

nature, as common to adults as it is to children, that it is incomprehensible that the Board of Trade should pay only lip service to it. Show a chap what he is missing and he may then on his own initiative try to remedy the defect. The Location of Offices Bureau has an excellent poster in some suburban railway carriages which makes this very point, but it needs the soap-ad boys to get it over universally. . . .

"I still have no answer to the question I repeatedly ask—why is it necessary to have certificate control in Development Areas? Unless, of course, it is control for control's sake. When America, for reasons of government policy, opened up the Mid-West, it did not, so far as I am aware, require every person, family or enterprise to be first vetted and then given or not given a certificate of entry. Nor can there be any apprehension over the location and environmental uses and abuses of free entry of industry and employment, because each area has its development plan and its policies of development control backed by the forces of the 1962 Planning Act.

"If industrial development certificates were abolished in Development Areas, and the Government mounted, in association with reception areas, an enormous publicity campaign which well and truly showed the carrot to be dangled, then not only would industry be more responsive but would lose that sense of irritation and antagonism which it has toward blind restriction. I have yet to meet an industrialist who will readily admit that some anonymous civil servant in Victoria Street knows better than he where he can best operate his business. Under more conducive conditions, however, he may well admit that given certain circumstances and inducements some effort at re-allocation might be made. The Government should establish such a climate of thought and incentive that the industrialist will of his own accord want to talk of re-allocation in the less favoured areas, rather than be bludgeoned into it by implacable restriction."

IT is always refreshing to find an astute critic of the powers of negative control, even if one might wish to take issue with him on some points.

The belief that it is better to take jobs to workers rather than the other way round can stand only if it can be conclusively shown that to bring workers to jobs will in the long run cost the community more and be less efficient overall—a very dubious proposition.

Where congestion costs are high and fall mainly on public bodies, or are spread throughout a community, there may be a good argument in favour of industrial dispersal as Pragma would seem to believe. Let it not be forgotten, however, that a land value based property tax would have a strong influence on choice of location, it being in many ways the equivalent of a congestion tax. The availability of cheap marginal land would also assist expansion beyond the urban fringes.

While we would reject the principle of direct financial subsidy to new industry (whatever form it might take) it is good to see contemporary controls being challenged.

A Lot of Noise for an Empty Vessel

By T. O. EVANS

REAMS must have been written on what the Government intends doing through its Land Commission. What it does *not* intend to do is, I think, more important, particularly in view of the synthetic sympathy for the landless peasants of this country that has emanated from the Bill's sponsors. We have had Lloyd George and Henry George quoted to us, and we have had the Land Song recited to us. The great land revolution is with us at last, one would imagine, from skipping through the pages of *Hansard* these last few months. "Land values for the community" has been the theme song throughout, raising hopes in the ignorant and stifling fears in the land owners—for they are not ignorant of what the slogan really means in the Government's vocabulary. Indeed, their wrath at the Land Commission project has been engendered not by the pusillanimous levy on land values but by the sheer intricacy, complexity and stupidity of the Bill.

So land owners are not unduly worried by the Land Commission levy. Why? Let's take a look at what this Bill will *not* do. It will not touch all the land values now existing and being enjoyed; it will not touch increases in land values that accrue where no development takes place (the infinitely greater number of sites). The Bill leaves idle sites alone and poorly developed sites alone, that is until development or re-development takes place, when it puts a levy of forty per cent on the developed value (the land value released by planning permission). Yet to implement this mouse of a land reform we are to have an elephantine bureaucracy with powers of infinite variety that will surely tie up building and development into one gigantic knot.

Of course, the real trouble of land reform of any kind is that while most land reformers and legislators are aware of the "special importance" of land, they are completely blind to the significant moral and economic distinction between land and wealth. This is no mere academic distinction. It is as important to economic and social life as the distinction between male and female is to biology.

Land Price Soars

LAND is costing the Greater London Council half as much again as the price paid by its predecessor, the LCC, only two years ago. In a written reply at a GLC council meeting, Mr. Robin Thompson, finance committee, revealed that in the first nine months of this year the average cost of an acre was £66,217. Last year it was £47,417. For the LCC the figures were £32,512 in 1962 £41,294 in 1963; and £44,162 in 1964-5.