

# DINKUM AUSSIES

## THREE IN ONE

(Australian Tradition Films) A Cert.

THOUGH I imagine most New Zealanders like to think they're very different from Australians, there is for us all the same a familiar quality about Australian life. We found something of it recently in *Smiley*, and it's there again, as real as the world about us, in *Three in One*. There's another reason also why this film is of special interest: it was produced and directed by a New Zealander, Cecil Holmes, whose work with the National Film Unit—and especially *The Coaster*—showed that he is a young man of talent.

Introduced and linked with some remarks by John McCallum, *Three in One* tells three stories of Australian life. Their common theme is "mateship"—the willingness of the good Australian to help his mates. Perhaps this is underlined a little heavily; but for all that *Three in One* is fine entertainment and a good piece of film-making which you should go out of your way to see.

How a lot of people who have never met Joe Wilson become his mates at his funeral is described in the first story, by Henry Lawson; the second, by Frank Hardy, tells of the way a couple of men helped their mates with a load of wood in the depression years; in the third, which Ralph Petersen wrote, two young people who want to marry encounter some of the problems that any young couple might face in a big city like Sydney today. The script for all three is by Rex Reinitz.

Attempting the very difficult task of getting across two quite ordinary young people who might work alongside any of us, the third story is the least successful: it has some good passages, and at times thoroughly convinces and even moves us, but it doesn't quite come off. The others are in different ways almost brilliantly successful—in portraying out-back characters, the humorous crowd at the pub, the hot, lonely landscape, for instance, or on the other hand in showing the aimlessness of relief work in the depression and in wonderfully sustained suspense as two men, with an old borrowed truck which fails at the vital moment, cut down a tree on a farm guarded by dog and rifle and take their load of wood in the middle of the night. One of the two, Darkie, is especially well played by Jerome Levy. (There is, by the way, a worthwhile twist in the tail of



JEROME LEVY

N.Z. LISTENER, MARCH 29, 1957.

## BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "Three in One."  
FAIR: "The Darkest Hour."  
MAINLY FAIR: "Bhowani Junction."

this story.) Ross Wood's camera-work on *Three in One* must also be mentioned—it includes, in the first story particularly, some poetic shots that would not be out of place in a John Ford Western. But most of all this film will be enjoyed and remembered for its down-to-earth regard for ordinary people and for its glow of fine, warm human feeling.

## BHOWANI JUNCTION

(M.G.M.)

Y Cert.

IF the John Masters novel *Bhowani Junction* is as good as it's said to be, it must be much better than the film. I'm told they are, anyway, not much alike. A story of India towards the end of British rule, the film gives an impression of widespread unrest and, against this background, a few weeks in the lives of several Anglo-Indians, some Indians and a British colonel. The background, shot in Pakistan—crowd scenes, violence and sabotage, trains rushing to and from the junction, and so on—is the best part of the film—faint praise, I suppose, and meant to be. The villains are the Communists, and even the passive resisters are shown as at least misguided. As a slice of history it can't be taken very seriously.

As personal drama it's even less satisfactory. It draws attention to the dilemma of those who are neither English nor Indian, but its way out of the dilemma for its main character, Victoria Jones (Ava Gardner) is to marry her off to an arrogant English colonel (Stewart Granger), while her Anglo-Indian lover (Bill Travers) is killed—heroically, since he's a good guy. Miss Gardner is as beautiful as ever, but her playing is hardly inspired; and Mr Granger is typically unimpressive. Mr Travers does rather better, and some smaller parts (including one filled by Freda Jackson) are well done. From a weak script many other faults flower forth. The main love affair is allowed to develop in a most casual, unconvincing way, and even the scenes that should be high drama quite failed to move me. This unfortunate piece, I'm sorry to have to say, was directed by George Cukor.

## THE DARKEST HOUR

(Warner Bros.-Jaguar)

A Cert.

THE DARKEST HOUR is an American thriller of a fairly familiar kind, but good pace, crisp, intelligent dialogue and first-class acting by some experienced players make it excellent entertainment. It's all about a former policeman's search for the man who sent him to prison on a framed manslaughter charge. As the injured, rather unpleasantly self-righteous party, Alan Ladd gives another of his glum, stolid performances; but Edward G. Robinson plays the big waterfront gangster with real fire and feeling, well supported by Paul Stewart, also in a familiar role. The relationship between the hero and his wife—who loves him but has been not quite faithful to him—is also interesting and well developed, with the wife very competently played by Joanne Dru. Direction is by Frank Tuttle, and the script by Sydney Boehm and Martin Rackin.

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