

Cornucopia

OKLAHOMA!

(Magna-R.K.O. Radio)

Y Cert.

REVIEWERS must be as tickled as Richard Rodgers was by the line. "The corn is as high as an elephant's eye": it's an intro on a silver dish. Add to it Aunt Emma's prophecy, "It's gonna be another good year for corn and oats," and the temptation is almost irresistible. *Oklahoma!* of course, is corn. I admit I went prepared to sniff. But there are corn crops so lush and well cultivated that one *must* admire them, and exhausted as I was after two hours and 20 minutes of *Oklahoma!* in a Wellington heat wave, I was inclined to think this was one of them.

As it happens that crack about corn is particularly apposite, for *Oklahoma!* starts right off with the biggest crop of corn ever, climbing right up through the top of the CinemaScope screen. Out of the distance and through this corn rides Gordon MacRae, singing. He's off to ask Shirley Jones to go to Skidmore's party with him. But, as you probably know better than I did, Shirley's going to teach him a lesson: she's going with the hired man (Rod Steiger) . . .

What makes this conventional story so agreeable? For a start, of course, the songs. I'm no Rodgers and Hammerstein fan, and I think there are too many songs in this show to take at one sitting. But there are some good ones, as you don't need me to tell you, and they're wonderfully well put across, especially by the principals—stereophonic sound never impressed me more than when they sing "People Will Say We're in Love." Then there's the straight playing. Those I've mentioned do all that's expected of them—Mr. Steiger especially is a really villainous villain—but there are other good parts, too: Charlotte Greenwood, for instance, as Aunt Ella, Gloria Grahame as the girl who "can't say no," Eddie Albert as the travelling salesman, Gene Nelson as Will Parker. The ballets are excellent, and among these the big cream sequence, after starting on familiar lines, blossoms into something really imaginative and eye-catching. So I might go on.

How much of all this will be familiar to those who've seen the stage production I can't say, for I never did. But I can say that this film version offers much that no stage could hold. Some of the set pieces are stagey or start off that way (dare one tamper with anything so hallowed by time?); but the director (Fred Zinnemann) and his photographer (Robert Surtees) have not stayed stage-bound, and many of their cinematic sorties, from the detail in close-up to long shots on the prairie, are poetry. I can't say fairer than that. I'm not reaching for the purple ink, because in film musicals I still prefer the thing written for the medium. *Oklahoma!* (I say it again) is too long, and so on and so on. But I went to sniff and stayed to praise, and I'm happy to say so.

SOMEBODY UP THERE LIKES ME

(M.G.M.)

A Cert.

TOO long also, by several thousand feet—as so many films are nowadays—is the screen biography of Rocky Graziano. A slum child, whose frustrated boxer father would knock him

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "*Oklahoma!*"
FAIR: "*Somebody Up There Likes Me.*"
FAIR: "*Forbidden Planet.*"

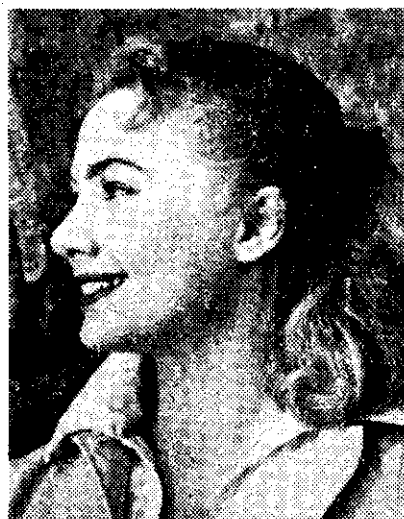
down if he whimpered in a tough workout, this world champion's story is pretty unpleasant, though part of the audience who saw it with me seemed to find his delinquency amusing. When neither prison nor the army had cured or crushed him, the boxing ring was his salvation (also his sublimation), which a devoted wife made secure. This story of how one man climbed out of the gutter is remarkable for a fine performance by Paul Newman as the hero. He starts off like an overblown Brando—scratching, shuffling, mumbling—but before long develops a considerable power of his own. As his wife, Pier Angeli plays appealingly, and his devotion to her shows the best side of his odd character. I found pretty objectionable, though, the pay-off line which gives the film its title. The direction of Robert Wise is always competent and, in a starkly effective way, sometimes more than that—as in a slum sequence when Rocky runs away to his old haunts just before the title bout. We have Rocky's word for it, by the way, that this, definitely, is his life as he remembers it.

FORBIDDEN PLANET

(M.G.M.)

Y Cert.

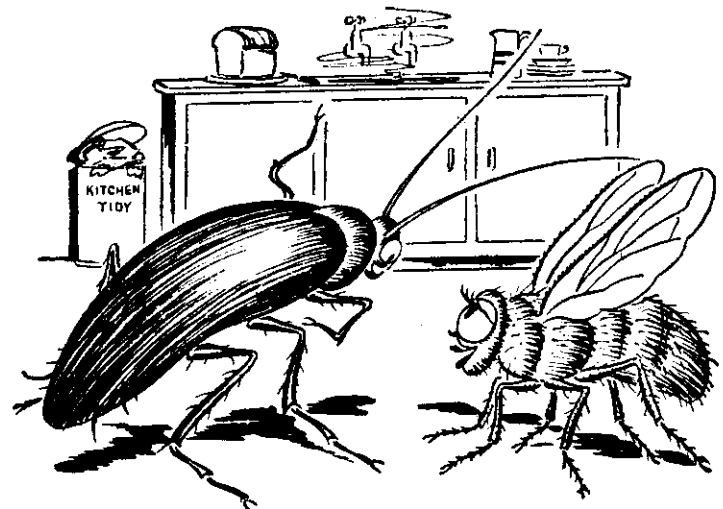
APPROACHED with misgivings, *Forbidden Planet* is after all interesting, suspenseful and amusing—quite intentionally so. Set well in the future when travel as fast as light is the thing, it concerns a relief expedition to the planet Altair in deep space, from which an expedition of 20 years before hasn't returned. They find one survivor (Walter Pidgeon) and his daughter (Anne Francis) and evidence of a civilisation that had far outstripped ours in technical know-how even before Man appeared on Earth. There's also an amusing robot and a really frightening monster. *This* turns out to be the evil unconscious Id—whose, I'll leave you to guess, and so, effective as it is, it may have been a mistake to have it visible. Still, this is a very entertaining piece for both eye and ear, and if you're no more scientifically-minded than I am you won't be too troubled by other improbabilities that have been pointed out to me. Fred McLeod Wilcox directed.



SHIRLEY JONES

AN ANNOUNCEMENT FROM

THE N.Z. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



"After you, Madam," said the cockroach to the fly, "we're dining out tonight"

This pair of visitors can bring sickness to your table—food poisoning. Imagine, a single fly can be loaded with six and a half million germs and bacteria! The cockroach, too, fouls food. Don't play host to these uninvited guests.

Keep an eye open for their breeding places. Flies can produce half a million offspring in a week or two. They breed in garden waste, compost heaps, outdoor toilets carelessly kept, animals' dung — any decaying matter where they can lay eggs.

THESE PLACES MUST BE KEPT CLEAN. Your compost heap should be stripped and turned in six inches all the way round every week so that eggs and maggots will be destroyed in the hot centre. Powder it with 10% D.D.T.

A good cheaper spray is an arsenic sheep dip mixed 1 part to 75 parts of water. Burn or bury garden refuse. Scatter grass clippings thinly.

In the house keep food and food utensils covered. Paint or spray your walls, window-sills and places where flies rest and crawl with insecticide paint. Wage constant warfare on the invader with space sprays, traps, flyswats.

Cockroaches breed in cracks and crevices and like damp, dark places near cupboards, basins and sinks where they can forage for food and liquid. Leave no vestige of food about at night. Painting skirtingboards with insecticide paint helps get rid of them and is usually effective for several months.

Flies and Cockroaches contaminate food!