

cultivation has risen by 35,818 acres to its present total of 162,182 during the same period. Food production has stepped up from 55,000 tons to 73,500 tons in 1950-51. *According to local residents, land values have almost doubled.* (Our itals., ED. L&L.) Grain and oil mills and other industrial undertakings have risen from 11 to 29."

The landed interests in Kataghan Province of northern Afghanistan have even more cause to be grateful to the World Health Organisation. *The Times* correspondent writes: "Although this is one of the most fertile districts its population, ravaged by malaria, has for years been migrating southwards, leaving those who remained too weak or ill to gather the harvests."

"The W.H.O. team's work was an extension of a scheme begun in 1948 for DDT house-spraying and the clearing of pools of stagnant water in the Pul-i-Kumri district of Kataghan, where families from malaria-free areas had been brought to work on hydro-electric projects. These families had even less resistance than the local inhabitants and had been falling easy victims to malaria."

"By August, 1950, 45,000 villagers were able to gather their harvests in full health for the first time in living memory; by 1951, 210 villages and 148,000 people had been included in the scheme. During the last year or two not a single hospital bed has been occupied by a malarial case; the population has increased from 8,000 in 1948 to 22,000 in 1955; the annual production of textiles risen from a million metres to 16 millions, *land increased in value from five to 50 times.*" (Our itals., ED. L&L.)

Colombo Planners Are Mocked

It is interesting to have these authoritative admissions that the provision of public services is reflected in the value of land—at least in Asia! Perhaps in due course some inter-governmental agency or some leading newspaper will discover that (economic laws being universal) precisely the same thing happens in this country. From there to advocating the taxation of land values is but a brief step. Meanwhile the well-intentioned sentimentalists who believe that salvation for the oppressed peoples of Africa, Asia and elsewhere lies in the provision of alms and technical assistance should pause to consider the consequences of the course they urge.

The excellent work being done by U.N. agencies, by the Colombo Plan and Point 4, and other schemes, is being sabotaged by the private appropriation of the rent of land. Either this rent is collected for the benefit of *all* the people or the men, women and children rescued from hunger, disease and illiteracy will spend the rest of their lives paying ever more tribute to private interests, saying "thank you" to them for their salvation and the very right to live and the opportunity to produce.

Together with land reform on right lines should go free trade and an honest, freely convertible currency. This is brought out clearly by the U.N. document we have quoted. Para. 62 describes difficulties experienced by governments without "the necessary dollar resources" to obtain insecticides; Para. 64 reveals that "one of the factors responsible for retarding the progress of malaria control is the restriction imposed by some countries on the movement of insecticides by way of tariffs, customs, etc. . . ."

TANGIER: A Paradise for Speculators

Frantic land speculation is given by Mr. Louis Hirschfeld, a vice-president of the International Union, as the main cause of the recurrent and ever-worsening economic crises experienced by Tangier where he lives. In a recent letter

Mr. Hirschfeld wrote: In the city centre there are still patches of unbuilt land and slum dwellings as well as old buildings which are very much less valuable than the land they occupy. Even when land prices had soared to a record peak level owners preferred to hold their land off the market. They knew that the more the city expanded and developed the more the centre would be coveted. So long as there is no land-value taxation they know that there is no risk involved in such speculative ventures. By preventing natural development, land speculation has deformed the city and driven people beyond the city limits where whole new districts have appeared.

This deformation and extension has caused a considerable increase in public expenditure on roads, canals, etc. The number of officials has been doubled if not trebled, new posts have been created, and new official buildings have had to be constructed. The useless and tremendous expenses thus incurred have not been justified by the real growth of the town and the volume of its activities. Existing taxes have had to be increased and new taxes imposed to such an extent that proportionately the Tangier budget is larger than that of any country in the world. The expense involved in making needlessly long journeys to their work—to say nothing of the time so wasted—has significantly raised the cost of living for very many people.

Although these devastating effects of speculation in land values are by no means peculiar to Tangier, they are felt more acutely here than elsewhere because Tangier being an entity in itself, a "country," has to suffer the consequences in their entirety; they cannot be spread over the whole countryside as is the case to some extent in other lands. In other cities the crises which result from bouts of speculation in land values are followed by a falling off in the price of land, and with the source of production thus again made accessible, the economy is enabled to recover. But that is not the case in Tangier. The price of land is at present falling considerably but unfavourable political and other circumstances stand in the way of a return to prosperity.

LONDON: Land for Housing

Shoreditch Council last night approved the buying of the site of the Royal Chest Hospital at an estimated cost of £11,000 to be used for housing.—*Manchester Guardian*, December 29.

More than a quarter of a million pounds was paid for about nine acres of freehold land in St. John's Wood, London, N.W., sold last July. The land forms part of the Eyre Estate which has been owned by the Eyre family since 1732, and was formerly occupied by old fashioned houses which have been demolished since the war. It lies between Lord's cricket ground and Swiss Cottage, on either side of Boundary Road, to the east of the Finchley Road. Two blocks of flats and more than sixty houses to sell at between £10,000 and £15,000 are to be erected, and the whole development will be known as the St. John's Wood Estate.

In the immediate vicinity there is considerable new municipal development. The L.C.C. has a housing scheme in the Finchley Road, about 200 yards to the north, and on several acres of equally desirable land, has built large schools fronting on to the Finchley Road, and facing the site now sold for private development. A short distance to the south-east the St. Marylebone Borough Council has erected blocks of municipal flats—on land costing £30,000 an acre?

SOUTHWARK. "I have made enquiries in my Borough and I am told that land on which to build a five-storey block of flats will cost about £15,000 an acre."—*Mr. G. Isaacs, M.P.*