

A Two-Faced Policy

By PETER TRACEY

WE HAVE HAD the "New Economics," even "New Maths" and "New Geography." Now, it seems, we are to have a "New Liberalism."

The philosophy of New Liberalism is a fascinating one, involving as it does simultaneous belief in both protection *and* free trade, the state-planned economy *and* individual freedom, guaranteed prices *and* an end to uneconomic production. It may be said, therefore, to appeal broadly to most people.

This thought arises from a reading of a report of a group of Liberals in the European Parliament meeting in Amsterdam.

European farmers and farm workers, they said, had the same right as other groups to expect a fair and regular income. Normal play of the market could not ensure this, so guaranteed prices were essential. The group therefore endorsed the EEC agricultural policy of guaranteed prices and import levies, at the same time approving proposals for lowering customs barriers on a world scale to increase international trade, and calling for an end to uneconomic production.

The group apparently recognised that guaranteed prices would result in overproduction for they considered that a balance must be maintained between production and the market; production and marketing need to be better organised.

The group called for a fresh initiative to bring the (free trade) EFTA countries into the (state-planned) EEC, at the same time emphasising that individual enterprise and freedom of thought provide the best means of progress.

Finally, state intervention would be needed to enforce minimum prices, but personal freedom and responsibility must be protected against excessive state intervention.

We only need the "New Liberty" now—state-planned of course.

someone, and there is a great pursuit and shooting and killing and much noise, and nothing seems to be permanently solved, for as soon as this play, this story, this book and this film is done and the one who was suspected and pursued is shot or brought to justice, or otherwise disposed of, all the people say bravo! let us have another, and another and another!

Now it seems to me (and after much thought, and Lord knows I may be wrong) that every man must in some way identify himself with either he who pursueth or him who is pursued, but more like it be the former, since as I have said, man unbeknown to himself suspecteth, pursueth and subdueth, in course of habit, actually or in his imaginings. So it is that every man must perforce play the angel of justice and make effort to set right those things which he deemeth wrong, and he followeth with eager devotion and attention the exploits of many creatures of imagination and fantasy from Mr. Sherlock Holmes to Mr. James Bond and even becomes enthralled with the skillfully energetic and comely Mistress Blaise. Indeed, I am somewhat perplexed at the fashionable adoration of the populace for those whom they call the secret agents, and in particular the beforementioned Mr. Bond, for they already have named a London street after him, and this I do declare to be the transporting of things for too great a distance, as the saying is.

So I consider it be not so far from the possibility of man knowing little or nothing of politics or economic laws yet having a great desire to right the wrongs and setting up enemies in great number in fantasy for this very purpose and so finding expression and satisfaction therein; and I would with all my heart that this energy and these desires be directed to more sober study and application. Moreover, it hath been reported to me that Mr. Wilson and Mistress Lee and others who by grace of God and favour of the people do govern us at this time, be now of opinion that a man's leisure is as important as his work and that he ought to spend it wisely and do the right things in it. I am therefore of a mind to make suggestion that if public money be disbursed in this manner, some good proportion thereof may be for the encouragement of the studies of political economy, philosophy and suchlike subjects, so that the people divert their attacks from fictions and fancies to the real enemies—ignorance, prejudice, injustice and poverty; and God forbid that I should give thought to the forcing of these studies upon the people, but write more in sorrow than in indignation. If all else fails, and a man, though the money be found for him and yet he find not the will to put his mind to these studies, he may do worse than buy paper, pen and ink and set down his thoughts as Mr. Pepys, Mr. Evelyn and my humble self have done from time to time, so that perchance a future generation may derive therefrom some amusement, and possibly some instruction.

WHY WE'RE NOT GETTING NEW HOUSES

THE latest housebuilding enquiry conducted by the National Federation of Building Trades Employers shows that the number of houses under construction in Great Britain is being cut back and that prospects of achieving anything like 400,000 new houses by the end of the year are dwindling fast.

Firms were asked to place in order of importance a number of factors likely to deter the private housebuilding programme.

The three most important factors indicated by the replies were:

- (1) The high price of land.
- (2) The shortage of land.
- (3) The belief that there is deliberate Government discrimination against private housebuilding.