

absurdity by mentioning the matter at all. There is only twenty shillings per £ of land value to take; it is *impossible* to take more. Any attempt to tax land at more than its full value would result in taxing incomes from another source on a *basis* of land value, which, as any economist will agree, reverses the principle of site-value rating to the unfair disadvantage of the land owner.

Mr. Clarke is of course really examining the question of whether or not there would be sufficient revenue from site values to meet the required expenditure. Finally he thinks there would be, but to talk of taxing land more than 20s. in the £ is most misleading.

At another point Mr. Clarke states that land-value taxation could "work harshly" because a man could be taxed upon a value he is prevented for many reasons from realising. But, we would think, it is self evident (and it is implied in the land-value taxation theory) that only market (realisable) value would be taxed. The question of harshness would not arise.

Mr. Clarke suggests that the valuation of agricultural land would be beset with difficulties. He raises the matter of farm improvements, such as "farmhouses and buildings, hedges and ditches and fences; increased fertility and irrigation," which would have to be excluded, ignoring the fact that valuers in Denmark and other countries (and the valuer in the Whitstable survey) found no difficulty in excluding them. Confusingly, Mr. Clarke includes in improvements, "private improvements to adjoining land which enhance the value of the land under consideration."

Mr. Clarke's commendable anxiety to remain impartial and to present both sides of the question with fairness has led him to dispense with his own thinking on certain matters and thus not only to fail to follow through the implications of various arguments but to take some of the objections to site-value rating too much for granted.

#### THE NET TIGHTENS

**P**OLICING of building sites is becoming a necessary part of planning — in order to make sure that developers stick to the planning permissions they have been granted. This was the opinion of a spokesman for the West Sussex County Council, whose officials, carrying out surprise site inspections, have discovered deviations from the original plans.

This must surely be the most startling example ever of the coercive nature of planning regulations.

However, the builders of West Sussex are in good company. During the thirty-five years that it took to build St. Paul's Cathedral, Sir Christopher Wren altered the design as much as he could back towards his original design which the ecclesiastical authorities would not approve.

Obviously they did not have sufficiently active "planning police" in those days.

## Why I'm Quitting the Rat Race

By Jack Harris, in the *Sun*, February 26.

**M**ILLIONAIRE property man Edward Drewery is quitting Britain's "housing rat-race." He says the frustration of building homes has beaten him.

Mr. Drewery has just sold his latest housing project, which is not yet completed, to rival developers for £750,000. Only a few of the three hundred homes at Orpington, Kent, are occupied. But Mr. Drewery said yesterday: "I just wanted to be shot of it."

Then he explained why he is quitting: "I have reached the stage of utter exasperation and feel I must chuck it up or get ulcers."

Obtaining permission to build, he said, could take up to three years. Meanwhile, the developer had to pay charges and interest on capital outlay without any return on the investment. "Then, when you've got planning permits, the official objections start, and the hearings often last months. The planning committee act like they are God, and the local objectors stall with every move in the book."

The giant building firms, said Mr. Drewery, had large staffs that shared the frustration. But in his case he bore the strain alone. "Things have got to such a pitch in the fight for sites that the giants have established a new career — "land officers" — whose full time job is to roam the country seeking possible sites."

Now Mr. Drewery, who lives in Orpington, plans to sell steel pre-fab homes to underdeveloped countries. "There aren't local council housing officials and planning officers in the jungle. The people there buy a home and up it goes — like that."

## Instruments of Power

By A. J. CARTER

*State Monopoly of Textbooks*

Forum of Free Enterprise, Bombay.

**T**HIS LITTLE BOOKLET is concerned with a subject which many people in this country may not have thought about — whether the state should issue textbooks for schools.

In India the question is very much one of practical politics, although it may be that the mass of the Indian public accepts state monopoly of textbooks as docilely as the English public accepts planning and growth rates. I suspect that the Forum of Free Enterprise is as out of fashion in Indian society, as, say, the Council for the Reduction of Taxation is here.

The booklet consists principally of an article reprinted from *The Year Book of Education* and the texts of three talks given at a meeting in Bombay in August 1964. Between them these four contributions contain a host of reasons why provision of textbooks should not be undertaken by the state and why the state, in approving textbooks, should spread its blessing as widely as possible.

The argument is often put forward, particularly in underdeveloped countries, that state provision of textbooks will reduce their cost by cutting out the publisher's profit. In India, however, the state books are usually more expensive than the private books, partly because the private publisher can expect to sell a good textbook beyond the confines of his own state and so reduce his unit costs. Needless to say, the author still has to be paid, whether in form of royalties or as a government employee. Moreover, price cannot be considered in isolation from quality, and in many of the Indian states the state textbooks are of a scandalously low standard and so slow in preparation that at the beginning of term they are often simply not available. The high cost, poor reproduction, and delay in publication are an invitation to counterfeiters, and pirate editions of books not only compete with the originals but sometimes capture the lion's share of the market.

Another argument for state textbooks which does not hold water is that the state can obtain the services of the best writers. So it can; but it is not to be assumed that it is any more expert in this respect than private publishers whose living depends on obtaining the custom of the best writers. Competition between publishers will ensure that when a more modern book is written it will also be published, and one of the advantages of a variety of books from private publishers is that the teachers can change their textbook as soon as a newer or better book is produced. It is difficult to imagine any government that had just published a textbook immediately issuing another if a new discovery was made or a clearer method of exposition suggested.

The lack of completely up-to-date textbooks obviously has a deleterious effect on education, and this is true also of a lack of variety generally. The function of education is not to create uniform minds by means of uniform teaching rituals. Education is a personal relationship between teacher and student in which the teacher should become, in Vinoba Bhave's words, the "friend, philosopher and guide" of the young. To do this he must have freedom of action; freedom to practise diverse methods of teaching; freedom (as a corollary of this) to vary his textbooks or even to write his own textbook; and, finally, freedom to use different textbooks for students of differing personalities and aptitudes.

It is highly desirable, therefore, that if the state approves textbooks it should approve several of them for any one subject in order to give teachers freedom to choose. It is essential that if the state itself produces textbooks (and that may be justifiable in some circumstances) it should do so only in competition with private publishers. State monopoly of textbooks is not only indefensible in practice, as this booklet shows, but also dangerous because of the likelihood of official censorship and indoctrination. The instruments of power should never be enlarged to help even the most benevolent rulers, for the power remains when the benevolence has gone.

## THEY SAY

### Political Pressures?

THE Minister (Mr. Richard Crossman) was really becoming a specialist in tantalising the public — a sort of intellectual performer of striptease dancing. "He has said that a local income tax would help, but that that would not be practicable; then he talked about a sales tax, but decided that that was not practicable; and then said that what would really help would be a land tax — except that that would not work." — Sir Keith Joseph, M.P.

### True Liberalism

FOR far too many people the whole business of politics is to provide them with a subsidy — preferably under some other name. I am tired of being told "We don't want charity; all we want is some special concession from the Government disguised under some fair sounding name like 'Social Justice'." — Jo Grimond, M.P.

### Words—Concealing and Revealing

PEACE and co-operation are words that can conceal very undesirable things indeed. "Peace in the super-markets" is not a slogan that would attract the housewife: on the contrary, she prefers to hear of a "price war," which often means that someone's little racket has broken down at last and we are going to get the benefit of competitive prices. Few are worried because there is no "co-operation" between the shops down the High Street and their customers for the purpose of improving retail trading. On the contrary, we are mighty anxious that our alternative sources of supply should not be 'co-operating' . . . — J. Enoch Powell, M.P.

### "Post-War" Credits for Youth?

I HOPE the Government will look at the suggestion that there should be a compulsory saving scheme on a P.A.Y.E. basis for all young wage earners. Many of them would be better off if they did not have so much money rattling in their pockets. — Lord Robertson

### THANKS!

The United Committee acknowledges with warm appreciation the anonymous gift of £300.

R. W. FROST, *Treasurer.*

### CORRECTION

WE regret that we wrongly described Mr. W. J. Hill as the Exeter and District Valuation Officer in our last issue ("Chartered Surveyors Under Fire"). The valuation officer is Mr. D. C. Papworth.