

years, and it shows every sign of keeping pace. Farm rents to sitting tenants have shown very considerable changes due to the arbitration provision of the Agriculture Act 1957, beginning to be implemented. It is now quite common for rents to be doubled upon review, either by agreement or by arbitration, and cases where rents tendered and accepted from substantial tenants are treble the figure originally paid are no longer rare. What is more, these new tenants are farming with a high standard of business efficiency, and on production of accounts can show quite clearly they are able to afford to pay a good rent.— *Clutton & Co. Bath and Wells.*

Wiltshire. In North Wiltshire small farms from 20-50 acres realise up to £200 per acre. Larger holdings up to, say, 150 acres if reasonably well equipped, reach £100 per acre quite readily, and often more. So far from being merely a sort of "traditional target," £100 per acre is now more often a starting point. The most striking tendency, however, is for larger farms to approach that figure, whereas previously £50-£70 per acre was more the order of the day. It is noticeable that these prices are being paid by practical farmers, not merely by those with other interests. This cannot be attributed to prices of produce, which are tending to ease under the influence of overseas competition and, to a certain extent, over-production. In spite of this trend, farm incomes are said to have improved, which must be largely due to a continuing improvement in efficiency, of which by no means the least factor is the markedly increased yield from modern breeds of cereals. This is reflected in the keen competition for the mixed and arable hill farms in the area. The demand for rented farms continues unabated, and the familiar

yardstick of £3 per acre has increased to £5 per acre arbitrators' awards are reflecting this tendency.—*Loveday & Loveday, Swindon.*

Yorkshire (East). Agricultural properties has been well maintained and, in fact, there has been a hardening in prices for the corn-growing farms, with demand for exceeding the supply. Blocks of arable land, without buildings, have met a ready sale at around £100 per acre.

"STAGGERING" PROSPECT OF NEW RATES

From *The Guardian*, February 15

DEEP concern about the rising costs of local government and the consequent prospect of increasing rates was expressed in London during the week-end at the annual conference of Labour Groups. Some councillors said they were worried by the rate position this year and several councils were mentioned where there is to be an increase of 3s. in the pound; in one case the figure was 3s. 9d.

Mr. G. W. Reynolds, M.P., said last night that the vast majority of speakers had feared that ratepayers would receive "a very considerable shock" when figures for next year's rate became public. Some prospective increases were "really staggering."

The conference was in private, but it was said afterwards that the speakers had all agreed there were two reasons for this financial dilemma—higher interests rates on Government loans and the impact of the new arrangements for block grants.

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

THE enrolment for the Winter Term of economic study classes which opened in January was 290. Of these, 83 are previous students who are taking advanced courses. Cardiff Branch had a record attendance of 60 students on the opening evening, the majority of whom had enrolled for the Basic Course. Tutors are Messrs. F. Giggs, E. Buck and F. Jones.

The new branch at Romford (tutor: Mr. Ron R. Blundell) made a good start with an attendance of 22, of whom nine were members of the local Liberal Association. This class was initiated by Mr. Lynden H. Jones, the Liberal prospective Parliamentary candidate for Hornchurch who is himself attending.

New ground has also been broken in Godalming where Mr. Geoffrey Walker is conducting his first Basic Course at the local library.

At the instigation of the local Liberal Association a Basic Course is being run at the West Ham Town Hall. The class meets on Thursdays and the tutor is Mr. Keith Baynes.

Mr. Michael Monk, who returned from Rhodesia re-

cently, is again conducting classes in the N.W. Kent area. He has a class of eighteen at New Eltham Library.

Mr. W. J. Cadman has resumed activity in the Enfield area and is running a class at the George Spicer School; fifteen students enrolled.

Eighty-one students are attending courses at Victoria for the Basic Course and advanced classes.

Other branches running classes this term are:—Muswell Hill, Welling, Beckenham, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight, Liverpool, Dundee and Glasgow.

A new Lecture Course is being conducted by Mr. V. H. Blundell at Victoria. This series of lectures held each Thursday at 7 p.m. is intended to provide background knowledge for students who have completed all the other courses. Subjects include: The Land Question in Parliament—a review of legislation of the past fifty years; Local Government and Land Value Rating; Land Values and the Property Market (guest speaker); Capital—Interest and Profits; Fallacies of Full Employment; Wages and the Cost of Living; and Current Economic Fallacies.