

Appeal to Women

THE appeal issued to women last week by the leaders of the Churches was one of the most pathetic documents of the whole war. War has meant broken homes since the beginning of history, and the problem necessarily increases with the remoteness of the battlefield. Whether we realise it therefore or shut our eyes, it has put a bigger strain on the women and girls of New Zealand during our two world Campaigns than on those whose men have done their fighting nearer home. For reasons also with which everybody is familiar, the strain has increased during the last twelve months. The facts are so clear, so widely recognised, and so inescapable, that with the single exception of this statement by Church leaders almost no public reference to them has ever been made. No one has had the courage to speak about them, or feel anything like confidence that speaking would do any good. And yet there is one obvious comment that it is dangerous cowardice *not* to make. The spokesmen of the Churches made it from their angle when they denied that war "brings a moratorium in decency and honour." We do not need to be moralists or puritans to know that it can be put more bluntly than that. It is crude, vulgar, decadent, and unclean to suppose that there is no longer such a virtue as restraint; that men and women separated by circumstances must necessarily consort with other men and women; and that fidelity is old-fashioned nonsense. We surrender most of the ground we have ever won as civilised beings when we argue like that, and a good deal of the ground we are again fighting for. We reduce human life to a slightly higher than animal level of eating, drinking, and mating, and make as good men and women of those who snatch and grab as of those who have achieved manners and delicacy and self-denial. The bluest, primmest, most inhibited, and most disfigured of the spiritual survivors of Victorianism is a more lovely spectacle than the woman (or man) who does not know what fidelity is.

LETTERS FROM LISTENERS

A FUTURE IN FILMS

Sir,—I don't think I am sceptical to query Michael Forlong's proposal that we institute baby Ivory Towers throughout the world to cater for intellectuals and classicists. As for Leftists—the Marxist knows that cliques are valueless; just as his theory must be united with his practice, so must his beliefs where the proletariat is concerned be integrated into one whole. It is just as idealistic of me to picture a world where every man and woman has an educated interest in the cinema as it is for Mr. Forlong to imagine that films can be free from vested interests "as literature and painting and music must be free." These things are not free; in existing world society, outside the Soviet Union, no artist is free. Freedom is an illusion—a thing perhaps difficult to comprehend by those not artists.

D.W.B. (Auckland).

SEX INSTRUCTION

Sir,—Replying to "Out of the Everywhere" on the subject of sex instruction for children, may I say that when I referred to the sex muddle I meant the muddle that human society had made of sex.

Sex in the animal kingdom is perfectly straightforward. But human beings lifted themselves above the animal kingdom and became civilised. Civilisation demanded that certain instincts, among them the instinct of sex, should be repressed. In order that this repression should be observed by the mass of the people, the question of sex was taken up by religious organisations, and a series of taboos was placed upon the subject.

The result of these religious taboos has been a consciousness of sin, even, in many cases, in legitimate marital relations. The policy of suppression led to an altogether false situation. It was not only indulgence in sex that was bad, but also knowledge of sex. In fact, we tried to tell ourselves that sex did not exist. For the past 30 years we have been emerging from that slough. For no matter what convention tells us, our lives are coloured by sex, and if we deny its existence, we must after a time either rebel or become the victims of a sex complex.

The best way to straighten out the muddle, in my opinion, is to bring the subject into the open, examine it, see how best, in the light of modern knowledge, to reconcile the sex instinct with civilised living, and then see that our children are instructed accordingly.

M. R. KENT (Kohu Kohu).

(This correspondence is now closed.—Ed.)

NOT ENOUGH OF US

Sir,—As the mother of two small children and the wife of an airman, may I say that I don't think small houses, birth control, selfishness, etc., are sufficient to kill the desire for increased families. The urge to create is too strong within us to allow for pettiness, but because we do create life (in other words, increase the population), we want that life — our children—to survive. Let the men who condemn birth-control (I have yet to

hear a woman condemn it), turn their energies to finding a solution to war and a preventive of war; then when we see a reasonable chance of peace and happiness for the future race, we can give full reign to that creative urge and the decreasing population question will be solved. It is stupid to blame women's selfishness and birth-control methods when in two successive generations the healthiest men, and therefore the best material for parenthood, are killed or wounded in warfare. If it was a joking matter, I'd suggest that future wars be fought with Grade 3 and 4 men.

MRS J. PEARCE (Lower Hutt).

"BETTER MUSIC"

Sir,—The manner in which the lovers of classical music seize upon every opportunity to voice their opinions on swing music is nothing short of amazing. The letter by "Cornstalk" of Wairoa, which opened with a legitimate request for the repetition of certain records heard from 1YA, lapsed into a deplorable tirade of trite remarks about "that ghastly rubbish, swing, etc." and concluded with a plea for "better music" and less "rubbish" over the main stations. From which it is perfectly obvious that "Cornstalk" is holding forth on a subject about which he or she knows precisely nothing. The average rhythm enthusiast knows only too well that approximately eight per cent of broadcasting time each week is devoted to swing sessions, and "Cornstalk" complains that swing is hurled at the general public hour after hour! The "Jazz versus Classics" argument has been thrashed out time and time again, and still the unsatisfied "greybeards" complain of the broadcasting time wasted on swing music. Yes, a whole hour wasted each week over each station!

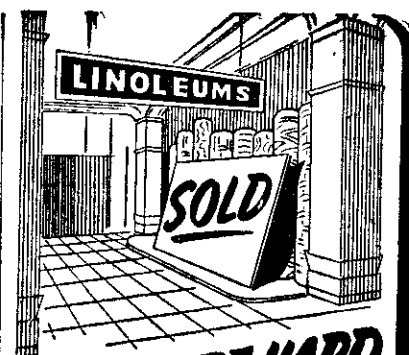
W. E. DASENT, Jnr. (Wellington).

"MUSIC FROM THE THEATRE"

Sir,—After bottling up my dissatisfaction for a long time, I must at last burst into complaint against the childish and pompous make-believe of *Music from the Theatre*. Good wine needs no bush. Ballet music is beautiful and attractive in itself, and is only ruined by the interruption of the commentator's voice, full of "expression," informing us that "she is now pirouetting down-stage," etc. Many an evening I have tuned in to delightful music, only to switch off in rage and disappointment when that commentary started. Those who tune in to ballet or opera music are in no need of a spoken commentary to stimulate their imaginations. The music does that for them, and I prefer to see the opera or ballet with my inward eye undisturbed by the vision of another. And let us be spared the silliness of applause and reference to the "conductor taking his place" and the curtain.

Another suggestion. Could a few noble English folk tunes, played by full band (there are plenty of them), be played before the London News instead of the rather cheap, un-English, jazzy marches that are put on by most stations?

HOPEFUL STILL (Invercargill).



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