

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Ability to Pay

Captain Corfield writes (L&L May) "... the accepted basis of direct taxation is an ability to pay. . . ."

At this present time the Government is robbing me of £1 a week by means of extracting this sum from my pay packet before I get it. I would prefer an ability to pay for more books, beer, cigarettes and other consumer goods rather than for the maintenance of any army of bureaucrats, to which purpose at least half of that £1 is spent.

Henton, Somerset. JOHN C. COOK.

## Sweated Labour and Free Trade

In conversation with another person I mentioned the low price of Japanese goods about 50 years ago and was immediately told it was due to sweated labour. I could not think of an answer to this although I believe in Free Trade. I would like to know the ultimate effects of Free Trade on sweated labour.

Caerwys, Flint. S. LANCASTER.

## Australia's Trade Policy

For forty years Tasmania has sold potatoes to French New Caledonia, about a thousand miles from Sydney, N.S.W. In recent years the trade has been worth up to £40,000 a year. Now the market has been lost to us because Australia's one-way trading policy prevents the French from exchanging goods for goods. As a result, the people of New Caledonia are now using potatoes, milk and apples shipped from France, onions from Libya, and tomatoes from Italy.

Here in Tasmania the apple export season is at present in full swing—millions of cases of apples and pears will be shipped to London, Europe and the east. How can the recipients pay for them unless Australia is willing to trade?

J. B. HECKLEY

Queenstown, Tasmania.

## Revised Views on Freedom Party

Last December you were kind enough to publish my essay, "Wanted—A Freedom Party". Since then I have received a great number of very helpful letters from parts of the United States and of the Commonwealth. You have been very generous in providing space for replies to my communication. Now that the dust is beginning to settle, it might not be inappropriate for me to comment on my own reactions to the exchange of views which has occurred in your columns and in my own mail.

It will be recalled that my proposals were four in number: (1) that the semi-idolatry of Henry George cease, (2) that Land Libertarians maintain a sense of social responsibility, (3) that the Land Libertarian argument confine itself to presentations essential to setting forth a twentieth century point of view, and (4)

that an international liberty party be formed.

With concepts enriched by the proposals of many others, my tendency now is to feel buttressed in my support for the first three points and to modify my position on the fourth. The suggestion that an international party be formed seems now to be premature; the need for more effective promotional organisation appears to me to be more clear than ever. The vacuum that faces the Land Libertarian in terms of a "home" creates a very real problem which in my judgment must be vigorously faced. The International Union, as one of your writers pointed out, does in fact exist and is quite probably the needed vehicle for more effective organisation and promotion of Land Libertarian ideas.

It is obvious that the orientation of the Union and of its publications is at present primarily—though of course not exclusively—directed to the Commonwealth nations, and I would think it desirable if more effective sections within the Union were to be established, for example, in the United States.

It might not be inappropriate to suggest here that the Union make available to its members—say in a permanent space in *Land and Liberty*—information as to how they should go about setting up chapters of the Union in various parts of the world. When such information becomes publicly available, I for one

intend to go to work on the project here in Colorado, and hope others will do likewise in their communities and regions.

May I say in conclusion that I particularly appreciated the very kind and helpful letter from the distinguished Dr. Glenn E. Hoover, of Mills College in Oakland, California. Dr. Hoover criticised my proposals where they needed closer scrutiny, and encouraged me on points wherein I think many of us are in substantial agreement—that is, on Nos. 1 and 2, above.

My very good friend Mr. Bob Clancy seemed in his letter to be surprisingly annoyed at almost everything I said, as though my remarks had somehow stepped on his institutional toes. Without the Henry George schools, of course, there would be few if any new candidates for membership in the International Union, in any international party, or in any other sort of Land Libertarian promotional organisation.

In any event, we must never become cross with each other because of differences in view. As John Stuart Mill and other scholars would remind us, it is by the exchange of opinions that knowledge becomes enriched and action becomes more effective.

In this case, I know that my own thinking has been greatly improved by the contributions of others, and I trust that something has occurred which will bring our common objectives much closer to concrete fruition.

Boulder, Colorado. JAMES L. BUSEY.

## LIGHT ON THE LAND QUESTION

**Bishopsgate, London.** £10,000 is asked for a freehold building site of 1,872 sq. ft. zoned for commercial and shopping purposes. This gives a per acre asking price not far short of a quarter of a million pounds.

**Eastbourne.** Agents are asking £8,500 for a freehold building site said to be in the finest position on the west side of the town. Planning approval has been obtained for the erection of 7 houses or a block of 12 flats.

**Essex.** A building site of four acres in the "favoured village of Wickham Bishops" is offered freehold at £2,500. There is main electricity and water, and planning permission has been obtained for residential development.

**Lancaster Gate.** A freehold site cleared to basement level having an area of about 7,150 sq. ft. was sold "at a satisfactory price of approximately 85s. per sq. ft." on April 23, according to a report in the *Estates Gazette*. This is equivalent to roughly £100,000 an acre. Planning consent has been granted and plans approved for the erection of a block of 32 luxury flats with ancillary accom-

modation and garaging for about 20/35 cars. Address of the site is 63, 64, 65 Lancaster Gate and 24 Leinster Mews,

**London, W.14.** Kensington High Street is a swanky shopping district. For a freehold site with 100 ft. frontage (area 17,740 square ft.) the asking price is £70,000 or near offer. The vendors warn that it is "not suitable for office development". Maybe not, but how excellently placed for funnelling the community-created rent of land into private pockets.

**New Bond Street, W.1.** The leasehold premises, numbers 67 and 68 were sold at the London Auction Mart on April 29th. The property is described as shop and business premises, having a total floor area of 16,100 sq. ft. There is a ground rent of £55 (lease expires in 1,951 years' time!), and quarterly and yearly rents totalling £6,235. The price realised was £155,000. Elsewhere a week earlier 109 New Bond Street (shop and office premises) was sold for £46,000. The ground lease has another 1,964 years to run at £7 16s. 4d. Yearly rents (i.e. paid by the tenants to the leaseholder) amount to more than £2,757.