

Under the Water — Land

by OSCAR B. JOHANNSEN

IT IS something of an anomaly that whereas the dry surface of the earth has been strictly defended as private property the ocean beds, comprising 80 percent of the planet, have been for the most part regarded as free land. Claims to exclusive dominion over large ocean areas have been made from time to time but they have usually been ignored by other nations. Only the suzerainty afforded by coastal or territorial conditions has been recognized. Improved methods for tapping under-water resources make the deep sea an increasingly profitable arena for obtaining necessary materials.

It was fortunate that until the 20th century there was no international organization such as Lina M. Keller mentions in "Sharing the Ocean Wealth" (Nov. HGN). She states "the General Assembly of the United Nations was pressed by humanitarian interests to lay claim to the ocean in 1967." Whether its action was motivated by humanitarian reasons or not is beside the point. What is important for everyone to recognize is the fact that so much power granted to a governmental entity is fraught with grave danger.

There are manifold reasons why an acknowledged authority is needed for distributing unequal opportunities of the earth among equal claimants to them. But a question arises as to whether this function can be carried out by any type of government. The evidence based on history is definitely against state or national governments' competency in this field, as, witness the disposition of the Western Hemisphere by the European monarchs. They divided the American continents at random among their parasitic favorites, disregarding their own citizens

and the Indians who were already here. The Congress of the U. S. also has a sordid record of unjustifiable allocations of land.

When radio and television airwaves have to be controlled, cooperative action is taken by local governments in the affected areas. When it comes to the water surface, more ingenuity is required. Modern technology might divide the seas into definable zones, but who would control them?

A fundamental principle is involved, namely that the earth's treasures belong to the people and should be distributed by them. This means that they must act collectively, coming together in groups periodically to reach decisions. Possibly a governmental unit, not on a world-wide scale but at the opposite pole, something similar to the successful New England Town Hall meetings, would be ideal.

Under-water resources and the opportunity to exploit them must be shielded from bureaucratic methods. If state and national governments cannot divide the dry land areas reasonably, imagine what would happen if an organization like the United Nations tried to allocate the ocean floor.

Exploitation

by CLAYTON C. BAUER

The ocean, with all its wealth in potential form, has been there all the time — George understood the sea as a part of what political economists called land. It is not something apart — it *is* land.

We see our San Diego fisherman being arrested and imprisoned by Peruvian gunboat forces when fishing a hundred miles and more off the shores of Peru which claims the water some 250 miles out from the littoral. And

so we have the strange situation of the U. S. giving aid to Peru yet having its men arrested while fishing in what have always been considered international waters. Peru is acting with one concern — to protect a rich mine of fish. Louisiana and Texas act in the same fashion. Right doesn't enter in.

I understand the practical nature of fishermen who have never respected fishing regulations except under the eyes of a patrol boat. Up in Alaska it was a common practice to raid fish traps when opportunity offered, sometimes through bribes to the trap keepers. Sometimes under cover of storms or fog. Soviet fishing vessels are seen off New England shores and the fleet is a threat in the Mediterranean where the prize is the Suez Canal.

When oil was discovered under the waters of the Gulf of Mexico the border states succeeded in pressing, their claims for the area. The federal government also sought the land but lost its case. What is right? That Greeks, Arabians, Chilenos and Canadians should have as much right to mine the oil of the Gulf of Mexico as Texans. But the Texans take the position that they're on the spot in numbers and strength and that's all the right necessary.

John Adams maintained that economics rules politics. The British were for an open sea as long as English

ships were numerous, but as England finds oil in the ocean bed, and coal seams too, her thoughts about private waters may change. If people ever find out how to meter the air they'll claim that and sell it to us.

There is nothing here to give special privilege to impoverished nations, and there should not be. All anybody has a right to expect is opportunity. You would not have expected much initiative or invention out of the old Libya before oil was discovered, and little now that it has been, for the rewards go only to a few. Just because it is poor is no reason why it should claim distant ocean resources. Albert Jay Nock believed people must want to be exploited and live as underlings because they do so little to deserve freedom or justice.

Georgists should lead in setting policy, and should never take a provincial attitude. I am for a tough international law that will keep the sea open to all. A nation is entitled to wharf taxes as compensation for providing coastal protection and conservation safeguards to fisherman. Where other natural resources can be reached, they should be exploited within reasonable limits, with rewards going to those who furnish the skills. Land value taxation remains the best way of getting back what the national community provides.

H. B. GOLDSTEIN

H. Bernard Goldstein who through a teaching career of 21 years seldom missed a class, died suddenly on December 2nd, and students at the final session this term on December 3rd were greatly saddened by the news. H. B. always taught the basic course. *Progress and Poverty* was his favorite text. Though he was everywhere affectionately regarded he was so modest that extravagant praise would have embarrassed him. Among many who were present for the final rites were all the members of his latest class and devoted friends from his post at the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the YMHA. A lawyer by profession, Mr. Goldstein received his law degree at the Brooklyn Law School and a B.S. degree at the City College of New York. He is survived by his wife and by more than a thousand "children" who were privileged to pass through his classes which were always large from the first lesson to the last.