

BAROMETER

FAIR: "South of Algiers."
FAIR: "Take the High Ground."

girl (Elaine Stewart) they meet in town.

Ryan gives the recruits such a bad time that even Holt rebels in the end. The idea seems to be that they are driven partly for their own good and partly because Ryan can't help it. He is a problem child, as his relations with the girl show. So is she for that matter; and, properly worked out, the part of the story that concerns these two might have been worthwhile. As it stands, it's a gesture in the direction of some study of character which, at any rate, isn't allowed to ruin the film by giving it a conventional happy ending. And that's what I expected and feared. In brief, *Take the High Ground* is not very good but might have been much worse. Richard Brooks directed.

Everest Film Business

THE CONQUEST OF EVEREST has been selected by the British Film Academy as the best documentary film of 1953. Although there are complaints that its run in London was too short and the cinemas too small, it continues to draw crowds at provincial centres throughout the British Isles. I have seen long queues for every showing day and night at cities with such varied tastes as Oxford and Glasgow, writes J. W. Goodwin from London.

In London there was the absurd position of people having to content themselves with the French film *Himalayan Epic* while the British *Conquest of Everest* was showing in Paris. The French film was the attraction at one of the largest West End cinemas with a well-reviewed comedy for more than three months: the far better British film, associated with a third-rate feature about the perils of the primrose path of hire-purchase, was moved to a smaller cinema after five weeks and taken off in London four weeks later.

Sir Alexander Korda's organisation says it has no place to show it again in London—yet a prominent film financier has declared that *The Conquest of Everest* will probably make a higher percentage of profit than any other film in history.

What national pride cannot achieve in London, a sense of business is doing in New York, where it has broken every attendance record at the Fine Arts Theatre. In the first four weeks 70,000 New Yorkers saw the film, it is expected to run for six or eight months, and to bring more than £357,000 in general distribution throughout the United States.

The members of the expedition have also been big business. One television appearance of just over quarter of an hour, produced in New York by the Ford Foundation, earned the Joint Himalayan Committee of the Royal Geographical Society, more than £1000 towards the cost of future expeditions.

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MARGARET HANSON
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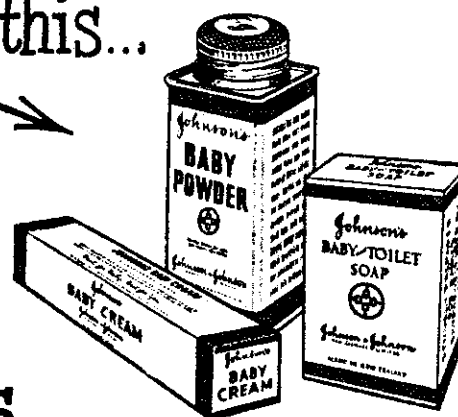
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