

TALKING OF TALKIES

“Rothschild” Easily Heads Poll

“Radio Record” Film Contest Brings in Thousands of Entries—“House of Rothschild,” “Henry the Eighth” and “Cavalcade” Three Popular Films—Norma Shearer and George Arliss Win.

THE film public (and nowadays that means everyone) has “gone all historical.” Approximately 8435 votes were cast in the “Radio Record’s” film ballot, and of that number 7463 were in favour of films with a historical background. “The House of Rothschild” was head and shoulders above all other films in the “best film of 1934” category. It scored 4941 of the total votes cast, “Queen Christina” coming second on the list with 1054, and “The Private Life of

star and emerged from the competition with 2109 votes to her credit. Strangely enough only three persons picked “Rip-tide” as the best film of 1934, and yet Norma Shearer, who has made only this one picture in the past two years, easily topped the poll. Miss Shearer has lately appeared in “The Barretts of Wimpole Street,” but it has not yet been released in New Zealand. Janet Gaynor came second with 1406 votes, more than half of which were from Christchurch. The southern city is a Gaynor stronghold—it was at the Crystal Palace there that “Sunny Side Up” established a world record with a season of 11 weeks. Greta Garbo was not far behind with 1348 votes, “Queen Christina” having done much to restore the Swedish star’s popularity. Diana Wynyard scored 613 votes, Joan Crawford 602, Jessie Matthews 351, with Katherine Hepburn, Loretta Young, Mae West, Marlene Dietrich and Gracie Fields in that order following behind. Anna Sten (the Goldwyn “find”) and Jean Harlow were not far from the bottom of the list.

Of the men George Arliss was easily in front with two-fifths of the total votes—3374. Ronald Colman was second with 843 votes, Clark Gable third with 785, Frederic March fourth with 422. Robert Montgomery fifth with 351, Clove Brook sixth with 330. Conrad Veidt, Wallace Beery, John Roles, the Barrymores, Leslie Howard, Jan Kiepura and Warner Baxter followed in that order.

Of the 8435 votes cast, 3624 picked Arliss’s performance in “The House of Rothschild” as the best acting performance of the year. Charles Laughton’s performance in “The Private Life of Henry the Eighth” was second with 940 votes. Garbo in “Queen Christina” was third with 843. Katherine Hepburn’s acting in “Little Women” filled fourth place with 765. Madeleine Carroll in “I Was a Spy” was next, Conrad Veidt in “The Wandering Jew” and Elizabeth Bergner in “Catherine the Great.”

“Cavalcade” came through with honours in the section devoted to the “best film I have ever seen,” scoring 2110 of the votes. “Disraeli” was second with 1406 votes. “The House of Rothschild” third with 763 votes. “The Private Life of Henry the Eighth” fourth with 527 votes. The following were included in this order: “Queen Christina,” “Smilin’ Through,” “Little Women,” “Whoopie,” “Blossom Time” and “Tell Me To-night.”

The prize of one guinea goes to Mr. F. M. Earle, of 77 Yule Street, Wellington, whose entry was the only one which exactly accorded with the popular vote. More than a dozen had four of the five sections right, and nearly a hundred had three correct.

The ballot has disclosed many interesting facts, but it also shows how tickle is the film public. In several New Zealand film ballots last year the late Marie Dressler topped the popularity poll. In the “Radio Record’s” film ballot this year she was not mentioned on more than 20 coupons.

THERE have been many experiments in colour for motion pictures, notably Samuel Goldwyn’s production of “Whoopie” with Eddie Cantor, but there has never been any real response by audiences to the colour films, which have, in the main, been garishly artificial. A notable example is the colour in the last scene of “The House of Rothschild,” a scene which might have ruined the picture had it not been for the superlative acting of George Arliss and the rest of the principals. The new system which has been perfected, however, and which has been used in “La Cucaracha,” which was shown at the Plaza Theatre in Wellington last



NORMA SHEARER.

“Henry the Eighth” third with 604 votes. Six hundred and one persons voted for “Cavalcade” as the best film of 1934, forgetful of the fact that this great Fox film was generally released in New Zealand in 1933. “Catherine the Great” was fifth on the list with 263 votes. Following in this order were “I Was a Spy,” “Little Women,” “Only Yesterday,” “Evergreen,” “Man of Aran” and “The Dover Road.” It is a significant fact that, in the majority of the films that polled well the leading stars were British, and, of the 11 pictures mentioned above, five came from English studios.

Several readers voted for films that are actually 1935 releases, and which have not yet been generally screened in the Dominion. Into this category fall such films as “Blossom Time,” “The Count of Monte Cristo,” and “The Gay Divorcee,” all of which polled a fair number of votes. Other readers picked on films which were released two or three years ago—“Emma,” “Frankenstein,” “Smilin’ Through” and “Rookery Nook” being included among this number.

Norma Shearer is New Zealand’s choice for the favourite female screen



GEORGE ARLISS.

week, does away, to a very great extent, with the artificiality of colour, and makes it a real adjunct to the film. “La Cucaracha” is quite short—it takes about 20 minutes to run—but they are 20 minutes of sheer delight. There is still a slight sense of unreality about the whole thing—we have been used for so long to black-and-white for our two-dimensional entertainment that it is somewhat startling to see such reality of colour, and our senses need adjusting. In all previous colour films the predominating effect on the senses—no matter what was the colour predominating in the film itself—has been of a garish yellow, but in “La Cucaracha” that sensation is gone.