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better books, it may be simply because the stock has just been improved, or because library organisation has been improved."

"All the same, it's interesting to recall what are some of the interests that have given place to the avid reading of the morning paper," said the first. "Douglas Credit, for instance? Theosophy? Occultish things, fantastic things that flourish in peace time, don't seem to have survived the times of worry. On the other hand, of course, Compost is on the up and up. Maybe we haven't changed at all really."

TWO REACTIONS

IN one large library *The Listener* interviewed a group consisting of the chief librarian and three heads of departments, and outlined a few general questions.

"Well, you've got two reactions: among the young a disappearing sense of responsibility; among the adults a growing sense of responsibility," said the second-in-charge.

"That's probably so," said the Fiction Department. "We have people who say they just can't read fiction any more, that it's not worth reading; that they must have reading that fits in with a more serious frame of mind. But I haven't noticed that people have relaxed their sense of responsibility with the relaxation of anxiety. I think those who have had a sense of responsibility awakened have had the good sense to keep it awake."

"In my department, fluctuations in interest are mainly need-of-the-moment reactions," said Non-fiction and Reference. "Technical works are in demand as the need for them arises."

"One interesting thing is that inquiries about the history of the last war have died out almost completely. On the whole, though, there hasn't been sufficient change in the general state of mind, as we see it reflected in the inquiries at the library counter, to justify linking it up with the change in the war situation."

"Maybe Theosophy and Douglas Credit have died down a bit," she said, "but look at the interest in Compost, to say nothing of Planting by the Stars and the Moon. I wouldn't dare to say that people have dropped such things entirely."

A PUBLIC GRAMOPHONE

AT a library which has in addition to its stock of music and musical literature an electric gramophone with a large collection of records, we inquired as to the use made of it, what kind of people came, and so on.

The collection contains no "tripe" at all, and is entirely made up of what the radio listeners would call "Classical Music"—many symphonies, some opera, instrumental music of all periods, and the Columbia History of Music by Ear and Eye.

It is in use almost continuously, and at least half of the users are servicemen, and many of these are U.S. Marines.

"Evidently it is the hardest thing possible for a man in the forces to hear—or at least to be allowed to listen to—decent music on the radios that are provided in camp huts, clubs and messes," said one of the librarians. The gramophone is also used by business people

who drop in after their working hours for a little good music, and, of course, by students.

WHAT SOLDIERS THINK

A SOLDIER back from the Middle East told us that men in the forces talk about everything but war. Some of them wonder about the future, and a few ask questions about it, but not many, and when they do talk about it, it is usually in material terms. Will their job still be waiting for them? Will they be able to get a house? Will they find the Commissioner of Taxes waiting for them? Will the farm be over-run with gorse or rabbits?

"Is there no sign that they feel they are fighting for a new world?"

"I don't remember any. They feel that they are fighting for their free existence, of course, for the things they have always had, but they are cynical about brave new worlds and homes for heroes."

THE WORLD OF SPORT

"WELL, of course, if you include racing in sport, then you'll find you've had the biggest totes for years,



People go to church in a crisis. A war-time picture from Russia

but then that's a spending reaction, not a sporting reaction," said a sporting expert who is in constant touch with the followers of many games. "Actually, I'd say that the tension has definitely eased off since things improved in the war news, and you can see that people are returning to their old interests—or trying to. And I've heard of people taking up cricket, or going to watch it, who never would have thought of it before. In the Army itself there are men who had retired from sport before the war and who got back into training in the Army, and started playing again, but there, that's another question altogether; because among the soldiers the scare that the news gave some people didn't matter that much!"

WOMEN AND THE WAR

"YES, I would agree that there is a change in our attitude in these last months," said one woman. "In the first place, I think we all feel more settled. A year or so ago we were all ringing each other up to say that we had seen such and such a garment for children in such and such a shop, and that it would be a good idea to buy some as things would be short. But now the prices have been fixed and clothes are rationed, so there is no longer that feeling that we must buy now. Again, a year ago, we were all frantically building up iron rations and stores of all sorts. Now more than one household has attacked its iron rations, and more than one mother is annoyed that she bought so much dried milk, which may go bad. I don't think we are more easy-going, but we have adjusted ourselves better to shortages, and we have got used to expecting the worst, and are a little relaxed now that the worst has not happened."

ENTERTAINMENT

"I DON'T think we have as many parties as we did, but a good many of us are pretty busy entertaining servicemen, especially if we have grown-up daughters," said another woman. "I should go as far as to say that there is an unusual rush to places of entertainment. It may be true of some of us older women that we have not much heart for entertainment. A lot of us are busier than ever before with knitting, parcel packing, Red Cross work, and so on."

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

THE LISTENER also inquired how far the Post-War Reconstruction Groups which started a year or two ago with some enthusiasm were progressing. "A good many of them have died a natural death," we were told. "Two years ago, when many people felt perhaps rather despairing of the war and also a little uncertain as to what it was all about, the organisation of such groups was supported fairly widely by those who needed some concrete expression for their hopes. The falling-off in interest is, I think due to two things—partly a realisation that the best that these groups could do was vague; partly that now people seem to be thinking in more practical terms. What can we do here in New Zealand? How can we meet the housing shortage and the return to ordinary production? What are we going to do to bring returned soldiers back to normal conditions of life? Are girls to keep their jobs? I think it is a healthy sign, and indicates a greater optimism than the other."

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