

## Public Opinion

### FOOD VALUES.

Sir.—At a time when we are being urged to avoid waste of foodstuffs, and when experts in their dozens are giving us advice unlimited on correct diet, food values, vitamin content, and so on, one's sympathy is with the harried housewife, whose head must be reeling under the blast and counterblast of proponents and critics of this or that particular idea.

I am moved to pen these lines on reading the remarks of "A Clinic Nurse" in Thursday's issue of "The Advocate" under the heading, "Minerals, Vitamins and Health," to the effect that spinach, rhubarb and celery tops should be avoided, because of their oxalic acid content. Now, the notion that spinach is a health-giving food to which children do not take kindly has become so strongly implanted that it has even found its way into the comic strips; and rhubarb has been recommended officially as a plant which should be grown in every garden for its food value.

Who or which is right? Granted that on the subject of food there is much room for education of most people, won't the mass of contradictions being purveyed merely result in the housewife sweeping all aside in favor of the old regimen which was, in any

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length.

case, "good enough when they were children."—VITAMIN.

### THE TOBACCO RATION.

Sir.—Smokers will have read the statement of the Minister for Customs on next month's tobacco ration with mixed feelings. If Senator Keane's announcement that the civilian tobacco ration for February is to be unchanged is to be taken literally, then the outlook is bleak, for so far the January ration has been conspicuous by its absence.

If tobacco normally diverted to civilians is wanted to fill Service requirements there can be no complaint. If that is not the case, the Minister should certainly see that stocks available are distributed equitably.—SMOKER (Burnie).

### THE SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Sir.—The natural and the spiritual knowledge of the Creator of the heavens and of the earth are separate departments in the Bible. School children and older students are returning to schools and colleges from the Christ-Child's birthday holidays. King Herod failed to kill the Christ Child of about two years of age, but cruelly destroyed others of the innocents in Bethlehem. Governments are responsible to God to seek the welfare of their subjects. If the Bible instruction by the teachers is omitted, we may expect a generation of "semi-pa-

gans" by the teachers is omitted, we may expect a generation of "semi-pagans." If the school children are neglected in the home, too, we may look for the "stones" of the temple in Jerusalem to cry out their praises of the lowly and meek Man Who rode into Jerusalem a few days before His crucifixion. We send millions of Bibles to the heathen; but natural religion of the creature to the Creator is sadly on the wane; and a spurious and Christless Christianity usurps the place and honors of "the faith once delivered" to the Christian Church. Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure. It is high time to awake to our solemn responsibilities regarding the children.—A. L. RLEVE (Forest).

### BRITISH FASCISTS.

Sir.—Writing in this column in your issue of 29th December, J.W.R. makes a very weak attempt to portray the father and leader of the British Fascist Party as an ardent British patriot. He says it is easy to be wise after the event, and then goes on supposedly to prove that patriotism promoted Mosley's Fascist views and actions.

J.W.R. makes the point that the formation of the British Fascist Party amid the economic strife of the early thirties was a symbol of hope to some people in Britain. But Mosley's gospel was the teachings of Hitler and his tactics the same, namely, slanderous attacks on the Jews in an attempt to turn the wrath of the hungry British people against the much-lauded (by Hitler) but non-existent ring of international Jewish financiers. He made promises to all sections of the people—the middle class in particular—always concealing from those who do not understand Fascism that the only section of the population which gains with the

introduction of Fascism is the representatives of big business. This is proved by the fact that since 1934 the number of millionaires and multi-millionaires in Germany has increased while the standard of living of the German people has considerably decreased, and what is left of the middle class is poverty-stricken.

The violence and basher tactics used by Mosley's followers against their opponents are best illustrated by this extract from some first-hand impressions of Mosley's political career by Mr. F. W. Doidge, M.P., a member of the New Zealand Opposition, in "Current Problems" (he worked in London as a journalist for many years): "I was present at a great Mosley meeting at Olympia—something I shall never forget. There must have been 15,000 people packed into that hall. It was a Fascist demonstration, and attracted many people who came to oppose and interrupt. It was then I saw the Blackshirts acting as thugs, in all their Fascist glory. As soon as anyone interjected, he was set upon by the Blackshirts, laid out with knuckle-dusters, and thrown outside."

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and thrown outside."

The demand of the British people for the reinstatement of Mosley should be, and is being, supported by the Australian trade unions and soldiers.

In the same correspondence the following sentence occurs: "We no more suspect Mosley of wishing to betray Britain to Italy than we did Anthony Eden, for instance, of wishing to sell us to the Kremlin." Let us recall what was actually the case. Mosley wished to bring to power in Britain a regime similar to that of Italian Fascism. Anthony Eden, on the other hand, with Winston Churchill, stood for collective security of all democratic countries, including the S.U. Had the influence of Eden and Churchill within the British Government been strong enough to defeat the pro-Nazi, anti-Soviet policy of the group of Munich-ers at that time led by Chamberlain, there would have been pacts of collective security between the democratic countries aimed at Fascist aggression. This, in turn, would have led to the economic collapse of the Fascist States.—IRIS E. BOUND.

#### YOUTHS IN HOTELS.

Sir.—Why is it that young men are the only ones found for being in hotels under age? Why is not the barman or hotel proprietor fined for selling liquor to them? If the young men knew they could not obtain liquor without showing their identity card, which shows their age, they would not go into the hotels. Is it fair to fine one and not the other? Both are guilty parties.—INTERESTED (Yolla).

[Under new legislation boys found drinking in hotels may be proceeded against. Previously the responsibility was wholly on the publican to see that they were not served. He, however, in the absence of personal knowledge, obviously in many cases would find it impossible to discriminate.—Ed.]

#### MEAT RATIONING.

Sir.—Rationing of any article implies shortage of it, and that is the imperative justification for rationing. People in Australia don't know what real shortage of anything is. The nearest approach to it is clothing, particularly cotton clothing. Has anyone seen a strong pair of working trousers hung at a draper's shop for sale? No. Those trousers are inquired for, the draper is watched taking his goods from a wharf, watched unpacking them, and if there are trousers they are snatched before he has any chance to hang them. In such cases people don't need to have explained to them the reason for rationing. It is self-evident. Most rationed articles in Australia are made short artificially. We have much more of them than we need, but we take a generally broad view and want to share our abundance with those who are in great need, and thus we create an artificial shortage at home. Again, people understand it and approve it.

The latest rationed article is meat. Regarded superficially, there is the same justification for rationing meat as butter. But when we come down to facts, we encounter differences. Who has heard of a producer complaining

to facts, we encounter differences. Who has heard of a producer complaining that his butter is getting stale because he can't sell it? That doesn't happen, because the Government takes all the surplus butter left after rationing. There is nothing approaching it in regard to beef. Beef may go to waste, and no one heeds it. (I don't know the beef position on the mainland, and I am speaking of Tasmania only.) Twelve months ago hundreds of fat cattle were sent to winter runs on the West Coast, to be reduced there to a starving condition, and other hundreds were de-fattened at home, with the failure of pastures. And in the same time Government spokesmen were saying that they wan-

ted every pound of beef they could get.

The same is happening now, only in more accentuated form, on account of meat rationing. At country sales cattle are already hard to sell at low prices. Producers are afraid to send cattle to bigger markets, because buyers know there is a large surplus, and only a touch of over-supply is wanted and the market will collapse. The King Island Council is begging Victoria to lift the restriction on fat cattle shipments to Melbourne. The Tasmanian beef market is becoming a spectre of ruin for producers. And all this time we are being told repeatedly that the Government wants every pound of beef it can get. In that case, even if one could afford holding fat cattle on, it is nothing less than a criminal waste, because if fat cattle are sold a new lot can be fattened. And it is not as though beef producers wanted fancy prices for fat cattle; while every article on sale has increased in price since the last war sometimes two and three times, beef is the only article that has remained stationary in price for the past 25 and probably 50 years.

Under the circumstances it is pertinent to ask the question: Say honestly, Mr. Controller of Meat, do you want meat or not? All the producer wants is business. If you want beef, buy it; if you don't, say so. And the producer will terminate the futility of producing beef and turn his energies to something else.

English sentiment in Tasmania is very strong, and any meat rationing will be accepted by people without grumbling, and even gladly, provided they have faith that our meat is helping England in her hour of trial. In that case, any illegal trading in meat would be impossible, because it would be against people's sentiment. But if people living on short meat rations see that fat cattle are unsaleable, and are allowed to waste away to store condition, then illegal killing of cattle and selling of meat will flourish.—S. SUTCHKOFF (Edith Creek).