

(continued from previous page)

Still, it is a pretty fine distinction. The Nazis, after all, are actuated by the motive, however misguided, of serving the State. (So are the Russians if it comes to that, since almost every Russian film is designed as propaganda). It is a matter with them of high policy and principle—a bad principle certainly, but still a principle. On the other hand, so far as I can see, the British or American film industry when it twists or glosses the facts is either just being slipshod (which is hard to believe, and reprehensible anyway), or else its main motive is simply to make bigger profits, because it has come to believe that truth can never pay as well as fiction.

I sometimes think that the most useful function of screen censorship would be to protect not our morals, but our history-books.

Note: In drawing attention to errors in *The First of the Few* last week we made one ourselves! The year in which the story began was printed as 1933. It should have been 1922.

TENNESSEE JOHNSON

(M.G.M.)

THIS is a very worthwhile film, in my opinion—an opinion apparently not shared by everybody else, since it ran for only one week at its release in Wellington. Perhaps one could hardly expect New Zealand picturegoers to be interested in the biography of a comparatively obscure American president and in a rather involved chapter of American political history: but those who are will find themselves rewarded by some excellent character acting from Van Heflin and Lionel Barrymore), well-written dialogue, intelligent direction (by William Dieterle), and by a story of political intrigues and conflicting ideals which is surprisingly, almost daringly, relevant to the present. They may even come to the conclusion that they are seeing one of the best and most adult films of its type since *Emile Zola* and *Louis Pasteur*.

In addition, they will have the unusual experience of seeing an historical film which sticks with remarkable closeness to the facts. The facts, of course, were made for the films: seldom can Hollywood have been so conveniently served by history. For in this case anyway, the truth was at least as strange as fiction. Andrew Johnson, who succeeded Abraham Lincoln, was impeached by a hostile Congress while he was still President. That in itself was a good dramatic basis for any film, but even the most enterprising scriptwriter might have hesitated to go further and make Johnson survive impeachment by the bare vote necessary, if history had not got in first and made it happen that way. Again, Johnson's chief opponent was the redoubtable Thaddeus Stevens, who bitterly opposed the president's policy (inherited from Lincoln) of conciliating the South after the Civil War. The records describe Stevens as old, lame, and irascible—and there was Lionel Barrymore under contract to M.G.M.! I did not think of Dr. Gillespie while I watched Barrymore, on crutches or in a wheel-chair, browbeating Congressmen; but next time I see Dr. Gillespie browbeating his hospital staff, I am sure I shall think of Thaddeus Stevens.

Again, we have with some justification grown rather cynical about Hollywood's flair for discovering that, in the background of almost every great man of history, there was some quiet, good

woman who moulded his destiny. There is, however, no need to be cynical about the role of Eliza McCordle (quietly and admirably played by Ruth Hussey), the village librarian who took the uncouth young Johnson under her wing, educated him, married him, fired his ambition, and helped him to advance from sheriff to Governor, to Senator, and then to vice-President (Lincoln's assassination made him President). For the text-books confirm that Eliza McCordle deserves a good deal of the credit for turning a "poor white" into the first citizen of the United States. There are also authorities to support the film in first presenting Johnson as a runaway tailor's apprentice.

With such aid from fact, and with a brilliantly discerning portrait of Johnson by Van Heflin, which does not omit the man's uncouthness and fiery temper, or even the suggestion that he sometimes drank too much, *Tennessee Johnson* presents an engrossing drama for adult audiences. One scene at least is wholly memorable: Jefferson Davis's emotion-charged announcement of the South's decision to secede from the Union, and the withdrawal of all the Southern senators from the Chamber—all except Johnson of Tennessee, who stood by Lincoln.

But *Tennessee Johnson* is more than merely engrossing. It is also provocative. There is one present-day parallel in Johnson's warning that a disunited Union might in years to come be the prey of rapacious foes from outside. Even more relevant and pointed, however, is the theme of conflict between Johnson and Thaddeus Stevens over Johnson's belief that reconciliation is to be preferred to retaliation: that peace is to be found not in revenge and in keeping defeated enemies in prolonged subjection, but in the spirit of Lincoln's "With malice towards none . . ." So Johnson pardoned the rebel Southerners and worked to reinstate them as equals, while Stevens, with a fanaticism that was at least equally sincere, believed that this weak generosity would cause another war. Hollywood does not attempt to draw any conclusions from this conflict. That, again, is left to history.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE.

Statement for September, 1943.

Estates to the value of £558,388 were reported and accepted for administration by the Public Trustee during the month of September, 1943. The total value of estates and funds under administration by the Public Trustee on March 31, 1943, was £66,777,793, and the new business for the six months ended September 30, was £3,214,598.

Grants of administration made by the Court in favour of the Public Trustee numbered 264 for the month.

During the month 596 new wills appointing the Public Trustee executor were prepared on behalf of testators and lodged for safe custody, and 404 existing wills were revised to provide for changes desired by testators. The total number of wills now held in the Public Trust Office on behalf of living persons is 123,395.

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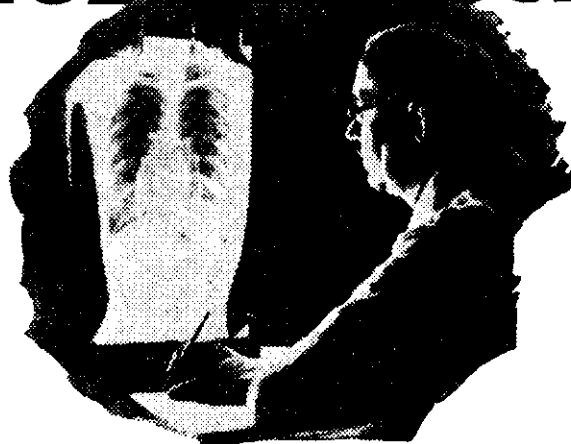
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TUBERCULOSIS



You don't inherit it YOU CATCH IT!

No one is born with Tuberculosis or 'Consumption' as it used to be called. It is a disease spread by germs from an infected person. Nearly always the germs lodge in the lungs. A healthy, well-nourished body resists and overcomes them. But if the body's resistance is low, the germs get a hold and the slow deterioration of the lungs begins.

The person suffering from active tuberculosis is the chief source of INFECTION for others. The germs are spread from the sick to the healthy by:—

- (1) Coughing, sneezing, spitting.
- (2) Handling articles infected by a patient's sputum.
- (3) Direct contact, such as kissing, and even casual contact, such as shaking hands.

The germs can also get into the body through drinking raw milk from infected cows, but the main spread is from the Tuberculosis patient.

The fact that Tuberculosis tends to "run in families" has given rise to the false impression that it is hereditary. But close contact within the family circle is responsible for this "family" tendency—the germs spread from one person to another.

- HEALTHY, STRONG BODIES are the best insurance against Tuberculosis infection.
- You cannot catch it unless you contact someone who has it.
- Use PASTEURISED milk.

FOR A HEALTHIER NATION

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