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THE FILMS, BY P.J.W.

Coronation in Colour

A QUEEN IS CROWNED

(J. Arthur Rank)

NOW that the great occasion is over, not likely to be repeated in our lifetime, we who sat up through the night of June 2, or listened to the rebroadcasts the next day, can see the magnificence of it on the screen. In an hour the pageantry and pomp of the Commonwealth are revealed to us in a manner more impressive than we could have thought possible. The scenes within the Abbey convey with astonishing power the almost mystical significance of the crowning. And whether we are royalists or republicans at heart, believers or unbelievers, we cannot fail to respond to the medieval splendour of it all, or to the ringing shout of the narrator, Sir Laurence Olivier, as the film ends, "May the Queen live for ever!"

Christopher Fry wrote the narration for *A Queen is Crowned*, and his words bring out, from the first introductory shots of the English countryside, the meaning of church, kingship and history which contribute their multiple parts to the total impression of the ceremony. He reminds us that the church in which the ceremony takes place is the church of Edward the Confessor, the Saint, and that it is his crown which is placed on the Queen's head. The dominant role of the Church is emphatically brought out in the film.

After the ceremony comes the giant procession, and here the producer of the film, Castleon Knight, has drawn on his experience with the Olympic Games of 1948 to present a splendid photographic record, in Technicolor, of the march past—the vast surging of the crowds, the horses, scarlet jackets and bearskins, the carriages, the military bands and the bayonets. The pavements glisten with rain; some of the peers sit uneasily on their horses; the Queen of Tonga waves a friendly arm; and at last the Queen returns to the Palace in the gilded State Coach. When she appears on the balcony the crowds break across the Mall like a sea towards the Palace railings.

This is not a perfect film; it was made in a hurry. But it is surprisingly good when we remember the speed with which it was released here. The Coronation provided a great opportunity for the colour camera, and the film contains moments we are unlikely to forget.

ELIZABETH IS QUEEN

(Associated British-Pathe)

THIS Coronation film is slightly shorter than *A Queen is Crowned*, and its approach and introductory scenes are different. On the whole, its

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