

## THE DANISH LAND VALUATION

THE RESULTS of the periodic valuation of Denmark made as on 1st October, 1936, are summarized in the *Statistical Bulletin* of 1st January, 1938.

The aggregate composite value of land with buildings and improvements is assessed at 15,720 million crowns (£714,545,000). This is the addition of the market values of all the properties, each assessed at the price it would fetch if it alone was being sold in the open market by a willing seller.

The aggregate land value, the value of land, property by property, apart from its buildings and improvements assuming it were so sold, is assessed at 5,612 million crowns (£255,110,000). The aggregate land value corresponds to £70 per head of the population and on the average the land value is 35.7 per cent of the composite value.

The land value is distributed as follows, over the country, and we give also the proportion of land value to composite value, as well as the land value per head of population within these areas so grouped :—

	LAND VALUE		
	In the aggregate million crowns	As per cent of composite value	Per head of population £
The Metropolis—Copenhagen, Frederiksberg and Gentofte	1,644	30	90
The Provincial Boroughs taken together .. .. .	899	26	47
Counties and Parishes including:—	3,069	43	70
Agricultural land .. .. .	2,460	55	—
Woods and Forests .. .. .	64	58	—
Country townships and land of urban character, market gardens, etc. ..	545	21	—

The high proportion of land value to composite value in the case of agricultural land will be noted. It belies the contention sometimes heard that “there is no land value in agricultural land”; and the demonstration should be the more convincing as it is established by practical systematic valuation made now repeatedly in Denmark\* with increasing precision gained by experience and in the light of full publicity.

Instructive also is the variation in the land value, as a proportion of composite value, which is shown in the succeeding table relating to the agricultural holdings.

The Danes subdivide agricultural holdings, which number altogether 204,350 and cover 8,770,000 acres, into two large classes as in this table. The farms number 93,590 and the smallholdings 110,760. The broad line separating the two classes puts holdings below one *tønne hartkorn* (literally *tun hardcorn*†) among the smallholdings and all above that among the farms, the “*hartkorn*” being the historic (but now abandoned) standard by which farm land was assessed and taxed in terms of the quality of the soil; i.e., its potential productiveness, which, of course, differs from place to place and even from field to field. For instance, of the land occupied by the largest farms, containing 12 or more *tuns hartkorn*, it takes on the average 15 acres to make one *tun hartkorn*; whereas in the case of the smallholdings of 10 hectares or more, the soil is comparatively so poor that it would take 109 acres of that kind of land

to make one *tun hartkorn*. Thus area is not the only measure in this classification, which will be remarked in the fact that the average area of the larger smallholdings is less than that of the smaller farms.

	Average area Acres	LAND VALUE	
		Per acre £	Per cent of composite value
I.—Farms			
Classified in “Hartkorn”			
12 or more <i>tuns</i> .. .. .	374	17	67.4
4 to 12 .. .. .	95	16	62.7
2 to 4 .. .. .	62	13	57.2
1 to 2 .. .. .	38	11	51.6
II.—Smallholdings			
Classified as to area			
10 Hectares or more ..	49	6	48.7
3.3 to 10 Hectares .. ..	18	13	42.2
1 to 3.3 Hectares .. ..	5½	17	31.4

The composite value of land plus buildings and improvements is always assessed as the market value, but in the case of agricultural land the Danes have set up a special standard for assessing the land value; namely the value which the land would have apart from buildings and improvements if it belonged to a medium-sized farm. This provision is made to avoid assessing the land of smallholdings at the enhanced price which generally has to be paid when land is bought for the purpose of a smallholding. In the result, the assessed land value of smallholdings is likely to be less than, and that of the farms over medium size is likely to be more than, the actual market value. But the variation in land value as a proportion of composite value is not greatly influenced by this consideration. The variation is very marked—from 67.4 per cent for the large farms down to 31.4 per cent for the smallest holdings. Financially, the “small man” is more interested in his improvements and in the results of his work than in the land value; the contrary is the case with the “big man.” The small peasants saw this back in 1902 when a retrogressive Government was enacting legislation to abandon the old “*hartkorn*” assessment and shift taxation upon improvements. They saw that taxation would be taken off the shoulders of the larger landowners and placed upon theirs; and they passed the famous Køge resolution demanding that all taxation be levied on the value of the land alone.

Denmark has since made progress as our readers know in putting land value taxation into force—the uniform though yet small annual national tax on land values in town and country alike, taking effect as from 1924; and a part of the revenue for local purposes, greater in the country districts than in the towns, derived by the rating of land values, which took effect as from 1926. Later, provision was made for an annual national tax on the increase in land value above a given point. For this, the valuations of 1932 provide the datum line and the assessable increase is determined at each subsequent general valuation.

These 1936 valuation returns make comparison with the previous general valuation of 1932. The aggregate land value of Denmark has increased by 12.4 per cent; in the metropolis the increase has been 14 per cent; in the provincial boroughs, 12.1 per cent; and of agricultural land 8.4 per cent. On the other hand, buildings and improvements apart from the land have

\*The general valuation, with land value separately assessed, has been made in 1916, 1920, 1924, 1927, 1932 and 1936.

† A literal translation, but there is no English word conveying the meaning.

increased over all Denmark by 16.1 per cent. Buildings and improvements now make a larger proportion of the composite value and land value a smaller proportion, so that relatively speaking it can be said that land value has gone down.

The comparisons between 1932 and 1936 should take into account the depreciation in the value of the crown; and in computing the crown at 22 to the £ we may have understated the actual value of the land in terms of sterling, although that is the current rate of exchange.

The *Bulletin* points out that the valuation figures are not absolutely final, in so far as some valuations remained to be settled as the result of objection or appeal.

(Readers interested in having fuller particulars about the land value legislation in Denmark should apply for the London International Conference Papers Nos. 8 and 13 by Mr K. J. Kristensen and Mr Abel Brink respectively, who speak with authority as departmental heads of the Central Valuation Board. The Papers are 3d. each.)

### THE VAN ZEELAND REPORT

THE RESULTS of the "inquiry into the possibility of obtaining a reduction of quotas and of other obstacles to international trade" undertaken by M. van Zeeland at the request of the British and French Governments was published in the newspapers of 28th January. The general tenor of the report is in favour of reduction of tariffs, quotas, exchange controls and other obstacles to international trade. There is nothing new in this. Committees of the League of Nations and other bodies have said the same thing repeatedly. M. van Zeeland's mission was in the nature of a diplomatic tour to ascertain whether progress could be made in putting these ideas into operation. He says that everywhere he found interest and goodwill, but when it came to practical proposals the attitude "almost everywhere became qualified by a very marked reserve."

The truth is that the governments which follow the practice of trade restriction do not disbelieve in it. They believe that tariffs and the rest are to the advantage of their own citizens; they object only to the tariffs of other countries. M. van Zeeland proposes that representatives of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States should be brought together to make preparatory soundings as to whether economic collaboration is possible, and to ascertain what grievances require to be remedied. The possibility of collaboration in the world of to-day does not seem to be bright. It is a case in which we must follow Voltaire's advice to cultivate our own gardens, and persuade our own governments that in the interest of their citizens they should abolish the tariffs and other restrictions which they have imposed.

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### NOTES AND NEWS

AT THE meeting of the Court of Contributors to Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (*Glasgow Herald*, 25th January) Mr. William Grieve said that the committee were much concerned over the additional outlay on milk supplies, amounting to £1,700. That increased cost was, he said, the result mainly of the marketing scheme.

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Sir David Milne-Watson, governor of the Gas Light and Coke Company, Ltd., criticised the Coal Bill at the annual meeting of the company and said: "Throughout the country the price of coal had been considerably increased, in many instances heavily. In consequence, many trades and industries had already been hit, and the cost of living increased while the upward trend of coal prices continued unabated. Yet the Bill, while proposing to allow a state of affairs which he could only describe as disastrous to continue for a further five years, offered no effective protection to consumers."—*Glasgow Herald*, 4th February.

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"THIS FREE ENGLAND."—A request made at a farm-workers' conference at Dorchester on Saturday that the Press should not give the names of the men who spoke led to one of the delegates exclaiming: "It is rather tragic that in free England to-day we have to ask the Press to suppress the names of delegates who express their points of view lest they should get it in the neck when they return to their farms." The conference decided to demand a minimum wage of £2 a week for Dorset farm workers.—*News Chronicle*, 14th February.

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As a memorial to Francis W. Maguire, the Philadelphian devoted protagonist of the Henry George teaching to whom it was a mission, Mr John C. Rose has published a biography *Forty-five Years in Harness: the Life and Philosophy of Francis W. Maguire, Who Labored Long and Faithfully in the Service of Humanity*. Orders for copies, at \$2 each, should be sent to Mr Rose at 491, Norton Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

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The *Oxford Guardian* is the weekly journal during Term of the Oxford University Liberal Club among whose members Mr Atholl Robertson, ex-M.P., and now the prospective Liberal Candidate for the Mid-Bucks division, has been doing valuable educative work in the advocacy of Land Value Taxation. "Land Monopoly—Give Freedom a Chance" is the title of an article contributed by Mr Robertson to the *Oxford Guardian* of 15th February. We look forward to the further cultivation of the subject on this fertile ground.

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Back numbers of *Land & Liberty* are invaluable for the research student and the protagonist who would be fully documented in his references to past events. We have surplus copies of bound and indexed volumes for the following years: 1908-10 to 1917, 1919, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1925, 1927, 1928 and 1930. No spare volumes for the years not mentioned. For the nominal cost of only 2s. per volume, any of these spare volumes will be sent on application. Bound volumes for 1932-33 are out of print. Those for 1934, 1935, 1936 and 1937 may be had each at the price of 10s. including the postage. Indexes alone from 1934 forward at 1s. each.

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