

women of the classes, with whom this age is filled. It will be brought about by the education of man by men who will give their fortunes, if need be their lives, for the love of humanity.

The foregoing is an extract from the brochure *The Crimes of the Minority*, by Alex. Y. Scott. In a foreword the late Louis F. Post acclaimed it as a brilliant statement of Henry George's principle of civilization: "Association in equality." Unfortunately, the brochure is out of print, but no doubt our readers will be glad to have this brief extract from it.

### BETTERMENT PROPOSALS

AT A MEETING of the Executive of the Rural District Councils Association (reported in the *Municipal Journal*, 15th July) a report of a sub-committee was submitted dealing with questions of land drainage and the responsibility for the cost of such works. The report says:—

The moment it has been definitely decided to construct a sewer adjacent to undeveloped or agricultural land, the value of the latter is enhanced enormously. Numerous instances have arisen where agricultural land worth £60-£80 an acre becomes an immediate demand at 1s. to 2s. 6d. a square yard, and—taking a rate of 1s. 6d. only—this represents a transition from about £70 an acre to £350. It is submitted that some reasonable proportion of this betterment should be recoverable by the local authority. A further report will be submitted.

The report mentions that the principle of betterment was accepted by Parliament in the Town Planning Acts. That is true but the principle does not work because the method is defective. If any attempt is to be made to collect a specific contribution from owners of land in respect of increases of land values caused by public improvements, there must first be a valuation of the value of all the sites in the vicinity. But even if this existed the problem of recovering from owners of land the specific benefit due to a particular undertaking is insoluble. It is impossible to say how much of the increase in value is due to that and how much to other causes. Neither is it possible as a rule to define any area as being the limit of benefit. What can be said, however, is that all the land value, both what exists now and what may be added in the future, is due to public expenditure and other community influences.

Betterment provisions in town planning have been in practice a dead letter. They cannot be operated, because the calculations involved are too hypothetical and complex. The simple and equitable method is to charge the cost of public services on all the land values of the district.

### BRISTOL TOWN COUNCIL

FIRST STEPS towards ending the "land value ramp" have been taken in Bristol, according to the *Daily Herald* (13th September). At a meeting on the previous day of the Rating Committee, Alderman Hennessey moved that the Town Clerk should prepare a report of all land purchases by the Corporation in which the price was considered excessive. When the report is ready it will be considered by the Committee and a decision then made upon the next action to take. The promotion of a Bill in Parliament to rate site values is one course open to the Council.

### ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE SUDETEN PROBLEM

IN THE discussion of the political and racial aspects of the Sudeten problem during the crisis the economic background has been generally overlooked. Considerable light is thrown on this in an article by a Central European Correspondent in the *Glasgow Herald* (19th September). Czechoslovakia comprises the chief industrial district of the former Austro-Hungarian monarchy. "On the break up of the Dual Monarchy the new Republic took over 100 per cent of the china industry, 92 per cent of the glass industry, 97 per cent of the linen industry, 90 per cent of the silk industry, 85 per cent of the woollen industry, 80 per cent of the cotton industry, 92 per cent of the sugar industry, 75 per cent of the chemical industry, and 70 per cent of the leather industry, etc."

As a result of this change the industrialists instead of having an internal market of 52,000,000 people were reduced to one of 13,500,000. Export trade then became of much greater importance, and it soon met with serious difficulties through the policy of economic nationalism pursued by the adjoining countries. In the endeavour to evade tariff barriers many of the Sudeten German manufacturers, especially in the textile and chemical industries, transferred portions of their undertaking to Yugoslavia and Roumania.

Other blows to the German-speaking border districts came from the deflation of 1922, and again with the collapse of the Reich financial system in 1931 when the German banks with which the Sudeten manufacturers had preferred to deal found themselves in serious difficulties.

The trend towards autarchy all over Europe became much more pronounced after 1931, and the efforts of Germany in particular to build up a war economy on a basis of national self-sufficiency severely curtailed exports from Czechoslovakia. Between 1929 and 1936 exports to Germany fell to little more than a quarter. The Sudeten districts became a distressed area, but the blame can hardly be laid on the Czechoslovak Government. Unemployed or underpaid workers became a ready prey to Nazi agitators.

There were also wealthy interests which had grievances. "The big Sudeten German landlords, some of them members of the old Austrian aristocracy, have never forgiven the Czechs for breaking up their great feudal estates in the land reform of 1919 and distributing part of them to poor peasants, many of whom were Czechs."

After the collapse of 1931 the Sudeten industrialists were obliged to borrow money from the Czechoslovakian banks. When the political situation became critical the banks not unnaturally refused further credits and in some cases took over financial control of the enterprises. "The Sudeten German owners may well favour a violent solution which, bringing about the 'liberation from Czech oppression,' would at the same time free them of their debts and the danger of an 'alienation' of their factories."

The transfer of the Sudeten areas to Germany may thus hold out some prospect of advantage to landowners and industrialists, but it is difficult to see how it can help the worker. It may be indeed that some realization of the consequences of loss of the Czechoslovakian market explains the rancour with which that country as a whole is assailed.

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