

DID YOU HEAR THIS?

Extracts From Recent Talks

Trees For Sheep?

IT looks as if we might have to face the possibility of vistra or lanital supplanting wool to some extent. So what? The poorest of our sheep country would, I suppose, cease producing wool first—rougher high country in the South Island and those North Island areas where even now farmers have difficulty working against scrub, fern, second growth, and soil erosion. We could afford such country—and by doing that we could protect better country from destruction—we could avoid any possible timber famine and perhaps provide raw materials for some secondary industries. Our third class sheep country doesn't produce much meat—it's mainly wool. We could still breed for meat—perhaps more intensively than we do now—on easier country.—(*"Changing Bases of Society," K. B. Cumberland in discussion with Dr. Page and C. G. F. Simkin, 3YA, July 9.*)



Great Responsibility

THERE is one big and outstanding fact about our civilised arrangements which creates many problems for girls and women. It is this. Girls become, in some respects at any rate, mature long before it is socially possible for them to marry and to become mothers. Most of our girls of course manage to pass through the time of adolescence successfully, but many do not and we ought honestly to face the fact that many undesirable forms of conduct and much delinquency among girls arises in this way. I have taught in a Girls' Borstal Institute and I know. We are more honest and open about these things than we used to be, but still not honest enough. The physical education of girls in this fundamental respect is still too often ignored. The average adolescent is naturally inquiring and ignorance only too often leads to a morbid brooding. Here the older generation of women and mothers in particular have a great responsibility. Mothers of girls often complain of antagonism displayed by their daughters and they are often puzzled and hurt by it. Often enough the mothers are themselves to blame for it, for they have not realised that their daughters are children no longer. The most important step which the older generation should make in their treatment of the younger generation at adolescence is the entry into full and equal companionship with them. How many mothers do this with their daughters? She should gradually be treated as an equal who is to play a part as an equal in the common work of civilised life.—(*"Physical Education for Women," Mrs. I. L. G. Sutherland, 3YA, July 7.*)

Pericles Defines

OUR constitution is named a democracy because it is in the hands not of the few but of the many. Our laws secure equal justice for all in their private disputes, and our public opinion welcomes and honours talent in every branch of achievement, not for any sectional reason but on grounds of excellence alone. And as we give free play to all in our public life, so we carry the same spirit into our daily relations with one another. Open and friendly in our private intercourse, in our public acts we keep strictly within the control of law. We acknowledge the restraint of reverence; we are obedient to whom-

soever is set in authority, and to the laws, more especially to those which offer protection to the oppressed and those unwritten ordinances whose transgression brings admitted shame. Our citizens attend both to public and private duties, and do not allow absorption in their own various affairs to interfere with their knowledge of the city's. We differ from other states in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life not as quiet but as useless.—(*Pericles, quoted by Professor Leslie Lipson, 2YA, July 14.*)

The Spartan Gestapo

IF we look at Sparta, we shall find a State in which Hitler and Himmler, Goering and Goebbels, would have felt quite at home. The Spartans formed a militaristic community organised on Fascist principles. They controlled a land empire whose inhabitants greatly outnumbered them. To keep this empire in subjection, they followed two principles. Full political privileges and civil rights were reserved for the small body of full-blooded Spartans; and towards their subjects this privileged group adopted any methods of intimidation, whether open or concealed. Among the conquered peoples the lowest grade was called the Helots. Virtually they were the slaves of their Spartan masters; and whenever they tried to rebel—as they did periodically—they were crushed by methods of terrorism. Each year, when the highest Spartan official—the Ephors—took office, one of their first acts was to declare war on the Helots; which meant that they could use any ruthless measures to keep the Helots in their place, and it would be justified by religious laws. They had developed this terroristic system to such a pitch that they even organised a Gestapo. Its very name was "The Secret Department," and its filthy job was carried out by specially selected young Spartans—like the young Nazi thugs whom Hitler trained for his purposes.—(*"Democracy and Fascism in Ancient Greece," Professor Leslie Lipson, 2YA July 14.*)



No Anthems for Arne

IN his day Dr. Arne set most of Shakespeare's songs and it is not unlikely that these will outlive all his other work, for in them he is truly himself. This spare man with a pinched expression in a velvet suit, as he has been described, was unlike so many of our great English composers, and was more at home in the green room than in the choir-school. He is perhaps the only English composer of any note who never wrote a church anthem. His failure in opera may have been accounted for because he would write his own words. A solitary anecdote tells of his trying to sell a horse and a comic opera to Garrick. The actor refused to buy, declaring that both were equally dull. But when Arne set Shakespeare's songs he was on safe ground.—(*"Poet and Composer," 2YA July 11.*)

As Good And Better

Synthetic fibres have already been produced which are hollow in order to give them the warmth of wool, while recently such fibres have been given a permanent wave to give them wool's elasticity. It

Scarcity Value

THE position of women in any civilisation must depend largely on the fundamental fact that women bear children—that girls are to be mothers. Now in recent years there has been a very significant trend so far as our population is concerned. The number of girls entering the child-bearing period is becoming progressively smaller. If our population is to be maintained even at its present level, therefore, the birth rate must rise substantially; and apart from other causes there are the effects of present war to be taken into account. Our girls are going to have a scarcity value more and more.—(*"Physical Education for Women," Mrs. I. L. G. Sutherland, 3YA, July 4.*)

must be remembered, on the other hand, that these synthetic fibres are unshrinkable and moth resistant—valuable properties that natural wool does not possess. Thus it is not only price competition that wool may have to meet, but also quality competition. For the chemist is gradually learning how to produce a fibre with almost any desired property or combination of properties. Thus, just recently, a special synthetic fibre has been made for fishing nets which lasts four times as long as the old net and catches twice as much fish as well, and we all know how the new synthetic fibre, nylon, makes stockings that are more sheer and wear longer than those made from natural silk.—(*"Changing Bases of Society," Dr. Page, in discussion with K. B. Cumberland and C. G. F. Simkin, 3YA, July 9.*)

Letters and L.S.D.

CLEARLY novels are often read for their local interest, in various ways. For example, many people read novels about Mayfair and the South of France and Miami and Honolulu because the elegance and gaiety of life in these places give them a dream-fulfilment which makes up for the drabness of their everyday lives. Many people in England and America will refuse to read a novel about New Zealand because it does not come near to their own local experiences and is hardly important enough in the world's affairs to have for them a foreign interest sufficient to attract them. If you write about New Zealand you must expect New Zealanders to be chiefly interested in your writing. And there simply aren't enough New Zealanders to make such writing pay. Consequently, the New Zealand writer is starved for a market. Either he doesn't write at all or else he accommodates himself to English or American tastes and interests and may be in that process untrue to himself and his genuine inspiration. Another point leads on from that. No matter what highbrow notions we may have of the poet writing solitary in his garret, not caring about his readers, writing to please himself or for posterity—the fact is that novels and poetry are written to be read. The novelist or the poet must to some extent estimate the importance of his work, the real seriousness of his business by the mere number of his readers. That may be shocking but I am sure it's true. So that a New Zealand poet or novelist—uncertain even of publication, aware of the limited number of readers to whom he must appeal, must inevitably be to some extent discouraged. It is a notable thing as we shall see later that some New Zealand writers have managed to triumph over this particular difficulty.—(*"Colonialism in Literature," Professor Sewell, in his recent series from 1YA.*)

