

is going to keep the children away?" This naturally led the W.A.A.C.s into some difficulties in defending their point of view.

An elderly bombardier—a father of six at least—said it was the women who were softest on the children and let them go to any picture rather than be pestered to death, or else merely to have the brats out of the way for two or three hours. He suggested special programmes for children, to be screened in the afternoons. He was asking for trouble too. "How," they asked, "are you going to stop parents from taking their children to an evening session if they have no one to mind them at home?"

So things apparently got back where they started. It all boiled down once more to the question of censorship. Perhaps there was something in censorship after all. All units agreed that sex was not the only censorable commodity. The popular picture of a film censor was an old gentleman who looked at life through a window bisected by a dotted line representing the sex border-line. Like drafting sheep, he drafted films, above, below, above, below—i.e., Recommended for Adults, Approved for Universal Exhibition, and so on, *ad infinitum*. What was the poor parent to do? Abandon picture-going? Well, hardly. Educate the film exhibitors? Yes, that sounded better. And also, perhaps, to revitalize the censorship and switch its viewpoint over to some of the features that really mattered, such as the pernicious influence of Mickey Rooney on youthful behaviour, and also that popular theme in American movies which invests youngsters not in their teens with the inevitable love affair.

How this was to be done was not quite so apparent. It was freely and somewhat ruefully admitted that public influence on box-office returns could not be effective so long as theatre accommodation in New Zealand remained inadequate for a free expression of tastes and preferences.

The propaganda value of films did not seem to have very much appeal with soldiers or W.A.A.C.s. If there had been propaganda in films they had seen, they retained no impression of it. The list of questions included in the bulletin for assisting to determine propaganda provided a new slant on this aspect, and furrowed brows showed the amount of heavy thought that was being applied in assessing films recently seen.

Much the same applied to film influences. Most people were willing to agree that American films, rather than American servicemen, had given us such expressions as "O.K.," "That'll be the day," "So what?" &c. But other influences were not as readily seen. Troops were content to criticize in general terms the influence of films on children. Serials, it was said, were typical of the shoddy sort of stuff that affected, and infected, children. "Any one would think the New Zealand public was a collection of morons," said a young bombardier. The influence of movies on fashions was admitted, but W.A.A.C.s seemed to be in doubt as to whether the films themselves were not originally influenced by fashions. Rather a case of which came first—the chicken or the egg.

