

ten years ago, with Laird Cregar in the title role, and such celebrities as Sir Cedric Hardwicke, George Saunders and Merle Oberon as supporting players) then Hugo Fregonese, who directed the current opus, has shown remarkably little originality. The Bonners (they were the Buntings in the novel) who let their attic to the stranger have been substantially upgraded in the social scale. No longer retired servants gnawing the dry bread of penniless respectability, they have an impressive home, keep a servant, dress for the theatre, and possess a niece whose uninhibited talents on the music-hall stage have found approval in the most Exalted Quarters. You might say that the real mystery in *this* story is why Mrs. B. took in a lodger at all.

Photographically, the presentation is equally uninspired. Apart from the theatre sequences (which give us something approximately like an audience of the 1880's on one side of the footlights and a fair simulacrum of a Stork Club floor-show on the other), the settings are routine. The murky cobbled streets, narrow lanes and cul-de-sacs, the fog curling conveniently about knee-level, the comical London bobbies, the occasional posses of mounted police, the figure in the shadows, the door about to open—all the old tricks are used over again. The dialogue coruscates with anachronisms—the police inspector, for example, greets his Commissioner with a brisk "Hallo, Chief," and the actress ecstatically announces that "All the reviews are raves."

But of all the incongruities, the most incongruous is the casting of Jack Palance as the lodger. With that battered mug, those jug-ears, that impacted profile, he just couldn't have avoided suspicion. Friday would have booked him on a 242 without a second thought. I know that Mrs. Belloc Lowndes described the lodger as having a worn, gaunt face (because I checked on it), but I'm sure she had in mind nothing so worn, or so far gaunt as this one.

HIS MAJESTY O'KEEFE

(Warner Bros.)

WHILE ZB listeners may find it interesting to identify their old friends Guy Doleman and Lloyd Berrell in the

cast of *His Majesty O'Keefe*, the production has other and more intriguing elements for the curious filmgoer. This story of the Irish skipper who became King of the Island of Yap is allegedly founded on fact, but I found it more entertaining as a comic parable of the clash of cultures—and currencies. O'Keefe, set adrift by a crew of mutineers, is washed up on the shores of Yap and nursed back to health by the kindly natives. As his strength returns his business instincts perk up, too, and he determines to turn adversity to profit by harvesting the thousands of dollars worth of copra he can see whenever he looks upwards, which is often since he is flat on his back. But, mortifying discovery! the natives won't work. Or rather, the only hard work they'll do is sail several hundred miles to a remoter island where they painfully quarry large circular slabs of stone that can't possibly be of use to anyone. To cut a long story short, O'Keefe subsequently acquires another ship and crew and a quantity of gunpowder, helps the islanders to quarry (in next to no time) an unprecedented number of millstones, then, back on Yap, refuses to let them into circulation until his ship is filled with copra. This provokes a shocking row, splits the island into what you might call the eastern and western zones, and leaves them open to the blackbirding depredations of types like Bully Hayes.

In the end (not, unfortunately, before the island is subjected to fire and sword) Skipper O'Keefe makes his agonising reappraisal, unites the two island factions and drives the blackbirders into the sea. The film ends in a blaze of tropical Technicolor, with King O'Keefe enthroned alongside a smashing half-caste queen (Joan Rice), and the island's traditional way of life constitutionally assured. But what no one told His Majesty O'Keefe (at least the film ignored it, though I thought it the cream of the jest) was that the curious large stone discs acquired with so much risk and toil by the natives were, in fact, the Yap currency. So much for the problems of convertibility!



WHEREVER their services have been needed over the years, the nurses of the New Zealand Armed Forces have gone to aid the sick and wounded. This picture shows part of the army hospital in which they worked in Greece during the Second World War. The story of the nurses of the armed forces from their earliest days in New Zealand down to the permanent peace-time nursing service of today, will be told in a programme to be heard from all YA and YZ stations at 9.15 p.m. on Friday, November 5,

N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 29, 1954.

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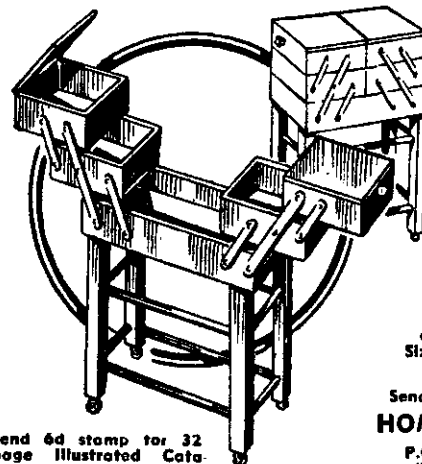
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