

Public Opinion

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

GOVERNMENT ENTERPRISE.

Sir,—In "The Advocate" report of the "Conversion of War Plant" by Mr. Makin a glowing picture is painted of the operation of the various munition factories in displacing private enterprise after the war.

Unfortunately for his case, the practical experience of Government intrusion beyond the realms of recognised Government services has been one of such colossal failure that the smoke-screen put over by Mr. Makin will surely not deceive anyone. For it is quite inconceivable that cheaper amenities can be secured by the people from factories under Government control than by private enterprise, unless, of course, the taxpayer is called upon to make up a substantial contribution to the cost of production.

The chief reason ascribed for Government control of these factories, which cost £100,000,000, is that private enterprise wished to secure at greatly reduced prices tangible assets represented by the people's investment. Much of this investment no doubt was established under the cost plus system, which definitely leads itself to gross extravagance in its process; therefore it is absurd to expect book values, which are undoubtedly fictitious, to be paid for these factories.

However, a much greater issue than the future control of this £100,000,000 worth of factories is involved, and it must be galling to those Ministers who are too astute to come right out into the open to buy their smoke-screen blown aside, and the important issue given its proper place, i.e., the amendment of the Federal Constitution by the addition of State powers which will permit the full and complete operation of the paralysing doctrine of nationalisation.

Senator Aylett is quite right in his contention that "if the Federal Government did not get the increased powers it was asking for it would be in a hopeless position after the war to carry out its policy." And if it does get them, it will have a flying start with £100,000,000 worth of buildings and plant, ready to go right ahead. Thus the first step would be taken to destroy a principle that has made the British Empire what it is to-day.—
A. LILLICO (Devonport).

BEEF MARKET.

Sir,—It is significant that persons quoting high prices of beef cattle on Tasmanian markets don't care to put their names to their statements, though probably they have some justification for quoting. Reports in papers are usually based on top prices, which are paid for a very insignificant percentage of cattle yarded. Usually it is the case of two or three butchers upholding their

cattle yarded. Usually it is the case of two or three butchers upholding their reputation for buying the dearest cattle. But look through any report under the heading of "fat cattle," and you will be surprised to see how many cattle are sold at £5 and £4 per head. It is hard to imagine any fat beast less than 400 lb., and so they must be sold well under 30/ per 100 lb. Of course, they are not prime, but they are fat enough for butchers to buy and good enough for consumers to pay the usual price for beef.

The Deputy Controller's idea of marketing is very simple: If the market on the N.W. Coast is unsatisfactory, just switch over and send cattle to Hobart and Launceston. There is a great deal of innocence in this conception of marketing. For one thing, Hobart and Launceston are the best markets in Tasmania, but they are, after all, only small markets, very easily oversupplied, and the consignor of cattle to these markets from the N.W. Coast worries every time when sending cattle, trying to guess if the market is to be oversupplied, and every time he depends entirely on luck. He knows he is gambling. If he is selling cattle on a market near home, he can decline an offer, if unsatisfactory, and take cattle home, but in sending to Hobart and Launceston his cattle are practically sold when he puts them in trucks, though he has not the least idea of the price. There is no chance of declining an offer.

Then we must bear in mind that, probably, most Tasmanian cattle are fattened ultimately by small producers. Practically every farmer is a beef producer on a small scale. And sending cattle to Hobart or Launceston for a small producer borders on impossibility. You've got to have a full truck, or it would be too costly. And railway rules are not helpful. If you have young cattle you might easily put them 10 to a truck. Not many small producers have as many. But there is in railway usage a term "half a truck," the most deceptive thing that has ever been invented. A full truck might hold 10 cattle, but if you want to send only half a truck of the same cattle, you can send only 3. If you put in 4, you will have to pay for a full truck. And in any case the charge for half a truck is not much different from a full

one. So the small beef producer is practically bound hand and foot to his country market. His only hope is that a scheme may be devised similar to the marketing of pigs, which will benefit everyone and do harm to nobody.

To give a glimpse of the state of the country market I am introducing a personal element. At the last Smithton cattle sale, on February 7, I bid for and sold 12 cows and heifers, ten of them speckled. For a Durham cow, 600 lb., 8 years old, fat but not prime, I was offered 9/ and declined. Durham heifer, at least 450 lb., prime, offered £6, and declined. Two Friesian heifers, four years old, at least 650 lb., not

four years old, at least 650 lb., not quite prime but very close to it, offered 28 to 1, and obtained. Eight average Jersey cows, on young side, fat, had no offer. If people interested in the beef market look more closely, they will find many sales like that. But they will rather argue abstractly that meat rationing doesn't affect the market than study the market in detail.—S. SUTCHKOFF (Edith Creek.)

THE GALLANT A.I.F.

Sir,—Might I suggest that you be so good as to republish the poem, "El Alamein, 1942," at the foot of this letter in order that we may re-read it, and in so doing remember the mighty deeds of the men of the 6th, 7th and 9th Divisions in the Middle East, Crete and Greece, and further, that these are the divisions which are still in the vanguard in the New Guinea campaign. May the receding also serve to remind us of the gallant 8th, which is almost wholly in enemy hands.—V. PERKINS (Latrobe).

EL ALAMEIN, 1942.

Walk softly over the desert sand,
And humbly bend the knee,
For here they made their gallant stand
And gave their lives for thee.
Walk softly over the desert sand,
Where a dry wind blows cold,
And the scrubbs run, in the midday sun,
O'er the graves of the young and the old.
Walk softly over the blood-stained sand,
From Gattara to the sea,
For they asked so little and gave so much.
That our people might stay free.

—G. S. L. Woodhouse, F.L.I. ("Air Force News," Cairo).

AQUA PURA.

Sir,—I arrived at Port Sorell in the years long since, when, between there and the Mersey River, a lovely dense forest covered the land, through which pellucid streams ran to the sea. The only building in the early days was the home of the squire of Appledore. It was foretold that there would arise a great city, but cities are limited by the water supply.

Water could be obtained directly from the beautiful Forth, but the Mersey should be locked first some miles above the Mersey bridge, leading to Gads Hill, and again at the Alum Cliff. This would supply a whole area from the Rubeon to the Mersey with present and future needs when Devonport has its own steamer and flying machine to the mainland.—LAU DL VIE.

TOURIST TRADE AT STANLEY.

Sir,—I read in "The Advocate" the heading, "Tourist Trade May Become Tasmania's Greatest Industry," with great interest, as undoubtedly Tasmania stands alone for the tourist.

The North West Coast towns of Devonport, Ulverstone and Burnie, with their excellent beaches and conveniences for the visitor, as well as the local people, are a fine example of

ces for the visitor, as well as the local people, are a fine example of combined progress, but travel down to Stanley, where as far as scenic beauty and excellent beaches are concerned, I have yet to see the equal, and you will find on the main beach (known as Godfrey's beach) two bathing boxes about 40 yards apart, and consisting of about 8 square yards, with no roof or door, with space of half an inch to an inch between the boards, in quite a number of places. The woman's dressing shed has not the above fault, but is more like a dog's kennel, only a kennel does possess a roof and door. On the other side of the Nut there is to be found another excellent beach well known for its safety for children, but the visitor will discover, much to his surprise, that here there are no bathing boxes at all. As a visitor to Stanley, I have heard much praise of the work of the Patriotic Committee. Is there any reason why this fine committee could not change its name in the near future from patriotic to progress, and make an excellent little town more inviting to visitors and locals—not only beach facilities, but the main street?—PROGRESS.

ONE FARMERS' ORGANISATION.

Sir,—Having taken a keen interest in the negotiations for amalgamation between the Tasmanian Producers' Organisation and the Primary Producers' Union, it would appear to me that a point to be cleared up in finalisation of proceedings is a name for the new organisation which would prove satisfactory to both parties. Naturally, neither party would be prepared to sink its identity by accepting the name

of the other, and I humbly suggest that an apt title would be the "Tasmanian Producers' Union." Thus each organisation would retain two of the original words constituting its present name.

There is no doubt in my mind about the desirability of the amalgamation, as the time has long since passed when there should be friction between the producers. They are worthy of a fair and equitable return for their labors, and the time was never more opportune than now for the formation of one union for Tasmanian producers.

The Australian Workers' Union, of 130,000 members, owes its strength to the fact that it has always served the rank and file, who were not able to take advantage of membership in a crafts union, and it seems to me that primary producers will have to set up an organisation with a paid secretary, and probably an organiser in the field, as is the case with the A.W.U. Members then could claim full-time service, whereas honorary officials can only be expected to devote spare time to the duties allotted them.

I trust the amalgamation takes place in the near future, and that all producers become members, thus setting up an organisation that can perform many useful functions.—R. H. LACEY (Ulverstone).

many useful functions.—R. H. LACEY (Ulverstone).

FISH AT DEVONPORT.

Sir,—In "The Advocate" I noticed a letter from W. Berryman, of Devonport, stating that it is scarcity of fish and not low prices that has compelled fishermen to work on the Devonport wharf in order to earn a living. He states that fishermen cannot afford to go looking for fish. If Mr. Berryman intends to continue disposing of his fish at Devonport at the price offering during the past few months, no doubt this would be correct from his point of view, although I have been unofficially informed that the local price has recently been increased.

Regarding the fish being so scarce, I would like to point out that in 15 days' fishing, from January 15, three hours' caught 275 boxes of barracouta at Port Sorell, within about 10 miles of Devonport, and which were sold on the Melbourne market at a net return of £220, after being frozen in B. Harvey's freezers at Burnie and Wynyard, an average of 16s per box. These prices have been approximately the same for some months, while at Devonport boxes of the same size were bringing the fisherman a return of 8s 4d (2s a pound for a 50 lb. box). Mr. Berryman's letter tends to give the impression that the majority of Devonport fishermen are members of the Waterside Workers' Union, and not full-time fishermen at all.—E. J. NISBET (Port Sorell, secretary to contemplated Devonport Co-operative Freezers).

DEVONPORT STREETS.

Sir,—With reference to a paragraph appearing in "The Advocate" dealing with blocked drains, etc., owing to pressure of other work, shortage of labor, and so on, this is not the cause of the trouble at all. The real cause is that the council's affairs have gone wild. Up till recently the excuse was "no money," etc. Let ratepayers look back over the administration of council affairs, and they will find an excuse given for everything. The people have been fed on excuses long enough. With rates at 4s 8 in the pound ratepayers have been most considerate in their attitude towards the council.—F. H. BATTEN.

UNWELCOME MIRTH.

Sir,—Do you think there is an explanation of the fact that so many Burnie picturegoers lose much of the dialogue of the scenes, because of their loud laughter? It is very annoying to miss the best bits of every film because some fool has to guffaw and the rest follow and drown the voices on the screen. It is not done elsewhere.—DESPERATE.

WEST PARK RENTAL.

Sir,—Probably the Burnie Athletic Club will publish a balance sheet, as it usually does after a carnival. In the meantime, many ratepayers are anxious to know how much the Burnie Council received in rental at the rate of 15 per cent. from the front gate takings at the last carnival, which was run

at the last carnival, which was run for patriotic funds. In fact, ratepayers should be told through the press matters such as this, which concern the whole municipality, for West Park is municipal property.—JACK CROWE (Upper Burnie).

BRITISH NATIONAL SOCIALISM.

Sir,—Evidently lacking an argument and realising the unpopularity of supporting British National Socialism as represented by Oswald Mosley, J.W.R., writing in this column of February 2, attempts to gloss over Mosley's pro-Fitzler politics and policy by having personally being a well-meaning man. As regards Mosley's personal life, it is known to all who have followed his activities to any extent that he was a personal friend of Hitler and Goebbels and that his marriage to his present wife took place at Goebbels' home.

Using the example of Mosley's idea of stimulating Australia to replace the Argentine for Britain's meat supply, J.W.R. advances the argument that Mosley's mind was limited to serve only British interests. Who did Mosley represent when putting

forward this plan?—a certain section of British industrialists who did not want to see an industrially developed Australia but wished to retain her as a primary producing country and as a market for their industrial products. But did he represent the British people?

I agree with J.W.R.'s statement that Mosley looked on internationalism as an evil thing, as facts from his political career confirm that Mosley did look upon an association of countries on a democratic basis as an evil thing, but when we call to mind his connection with German and Italian Fascism it is logical to assume that Mosley's idea of internationalism was that of racial inequality and exploitation of weaker nations by powerful Fascist States. This same exploitation would not be in the interests of the people in these stronger States, but only the industrial monopolists at their head.

In regard to J.W.R.'s stated distrust of the present international unity achieved by the great democratic Powers for the defeat of Fascism and his disgust at the demand by that internationalism for punishment of self-proclaimed Fascists who have inflicted death and worse on millions, I would point out that persons who attack such unity and defend such criminals cannot in their own minds be far from the support of Fascism.—HIS E. ROUND (Devonport).

FUTURE TOWN PLANNING AND HOUSING SCHEMES

Sir,—Judging by the shoddy homes erected after the last war a very different line should be followed when homes are erected after the present war. Jerry-built structures rushed up under the conditions then prevailing should be an object lesson for future guidance, and as no doubt "rush" orders will be placed to satisfy the many homes that will be wanted, properly laid-out schemes must be evolved. Above all things to be shunned is that of allowing Government control, as in no case has a Government been successful in carrying out betterment schemes without

and a government, or an enterprise, in carrying out betterment schemes without huge expenditure and costly failures. For instance, the many millions sunk in re-patriation on farms after the last war. If individuals are not able to raise capital for their own home, or private enterprise cannot build them, let the public take a lesson from an English venture and see if they cannot surmount the difficulty by co-operation, and, by the way, instead of crowding the population around the present towns and cities, build up a healthier population away from the smoke and grime of the larger towns. Forty years ago three small villages with a population of 400 inhabitants all told were taken over by a limited liability company, and about 4000 acres of land purchased to form the Letchworth garden city, the first of its kind in England. So successful has the venture proved that today it is a thriving industrial centre of 25,000 people, with every essential need for developing industries, which have been working for the war effort in the healthiest possible surroundings. The author of the book, "Garden Cities of To-morrow," Sir Ebenezer Howard, laid the plans for its development, and leading architects were called in to prepare the layout of its residential and factory sites, including technical schools, libraries, etc. Judging by photographs of its gardens and public squares it must be an industrial Eden. I see no reason why a similar garden city proposal could not be carried out in Australia, which would enable every dweller to purchase his home on long terms of repayment. The chief lesson to be learnt from Letchworth is that instead of each generation having to leave their home centre to seek employment elsewhere, industries are established which maintain them in their own healthy surroundings. If Australia had scores of such smaller centres instead of the majority crowding in a few cities it would be far better for the nation's welfare.—B. HORTON (Devonport).

SEED GRADE POTATO PRICES.

Sir,—In your issue of February 8, the Minister for Agriculture states that he intends seeking higher prices for seed grade potatoes. I would like to commend the Minister on this action, which is long overdue. According to correspondence received from the mainland, grade would not count if only the people could get some potatoes.

I have a questionnaire from the P.M.B. seeking the cost of production, which I intend filling in to the best of my ability. At the same time, as Tasmania is the most reliable State in the Commonwealth for potato production, I would like to suggest to the Marketing Board of Tasmania, the Australian Potato Committee, or anyone who can use his influence, the offer to Tasmanian potato growers for the 1944-45 season of £15 per ton f.o.w. for all grades and varieties. The average grower knows the variety that suits his soil. Getting away from the financial side, the question at the moment is getting supplies for this nation and the fighting forces. I feel sure, irrespective of manpower problems, that if Tasmanian growers were given the above encouragement, they would turn out an all-time record.—OWEN DYSON (Sprent).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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E. H. Batten.—The statements made in your letter are of such a nature that you should bring the matter to the notice of the Warden with the object of having the alleged danger removed. Publication while other means of improving matters are available to you might cause unnecessary alarm.—Ed.