

'CLIMATE' FUND TO RESCUE RAIN FORESTS



• Gro Harlem Brundtland

ALL the industrial nations will have to pay billions of dollars in "rent" to protect the world's rain forests, their genetic resources and ability to stabilise the world's climate, says President Virgilio Barco of Columbia. This was an "ecological debt to pay to mankind."

The Prince of Wales has already called for "mechanisms of compensation" for countries that controlled the destruction of their forests. Mrs Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Norwegian Prime Minister, believes that the developed nations should pay 0.1% of their GNP to a "climate fund" to finance curbs on "greenhouse gases".

None of these advocates has yet proposed internal social and economic reforms that would probably do more for conservation of

the environment, and the quality of life of third world citizens, than the simple transfer of "rents" to developing countries.

SPECULATION:- Hundreds of squatters have settled in the desert hills, hoping the land will increase in value if a border crossing is built in Anapra, Mexico.

The population of this little town exploded from 300 families to over 1,000 families in the few months following the announcement that it may have a border crossing into New Mexico. But the mayor of nearby Ciudad Juarez warns: "The rights of those people who lived in Anapra from the beginning, 16 years ago, will be protected. They'll get title to their land. But those squatters moving in now will be removed - forcibly if need be."

safety-valve when they were hard pressed by economic conditions.

Ms. Limerick says it is America's "creation myth" that the availability of land attracted people and that a pioneer spirit moulded life on the frontier. But 19th century observers and participants saw it happen. Why deny, more than a century later, that it happened? By focusing on the particular mishaps and misdeeds, Ms. Limerick and the other deconstructionists do not see the forest for the trees.

The people who migrated west were ordinary people, warts and all, seeking a new life. Taking a

FLIP FLOPS

NAVAJO Indian Chief Peter MacDonald Sr denies that he attempted to cheat his tribe through the deal on a 491,000-acre ranch, which was bought for \$26.2m and then immediately resold in what investigators call a "land flip" to the tribe for \$33.4m. The tribe seeks \$24m in damages from their chief and his co-defendants.

perspective that is less myopic, the civilization built up was, in spite of everything, a phenomenal accomplishment.

As for what to do with a society after the frontier is gone, Turner thought the government would have to become more active and involved in making up to people the benefits previously offered by the frontier.

Indeed, this has come about, what with the extensive welfare programs undertaken by the government.

Henry George had a better idea. Recreate frontier conditions by publicly collecting the rent of land through land value taxation. This would cause much good land to be disgorged by monopolists and speculators. Persons seeking land for homes, farms, businesses, would find it much easier to obtain.

A reform like this would not depend on the accidents of history and geography, but on a knowledgeable and rational creation of a perpetual frontier.

Deadly deal springs into life

WESTMINSTER Council — Premier Margaret Thatcher's favourite London borough, which has cut its spending to one of the lowest levels in Britain — sold three cemeteries in 1987 for 15p. That triggered a political row, and now the current owners say they would agree to sell the land back for 15p plus their expenses — about £5m!