

accurate and deliberately misleading nature. In Hawthorn City the council issued under the guise of "typical comparative notices" very inaccurate information about the possible shifts in tax incidence as a result of a change to site-value rating. In addition, contrary to usual custom, voting was not mandatory and the poll day was switched from a Saturday to a Thursday, resulting in less than a 50 per cent poll. In Healsville Shire the council did not fulfil the requirements of the Local Government Act and the "comparative notices" which resulted in a vote against site-value rating are likely to be challenged in the courts.

Although these three defeats are to be regretted, they have shown the need for good organisation and vigilance on the part of the advocates of S.V.R. These people, assisted by the General Council for Rating Reform, and backed by high quality statistical work carried out by the Land Values Research Group, have, however, achieved remarkable poll successes in recent years and their good work is evidenced by the four successful polls.

(Facts from *Progress*, Melbourne)

## BUREAUCRATIC OCTOPUS

**E**MPLOYMENT in the federal civil service in Canada had a growth rate of 6.6 per cent last year, excluding independent federal corporations.

- \* In Ottawa, home base for about a quarter of the force, office buildings are "springing-up" like dandelions.
- \* A severe housing shortage has developed.
- \* Budget estimates for civil service payrolls show an increase of 44 per cent in three years.
- \* It will take the combined personal income tax revenues from Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Hamilton to meet the bill.
- \* Six entirely new departments and twenty-one agencies were added to the federal structure in the last ten years, and each strives for its own perpetuation.
- \* One classic example was the Halifax relief commission set up after the Halifax explosion of 1917 to administer disaster funds. It didn't vanish from the books until 1960!

—From *The Province*, Vancouver, B.C.

## ON TO 1984

**J**UST AS the first Industrial Revolution killed feudalism and created capitalism, so the second industrial revolution will kill capitalism and give us the opportunity of creating a Socialist society in which the needs of the individual become the dominant factor in policy thinking.

"Laisser faire will become an absolutely dead duck. All the really interesting arguments will centre round the ways and means by which the new partnership between government and industry can be evolved."

—Mr. Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Minister of Technology, reported in *The Guardian*, October 12.

## INDIA

# The Power That Remains



**T**HE MAHARAJAS, nizams, nawabs, and other ex-rulers of the former princely states of India have formed a "consultative committee" under the Maharajah of Baroda to consider matters affecting their interests.

The Indian Government pays the ex-princes about £2.3 million (tax free) a year and allows them to import goods duty free and to fly flags from their cars. The payments are made as compensation for loss of political power.

The fact that many of these ex-rulers are still very rich (the Nizam of Hyderabad has a personal staff of two thousand) underlines the fact that loss of political power without loss of rights in land counts for very little. The present nizam's father was said to have been the richest man in the world—he once gave Britain a whole squadron of Hurricanes—and had an annual income of £240,000 from the compensation fund. When he died it was found that rats had eaten their way through £3 million worth of bank notes.

The wealth of the Indian aristocrats can be contrasted with the condition of the rest of the people. According to Satish Kumar, writing in *Peace News*, only five per cent of India's population lives in relative comfort, 50 per cent live on minimum human subsistence, and 45 per cent exist at a "sub-human" living standard.

A chain of violence in Naxalbari set off by landless peasants led to a recent conference to discuss how the country's land problem could be settled by non-violent means. Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, who presided at the seminar said: "There is a terrible problem of land, and the political elements, especially the extremists, are exploiting it. The common people will fall in with the violent movement if no non-violent solution is found."

Opinion at the conference seemed to favour some sort of village co-ownership for settling the landless. This solution, it would appear, is preferred to the extremes of individual ownership or state ownership, but the possibility of "communes" for the landless raises the question of compensation for landlords.

The "trade union" for princes is expected to come into being shortly and in addition to defending the privy purses it will advise its members on taxation problems. A new pressure group against land-value taxation and land reform will thus be clearly identifiable. This will match an Indian Socialist's view that "there is need to rouse the masses against the injustices being perpetrated on them by landlords, as well as the land revenue system."