

MOVIES FOR THE MILLIONS

SOLDIERS ARE KEEN CRITICS

By a Staff correspondent in N.M.D.

"**O**F ALL the crazy things in movies the use of music takes the bun."

This was the comment of a young realist during a Current Affairs discussion on "Movies for the Millions" at one of the N.M.D. units recently. All the discussions seemed to be keen—at least nearly everyone had something to say with greater or less degree of emphasis.

This critic continued: "I saw a film ('The Amazing Mrs. Holliday') in which Deanna Durbin sang a lullaby in a nursery. The whole thing was spoilt because she was accompanied by an unseen full concert orchestra. Now you can't imagine children going to sleep with thirty or forty musicians crowded into their bedroom."

Another speaker, a W.A.A.C., took up the theme. "Yes," she said, "It could have been done so easily by making Deanna turn the radio on and then start singing to the music. At least the children would be likely to go to sleep."

Servicemen and women make no bones about the motives behind picture attendance. These are either escapism or habit—"Why do I go to the movies? Because my girl-friend (substitute 'wife' where applicable) likes to go out on a Saturday night." Apart from the younger candid souls who go in pursuit of "a bob's worth of dark," and that select minority who scan the advertisements to find a programme that appeals to them, the bulk of servicemen go from

habit or for want of something better to do.

This does not mean, however, that soldiers and W.A.A.C.s are satisfied with the programmes offering. On the other hand, they are keenly critical both of the subject-matter of current films and of the operation of censorship. In every unit where discussions were held some one had something to say about censorship—usually against it. There were a few who said that censorship in New Zealand was all wrong, and even if it was good they wouldn't like it. These, however, admitted that they had no knowledge of what was cut out of films. But they claimed that so far as censorship on moral grounds was concerned, a film which was considered suitable for public exhibition in England or America should not be subject to further censorship here. "We can take it" was the majority opinion. Of course, the question whether some guidance should be given to parents of children provided a complication. Here the W.A.A.C.s leapt into the breach. "Simple," they declared, "children should not be allowed to go to the pictures."

Now that was a bit tough on the poor children! Even the W.A.A.C.s admitted that perhaps there was room for modification. "Children shouldn't attend pictures under the age of fourteen," one suggested. "At least eight years old before their first picture show," said another. —"Or six!"—And who

