture has done incalculable good for Anglo-American relations."

Mr. Hornblow pointed out that the President himself had written a letter to Mr. Gable, when it was indicated that Gable would soon enlist, telling the actor that he could be more useful where he was. This was not alone, he said, because of the star's great popularity.

"Gable's three pictures a year bring \$9,000,000 in taxes into the United States Treasury," he said.

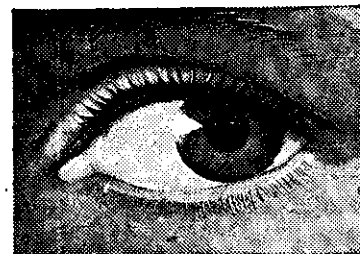
He pointed out that James Stewart, now a lieutenant in the Air Force, and instructing beginning flyers as a ground instructor, can hardly be said to be aiding the war effort as much as he might be doing if he were in pictures, which drew 30,000,000 people into theatres every week.

"England," he says, "did the same thing—and has made but one successful picture since the war started. But Germany is keeping its best actors at work — to send pictures into South America, for purposes which do not have to be detailed here."

The American picture industry, Mr. Hornblow points out, can still make pictures without its stars.

"But," he asks, "who will see them? Three million people, maybe, instead of thirty million!"

"Americans," he says, "must be permitted to follow all issues of the war and the post-war period as they develop. This is not altogether a matter for the press and radio, for the motion picture reaches many people these do not reach, and is able to carry messages they do not always carry. It does so by entertainment, and this will not change, because it is built upon entertainment. But entertainment can also instruct and guide and inform—and Hollywood has proved it."



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