

Silencer threat for Sex Pistols

John Read, chairman of EMI, said yesterday the company is considering whether to release any more records by the Sex Pistols, whose language on their new album provoked a storm of protest last week.

In an interview on Thames Television — half owned by EMI — was "disgraceful," Sir John said shareholders in London. He added: "EMI will be setting its general guidelines for the content of pop records."

Sir John said: "Sex Pistols have damaged a reputation for good music which certainly demonstrates itself to the public."

The Sex Pistols is the only punk rock group that EMI records under direct contract and whether they will in fact release any

more of their records will have to be carefully considered.

"I need hardly add that we shall do everything we can to restrain their public behaviour, although this is a matter over which we have no real control."

Sir John, in a lengthy statement on permissiveness in the music industry, said EMI did not want to be a censor. But the entertainment giant wanted to discourage records likely to give offence to the majority.

The Sex Pistols uproar had started with "a disgraceful interview" followed by a vast amount of newspaper coverage, he said.

Sir John's remarks follow last night's walkout by scores of students from a concert being given by the punk rock group in Leeds.

One said: "They are rubbish."

It is the worst group I have ever heard. They did not shock me. Their music was just so bad."

Eight other concerts organised for the group have already been cancelled after the controversial Today television interview which included a number of four-letter words.

Sir John said after the meeting that the directors expected to take a decision probably "within a week" on the future of the Sex Pistols.

EMI had a two-year contract with Sex Pistols worth £40,000, signed in October.

Termination was "one of the possibilities we might have to consider but at the moment we have no complaint against them on their recording interests."

He said: "Obscene behaviour just gets no one anywhere. It will hurt their record sales and get them nowhere."