

OUT OF THE PIT

THE BRAVE DON'T CRY

(Group Three-Associated British)

THREE years ago at the Knockshinnock Castle Colliery in Scotland, during a heavy downpour of rain, the surface of the ground in a farmer's paddock subsided into the mine workings below, trapping 118 men for two days. This film, the first we have seen out here for many years by the British documentary producer John Grierson, retells the story of what happened during these 48 hours. It is a strong, unpretentious and in many ways a magnificent film, which attempts with a good deal of success to reveal the uncomplaining heroism of ordinary men and women, when they become involved in crisis and tragedy. The cast, apart from John Gregson, who takes the leading role, consists mainly of members of the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre, and under Philip Leacock's direction they give restrained and sincere performances which play down any false drama in the situation and help make the film credible and life-like to a remarkable degree.

The opening shots of *The Brave Don't Cry* emphasise the ordinariness of

BAROMETER

FAIR TO FINE: "The Brave Don't Cry."
OVERCAST: "The Stars Are Singing."

the day as the miners say goodbye to their wives and sweethearts and depart for work in the pouring rain. A few minutes later the ground cracks and collapses. Number Four section is wiped out, the pit-head is flooded, and the men are trapped. They gather around the pit telephone which is now their only connection with the world above and begin their long wait. On the surface the womenfolk silently assemble outside the mine buildings, while rescue parties with oxygen apparatus make their way through the workings of an abandoned mine from which they hoped to dig their way through to the trapped men. When the first hole is cut fire damp seeps into the mine and the way to freedom has to be sealed. After two days of fruitless pumping to clear the air, the men are brought out through the old workings wearing firemen's salvor apparatus, exhausted but still in good spirits. Apart from the nine men in the caved-in section, all are saved.

The film views the disaster from three points of view, moving simply and



JOHN GREGSON

Disasters are overcome by people working together

directly from the men below to the anxious women, to the unhurried exertions of the rescue parties. There is no weeping or lamenting, and no high drama, only the steady movement of the escape plans toward fruition. Yet beneath the stoic calm is the unspoken realisation that over a hundred lives are at stake. On the technical side the photography (by Arthur Grant) is consistently good, and the composition of

mon striving of groups of people working together. This is a fine spirit for a film to have, and it is advanced unobtrusively in this case, but with strong effect. Such scenes as the singing of old Scotch songs as the men sit along the stony walls of the shaft, or the preparation of food by groups of women on top, emphasise this. Few people are allowed to stand out in the cast, even

(continued on next page)



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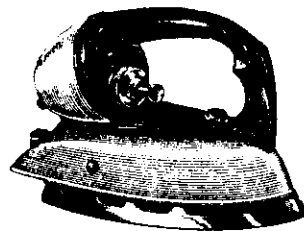
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