

enough to satisfy the demand for small holdings. That indicates the need, not for an abandonment of the policy, but for strengthening the legislation and operating it with more vigour. In addition, the service done by these Acts in maintaining existing smallholdings in existence is often overlooked. Two-thirds (49,003 out of 74,017) of the agricultural holdings in Scotland are between 1 and 50 acres in extent.

The position has been complicated by de-rating, which has relieved agricultural land as well as the buildings and improvements of seven-eighths of the rates at the expense of imposing heavier general taxation and heavier rates upon land and improvements used for non-agricultural purposes.

All this legislation, which was introduced under Conservative governments for the benefit of agricultural landlords should be swept away. All land should be rated upon the land value. All buildings and improvements should be free from rating. New holdings should be formed by the compulsory leasing of land from landlords, and no public money should be spent upon buying them out.

### JAMAICA

THE AMERICAN news-sheet, *Worldover Press*, November 29, quotes its Kingston, Jamaica, correspondent:—

"When bauxite, the mineral from which aluminium is made, was discovered two years ago in Jamaica, there was much excitement. But few facts became known to the people of the island or to the outside world. Quietly, representatives of a Canadian firm, called Bauxite Company of Jamaica, went through the countryside, buying up large tracts of land without divulging the exact extent of their holdings or acquisitions. Land means everything to the Jamaican, for industries are few and the population tremendous. Whatever the size of the land purchases, they were substantial enough to cause no slight alarm among many Jamaicans. Now they are discovering that the Canadian firm is a subsidiary of the Aluminium Company of Canada, which is owned in actuality by the Aluminium Company of America (Alcoa).

"The bauxite properties, described by metallurgists as 'one of the important world sources,' are expected to provide fat revenues for the company and for the sole rival concern, Reynolds Mining Corporation, of Richmond, Virginia, which also has holdings. While it is asserted that Alcoa intends to promote scientific farming to offset the loss of land taken away, native public opinion is profoundly disturbed by its inability to get straight facts, either from the companies or the colonial government, on which to base a judgment of the economic portents for the people."

The proposals of the recent Jamaica Government Commission in favour of Land Value Taxation will, if given effect, take charge of this state of affairs.

## "RICH MAN, POOR MAN"

HOW PROGRESSIVE thought and ideals can be misconstrued is illustrated in the Foreword, by Sir William Beveridge, to a new book entitled *Rich Man, Poor Man*, by the late Professor John Hilton (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.), this being the Halley Stewart Lecture of 1938.

The subject of the book is the maldistribution of wealth in this country, which *Land & Liberty* has often drawn attention to in its summaries of the annual reports of the Inland Revenue Commissioners. John Hilton draws his evidence from the work of two specialists, Professors Daniels and Campion, of the Manchester and Oxford Universities. The statistics relate to the conditions of 1936-38. The main fact, which John Hilton illustrates in lively fashion, is that out of 12 million families, only 4 million families are worth all told more than £100; that another 4 million families are worth between a couple of pounds and £100; and the remaining 4 million families live from hand to mouth, owning no more than they stand up in.

After discussing the evidence for this glaring fact, and its supposed causes, the author refers to the basic assumption underlying the present fashion for social security, whether Beveridge or some other scheme. "It has been put to me so often," says Hilton, "I feel I must believe it, that what our millions want above all else is security against destitution in the event of a mishap." This, of course, is the modern belief of all parties; it is said so often to us all, that everybody believes it.

Sir William Beveridge picks this passage out in his Foreword, and seems to claim it as leading directly to his own Social Security scheme. He says that Hilton's statement is authoritative, and, written as it was in 1938, was confirmed by the "amazing popular response" in 1941 to the Beveridge Report.

But Hilton follows up his own statement (on page 155) by saying: "Yet I am not wholly convinced. Greater security, certainly. I have pleaded for it in previous chapters. Accident, sickness, and unemployment are public concerns and ought never to be tolerated as private visitations. But I beg leave to doubt whether peace of mind and social health can ever come from mere security against destitution. We should strive, also, if we are to have personal happiness and social health, for a state of affairs in which the typical family has sums of its own with which to further its own fancies and fortune, and from which to learn something of the technique of firmly holding and wisely using personal property."

Sir W. Beveridge thinks this is "nearly as important" as the preceding quotation, and more surprisingly still, claims that the fact that his scheme has no provision for a Means Test, meets the condition that Hilton has in mind, and will

leave to the individual incentive and initiative to add for himself to the minimum provided by the State. "It"—the absence of a means test—"is a condition of leaving him responsibility and freedom in planning his own life."

One wonders if this is all that Hilton did mean. The whole point of his book is the fundamental and grotesque disproportion in the distribution of wealth, and the great criticism of all the popular social security plans is that they have no sort of conception of any basic change in that maldistribution. The only thing one can say is that these schemes may make a redistribution of poverty, but wealth and property will continue to be divided in much the same unequal and unjust shares.

*Rich Man, Poor Man* quotes Campion's estimate of £20,000 millions as the total of property in private hands in 1936, and shows that this, if equally divided, would provide £1,500 per family, so that there is enough private wealth produced apart from publicly owned property. "The master figure," says Hilton, "is the proportion of those over 25 who, if they sold up all they have in the world, cashed in all their savings, paid their debts, and counted up the net balance of their worldly wealth, would turn out to be worth £100 or more." He shows that these number only 25 per cent. of the population, the remaining 75 per cent. having less than £100 to their name.

When income instead of property is considered, we learn that 11,500,000 persons had incomes in 1936 of less than £2 10s. per week, the average being £2. They are two-thirds of all the income-receiving population; they receive one-third of the aggregate income. Pensioners and unemployed not included. There were another 5 millions within the range of £2 10s. and £5 per week (average £4), and these are income rates before taxation.

Hilton disposes of the idea that the huge numerical totals of "Small Savings" can be set over against the above facts. They are shown to be deceptive as indices to the real sharing of wealth or property. In addition, Hilton, far from swallowing the social security creed, has this to say: "Not one of our social services represents the *actuality* of private means, in the sense that a lump sum of money is available to the insured person. . . . Our social services cover a good deal—but not that. They are one and all weekly dribbles to the necessitous given out on the avowed or tacit assumption that he or she has little or nothing in hand—and can hardly be expected to have anything in hand—to meet any emergency." This is poor support for Beveridgism, with or without a Means Test.

This book is valuable as a social record in popular form. But it shows no

realisation of fundamental causes of poverty. The author is too fond of alliteration with his references to waste on "Pints, Perms, Poms, Pictures and Pools." That there is a land question, or such a thing as private ownership of land, does not appear at all from a reading of the book, or that private monopoly of land might have something to do with this gross maldistribution of the good things of life. Prof. Hilton gets near to it once, when he asks (page 107): "What about low wages as a cause of the poverty?" a question he does not answer. And again when, in answer to the idea that all the poor have to do is to save, he says: "To save big money you must make big money, and to make big money you must either get a strangle-hold on the public, or (some rarer possibilities)." But he does not as much as guess that the monopoly in land is the permanent and all pressing strangle-hold on the nation's life. He points out that an equal division of the total wealth which would give every family £1,500, would mean an extra weekly income of £1 in interest, in addition to the earnings, but he seems never to have heard that this must soon find its way into the private rent-fund because of the economic fact that every improvement, under land monopoly, must at last accrue to the land owner. But in this we find no better guidance in Sir W. Beveridge's Foreword. The best reply to the problems dealt with by Prof. Hilton is to be found in *Progress and Poverty*, in which Henry George, in 1879, asked and answered the question: Why, in spite of increase in productive power, do wages tend to a minimum which will give but a bare living?

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Before enclosure, the English cottager had had milk, butter and cheese in plenty, home-grown pork and bacon, home-brewed beer and home-baked bread, his own vegetables, his own eggs and poultry. After enclosure, he could get no milk, for the farmers would not sell it; no meat, for his wages could not buy it; and he no longer had a pig to provide the fat bacon commended by Cobbett. Working long hours he lived on bread, potatoes and tea, and insufficient even of these. . . . At the beginning of the Enclosure period the Industrial Revolution was barely in its infancy. A large part of the spinning, weaving and other manufactures was carried on in the cottages of men who had gardens they could dig in and cows and pigs of their own. The invention of power machines, the discovery of coal wherewith those machines could be worked, led to the concentration of factories in the huge cities. But it was the drift from the villages of dispossessed men, together with the cheap child labour provided by Poor Law Guardians, that made possible the starvation wages and the tyranny of the factory system.—From *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, by Maisie Ward; published by Sheed and Ward.

## MEN AND POLITICS — ITALY, POLAND, SPAIN

IN HIS entrancing book, *Men and Politics*, published 1941, by Jonathan Cape, Mr. Louis Fischer touches frequently on economic conditions in the countries he visited. The following extracts shed much light, the first being a report of his interview with the Italian Fascist Minister, Rossoni:—

### ITALY

"We have increased wheat production for the whole country," he (Rossoni) had begun, "and also increased the land under cultivation." He handed me the appropriate statistics.

I said, "You have a dictatorship. Why don't you nationalise land?"

"A dictatorship," Rossoni replied, "is a political matter, not an economic or social matter. We cannot take the land away from the landlords." The government could only buy the estates of those who wished to sell, and then the peasants could buy these lands with federal loans. In this way, Rossoni estimated, they could find work in the next five years for 400,000 families. But, this process was slow. Many landlords had grown fabulously rich by selling their huge latifundia at fancy prices. Besides, the peasants hesitated to assume the responsibility of heavy debt payments for twenty years. That is why "crowded" Italy had a great deal of untitled land: the landlords did not cultivate it; the peasants could not buy; the government would not take it. On December 7, 1935, the *Osservatore Romano*, newspaper organ of the Vatican, reported a Rome congress of peasants who urged that the estates be divided. I therefore persisted, and said to Rossoni: "Instead of conquering Ethiopia, which you hope will accommodate surplus Italians, why don't you attempt to take care of them at home by introducing a land reform?"

Slightly irritated, Rossoni replied: "The Abyssinian war perhaps has economic reasons. But chiefly the reasons are moral and political. France did not acquire colonies because she was overpopulated. Nor did England." He was saying just what I should have wanted him to say if I could have planned it. There was never any truth in the claim that economic necessity or the need of new lands for settlement, or even the need of raw materials, compelled the so-called "Have Not" countries to expand. Rossoni also had admitted that Italy behaved like any other capitalist country in relation to its rich landlords. The interview was going fine.

"Italy must make a new contribution to civilisation," Rossoni continued. "Italy must carry civilisation to the entire world." He black-pencilled that last sentence, perhaps as being too immodest.

This did not satisfy me, and I said, "You have a dictatorship. You can send people to war, maybe to their death. Why can't you take vacant land

from the estate owners and give it to the peasants?"

Signor Rossoni, to my delight, was now thoroughly aroused, and replied with equal candour, "That is demagoguery. Peasants must be directed. 'Give land to the peasants.' That is a phrase. There must be organisation. We are Fascists, not Socialists." (Pages 263-4.)

### POLAND

Finance Minister Kwiatkowski, on December 5, 1935, announced in the Sejm—Poland's parliament—that Polish peasants with twenty-five acres of land spent on the average \$8 a year. (In 1929, they had spent \$22.40 a year.) But they were millionaires compared to the peasants who held only ten to twelve acres, and who constituted thirty-one per cent. of the population, and another thirty-four per cent. who owned even smaller "dwarf households." He said, "Ten million persons stand completely outside the realm of economic life." They neither bought nor sold. Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, who received three dollars a month from American relatives could become business men on that money. (Page 276.)

### SPAIN

In the neighbouring province of Badajoz, hard by the Portuguese frontier, which we visited, agricultural conditions were even worse than in Caceres. Eighty-five per cent. of the population lived by the land. There were 175,000 families in the villages. But 2,946 individuals owned forty per cent. of the soil. Here, too, the yunteros took land in the spring of 1936 and then signed leases for it. (Page 311.)

The Catholic hierarchy of Spain has done much harm to Catholicism in Spain. The Loyalists are not anti-religious. In Soviet Russia the régime is frankly atheistic. One will look in vain, however, for anti-God sentiments in the declarations of the Loyalist government or of its leaders. But the church has taken the sides of the generals, the Nazi pagans, the infidel Moors and Mussolini. This will react to the disadvantage of the church. The people will distrust the church. A Franco victory will hurt the church in Spain. It will die in the hearts of common men. Only a liberal triumph could enable Catholicism in Spain to attempt to redeem itself. When the civil war broke out, the people did not burn banks or commercial houses. They burned churches. I regret this. But this has happened before in Spain and Mexico and elsewhere. Where popular wrath overflowed, it attacked the church, which was closer to the higher-ups than to the underdog. The church in Spain behaved like a political party, and it has to pay the penalties. It is in the front line of battle fighting under the Fascist banner. It cannot complain if it is struck by the bullets. (Page 456.)