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Film Reviews, by P.J.W.

HOPE EVERLASTING

SON OF PALEFACE

(Paramount)

AS one of Hollywood's few surviving comedians big enough to pick his own winners, Bob Hope has chosen what looks like sure-fire material for his latest burlesque. In *The Paleface* he played a dude who went West and bamboozled the cowboys and Indians into thinking him something of a hero. *Son of Paleface* gives us another load of the same Hopus-pocus, in which Hope goes West again as a Harvard undergraduate seeking the lost fortune which his old man left to him before passing in his checks. He arrives at the town of Sawbuck Pass right in the middle of an old-fashioned plot involving a mysterious desperado called The Torch (Jane Russell), who goes around robbing mail coaches, and a disguised federal agent (Roy Rogers) riding a remarkably intelligent horse (Trigger).

Hope and his scarlet Model T Ford have no sooner bounced dustily into town than they become the centre of interest between the bandits and the law. At the Dirty Shame saloon, where The Torch sings and dances away the hours when she is not careering across the desert with a six-shooter on each hip, he is given a doped drink by the lady (at a private party in her room) so that she can slip away through a secret passage on another raid. But singing Roy Rogers, with a Winchester hidden inside his guitar, has marked her horse so he can trace its hoof-prints. Meantime, Paleface's son is also being pursued by a posse of angry creditors anxious to get back the money which his father owed when he died, and that money is hidden inside a stuffed moose head in the ghost town of Sterling City, in the middle of Indian territory.

Hope and his vintage limousine finally get on the trail of the gold, and together with Rogers and Jane Russell are trapped by the Indians in the ghost town. Everything is solved in somewhat haphazard fashion, and the film ends with its best sequence, a long chase across the desert with Bob and Jane driving the car (equipped with wagon wheels instead of tyres) and a band of whooping Indians shooting arrows up the exhaust pipe. Altogether, Hope's wisecracks, pratfalls, and generally nonsensical behaviour are pretty much on the juvenile side, and *Son of Paleface* seems to be aimed more at Saturday afternoon crowds than mature audiences. But if you like Hope's particular brand of humour, which hasn't changed much over the years, you will enjoy this one, and of course Jane Russell is an added attraction—very much so.

HOUSE OF WAX

(Warner Bros.)

THE third 3-D film to be released here isn't much from the story point of view, but it does contain some interesting visual effects. *House of Wax* is a remake of an old horror picture called *The Mystery of the Wax Museum*, in which a sculptor (Vincent Price) is burnt out of his hall of exhibits by a treacherous partner (Frank Lovejoy). He is horribly scarred and crippled in the

BAROMETER

MAINLY FAIR: "Son of Paleface."
OVERCAST: "House of Wax."

fire, and his injuries drive him insane. Thereafter he hobbles around the midnight streets of New York disguised in an opera cloak and murdering pretty young girls whom he covers with molten wax for his new display. The film has a fruity turn-of-the-century setting, which enables the cameras to feature such shots as an attractive blonde being laced into her corsets, the high-kicking legs of a chorus of can-can dancers, and so forth. These have considerable impact when seen through polaroid spectacles and the medium of the latest Natural Vision 3-D technique (in colour). But despite its flying chairs, axes, bodies and legs, this is in the main a dull show.

National Film Unit

PICTORIAL PARADE for June pre-

sents the story of New Zealanders in Korea, and it opens at sea, with close-up pictures of the crew of H.M.S. Hawea shelling shore-targets in support of United Nations troops. Ashore, a disastrous fire at Pusan is seen, and U.N. relief agencies are photographed at work on their immense task of attempting to house and feed 4,000,000 victims of war. At the front, gunners of the 16th Field Regiment are seen in action on Hills 355 and 210, and men of the 28th Field Engineer Regiment, L.A.D., at work maintaining guns and equipment for the front-line troops. In Tokyo we follow gunners from "Peter" Battery on leave. Not only do we see general shots of the Japanese background, but also picturesque interiors in a Meiji shrine. Returning by Meteors of the R.A.A.F. to the battlefield, we find the Kiwi troops once more in action. The film ends with salvos from 25-pounders, and with the troops in their "hoochis" well dug in.



BOB HOPE, JANE RUSSELL
The moth and the torch

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 29, 1953.