

ted this programme might help to create? What of the statistics which begged contradiction on utterance? Should we have to be content with last year's views in place of this year's news?

Demands on viewing time could have been met by cutting to the earlier, direct statements made by panelists; then, by allowing the same people to comment further in the light of subsequent public reaction, we might all have been given fresh food for thought.

Rather than allow such a vital subject to remain frozen in one aspect may I introduce some fresh material even at this late date?

It is interesting to note, for instance, that since the inception of domiciliary deliveries by midwives in the Auckland district in 1974, more than 200 babies have been delivered by the two midwives in practice there. Their perinatal fatality rate is *nil*.

Do healthy women having normal deliveries benefit from the chemical and mechanical "aids" so readily available in the maternity hospital? Professor G. J. Kloosterman, chief of obstetrics in Amsterdam's teaching hospital, says quite unequivocally, "I do not believe that technology ever will improve a natural labour in a healthy woman". He goes even further by stating: "That in a hospital you can spoil a normal delivery and perhaps even make dangers for mother and baby is a supposition I personally believe in." He points to the danger of "making physiology into pathology, either out of jealousy, or idleness, or because it's so easy to take over".

However, lest those healthy women readers happily contemplating a normal delivery in the tranquil and familiar surroundings of their own homes become too complacent, we should acquaint them with the warning given by the Auckland obstetrician, Mr Bruce Faris: "Women should be aware that having a baby is not a normal physiological function at all" (*NZ Herald* — October 19, 1976).

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Birth

Sir, — *Birth with R. D. Laing* was well worth rescreening (June 5). But TV1 committed a major blunder by repeating with it — unedited and restricted to its original scope — the discussion which followed the first showing of this remarkable documentary.

What of the statements made by panel members which were later challenged in the press? What of the changes in hospital procedures which it was sugges-

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