CORRESPONDENCE

HAROLD COX AND COMPULSORY STERILIZATION.

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,

Mr. Gwynn's letter needs no detailed reply. He still argues that he was justified in saying that I am in favour of compulsory sterilization, although I said emphatically that the sterilization must be with the consent of the persons sterilized, or with the consent of their guardians. In the former case he apparently now drops the contention that sterilization would be compulsory; in the latter case he argues that the guardians might abuse their powers. That consideration applies to all persons to whom powers are entrusted, and Mr. Gwynn would have been on safe ground if he had merely pointed out that there was this danger of abuse. But to argue that I am in favour of compulsion because the precaution which I demanded against compulsion might in some cases be abused is to defy both language and logic.

Yours faithfully,

HAROLD COX.

GRAY'S INN.

To the Editor of BLACKFRIARS.

SIR,

I can only repeat:

(1) That Mr. Cox's own words were: 'Those persons who, as the result of physical or mental defects, are unfitted to produce children should be sterilised, with their consent or with the consent of their guardians, at the expense of the State.'

(2) That sterilisation 'with the consent of their guardians' *is* quite obviously—whatever Mr. Cox may say to the contrary—compulsory sterilisation: whether the persons so sterilised be children or mentally defectives or any others either temporarily or permanently under the jurisdiction of guardians. Consequently, in declaring that certain classes of people 'should be sterilised with the consent of their guardians' Mr. Cox *ipso facto* declares himself in favour of compulsory sterilisation for several very large classes of persons.

(3) That even where the consent of the persons themselves has to be obtained, they will in nine cases out of ten be either

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