

ship which is at the root of all the trouble in South America. And to put it right it is not sufficient to exhort the privileged to help; the only way to "assure an increasing measure of social justice" is to remove this privilege.

Without basic land reforms all President Kennedy's "Alliance for Progress" and similar schemes will have little result. But perhaps it is only a little result that is required — just sufficient to keep the non-privileged from turning to Communism.

## THEY SAY

**SOMEWHERE** in the world there must be a cure for unemployment. — Lord Beveridge in 1903.

— And although he became Director of the London School of Economics, he never found it.

### And They Should Know

**I DOUBT** if curbs on office building would have any significant impact. You won't see houses being built up on commercial sites, after all. I think all that will happen is that commercial site owners will sit back and wait, secure in the knowledge that restrictions can only inflate office prices in the long run. — Mann & Co., Estate Agents.

### Nucleus Nonsense

**WE CANNOT** have expansion without a great increase in exports. We cannot have an increase in exports unless we hold our costs steady. We cannot hold our costs steady unless we have an effective incomes policy. There you have the nucleus of our economic policy. — William Deedes, M.P., Minister Without Portfolio.

### Good Old Jo

**I ALSO** notice — and I consider that this is a serious omission from the White Paper (London: Employment — Housing — Land) — that there is no mention of taxation of land values, or on profits made out of land. — Jo Grimond, M.P., in the Commons.

### Production — But What of Distribution?

**FOR THE** first time in the history of the human race I believe that we are within sight of an age when industrial production could be on a scale to banish want altogether. — Lord Hailsham.

### But Why Wait?

**THE MOST** direct way to cure unemployment would be for the Conservatives to win a general election. — Paul Bryan, Vice-Chairman of the Conservative Party.

### Grants No Solution

**FOR ALL** the Governmental grants in the world will not induce people to set up industries unless they are convinced that their business, when properly under way, will be profitable. — John Boyd-Carpenter, Chief Secretary to the Treasury.



IN PARLIAMENT

## Protectionists Have A Field Day

**THE** debate in the House of Commons on March 1, on the horticultural industry, was most uncontroversial. Speeches made by Members from both sides of the House (the Liberals excluded themselves) were almost identical in substance — heavily committed to protection and planning.

MR. JOHN WELLS (Conservative, Maidstone) opened the debate by moving:

"That this House, believing that an efficient and modern horticultural industry is essential for the supply of high quality fresh and reasonably priced fruit and vegetables, calls upon Her Majesty's Government to assist the re-organisation of wholesale markets, to encourage standard grades and re-affirm its determination to protect the industry from unfair competition by imports."

With the ending of the Brussels negotiations for the Common Market, Mr. Wells felt there was a great question mark left in front of British horticulture. Although not seeking to tell the Government what he thought they should do, he had doubts as to whether or not the tariff system amounted to any real protection in monetary terms. He said: "As a great trading nation, we are bound in the long run to accept with open arms the idea of the Kennedy round of tariff reductions, but when this comes I hope that the Government will find some alternative and comparable method of supporting the horticultural industry. . ."

The taxpayer and the consumer are evidently not going to be allowed to benefit from lower tariffs if Mr. Wells can help it. They will pay in some other way to "support" horticulturalists.

He also said that the industry faced a problem in the sphere of markets and marketing. Although well aware that there was a strong body of opinion which wanted Government compulsion immediately in the matter of grading and packing he hoped the industry would try once more to institute uniformity before seeking compulsory powers. With reference to the vast rise in living standards among all sections of the population, he said it was important that people should realise that they might very well increase their consumption of fruit. (A gratuitous and impertinent admonition.)

Although admitting that dumping had not been a very serious problem with horticulture in the past, Mr. Wells was concerned about "the vast glut of apples about to break," in Europe. He believed the existing anti-dumping mechanism worked too slowly for such highly perishable articles as horticultural products.

He also wished to see provision for further capital for glasshouse reconstruction or building, which at present is *only one-third of the cost* of a project under the horticultural improvement scheme. (Our italics.)

MR. HAROLD DAVIES (Labour, Leek) became emotional as well as silly about the necessity for the industry to be built up, and, after referring to the Common Market, said: "This will not be the first time in history that Britain has been on her own. We have only to go back to Dunkirk days to see what we can do; and if we can do it militarily surely we can do it peacefully, economically and constructively."

Mr. Davies was obviously too misty-eyed to see that the best way to isolate Britain is to erect tariff walls around her. Dunkirk indeed!

SIR PETER AGNEW (Conservative, Worcestershire South), after discussing ways in which marketing and grading could be improved (and this is so obviously the business of Parliament) said: "Another matter of great importance to the industry is the regulation of imports. Nobody now thinks that we should dismantle our tariff system and lay ourselves open to foreign competition. Now that the Brussels negotiations have come to an end for an indefinite period we need not worry too much about this now, since there can be no question of free horticultural competition from abroad." But he realised that the general climate of opinion towards tariffs in Britain might force people in the horticultural industry to consider whether some other system should be introduced. He suggested as an alternative a minimum import price system at the ports, in order to deal with the situation where "over a period of only two or three months, produce tended to be offered from abroad at a price that would cripple that season's work for our own producers." He thought that in any case the tariff application system had worked too slowly.

With regard to dumping, Sir Peter asked the Minister to consider amending the Act so that the second qualification (that a positive case has to be made out accepted by the Government that a home industry is being injured) was no longer necessary before countervailing duties could be imposed. He also said with shameless special pleading that he wished to see horticulturalists enabled to obtain remission of duty on the petrol which they use in their machinery.

MR. G. R. HOWARD (Conservative, St. Ives), agreed that the minimum price system would be an excellent idea, and complained of the slowness of anti-dumping legislation which led to "ships rushing in at the last moment and dumping potatoes on the market and thereby causing great harm to our own growers."

He concluded with a novel comment. He said: "I hope the Government will bear in mind that, whether they like it or not, horticulture is one of the most important industries in the country because of the type of man it produces." (*sic*)

Referring to the Kennedy round of tariff reductions MR. DENYS BULLARD (Conservative, King's Lynn) said:

"There is no month of the year in which some of our horticultural produce is not subject to intense competition from the products of other parts of the world where climatic and other conditions are, for the time being, more favourable than ours." (Shades of the candle-makers petition.) For this reason, although appreciating the virtues of co-operating in tariff reductions he considered that "it would be very dangerous to hint that this must necessarily apply to the modest protection which is now given to agriculture." Dangerous to whom?

Similarly, MR. J. M. L. PRIOR (Conservative, Lowestoft), although admitting a dislike for tariffs as a way of protection, felt that in the case of the horticultural industry "there are very special circumstances which make this form of protection both necessary and desirable." These special circumstances were not enlarged upon, except that he hoped protection would not be given to the inefficient growers. (How on earth would they arrange that? By giving protection to none?)

Regarding the reconstruction of the markets of the country he considered ten markets to be about the right figure, the main consideration being to establish free movement of traffic in and out of the market, and the use of mechanical devices within the market.

As for Government policy on marketing, MR. FRED PEART (Labour, Workington) wondered whether the Government favoured a resurrected Horticultural Marketing Council with executive powers, some new form of statutory authority, or a development council as suggested by the National Farmers' Union.

It was left to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Christopher Soames) to introduce a note of sanity into the "debate" by reminding the House of the considerable help already given to the industry.

He said the gross income for the horticultural industry had risen from £105 million, taking the average of the three years 1950-52, to £160 million, taking the average of the years 1960-62. These figures, he said, did not support the idea that horticulture was in any way a declining industry, and although he gave much of the credit to the industry itself, he thought the Government (the taxpayers) could also claim to have played an important part.

The Government's (taxpayer's) record was impressive according to the facts given by Mr. Soames. It had set up six research stations and seven horticultural experimental stations, and a new Advisory Council had just been formed. In 1960, a grant aid scheme was introduced to help growers and marketing co-operatives to install equipment. Grants had also been made towards expenditure incurred in setting up and improving the efficiency of horticultural marketing co-operatives.

So much for *our* horticulture — subsidised, protected and planned. Two things stand out in this farce of a debate. One is the consistent use of the word "our" in order to identify the interests of the consumer with those of vested interests, and the other the lack of any protest on behalf of the consumer from any quarter of the House.