

Letters to the Editor

CENSUS OBJECTORS FUND

SIR,—Like many others, I respect and admire the stand made by Mr. Stephen Martin and others against snoop questions in so-called government "surveys."

Yet another survey on London's housing is to be made this winter, and once again householders will be pestered with personal questions.

At least one man has chosen to go to prison rather than answer such questions, and several have been heavily fined. Few of us have the courage to undergo a prison sentence for our principles, and fewer still can, with impunity, do so at the expense of consequent suffering to our families and friends.

I therefore tentatively suggest a fund to aid those to whom a fine would be a heavy blow and if anyone could suggest the best way of arranging this, I should be glad to pledge the first ten shillings.

Yours faithfully,

ROBERT MILLER

London, N.14.

LEAD FROM JAPAN

SIR,—An unusually brilliant young Korean economist in university teaching admitted that he had never taken Henry George seriously until he discovered that one of the most important economists in Japan had translated *Progress and Poverty*. This is typical. The entire educational system here discourages even the most intelligent from forming independent conclusions, even in the face of the most obvious evidence.

The almost complete absorption of Korean capital into land speculation is forcing the import of Japanese capital, with the accompanying threat of loss of economic independence. Partly developed gold properties that could have touched off a gold rush in the U.S.A. attract no local capital at all, and the most profitable gold mining properties are undeveloped for lack of capital.

In the meantime, prices move steadily upwards and slums get worse. The government periodically transplants the worst slums forcibly to the outskirts of the capital, where they will be less conspicuous to the foreign visitor, but this solves no problems and increases the already terrible burden of human misery. There are vast tracts of unused land suitable either for building or for intensive market gardening inside the

city limits of the capital. Land prices, of course, are astronomical and rising.

Yours faithfully,

ARCHER TORREY

Kangwondo, Korea.

LAND SPECULATION GETS A CLERICAL BLESSING

SIR,—When I came to British Columbia from England in 1911, municipal taxes were levied on land values only. Speculators got on to the councils to oppose the "burden on the land" and started a tax on improvements (on 25 per cent. of valuation). It soon got to 75 per cent. and now it forms the heaviest source of municipal revenue. The "burden on land" is still the howl, but no mention is ever made of the burden on improvements (property).

A Social Credit Government has been in the saddle for many years now and the Minister of Highways (who is also a Reverend Minister) is urging land speculation! Speaking at a real estate board luncheon recently, and referring to the Kamloops area, he said that the Americans are coming in there so fast that they are almost crowding out the natives of the area. He said they were trading entire sections of land. He did not condemn the American speculator, indeed he thought they were setting a good example.

The Minister then went on to advocate land speculation by residents who should "show a willingness to gamble with the potential and future of British Columbia." He concluded: "A person should roll up his sleeves . . . and roll up a fortune for himself . . . especially in real estate."

Where do we go from here?

Yours faithfully,

HARRY H. HOLLINS

Victoria, B.C.

DECLINE OF LIBERTY

SIR,—Britain has advanced more towards the totalitarian state in the last twelve months than in the previous twelve years, and what do we see now? We see something like a disease spread across the country, with people clamouring on every side for state control. The same disease runs through every party political programme one picks up. Because many proposals are advocated under the guise of paternalism and "social justice" it does not alter the fact that it is authoritarianism. State paternalism leads to the adoration of the state and involves the subordination of the individual.

We still have an inequitable distribution of wealth in this country; we still have people richer than they should be, and people in unjust poverty. But instead of going to the root of things, the advocates of paternalism and controls come along with proposals to spend millions of pounds in welfare schemes, much of it coming out of the pockets of the recipients themselves by way of taxation, national insurance, increased contributions, and passed on "capital" taxes such as the selective employment tax. When these funds are exhausted the Government resorts to the printing press and dilutes our earnings and savings. What kind of welfare is this?

To create the impression that profiteers and land speculators are being soaked to pay the bill, the Government produces a Land Commission which only toys with the problem of land speculation and ties up the development industry with controls and disincentives. The way to deal with the land question is not by control but by taxing the unimproved value of the land.

We are now being told that for a man to be employed or not is the prerogative of the state. If we are to believe that there shall be no inherent right to give employment or to fix wages, then it necessarily follows that a man has no inherent right to take a job—except with the state.

Through all this state paternalism there runs the thread that Whitehall knows best about everything that concerns our daily lives. Thus Government by the élite is now recommended—not Government for the people by the people. It is no wonder that proportional representation is no longer discussed today. I am reminded of the old lady who asked her vicar if one would have to associate with the lower orders in Heaven. The vicar replied: "Madam so long as you feel like that about it the matter will not arise." So we ought to have government by the élite!

It is the ordinary man in this country who has made this country great, not the politicians, and the Government's only business in the economic life of the country is to see that he gets opportunity and liberty. Anybody who is going to take away the spirit of freedom by putting the people of this country in chains is going to do more than damage this country—he is going to damage the whole world, for this country has led the fight for liberty for all mankind.

Yours faithfully,

ASHLEY MITCHELL

Huddersfield, Yorks.