

the Regent of Hungary. Hungarian foreign policy must be based on entirely new foundations, for Hungary's problem is that of Eastern Europe and unsolved will always remain a nest of explosives for future wars. . . .

"The Magyars have to choose between two paths. The first would be to follow Horthy and the traditional policy of the landowners which attaches them to the trail of German Imperialism. This is a most dangerous path, as the victory to which Horthy is contributing is not in Hungary's interest. In spite of the fact that it would enlarge Hungarian territory, Hungary would become a German colony, merely used as a passage to

the Near East to satisfy Hitler's 'Drang nach Osten.' The only 'advantage' would be the security of the big estates. The other path to choose is sincere collaboration with the Slavs, a democratic land reform, and a social and progressive policy. Britain has to choose also. If, as all down-trodden people of the Continent believe, she is fighting for democracy she has to back up that new Hungary which will be the Hungary of to-morrow—those millions who by tradition were always the enemies of German reaction and who at last yearn to live in peace with their neighbours and create a Federation of the Danubian Countries."

"SHARECROPPERS"

A Social Problem of the United States

THE AMERICAN Baptist magazine *Missions*, published in Concord, contains an article by Mr Mark A. Dawber, general secretary of the Home Missions Council of North America, on the dispossessed "sharecroppers" and very-low-income farm tenants, who form a social problem in the United States. They have been displaced by the increased use of farm machinery and cheap day labour. They have been driven off the land and compelled to wander about the country looking for food and shelter. Some of them migrate to cities and towns, where they swell the relief rolls or threaten the standards of life of city workers, some go back to the sub-standard rural areas, and thousands have become migratory workers seeking employment as casual farm labourers.

Following are brief extracts from Mr Dawber's article:—

"The Government programme for the reduction of cotton acreage has wrought havoc in the lives of the sharecroppers. From the point of view of world markets it was well intentioned and necessary, but it has resulted in a programme that robs Peter to pay Paul. The big farmers and the landowners, the insurance companies, and the large holding corporations get most of the benefits, while the rights and needs of tenants, sharecroppers, and day labourers are virtually disregarded. Reduction of crops has meant eviction, unemployment and the loss of whatever meagre security the worn-out land provided.

"Approximately 9,000,000 American citizens fall into this category of farm labour. Many people are accustomed to think of the sharecropper situation as a 'negro problem,' but such is not the case by any means. It is true that negroes were the first victims of this arrangement, which grew out of conditions following the Civil War. But to-day they represent only 44 per cent of the 1,831,000 sharecropper families as estimated in the 'Report on Economic Conditions of the South.' The remaining 56 per cent are whites.

"The sharecroppers' life at best is little beyond back-breaking toil in the cotton fields from sun-up to sun-down. Their very existence is dependent upon the whims of the cotton market and the self-interest of the landowner. The weekly income for an entire family is as little as \$4. Some estimates have placed the sharecropper's income as low as 10 cents a day.

"For decades they have lived as virtual slaves in a free country. Their homes, if such they can be called, are unpainted one-room or two-room shacks, where often a family of eight or ten people must live, eat, sleep, and give birth to children. Few have any sanitary conveniences or outbuildings of any kind. Cotton is planted up to the cabin door, leaving no room for vegetables, fruit, or live stock. For food the sharecroppers depend upon the three M's—meal, molasses,

and side meat. They are easy prey to tuberculosis, pellagra, and malaria. They share the cash return on the crop in theory only, for many of them seldom see cash. Each year they find that they have fallen deeper in debt to the landlord. Having no claim on the land, they have little incentive for improvement.

"The sharecroppers' educational opportunity is limited. Tending crops is their paramount function in life, and in some places schools are open only four months of the year. If the sharecroppers cannot read or write they are at the mercy of the landlord in estimating their return on the crop.

"The conditions that have been described also result in the sharecropper's being deprived of his rights as a citizen. The lack of cash income makes it virtually impossible for him to pay the poll tax, which in eight Southern States is a prerequisite for voting. Excluded from all benefits which industrial workers enjoy through social security and other labour legislation, the sharecroppers are truly democracy's forgotten men, women and children."

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IN AMERICA ALSO

The *St Louis Globe-Democrat* of 23rd February reports that some land owners near Weldon Springs, who sold their property to the War Department for the site of the T.N.T. plant, received from two to three times the assessed valuation of the land. The records of the St Charles County Collector show that Birch O. Mahaffey, who owned 165 acres overlooking the Missouri River, was paid \$41,441 for the tract, which had an assessed valuation of \$1,570. The County Collector said that the assessed value of land in the county for tax purposes is 35 to 40 per cent of the actual valuation. Of the 16,000 acres that are being acquired, he said, the assessed value was estimated at \$350,000, whereas the actual value was approximately \$1,000,000. On the other hand, so the *St Louis Globe-Democrat* declares, Mr R. McDowell of Kansas City, Contractor, who has been allowed fees of 5 per cent by the Government on the total purchase price, in making his first estimate of what it would cost the Government to acquire the site, placed the cost at \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000.

Mr J. E. Bruton, B.Sc.(Econ.), is editor of the page "For and Against," in Pitman's journal, *Business Education*. In the April issue his "Mr Pro" and "Mr Con" argue respectively for and against the Taxation of Land Values, and the arguments on both sides are very fairly put. In this contribution Mr Bruton has certainly succeeded in giving his readers good business education, and we judge that his letter-bag will have many enquiries for more information on the subject.