

VOTERS FAVOUR SITE-VALUE RATING

HORSHAM CITY rating poll resulted in a most significant victory for site-value rating, reports *Progress*, October.

This is the second attempt to get Horsham on to site-value rating. The first poll was taken in August, 1963, and was heavily defeated, the proportion against the proposal being 63 per cent. This latest poll reversed the results, with 64 per cent of the total vote being recorded in favour of putting the rates on the unimproved value of the land.

Comparative results at the two polls were as follows:

	For	Against
1963 Poll	2,898 (37 per cent)	4,978 (63 per cent)
1969 Poll	2,649 (64 per cent)	1,437 (36 per cent)

The lower total of votes at the second poll is due to the abolition of multiple voting last year so that each person on the roll received only one vote. Multiple voting applied at the first poll, most voters having two or three votes.

Horsham provides an inspiration to other places where attempts to establish site-value rating have been lost on a first try. The first poll was bitterly contested. Main opposition then, was from the Chamber of Commerce, many of whose members subscribed very heavily to defeat the proposed change. There were large advertisements in the local paper for weeks before polling day. Their content was aimed to confuse voters and induce fear that their employment might be affected. Site-value rating supporters could not match their opponents in providing finance, but the cost to the traders proved ruinous.

At the latest poll some of the business men who had previously subscribed money to oppose site-value rating, now supported it. Others would contribute no funds to oppose it. One businessman who had earlier opposed it said that campaign had cost him so much that he could have paid his higher rates under S.V.R. for ten years and still have saved money. At a rather late stage the Chamber of Commerce again opposed site value rating but this time it had no financial backing from its members.

Horsham City is in the Wimmera Division of Victoria, 203 miles north-west of Melbourne. Its area is 5,939 acres with a population of 10,900. There are 4,221 rateable properties of which 3,252 have dwellings and there are approximately 700 vacant lots.



PETER
HUDSON

IN COMMON with many of the world's great cities

London has been steadily losing population in recent years and could witness the emigration of a further 700,000 of its work force by 1981. The South East Region however, has been expanding rapidly, both in terms of population and production, and there is clearly a relationship between these trends. The fall in London's numbers can be explained partly by the limitation of the capital's housing stock, and partly by the deliberate policy of decentralising employment to new and expanding towns while restricting growth in the centre. A recent booklet* describes the New Town employment strategy as a "howling success" in producing balanced communities as far as population and jobs are concerned.

Looking at other cities, particularly in the U.S.A., we can observe that London's New Towns, which were introduced after the war, stand as good examples of "trend planning". In other words, the decentralisation of jobs and people from the capital would have happened in any event. The designation of the seven New towns had the effect of channelling much new development to pre-determined locations. Naturally, not all firms in New Towns come from London, and there has been expansion in other parts of the region unrelated to New Town policy.

The author of the booklet argues that there is a strong case for inducing the further decentralisation from London of half a million jobs. This he sees as a desirable objective to counter the journey-to-work problems of central and inner London.

About 450,000 people commute to the capital at present at high cost. To ease the traffic situation the Greater London Council proposes to invest somewhere between £860 and £1000 million on a new road network, mainly to meet the demands likely to be created by a car ownership rate of two cars for every three families by 1981. The 1966 figure was less than one car for two families.

The dispersal of employment to New Towns to date has been mainly in manufacturing industry. But at the same time central London employment in offices and

London's New Towns — a study of self contained and balanced communities by Ray Thomas, Broadsheet 510. Political and Economic Planning. 10s. 6d.

LAND & LIBERTY

Needed: an Incentive for Dispersal

How to deal with the pressure of London's population, employment, and transport problems

services has increased, and shows signs of continuing to do so. Adherence to the Green Belt policy has meant that new investment in railways and roads has been not so much to improve total capacity but to enable longer journeys to be made at greater speed.

Depending on the rate of decline in the Inner London population, by 1968 the surplus of jobs over labour supply in the centre could be 700,000, or twice the 1966 figure. This would pose fantastic movement problems. The outward migration to date has been caused by the relatively inelastic housing supply in inner London, the high price of new houses, and the movement of manufacturing employment, which has been both government-sponsored and willingly undertaken by industrialists. But with centrally located office and service employment growing faster than manufacturing, the commuting army shows little prospect of decline.

Viewed in this light, Ray Thomas's plea for deliberate office dispersal has some merit. The advances made in communications, like telex, closed circuit television, multi-access computers, and instant

photographic reproduction, all suggest that many office functions could probably operate efficiently anywhere in the south eastern region. A word of caution, however, needs to be sounded. The interdependence of offices and service activities is very complex. Many executives depend upon personal contact for all manner of transactions. This is particularly true in finance, insurance, property development, marketing and advertising. Would it be possible to separate these people from their administrative tasks without destroying the efficiency of intricately woven markets developed over many years? So far the Location of Offices Bureau has induced employers to shift 50,000 white-collar workers out of the central area, and research suggests that nearly as many have moved voluntarily. Here, then, may be an embryonic trend similar to the one that has occurred in manufacturing. If this is so, the only question that remains is will decentralisation happen quickly enough to match population changes?

Ray Thomas has pointed out that population dispersal brings the added bonus of a wider spread in land value, thus cheapening renewal of improvements in the centre. If sufficient land were to be allocated by planning authorities for office use outside of Central London, and other controls were relaxed, the prospects for both population and employment dispersal would be very rosy indeed. Add to this an economic spur through taxation on location values and a powerful force would be set in motion that could reshape the whole of the South East and provide a better balance between homes, jobs and transport facilities.

What more could the planners want?

The Thoughts of Enoch Powell

(Extracts from recent speeches)

● When Governments feel obliged to make crimes out of innocent and harmless actions, it is a sure sign that the governments themselves are engaged in something foolish or wicked, that they want to cover up.

● The translation of a want or need into a right is one of the most widespread and dangerous of modern heresies.

● The assembled economic and financial pomp of half the world is assembled at this moment in Washington to discuss something called the International Monetary System. Yet the system dignified by that

description is rotten and untruthful, and its practitioners and high priests know it is. That is why it dare not look a gold coin in the face.

● For twenty-five years Britain has been the victim of its balance of payments. The damage has been almost incalculable. Be damned to this everlasting borrowing and computation of surpluses and deficits. We don't have to have them; we never did.

● Whip that application back from the table in Brussels—it will barely be noticed amongst the wrangles

and quarrels of the members of that ramshackle organisation, the Common Market, and tell them that, like other nations from whom we are separated by tariff barriers (such as America and the former countries of the Empire), we intend to continue to trade with them to the best advantage that we can.

● It is no accident that in any Socialist system, by which I mean any society in which the Government has accepted responsibility for the management of the economy, the rule of law must disappear, since you can't reduce to law those judgments that are required for the management of an economy.