

# Public Opinion

Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words in length

## THE WAY OUT

Sir,—I read in "The Advocate" a review of the apple crop, which concluded by stating that growers were going to suffer great loss owing to transport difficulties to the mainland. The Commonwealth Disposals Commission is advertising for sale a number of small steamers, some lying at Hobart. It is quite within the range of the Tasmanian Government's duty to guarantee a loan to the Fruit Board to take over any of these steamers that may be suitable, to move the apples or other produce to the mainland. It only wants somebody with punch. There are dozens of men in the naval reserve that could be used to man these steamers.—S. M. BURNS (Yarraville, Vic.).

## IN SELF-DEFENCE AND CONCERNING FREEDOM.

Sir,—"Traditional Mind" doesn't know how to play the game. When he is perfectly beaten on the game he started, he forgets all about the game and attacks his opponent personally, as he does in his letter "This Freedom" (April 4). I could stand even that were his attack based on my letters. But there is not the least connection between my letters and his attack. He invents something that has never entered my mind, and then attacks me on the strength of his invention. I demand him to quote where I did "sneer at our hard-won privilege of free speech." The fact is that there is nothing I respect and love more than free speech. I couldn't even expose "Traditional Mind" if not for free speech. And when I am contradicting misstatements he is telling me that I am abusing free speech. But that is not enough. He knows that in the long run truth will out, and he has no chance. Then in a most dastardly way he invents that I am attacking not him but all the Australian nation, and he defends it, speaking for the nation, not for himself: "All we ask is that he" (meaning me) "should not abuse it" (freedom) "by abusing us" (Australian nation), "whose only fault is that we value our traditions too lightly." What is he talking about?

that we value our traditions too lightly. . . . " What is he talking about? There is a perfect harmony between Australian people and me, and I had arguments only with a man who calls himself "Traditional Mind," and whose traditions are unworthy of human nature, and particularly English nature.

All this is very serious. It is the perfect example of how Jew-baiting is being done in Germany. It needed only Hitler's order and the mind of a baiter—Reprint "Traditional Mind's" letter, "This Freedom," in every newspaper issue it in millions of leaflets, spread the leaflets throughout the country—and the stage for a pogrom is set. "Traditional Mind" would go far if he reported himself to Hitler's headquarters, though in the present uncertain times in Germany he might only go up.

I want "Traditional Mind" to remember when baiting me in future that I may have better claim to Australian citizenship and freedom than he has. When he says "this freedom which we have won with our blood," no doubt he means himself, and uses it in a harmless poetical

sense, or rather, not even poetical, but only melodramatic. In my case there is only a stark reality. By sheer luck I have not shed much of my blood, but I willingly offered my life for the country that had adopted me, when the country needed it. I served three years in the A.I.F. abroad, and when in the fighting line I was prepared every minute to shed my blood for Australia's freedom to the last drop, but not for "Traditional Mind's" freedom to bait me. When he is spreading inaccuracies about the Polish settlement, and I am trying to correct him, he is not using "this priceless heritage of free speech" to contradict me. He wants to shut my mouth by threatening me as one of the "strangers within our gates." It is exactly the freedom that unfortunate peoples were enjoying under Hitler's heel. A tag of "Freedom" doesn't make freedom. "Traditional Mind" might write the word "freedom" over every line of his letters, but it would always spell only his daily prayers in different guises for our national freedom to be relegated to the bottom of hell.

And "Traditional Mind" is still hitting furtively from his hiding-place.

— S. |  
SUTCHKOFF (Edith Creek).

## ATTACK ON DANCING

Sir,—Once again and for the last time I must ask Mr. Howie in his criti-

time I must ask Mr. Howie in his criticism of my expressed views on dancing to stick to the point and not draw red herrings across the path. That members of the Conference squabbled among themselves about dancing is certain, and as one result dancing is barred from Methodist property.

It is futile for Mr. Howie to attempt to bolster up his quartette of clerical brothers who so forcibly denounced dancing as being "dangerous and damnable." He does not state his own views on dancing. He has inferred that my source of information of what the four said was unreliable. I gleaned my information from "The Advocate," and am satisfied with my authority.

Further newspaper publicity is unnecessary to show that dancing is not all it might be from Mr. Howie's point of view, but as an exponent of Methodism he will appreciate that as Methodism has functioned for less than 150 years, it has far to go before it wipes out the terpsichorean art when the Christian churches generally have had nearly a couple of thousand years to do it and have not done so, presumably because dancing was never vetoed by Jesus his Master.—RICHARD BOOTH (Moorleah).

Sir,—Mr. Booth, it seems, does not quite get the meaning of my letter. I did not say I was virtuous, but I did say that we cannot serve Christ and the world. It is nothing to do with me whether the worldly people dance or go in for any other kind of worldly pleasure. I do not believe in the Church trying to force its beliefs on to the world. It is the duty of the Church to preach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to practise it.

I was once in a town in North Queensland where there was a picture show which started at 8 o'clock on Sunday night. The church started its service at 7 o'clock. Some of the leading members went straight out of church to the pictures. I was a real man of the world at that time, but that sort of thing did not appeal to me.—

ALF. SMITH (Devon-  
port).