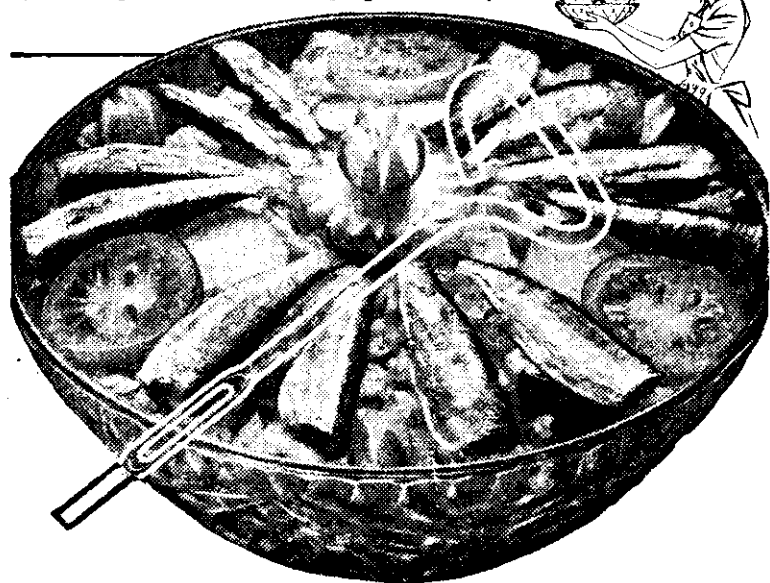


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FILM REVIEWS, BY F.A.J.

Heigh-Ho for Hayhoe!

TIME GENTLEMEN PLEASE
(Group 3)

ANYONE will tell you that there's no story in contentment, and Little Hayhoe was so much at peace with itself that the local policeman used the lock-up as a spare room for his mother-in-law. But suddenly it attracted attention. Whitehall noticed that it had the remarkably high employment rate of 99.9 per cent, and straightway there was nothing for it but to give the town the full treatment: a visit from the Prime Minister and even, come to that, his P.R.O. From that moment the skids were under its idle point one per cent, a lovable old tramp named Daniel Dance who divided his time between one of the local haystacks and the local pub. Without hesitation the local council decided he'd have to be kept decently in the background till the P.M. had come and gone.

Time Gentlemen Please goes on to location at Little Hayhoe, with a bit of American-style newsreel about the place that somehow suggests a good-humoured take-off of *Citizen Kane*. Its story proper is a little slow getting under way, but once it begins to unwind it's as suspenseful and as richly comic and heart-warming as you could wish. Take the sequence in which the town is roused after Daniel strikes the jackpot, or any one of his wild sprints across town to beat the curfew. As a tonic, in fact, it's better than anything Daniel ever put on the slate at The Swan or slipped into the glass of the unsuspecting Miss ("Mata Hari") Mouncey—who (for the record) is the big noise in Little Hayhoe's weaving industry, and one of the many locals who, as the story unfolds, take sides for or against the unemployed.

Names are a bore to many people and I hesitate to use too many in this review, giving it an air of solemnity when the film has none. But if you look out for people as I do you will want to know that the story is from R. J. Minney's novel *Nothing to Lose*, that Eddie Byrne plays Daniel Dance at the head of an excellent cast, that the spritely music is by Anthony Hopkins, and that the film was directed by Lewis Gilbert and beautifully photographed by Wilkie Cooper for John Grierson's Group 3—a relatively new English unit whose *The Brave Don't Cry*, a film as grim as this

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "Time Gentlemen Please."
MAINLY FAIR: "No Business Like Show Business."
FAIR: "For Men Only."

one is gay, was seen here a year or two ago.

I hope you will like *Time Gentlemen Please* for its infectious, fantastic fun, and enjoy as much as I did its agreeable satire. Mr. Grierson says it is based on the simple but civilised idea that maybe someone somewhere shouldn't work as hard as they keep on telling us to do. If it said no more than that it would say a mouthful, but in bringing that idea to life it makes fun of all the solemn world for harmless, easy-going non-conformity.

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS

(20th Century Fox-CinemaScope)

THE new CinemaScope musical is a big, noisy, colourful affair about two show people (Ethel Merman and Dan Dailey), their children (Johnnie Ray, Mitzi Gaynor and Donald O'Connor) and one or two others, including a dumb but up and coming blonde played by Marilyn Monroe. Its brightest light for me was Mr. O'Connor, a first-class dancer and, on the screen at least, a most likeable person. The film has some entertaining and amusing passages, but I find it hard to recall them after sitting face to face with Mr. Ray and Miss Monroe at a distance of only about 20 feet. This was my first encounter with Mr. Ray at the Movies, and I found him off-stage a not unlikeable youngster. But let him open his mouth, waggle his jaw, close his eyes and wave his arms about and I go glassy-eyed with fascinated but uncomprehending and, indeed, incredulous horror. What is it about this astonishing act that some women at least apparently find exciting? I'm curious. I hope I may be more easily forgiven for saying this when I add that apart from having a man's normal reaction to a body as shapely as Miss Monroe's I found her a little easier to understand. She can go through the motions of a sexy song and dance piece all right, but unfortunately this sort of thing demands rather more than that, and the best she can do in her supposedly most torrid number isn't much better than burlesque. Or is the joke on me?

FOR MEN ONLY

(Lippert)

FOR MEN ONLY, which I saw a little time ago, but haven't had space to mention, is an expose of the worst features of American university fraternities—especially their more barbaric initiation ceremonies. I'm told that Paul Henreid produced and directed it himself because no one else would tackle it. It opens on a powerful note and keeps going hot, strong and horrific for quite a way. After that, unfortunately, it becomes a bit overplotted for a film that's trying to say something. The complications continue to grow out of the main theme, but in effect they tend to turn the story into a personal history of a professor (played by Paul Henreid) who is fighting against initiation ceremonies. I suppose this is interesting enough in its own way—among other things he gets involved with a girl—but the film really makes its point only if you keep the early part of the story steadily in mind.



EDDIE BYRNE
The idle point one per cent

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 7, 1955.