

Miscellany

Would SVR Sprout CentrepoinTs ?

A RECENT critic of the possible impact of site-value rating suggests that it would. This argument needs to be swiftly refuted. CentrepoinT, of course, is a special case being in an exceptionally good location and owned by a developer with substantial alternative income. While it is true that SVR would encourage the maximum permitted development of sites with renewal potential, office construction would be undertaken *only where there is a demand for office floor space*. Few property companies could afford to let new buildings remain untenanted and bear the interest on construction costs. The main point, however, is that there is a scarcity of good office accommodation in Central London and this is due to the office development permit control exercised by the Department of the Environment and the planning controls of the G.L.C. and the Boroughs.

It is the scarcity situation and the unique characteristics of the Centre Point development which have led to the developer making the most of a monopoly situation. Site-value rating, accompanied by a more liberal attitude to office building by the authorities would encourage both development and swift letting.

Drivers Don't Want to be Nationalised

LORRY drivers are almost solidly against nationalisation of the road haulage industry. This is shown by a "referendum" of its readers just conducted by *Headlight*, the lorry drivers' trade paper.

Over 94 per cent of the thousands of lorry drivers who returned a voting form which was included in an issue of *Headlight* voted against nationalisation. Less than six per cent were in favour of the

industry being nationalised.

"It is not our policy to try to influence our readers politically," said Jeff Kelson, editor of *Headlight*, commenting on the results. "We try to present the facts and leave them to decide for themselves.

"The lorry drivers' dislike of nationalisation does not surprise us, however. Most of them have a sense of vocation, and they fear that nationalisation would cause redundancies and therefore they would be in danger of losing the job they prefer to do. Also the lorry driver tends to be the type who likes informality and independence, and to have a choice of employers.

"It may be that he feels that if the State owned the road haulage industry it would mean a loss of job opportunity."

Bankruptcy of Cash and Ideas

FACING inflation difficulties the Italian government is searching for new taxation sources. Among the proposals is a once and for all room tax which would be on a sliding scale of between 5,000 and 50,000 lire for each room according to size and use. This novel tax is purely punitive and confiscatory; it may produce a substantial revenue on a one-time-only basis but it is simply another form of legalised robbery which has not the slightest justification in equity or economics.

Population Down

TOKYO had a net decline in population of 1,418—to 11,633,875—during the year ended July 1, the metropolitan government reported recently.

It was the first decline in population over a one-year period since the end of the Second World War.

— *Evening Standard*, July 31

LETTER

EUROPE - A GREAT ADVENTURE

SIR, - The letters of Mrs. Shirley-Anne Hardy and J. G. Gerrard (July/August issue) on the question of Europe cannot go unanswered.

Mrs. Hardy's letter produces no argument one way or the other - in fact most of her letter is irrelevant - but she does quote Mr. George Gale of LBC who says 'In terms of the economics of the argument it is extremely difficult for the man in the street to determine whether we are going to gain from entry into the Common Market or not' - this precisely answers Mr. Gerrard's point about a referendum. What is the point in conducting a referendum when the deepest implications are not understood by the majority of the people whose opinions the referendum is seeking to obtain.

The sooner the public realises that Mr. Wilson's Cabinet is rent from top to bottom on the European issue and the promise of a referendum is the only way he can appease his left-wingers the better; the sooner the public realises that Mr. Wilson's 'negotiator of better terms' Mr. Jim Callaghan, is basically pro-Europe the better, and the sooner Mr. Wilson's Government participates in the European debate by taking its places rightfully allocated to the Labour Party in the Council of Europe the better.

The sooner the public realises too that Mr. Wilson has no intention of holding a referendum until six months after the next Election the better too - the sooner the public perhaps will realise that it is having the wool pulled over its eyes by the Labour Party.

What a pity Churchill was not allowed to take us into Europe in 1953 - our teething troubles, parochial attitudes and misgivings would be over by now.

Yours faithfully,

John Heddle,
Prospective Parliamentary Candidate (Conservative) Bolton East.