

certainly is not just because it discriminates unfairly between rent recipients, and which can have unfortunate economic effects even although it does make possible some remission of other harmful, unjust taxation. Dr. Logan appears to favour the no less unjust, and probably more harmful, capital gains tax. The proper method, of course, is to apply a straightforward tax on the value of all land at a uniform rate, and without exemptions of any kind.

Earlier in his paper, Dr. Logan pointed out that the price paid for land let is not related to any cost of its production. Land hoarding in previous centuries, he remarked, had retarded industrial progress by creating unemployment. A high rent on land, he wrote, will not in general increase its supply, but will retard the increase of agricultural production and building construction.

The full text of Dr. Logan's paper is given in the *Estates Gazette* of September 7 and 14.

At the same conference a paper on *The Transition in Rating* was presented by Mr. H. D. S. Styles, T.D., F.R.I.C.S., F.A.I., in the course of which we note wryly this guarded comment:

"As the official programme of the Labour Party proposes that industry shall be fully 're-rated,' the two leading political parties would seem to be agreed that the rating system shall remain substantially unaltered. One cannot rule out the possibility that there may in the future be some form of local income tax or land value tax, but there are no firm proposals for them at the present time. In any event, it is likely that they would be supplementary and not alternatives to the present rating system."

Opposition to the effects of the present local taxation system is mounting. This, combined with the steadily increasing number of those who know that the rating of land values—or "civic single tax" as some call it—is the only just and practicable alternative, will bear fruit, sooner perhaps than even the most optimistic dare hope.

CAN YOU STAND HEIGHTS?

PPRIVATE ownership of the resources of nature is not an indispensable prerequisite for economic development. We have never thought that it was. Now we have an authoritative ruling on the matter from a member of the General Legal Division of the United Nations, Mr. Oscar Schachter. According to our Melbourne contemporary, *Progress*, he was asked who will own the moon, to which he replied:

"One may ask whether any one at all should 'own' the moon. The fact that there may be trips to the moon does not necessarily mean that it must be regarded as real estate to be acquired by individuals or governments. We may, with good reason, decide to treat the moon in the same way we do the high seas, as belonging to all mankind, open to all and subject only to rules in the common interest. If there

should be any resources on the moon which are capable of exploitation by man, special rights could be granted to those willing and able to develop and use such resources. This could be done without permitting territorial acquisition and without substantially limiting the freedom of others to land on the moon and conduct scientific investigation. International co-operation rather than territorial rivalry would be the basis of lunar exploration and research."

Expensive rocket fares—aside from other considerations—may keep this free land beyond the reach of most of us. But the public collection of the economic rent of the land would throw open nature's storehouse on this planet on equal terms to all. Those who are landless, and who have poor heads for heights or who are poor travellers, should urge their elected representatives to get cracking with the necessary legislation. They could quote Mr. Schachter's dictum.

Last Month in Africa

NO TIARAS FOR SHOP GIRLS

THERE has been a lot of pother in the press recently about one aspect of the universal land question. In Sierra Leone, a British colony on the West African coast, so-called illicit diamond diggers have been applying their labour to the resources of Mother Earth. What could be more natural? They have been aided by "smugglers" who, circumventing the "normal channels," have helped to get their products into the hands of consumers. Officially this is regarded as a very serious economic and social problem, and exceptional steps have been taken to counter this activity. They are said to be having marked success.

At one time the Sierra Leone Selection Trust had virtually a complete monopoly over diamond mining in the Colony but it surrendered this valuable concession, and now holds a mere 150 square miles or so. The boundaries of this holding, much of which is in wild, desolate country, are not always clearly marked. It is here that some of the illegal diggers have been operating; when they are caught they affect surprise at learning that they are on company land.

Is this in fact a problem, and what are the rights and wrongs of the matter? Since diamonds are in demand, their extraction is not *per se* undesirable. Increased production should reduce prices for both industrial and ornamental purposes which clearly is desirable, notwithstanding the possible chagrin of many a glittering duchess. Above all, men have an inalienable right to exercise their labour as they please, subject to the equal rights of others. But have they a right to "poach" on company land?

We would be the last to advocate scrumping in somebody else's orchard. The simple test to apply here is: does the Selection Trust pay to the community in Sierra Leone the full economic value of the privilege they enjoy? Only if it does has it the moral right to deny access to the land it holds. As we have not information on that point we are unable to give an unqualified opinion on recent events but if, as we are almost certainly right in assuming, the company does not pay the full economic rent for its holding, the forces of law and order are being misapplied in support of a privileged interest against the true interests of the people. In that case, our sympathies go to the illicit diggers and the smugglers.

"SCARCITY BENEFITS EVERYBODY"

THE desire in West Africa to keep up the price of diamonds is matched by a similar desire in Central Africa to deny industrialists the benefit of cheap copper. Speaking in Salisbury, September 15, Sir Ronald Prain, chairman of the Rhodesian Selection Trust group is reported by the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent to have said that it was the responsibility of the big copper producers in the free world (note that word "free") to get together and control the supply of copper at the source rather than to continue a policy of full production and diminishing prices. He was against the suggestion that the low-cost producers of the world should cut their prices and knock out the high-cost producers. Only a few marginal producers would be adversely affected, copper prices would thereupon rise and they would return to production. Sir Ronald said in part:

"If supply and demand are out of balance there is very little the producers can do to affect the rate of demand; but, on the other hand, they should be able without too much difficulty to do something about the rate of supply. About two-thirds of the free world's production of new copper is in the hands of a few large companies; and in my opinion such companies should accept the responsibility which goes with their size and be ready to control the supply at source."

Such action, Sir Ronald said, would have to be voluntary. A cut-back of about 10 per cent might be necessary if all producers did the same. This was "not of an order which would generally create any great employment problems . . . in my opinion everybody would be better off under such a system."

Holders of copper shares and owners of copper bearing land apart, how can dear copper be in the interests of "everybody"? People seek the greatest possible amount of wealth for the least possible exertion. In other words their interest is in cheapness. The policy Sir Ronald puts forward—a familiar one—if adopted would tend to imperil employment opportunities in the vast range of copper-using industries and to raise prices of consumer goods needlessly. That is in the interests of everybody? Whatever will they tell us next?

"I LOVE POWER"

MR. KROBO EDUSEI, if he has been fairly reported, is an honest man. He is also in some respects exceedingly foolish and dangerous, but that is another matter. He is the Minister of the Interior in the new Dominion of Ghana (formerly the British Colony, Gold Coast) and according to newspaper reports he told a meeting of the Convention People's Party at Cape Coast on September 27, "I love power." He said that a Bill was before Parliament which, when passed, would enable him to issue orders to the police to arrest and detain at certain places members of the Opposition and other C.P.P. "difficult men" who indulge in criticising the Government to the advantage of the Opposition. It was obvious from his further remarks that he relished the thought of exercising the power which the Bill would confer upon him.

This statement and recent repressive actions by the government of Ghana sadden libertarians and friends of Africa. They can hardly fail to strengthen the hands of the Nationalists in the Union of South Africa. Moreover they are likely to arrest the rate of progress towards self-government in other dependent colonial territories. They show, too, that in political affairs no less than in the realms of economic activity to which we have previously drawn attention, some Africans are as capable of inhumanity to their fellows as some Europeans have been and are to their fellows and to the subject peoples.

Mr. Edusei's frankness is certainly unusual. But it would be naive to regard his love of power as unique. Throughout the world there must be thousands of politicians similarly afflicted, and hundred of thousands (at the very least) of ambitious people who aspire to exercise political control of their fellows. Recognising this, the libertarian who desires to lead his own life in his own way, and who wishes his neighbours to be able to do the same, seeks to reduce the power of government to the irreducible minimum. He sees that by far the greater part of political power these days is dependent upon the existence of poverty and inequality of opportunity, and that it is sustained by wrongful taxation. He deduces, logically, that if poverty is extirpated—instead of being merely gilded over by the redistributive social welfare measures—and if sound taxation is introduced, the power-hungry will have neither the occasion nor the opportunity to entrench themselves on the spurious pretext of combating poverty by taking from some and giving to others.

The Single Tax on land values destroys poverty, reduces the power of government, and increases the freedom of the individual. It conspires to the greatest good of the greatest number. Those who regard themselves as libertarians but who do not yet understand this should study *Progress and Poverty* and Henry George's other writings. They can be obtained—very cheaply—from our offices.

FORM OF BEQUEST

I bequeath, free of duty, to the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Limited, the sum of £.....

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