

## AN ISLAND PARADISE

Under the title "The Paradise of the Tasman" Hubert Lyman Clark gives an account in the *National Geographic Magazine* (Washington, D.C., July, 1935) of an island which puts into operation an approximation to the ideas of Henry George.

On Lord Howe Island, 360 miles east of Australia, there is no problem of poverty; everyone has a home and an income—although no one need work more than a couple of hours a week. This tiny bit of land, seven miles long and a mile and a half wide, provides practically all the "florists' palms" which decorate hotels, churches, steamships and homes all over the world. The income from the sale of palm seed—which is a public monopoly—maintains the entire population in a unique communal life of unusual charm.

Residents of Lord Howe are divided into "participants" and "non-participants." A participant is one who shares in the annual division of the island's income from palm seeds. To be a participant one must be a native-born islander, or else married to an islander, and a resident of 10 years.

No one owns any land; the whole island belongs to the people. The Board of Control assigns land in accordance with the needs and desires of the islanders. Land may pass from one generation to another, as long as it is occupied and used, but it cannot be sold.

If a young man wishes to marry and establish his own home, he notifies the Board of Control, which assigns him a block of land on which to build a home and use for gardens or pasturage.

The taxation system is unique. Non-islanders who stay for long periods must contribute £5 per annum to the island's funds. Participants in the palm-seed industry pay no taxes on property, but those who receive an income from any other source are taxed by the reduction of one share in eight of their holdings in the communal palm-seed industry for all income over £24. This system helps to equalize the incomes of all islanders, and thus prevent any development of classes who might be called rich or poor.

All males 21 years of age have 25 shares in the allotment of income. Women of like age have 10 shares, but on marriage their holding is increased to 25 shares. A married couple will thus have 50 shares when starting their home. For each child born to them they receive 10 additional shares, with a maximum of 35 shares for children. Upon reaching the age of 31, married islanders, male and female, receive an additional 25 shares each. If a participant dies or leaves the island for six months, his shares lapse, but a former participant who returns to the island may participate once more after residing two months for every year of absence.

There are no unemployed nor overemployed. Some have finer homes than others, but the difference rests more on the diversity of ambition and taste than on opportunity.

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