

Letters to the Editor

EFFRONTERY

SIR.—The Egg Marketing Board is calling for a ban on cheap Danish Eggs. As it not many months ago that the Danes complained that this country was dumping surplus subsidised eggs in traditional Danish export markets this particular cry for restrictive action against an EFTA partner is a singularly brazen piece of effrontery. The Board seems to have forgotten that the function of egg produce is to satisfy consumers' demand for eggs: it is not up to the community at large to allow itself to become a captive market for a favoured group of home producers who apparently cannot offer their product at a competitive price.

It is particularly interesting at the present time to read that the shipments of eggs to this country from Denmark and elsewhere "are the result of high levies imposed by the Common Market on eggs from non-member countries." In other words, if we were to enter the Common Market, we should be denying ourselves access to cheap food, and much else besides. The cost of living would rise: the standard of living of our people would fall.

This is but one illustration of the true nature of the European Common Market. It is a protectionist trading bloc, a mere customs union, fine for producers no doubt, but framed without regard to the interests of consumers (which, incidentally, we all are, if we would only pause for a moment to realise it, and harmonise our policies accordingly).

For Liberal free traders like myself, it is especially ironic to note that it is not yet thirty-five years since Liberal ministers left a coalition government over the issue of the formation of an Imperial customs union at the Ottawa Conference. Liberals really ought to be leading the fight against a European customs union now.

Yours faithfully

Iford, Essex.

D. K. MILLS

PRECURSORS OF GEORGE

SIR.—Now that the teaching of Henry George is gaining ground in Latin-American countries, it may be fitting to mention a couple of Spanish authors who, in times past, have advocated the same idea.

First the political economist Alvaro Florez-Estrada (1766-1853) who twice had to flee his native country and go to England to escape from the

tyrant Fernando VII. Before that he had been foremost in the resistance to Napoleon's invasion of Spain. Whilst in England he became acquainted with the works of Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo and others, and in his work *Tratado de Economia Politica* (London 1828), he preceded John Stuart Mill and others in presenting ideas similar to theirs, and Henry George by half a century in proposing taxation of the "net product," a taxation which was to fall entirely on the proprietors of the soil as such. Before all of them, of course, had been the French Physiocrats, to whom Henry George paid due recognition.

Another forerunner of Henry George is of still earlier date. In Gerald Brenan's very informative book *The Spanish Labyrinth* (Cambridge University Press 1950) there is a quotation from a Spanish ecclesiastic of the sixteenth century, Father Juan de Mariana, who in his *De Rege et Regis Institutione* says:

"It is a duty of humanity for us to



Miscellany

Cornered

A SHORT note in a recent edition of the *Chartered Surveyor* explains how valuations for compensation are being made in the West Indies.

The claimant nominates one valuer, the compensating authority another, and both valuers appoint a third "impartial" valuer. Three valuations are made and compensation is fixed half way between the valuation of the third valuer and the figure of whichever of the two other valuers is closest to him.

This rough and ready but subtle method of valuation is on the lines of that described by the late Dr. J. J. Pikler in his article "Symmetry in Budapest" (copies of which are available on request)

Land Prices, etc.

REPLYING to a question about land prices in a recent Parliamentary debate, the Minister of Housing and Local Government said: "I am well aware of the land shortage and the high price of housing land in London. I am confident, however, that enough sites are available for the current four year housing programmes and that further

open to all men the riches which God gave in common to all, since to all he gave the earth as a patrimony, so that all without distinction might live by its fruits. Only unbridled greed could claim for itself this gift of heaven, appropriating as its own the foods and riches which were intended to be the property of all... God wishes then, and it is laid down by his laws, that now that human nature, corrupted as it is, has proceeded to a partition of common goods, they should not be monopolised by a few, and that a part should always be set aside for the consolation of the people's infirmities... In a Republic in which some are overstuffed with riches and others lack the very necessities, neither peace nor happiness is possible."

No doubt one could find in the various nations who took over the heritage of Spain in the New World representatives of similar thoughts just as one can find them in all countries, amongst all races and in all epochs.

Yours faithfully,

OLE WANG

Tonsberg, Norway.

sites such as the one at Woolwich Arsenal to provide homes for 60,000 Londoners will become available. The Government's new housing subsidies proposals will give subsequent help towards meeting high land costs."

It is high time that the Government learnt that the Land Commission with its "knock down value" disposal terms and housing subsidies which ultimately mean more cash for the land owners are no answer to the basic problem of land tenure reform. Land-value taxation on the other hand must result in lower land prices.

The Writing on the Wall

WILL new factories continue to follow the natural course of gravitating towards the most suitable and economically sound location, or will the position be dictated by the need to provide work for sections of the population or to provide satisfaction for political theories and ambitions? I think that bureaucratic direction is inevitable and will increase rather than decrease in intensity.—Charles Hornby, FALPA in an address given to the Incorporated Society of Auctioneers and Land Property Agents.