

Bent Potatoes from a Bent Market

THE process of screening potatoes whereby only those of a certain size are allowed on to the market, has been described as the "fiddle of the riddle". When supplies are greater than estimated, the potatoes are put through a larger riddle leaving less for the market and of course avoiding the "danger" of an oversupply bringing the price down.

A few years ago, in a time of a surplus, even those that remained on the riddle were too many for the market, and there was a move to ban "ugly and mis-shapen potatoes" on the ground that the housewife "did not like them" and found them "difficult to peel."

Now that there is a shortage, the other side of the record is being played. Housewives are being told not to turn up their noses at mis-shapen and small potatoes because there is nothing wrong with their quality.

A steep price rise is expected early next year because of the shortage due to this year's drought.

Of course, supply is controlled long before potatoes get to the riddle. The Potato Marketing Board will not let you grow potatoes for the general market without an official quota—and you must limit your production to this quota or face a fine. It is only when estimates go awry that later adjustments have to be made and fiddled with the riddle. This is all done in the name of "orderly marketing."

Economic Laws vs. the Post Office

BRITISH businessmen have hit upon a method of avoiding the new high postal charges. It is cheaper to post letters to any part of Britain from certain countries abroad than it is from home. So mailings are sent abroad in bulk, stamped there by an agency at the rates prevailing there, and simply posted back to the United Kingdom.

Naturally, the Post Office objects and, where it is able to, is impounding the mail and surcharging which, under its regulations, it is

entitled to do, although the "offence" is not actually illegal. The Post Office claims the exclusive privilege of "collecting, despatching and delivering all letters" within the British postal area. With little regard for semantics, the evaders of high postal charges are labelled "pirates."

The rights and wrongs of this comedy are not relevant. What is relevant is why we have to tolerate this loss-making monopoly which serves not the interests of the people, but only the power-hungry state.

Paradise for Two

(Book your passage now)

THE story of a farmhand and a milk maid who left their jobs and went to live in an underground burrow in a wood near Moscow, sounds very romantic. And who would not wish them well? The Russian Government for a start: both have been sentenced to a year in prison for refusing to take a job.

Eternal Vigilance

Extracts from a speech by Lord de L'Isle, delivered at the inauguration of the National Association for Freedom, December 2.

I BELIEVE that many people who want freedom have fallen into the belief that the political battle for free institutions was won long ago, and that we could go on enjoying our liberties for ever.

After all, we say to ourselves that our parliamentary democracy is the envy of the world and England is "the mother of Parliaments." We have failed to notice that the State has persuaded us in the name of welfare, by stealth and by degrees, to surrender one by one the freedoms which are the basis of the institutions which we are accustomed to think of as fundamental to our way of life.

We have not yet discovered that the much vaunted "moderation" in our political life is no more than a smokescreen to obscure the road along which we are travelling towards the drab collectivist reformatory intended for us by those who are not tolerant or easy-going, nor un-doctrinaire.

Free from external or constitu-

POVERTY STRICKEN IDEA

THE EEC have given £30,000 towards a pilot project in Edinburgh to combat poverty. Teams of social workers will carry out investigations into the causes of poverty and ways of combating it.

Investigations into poverty in Scotland are not new. Henry George in 1884, speaking in Glasgow on the poverty in Scotland, said: "... that Royal Commission, to a man who does not know anything about it, looks like a committee of wolves to investigate the condition of the sheep."

tional constraints, the Government based on its majority in the single chamber levies taxes to allow it to spend 60 per cent of the Gross National Product and further supports its extravagance by borrowing billions of money overseas to satisfy its insatiable demands.

Always it explains its manifest inefficiencies by claiming that these arise from a lack of sufficient resources devoted to this or that beneficent project. Its pressures are inexorable and despite the threat of cuts, which are usually cuts in the growing rate of expenditure, in a few years 60 per cent of the GNP will be chicken feed.

Organised labour is the master of the present administration. Having once laid its hands on the levers of power, it will never willingly relax its grip. This is the undemocratic gearing of State power which the defencelessness of our pliable constitution has achieved.

History tells us that liberty is always under threat, that it is sometimes overborne for a time, but that its roots are so deep that it cannot be eradicated even by persecution.

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Dr. W. D. Redfern of the French Department, Reading University, is writing a book on the French writer GEORGES DARIEN, who was connected with Frederick Verinder and the English League for the Taxation of Land Values in the period 1900-1914, and who organised a parallel French organisation. He would be very grateful for any information readers may have on this matter.