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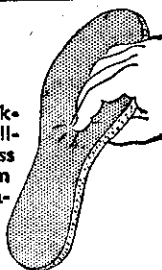
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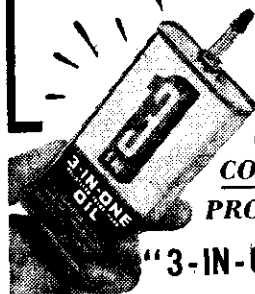
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FILM REVIEWS, BY JNO.

Well Made, New Zealand!

SNOWS OF AORANGI and THE SNOWLINE IS THEIR BOUNDARY

(N.Z. National Film Unit)

THE two best films I saw last week were made in New Zealand. With a little more luck I might have been enthusing about four films instead of two, but Circumstances Beyond My Control (in a word, work) kept me away from the National Film Unit's preview show until shortly after half-time. I suspect, however, that if I had been there from curtain-up it might have been difficult to find space this week for the common or garden commercial cinema. But *Snows of Aorangi* (of which I saw all but the first few flakes) and *The Snowline is Their Boundary* were, in any case, enough in themselves to make the week memorable.

Film Unit newsreels and short features have, of course, always been popular. They have edified and instructed us, given life and meaning to the news of the day, recorded our history as it happened, and (to a greater extent perhaps than we realise) shown us where we are going and why. If there were roughnesses or lapses to begin with, they had our cheerful indulgence.

But it is a long time now since the work of the Miramar studios needed any parochial props. The recently-screened *Kotuku* was a masterly study in black and white. In the field of colour photography, *Snows of Aorangi* and *The Snowline is Their Boundary* are likewise in world class. The first of these gave me the most exciting glimpse of snow and ice I have had since I saw *The Conquest of Everest*, and the finest display of skiing I have so far seen on film. The photography is superb and the editing matches it in quality. This is a film with pace, high spirits and good humour as well as great pictorial beauty. *The Snowline is Their Boundary*—high-country farming in the shadow of the Southern Alps—moves with a more deliberate tempo. Technically, I suppose, the other is the more accomplished of the two, but the musters and their dogs—and the sheep pouring down the hillface like porridge—completely captivated me. And the use here of an authentic New Zealand voice in place of the suaver accents of the studio added notably to the authenticity of the picture. *The Snowline* covers more than mustering, but does not attempt to give us a complete shepherd's calendar. There are plenty more films waiting in the high country, and I hope they will be as good as this one.

It has been suggested to me that both films (in particular the first) might be criticised on the ground that they violate the unity of place—shots from different localities being cut in together. I can see that this criticism might well be made by specialists, and would be reasonable if the films were for specialists. But I cannot agree that it has any general validity. The craftsman and artist must have the right to arrange his materials, and tell the truth in his own way. But you will have your own chance to judge before long. Both these films have been shown (and acclaimed) at the Edinburgh Festival, and they will soon be on circuit here. Don't miss them.

BAROMETER

FINE: "Snows of Aorangi" and "The Snowline is Their Boundary."
MAINLY FAIR: "Knights of the Round Table."
OVERCAST: "Elephant Walk."

KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE

(M.G.M.-CinemaScope)

I DON'T recall ever having read that Sir Lancelot du Lac had a white horse as intelligent as Hopalong Cassidy's, but the versions of the Arthurian legend in circulation are so multitudinous (and my own scholarship is so restricted) that I wouldn't dream of suggesting that it wasn't according to Hoyle—or Nennius, or Geoffrey of Monmouth, or Malory, or any other of the chroniclers, ancient or modern. *Knights of the Round Table*, on the whole, seemed to me a fairly consistent version of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. It is notably more ambitious, more finished in detail, above all, more serious than the unconsciously comic *Prince Valiant*, seen here a short time ago. But I doubt if it will be more fun for the juveniles. It had its lighter moments (notably the first encounter of Arthur and Lancelot, and Lancelot's joust with the Green Knight) which reminded me irresistibly of T. H. White's down-to-earth descriptions of knight-errantry, but the theme from the outset is tragic—the destruction of good by evil—and it wasn't merely Stanley Baker's relative competence as an actor that made the treacherous Sir Modred the focus of attention.

Knights of the Round Table has some first-rate pictorial photography (a good deal of the film was shot on location in England and Ireland; Ava Gardner was shot *in situ* in Hollywood), some good jousting and a hawking sequence. As

(continued on next page)

British Composers and Film Music

IT'S nearly 20 years since Sir Arthur Bliss, now Master of the Queen's Music, wrote his famous score for the H. G. Wells film *The Shape of Things to Come*. That is often regarded as the starting point in the development of a new type of music for films, for it was probably the first occasion on which a composer worked side by side with the film makers from the scripting to the final editing. Wells himself said: "The music is a part of the constructive scheme of the film, and the composer was practically a collaborator in its production. This Bliss music is not intended to be tacked on: it is a part of the design." In the same year William Walton wrote his first film music, for *Escape Me Never*, which starred Elisabeth Bergner, and over the years since then nearly every contemporary British composer of note has written music for the cinema. Among the best known are Ralph Vaughan Williams, who began in 1940 with *49th Parallel*, and whose score for *Scott of the Antarctic* was a starting point for his *Sinfonia Antartica*; and Arnold Bax, who in 1942 wrote the music for *Malta, G.C.* These four composers will be discussed in four programmes on the British composer and film music, which are to be heard in *Focus on Film* from 2YA on Mondays, starting on October 18.

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 15, 1954.