

COLIN CLARK AND THE TOWN PLANNERS

AT A general meeting of the Town Planning Institute, Professor Colin Clark read a very technical paper on "Urban Land Use Here and Abroad," which dealt with population movements and industrial expansion in large urban areas. One of the strong points Prof. Clark made was that town planners should acknowledge the need of very large manufacturers to locate on the outer fringe of conurbations, and for small industries dependent on others for services to remain in central areas.

Studies of American land value patterns revealed that apart from very expensive but small areas in city centres, natural dispersal of population and function had led in recent years to a decline in land values *per capita* in many inner urban areas.

A similar change in the value pattern had been noted in Manchester and was probably occurring in a less degree in many other cities, although *per capita* land values are still higher in England than in the U.S.A. Professor Clark commented that a fall in urban land values would be of considerable assistance to town planners, and added that the outstandingly low *per capita* land values of some Australian cities were due to the prevailing systems of land taxation which had been shown in theory and practice to effect big reductions in land prices.

Asked for his opinion on the impact that the Land Commission Levy would have on land prices, Prof. Clark replied: "The taxation of which I was speaking was not on land sales, but on land ownership. You pay by the year whether you sell or not. To tax land *sales* might have a detrimental effect in slowing down sales. The proposed land levy is very cumbersome. I cannot see why the Government refused to follow the policy, so often advocated in the past, of simple land taxation."