

housing, the *West Australian* sending a reporter and giving the discussion a good write-up. The Mayor said that all candidates to the next election should declare which form of rating they stood for and that he had not finally made up his mind in the matter. Outside the Council I cannot find anybody in favour of reverting to the old system."

Thus a reactionary move has been stayed and there is good chance that a permanent victory has been won, vindicating the Rating of Land Values. Mr. Standring is to be congratulated on his timely and effective action.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A Victory Frustrated

On July 7, in the Encounter Bay District Council area a poll of ratepayers was taken to decide whether to adopt the rating of land values in place of levying the rates on the composite value of land and buildings. The voting was : in favour of Land Value Rating, 335 ; against, 152. Thus there was an absolute majority in favour, but the vote was "invalid" because under the South Australia law it is required that there must be at least a three-fifths majority for adoption of the land values system. (Yet if there was a poll to reverse the land value rating system after it has been in operation, only a bare majority of those voting can do the trick. So is the dice "loaded" against reform). At this poll, moreover, absentee landowners exercised their right to vote by post and their vote was 136 against the change and 62 for the change. This means that while the residents voted 273 to 116 in favour of Land Value Rating, thus exceeding the required three-fifths majority, they were frustrated by the absentee voters. Two unfair circumstances, then, contributed to the defeat, denying to the home-owners and other owner-occupiers the benefits to be derived from untaxing their buildings and levying the rates on the value of land alone.

JAMAICA

Land Valuation and Intended Local Taxation Reform

Our correspondent in Kingston writes, May 26, "In the legislative programme of the Government for this year there is provision for the introduction of a Bill providing for taxation on the basis of 'unimproved value.' During the Budget debates several references were made to this by the Chief Minister, Mr. Manley, and by other members of the Ministry." In a later letter, July 8, our correspondent has sent a number of clippings from the Kingston *Daily Gleaner* which show how matters have developed, following the determination of the present government to proceed with measures for instituting the taxation of land values, which require in the first place a thorough-going and thoroughly competent valuation of the land.

Daily Gleaner, January 19 : A new valuation officer has been appointed by the Government and will shortly be arriving in the island. The Minister of Finance, the hon. Noel Nethersole, announcing this in the House last night said that the past two valuation officers were allowed (by the previous administration?—ED, L. & L.) to do nothing about the work they were contracted to do. This one would have a chance to do that work. The substratum of all parochial financing was the land rate and it would indeed be a most irresponsible Minister of Local Government who would have attempted to interfere with the rating system at this time without a complete revision of the Valuation Law and without a complete revision of the Valuation Roll both in substance and in method. Every-

body knows that for many, many years that question has been accepted universally: that at least two men have been sent out here, both of whom wasted the entire purpose for which they were sent and went away without doing a thing on this matter of revising the system of land valuation for which they were sent. Now, fortunately, after a great deal of searching, the Government has been able to find an officer who will come here to undertake that work.

Daily Gleaner, March 3 : The revaluation of property in Jamaica is scheduled to begin during next month and should become effective in 1958. This was stated yesterday by the Minister of Finance during a conference between the Government and local government representatives. The expert who was recruited by the Government to undertake the revaluation is expected to arrive within the next few weeks and will begin the project immediately.

Daily Gleaner, April 27 : Dr. J. D. F. Murray, land valuation expert of Australia, flew in yesterday from New York to advise the Jamaica Government in connection with the Government's policy of introducing a system of taxation based on the unimproved value of land. A former senior land valuer in Tasmania, he is chairman of the Commonwealth (Australia) Federal Valuation Boards. He is author of the work *Principles and Practice of Valuation*, which is a university-level text book on valuation problems. He has advised on land values for the New Guinea and Torres Straits Reparations Commission ; and his services in Jamaica have been recruited under the Technical Assistance Programme of the United Nations Organisation.

Daily Gleaner, June 14 : A preliminary report of his findings was submitted to the Government on June 12 by Dr. J. D. F. Murray, the land valuation expert of Australia. During his stay here Dr. Murray and his associate, Mr. John Copes, land valuation expert of Sydney, N.S.W., were attached to the Land Valuation Department and they travelled extensively over the island. Mr. Copes will remain for two years and will carry out the Government's land revaluation scheme. On June 12, Dr. Murray and Mr. Copes attended at the Ministry of Agriculture and there met the Chief Minister, the hon. Norman Manley, Q.C., and the hon. William Seivright, the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Murray briefly outlining his findings. His official report will be available after he has submitted it to the United Nations officials in New York. He is then proceeding home to Australia via London.

Passing through London, Dr. Murray paid a visit at LAND & LIBERTY offices. One was naturally curious to have the contents of his report, but we were advised to await its formal publication.

AFRICANS ALSO LAND GRABBERS

A Near Thing in Uganda

The old Adam of acquisitiveness in us knows neither boundaries, race, nor colour. What charges have not been made in Africa against the stealing of the land by the Europeans, but Africans can commit the same crime against their fellow citizens and have been near to it in Buganda, which is in the State of Uganda. We allow the story to speak for itself, as reported in the *Manchester Guardian* :

The Buganda Lukiko has passed a resolution to distribute 154 square miles of land as a gift to certain "deserving" people. Among the beneficiaries are members of the Buganda royal family, members of the Lukiko, chiefs and officials, as well as certain individuals who showed courage during the Kabaka's exile.

The land in question is the area remaining of the eight thousand square miles which was allotted to chiefs and private

landowners under the Uganda agreement of 1900. The disposal of this land has long been a source of discontent, but two previous attempts to reach agreement on how it should be distributed ended in failure. The Minister of Education, Mr. A. K. Sempa, proposing the motion, suggested the following allocation :

The Speaker of the Lukiko and Ministers, 7 square miles each; the Buganda Regents, 3; chiefs, 10; members of the Lukiko, 30; nominees of the Kabaka, 3; officials, 4; the clerk to the Lukiko, 200 acres; the Kabaka's mother, 320. The Kabaka himself and other members of his family should receive a share of the remainder, with the rest going to the Kabaka's supporters during his exile.

The proposal has aroused adverse comment among Africans. The two most active political parties, the Uganda National Congress and the Progressive party, have led the criticism. The U.N.C. has issued a statement asking that the land should be retained by the Buganda Government and that the revenue from it should be used for developing services and agriculture. The statement adds that if the land is distributed, the U.N.C. will "do all in its power to return this land into the hands of the Kabaka's Government." Unable to resist a side-kick at Europeans, the U.N.C. blames them for the introduction of the idea of individual ownership of land.

The leader of the Progressive party, Mr. E. M. Mulira, also declared that the land belonged to all the people of Buganda and should not be distributed among individuals. And two Africans writing to the *Uganda Argus*, the Protectorate's principal newspaper, urge that the Governor should exercise the power of veto on this proposal. Hitherto the veto has been used when the Lukiko has passed resolutions against Ministerial advice.—*Manchester Guardian*, June 28.

A joint meeting of the Uganda National Congress and the Progressive party has called for a commission of inquiry to investigate alleged corruption in the Buganda Government. The meeting also carried resolutions opposing the proposal in the Buganda Lukiko to divide 154 square miles of land among certain individuals . . . One resolution declared that it was "appalled by the gross incompetence and short-sightedness of the Buganda Ministry whose blind policy up to date has been one series of blunders. We have no confidence in the Ministry."

The African Chamber of Commerce and the newly-formed Democratic party have also protested about the land decision. The Democratic party says the move is "unwarranted, unfortunate, gratuitous, perverse, vicious, injurious and definitely selfish."—*Manchester Guardian*, July 3.

The Kabaka of Buganda has ordered the postponement of any action on the Lukiko's proposal to distribute 154 square miles of land to certain individuals in Buganda, pending further discussions to obtain the views of the people. The Lukiko's plan, which involved the allocation of land to the Kabaka, Buganda Ministers, members of the Lukiko, and other persons, has aroused strong opposition among Africans, who have petitioned the Kabaka and the Governor.—*Manchester Guardian*, July 23.

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Many who have sympathised with the Kabaka in the prolonged constitutional trouble before he was permitted to return to his people, will be astonished that he of all persons takes a page of history from the Tudors. We can only hope that these plans will be defeated and that a solution upholding the equal rights of all the people to the use of the land will be found.

Food Prices and Landlords' Rents

Richard Cobden's Speech at Aylesbury, January 9, 1853

We are met here under the denomination of a reform meeting—a parliamentary and financial reform meeting; but it will be known to everyone present that the general impression, both here and abroad, is that this is a meeting for the purpose, so far as I am concerned in the matter, of discussing the question of protection or free trade, especially with reference to tenant-farmers' interests in this matter. I remember speaking to an audience in this hall six years ago, and on that occasion going through the arguments necessary to show that the corn law was founded upon impolicy and injustice; I remember on that occasion maintaining the proposition that the corn law had not proved beneficial to any class of the community, and I ventured to say that the country would be more prosperous without the system of agricultural protection than it had been with it. Well, I am here now to maintain that by every test which can proclaim the prosperity or adversity of a nation, we stand better now without the corn law than we did when we had it. [Cheers, and some cries of "No."] I am rather glad to see that there are some dissentients from that proposition; our opponents will not say that this is a packed meeting. We have got some protectionists here. And now, if you will only just keep that order which is necessary for any rational proceedings, I will endeavour to make you free traders before you leave.

I have said that, by every test which can decide the question of national prosperity or national adversity, we stand in a better position than we did when we had the corn law. What are the tests of a nation's prosperity? A declining or an improving revenue is one test. Well, our revenue is better

than it was under a corn law. Our exports and our imports are better than they were under the corn law. Take the question of pauperism. I will not shrink even from the test of pauperism in the agricultural districts; I have the statistics of many of your unions in Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire, and I warn the protectionist orators, who are going about persuading themselves that they have a case in the matter of pauperism, that when Parliament meets, and Mr. Baines is enabled to bring forward the poor-law statistics up to the last week (not going to the "blue books," and bringing forward the accounts of the previous year), I warn the protectionists that, with regard to the test of pauperism, even in the agricultural districts, it will be seen that things are more favourable now, with bread at a moderate price, than they were in 1847, when prices were to their hearts' content, and the loaf was nearly double the price it is now. Take the state of wages; that is a test of the condition of the people. What are the people earning now, compared with 1847, when the protectionists were so well satisfied with their high prices? Why, as a rule, throughout the country, there is more money earned now than there was then; and they are getting the comforts and necessities of life in many cases at two-thirds, and in some cases at less than that, of the prices of 1847. [A voice: "It is not so with the agricultural labourers."] I will come to them by-and-by. What I want you to agree with in the outset is that your labourers are not the nation; and if your agriculture be an exception to the rule, we must find out the reason why it is so; we will come to that by-and-by.

I remember quite well, when I came here to see you before,