

Teenagers make lively and varied pilot

by Michael Campbell

THE medium is not distinguished by its originality and the concept of teenagers presenting programmes for teenagers is not new. But **Something Else** (BBC-2, Saturday, March 11, 5.45 pm) went one stage further. A group of thirteen teenagers chosen from 2,000 applicants, devised, presented and produced (with the help of the BBC's Community Programme Unit) the sort of programme they, as teenagers, would like to see. The result was a well-filled and very lively 45 minutes, containing a wide variety of items.

By beginning with The Clash (the foremost remaining punk-group), it was made clear that the programme would concentrate upon what is happening now. The discussion with The Clash and Joan Lester MP, on young people's involvement in politics, was well handled by Douglas Rodericks, who allowed the guests to speak without undue interruption. But why were only "punks" in attendance for a discussion of universal interest?

Apart from The Clash, music during the programme was provided by Sally Williams, who sang a song of her own writing, and by Ad Hoc, a new group with definite promise.

The item about Tube Theatre gave a good idea of this original group's activities, but I would have liked to see a little less of the reaction of the commuters and more of the antics of the group. But the filmed visit to Skye by Dave Paes could hardly be faulted. Although not of immediate relevance to city-dwellers, it showed, with the help of articulate and unselfconscious interviewees, that for all its idyllic qualities Skye is not without its problems, especially

regarding job opportunities for school-leavers.

Advertising director Patricia Mann came under fire from Andrew Franks, T. J. W. Phoenix and a confident young lady who failed to get a caption credit. The interviewers here were not afraid to be fairly brusque in their questioning, but this was perhaps the one item which had insufficient time.

Overall, however, the conciseness was notable, and superfluity and flippancy were thankfully avoided. As for the presenters themselves, there was little chance for more than a few to stamp their personalities on the proceedings. But if, as the BBC has hinted, a series is made, that situation could be remedied. Certainly there is a large amount of talent and imagination within the group.

The fairest thing is to say that at no time would the programme have disgraced professional presenters and devisers. The only real criticism is that, in the interests of pace, the transition from item to item was too abrupt and often disconcerting.

The advice to teenagers from the NCCL was presented with amusing graphics from Rosalind Dallas and was accompanied by a look at community service orders, well conducted by Dawn Glasson. Not one sub-standard item to be found, and interest kept throughout.

Let us hope, then, that a series can be developed from this pilot; this viewer, at least, believes it should be and deserves to be. But, please, find a title which is less of a cliché.

Michael Campbell is an 18-year-old London schoolboy.