

people are no doubt very willing to be impressed; many are not. Our assessors and valuers can do wonderful things when the necessity is there. But if they are really baffled, they can always learn from those who are regularly doing such work in certain Commonwealth countries, U.S.A. and Denmark.

Site-value is the true measure of the value of the services and amenities provided by the community for each property. Whether it measures the *personal* services each person may receive from the community is another question. But it is not one we are called upon to answer here.

## PARLIAMENT SANCTIONS DEAR FOOD POLICY

### *Additional Import Duties Orders Debated, December 10*

Moving that the Additional Import Duties (No. 3) Order, 1953, be approved, MR. PETER THORNEYCROFT, President of the Board of Trade, explained that the Orders had been made possible by the "waiver" which he had obtained at Geneva at the Eighth Session of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. No novel or special form of protection for the horticultural industry was being introduced. In fact the Government was getting rid of every physical restriction, except for a few concerning agricultural plant-health. Physical quotas had been clumsy and unsatisfactory to both the producer and the consumer. It was not possible to estimate the effect the changes would have on the cost of living or on prices, but Mr. Thorneycroft thought that they would be "pretty marginal." It had to be remembered that quota controls had themselves a price-raising effect.

These were the first tariff Orders which had been introduced since the war. The case for horticultural protection was that it was a hazardous industry, influenced not simply by the "ordinary difficulties of supply and demand" but by other difficulties, such as the weather, to a degree far greater than affected most other industries. The other "broad principle" involved was that the present duties were out of date. World prices had risen several times since before the war so that what had been a reasonable tariff then had since been very much reduced in its incidence.

The National Farmers' Union had applied in 1950 for increased duties. In 20 cases increases were approved. Almost an equal number were not accepted. In those cases there had been reversion to the 10 per cent *ad valorem* duty which is the basic duty of the British tariff system.

In determining its policy the Government had applied five principles: (1) a fair return had to be secured for the producer without causing hardship to the consumer; (2) existing duties were taken as the starting point from which to decide whether to increase, maintain or abandon the degree of protection afforded; (3) the consumer must not be injured by the introduction of a tariff at a time when, on an average, home produce was not available; (4) protection should be given to protect those crops which the United Kingdom grower could produce in really large quantities; (5) in the main reliance had been placed on specific duties so that when prices are low the incidence of the duty is high and when prices are high, the incidence of the duty is low. "The advantages of that principle are obvious. It tends rather more to keep the imported goods out in a period of glut, when they would be most dangerous."

### **Conservative Free Trader Champions Consumers**

SIR WALDRON SMITHERS (Cons., Orpington) scathingly denounced the Board of Trade proposals, stating as his view that the removal of all tariffs and controls would be of benefit to the whole world and especially to Britain. Bulk purchase by the British Government was already responsible for the high level of world food prices and these proposals would necessarily raise the cost of living at home, hitting particularly the poorer sections of the community, such as the old age pensioners. Recently the Government had refused to consider increasing pensions of certain Service officers on the grounds of economy but now, in an attempt to placate a small but articulate group of producers at the expense of the great mass of the consuming public, the Government was proposing to take a step that would force many of the poorer people to apply for National Assistance and thus increase Government expenditure. Pensioners and wage earners must be allowed to make the best use of their present incomes by buying their food in the cheapest markets.

The increased duties would remove a spur to greater efficiency and would bolster up the inefficient growers. Efficient growers did not require protection. Twelve farmers the previous evening had told Sir Waldron "We cannot be more efficient than we are because of Government interference and all the penal taxation which prevents us from doing our best."

No one in his senses would put up greenhouses on the Kentish hills to produce oranges and bananas which grow in profusion out of doors abroad. The principle was exactly the same in the case of any other fruit or vegetable. The right things to grow were those which we in this country could produce in competition with overseas growers, but were we, in fact, growing the right things?

The White Paper stated that the period for which seasonal duties are charged on certain items should be adjusted. By whom? Who decided? No one could foretell the weather or floods or storms. Did the Government or the N.F.U. really think that they were omniscient or omnipotent? How could Britain expect the U.S.A. to amend tariff restriction in favour of our exports when we ourselves imposed obstacles on the horticultural exports of other countries? Would produce from the Channel Islands be classed as foreign and liable to duty? If the pressure of the N.F.U. was not resisted the result would be the expulsion of the Channel Islands from the British Commonwealth.

### **Liberal Free Trader's Four Objections**

MR. DONALD WADE (Liberal, Huddersfield West) believed that the Government was committing the country to a long-term policy of dear food. The decision was unfortunate for four reasons. In the first place it was bound either to raise or to maintain the cost-of-living-index with the all too well-known consequences on wage claims and claims for higher pensions. Secondly the new tariffs would so greatly increase the price of early supplies of soft fruits, the majority of which are imported before the British crop season begins, that many housewives would be unable to buy at all during that period. Thirdly, because tariffs could not be speedily removed, the sudden failure of an entire home crop would inevitably result in very high prices. Fourthly, and most important of all, the inevitable although perhaps unintentional result of the new duties would be a diminution of international trade. Mr. Wade said that some years ago he had stayed with some people in Brittany who had depended for their livelihood on growing tomatoes and potatoes for the London market. In turn they bought British goods, particularly cutlery from Sheffield and clothing for their children. It was obvious that if their livelihood was taken away they would no longer be able to buy British goods. That instance multiplied a thousandfold gave an indication of the harmful international effect of these restrictions.

### **Labour Protectionist Exposes Inefficient Production**

MR. GEORGE BROWN (Lab., Belper), the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture in the previous Administration, in supporting the Orders, said that no one should minimise the degree of traditional feeling which existed about increasing tariffs, particularly on items of food. It was not a thing to be laughed away. As a co-operator, a member of a very large trade union and the representative of a constituency which consisted predominantly of consumers, he was well aware of the extent to which people felt strongly on the matter. But whether one's interests were with the traders or predominantly with the consumers, it should be recognized that any argument that the Orders would make a substantial addition to the cost of the people's food was wrong.

Protection was necessary for the workers in the horticultural industry. Before the war their wages had been 30s. to £2 a week. Now they were getting £6 a week. That could not be maintained in a horticultural industry that did not receive some measure of protection against imports at particular periods of the year. Mr. Brown was not satisfied that tariffs were any more flexible than quotas. It was still the case that the dates were fixed on the best guess, and that if they came a little later or earlier the tariff would operate at the wrong time.

The foreigner was blamed for glutting and breaking the market, but really the home producer was responsible. He broke his own market because he had little in the way of arrangements for processing and storing, and releasing produce in the ordinary way. It could not be repeated too often or too firmly that the retail trade liked to handle foreign produce because of the superior condition in which it arrived. The home producer would still have to find out why so much British produce was marketed in sacks and in a condition which placed it at a disadvantage with foreign produce. Many people could do a good deal better and be a good deal more competitive. A great burden lay upon the industry to go forward with marketing and packing and grading schemes. But that could not be done on a wholly voluntary basis. Compulsory powers, exercised either by a marketing board under the Marketing Act or in some other way were essential.

There had been many references to increases of 300 per cent, but most of the increases were of an order which was justified by the change in money values since the specific duties had been introduced.

#### **Agricultural Trade Unionist Rejects Cheap Food**

MR. E. G. GOOCH (Lab., Norfolk, North), the President of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, welcomed the tariff proposals. He did so, he said, with a sense of responsibility to the housewife and to the commercial grower. Horticulture was a large and important section of the farming community, providing worthwhile employment for more than 150,000 people. It was worth preserving and it was entitled to "fair play." The horticultural workers were entitled to good wages and conditions. Mr. Gooch said that he was not wedded to tariffs. He respected the views of those of his colleagues who held that the imposition of tariffs would increase prices to the housewife, but he did not agree with them. He had gone into the towns to condemn the present Government for reducing the food subsidies and thus making it more difficult for many deserving people to live, but he had never promised cheap food. One could not have at the same time cheap food and a fair remuneration for the growers and good wages and working conditions for those who did the actual work on farms. Thus he supported the proposals, in the absence of any workable alternative, because by so doing he was seeking to serve the best interests of the many thousands of farm and horticultural workers whom he was pledged to serve.

#### **Thin End of Wedge—Tariffs Beget Tariffs**

MR. PERCY DAINES (Lab., East Ham, North) said that this was a bad Order. He was opposed to it. For Party reasons he could not press his opposition to a Division, but he intended to register his protest completely. Actions which limited the volume of world trade must be avoided. We had interests in the Breton peasant; whether we liked it or not, we had a direct interest in Denmark. However much hon. Members might follow their vested interests—trade union, manufacture, or constituency—it really mattered to us in this country whether there was a healthy agricultural system in Denmark in order that they could exchange goods with us and we could sell manufactures to them. One tariff started another. Here was a list of 18 horticultural products. What was the next product to be taken? This was only the thin end of the wedge.

#### **"Better than Quotas"—Labour Free Trader**

MR. E. L. MALLALIEU (Lab., Brigg), declaring himself a Free Trader, said that they were discussing a shift from an undesirable

form of protection to a less undesirable form of protection. He was not worried on that score. It was not true in his experience that the horticultural industry was inefficient. Some kind of help should be extended to the growers, but the present proposals would not prove to be of much assistance.

#### **More Production Wanted**

MR. J. B. GODBER (Cons., Grantham) commented that the proposals were inadequate. There were certain items bearing tariffs which were not high enough and they should be looked at again where this was possible under G.A.T.T. For instance no protection was provided for main-crop carrots although something had been done for the early carrot grower. The extension by a further month of the period of protection by specific duty would have encouraged home production of onions a great deal more. Nursery stock, flowers and bulbs were covered by pre-war tariffs. Presumably some action was being taken about them?

#### **The Old Order Changeth**

MR. M. PHILLIPS PRICE (Lab., Gloucester, West) recalled the days of the Tariff Reform League. Then he had held a different view and opposed their campaign, but the course of time brought changes. Then it had been thought necessary to buy cheaply all over the world in order that we could produce cheaply and it did not matter so much if it was to the detriment of British agriculture. To-day we could not afford to be so complacent. Home production was vital to the nation and the importation of what we could produce ourselves must be regulated. That was all that these duties were supposed to do. The use of quotas had been quite satisfactory but in the present times of greater plenty and more stability it was better to find a somewhat less drastic way to protect that section of the industry which had not received any help under the 1947 Agricultural Act, namely the horticultural industry.

#### **Privilege the New Cold War Weapon**

BRIGADIER O. L. PRIOR-PALMER (Cons., Worthing) said the Conservative Government had decided that this was to be one of its objects of policy, but it had taken nearly two years to obtain the necessary "waiver." In these days of cold-war, or the warm-war, the horticultural industry was one of our arms of defence. For that, if for no other reason, the industry must be helped in every way possible by the Government. There was a danger of other countries putting on hidden subsidies to off-set the tariff and it must be hoped that a way could be found of getting round that particular difficulty.

#### **Labour Party's Difficult Decision**

MR. A. J. CHAMPION (Lab., Derbyshire, South-East), giving the Order his approval, said it was not an easy decision to take and the Labour Party, feeling close to the poorest members of the population, found the choice particularly difficult. Nevertheless, when in power, they had tried to achieve a stable and reasonably prosperous agriculture, insulated and isolated to some extent from the worst effects of varying food trade conditions, but the horticultural industry had not received any real benefit from the 1947 Act. The Orders should be supported but it should be stressed that it was entirely wrong that the tariffs should operate, as perhaps they might, not to the benefit of the producer but to the benefit of the middle-men, the commission agents, and so on. Therein lay the danger.

#### **Savage Effects of Quotas and Tariffs**

Replying to the Debate, MR. PETER THORNEYCROFT asserted that the Orders would not increase the cost of living as alleged by Sir Waldron Smithers. This was a Government decision in which the Board of Trade took principal responsibility. It was a balanced decision which took into account the interests of producers, importers, distributors and consumers. In many ways it could be regarded as a Liberal Measure in the sense that physical quotas were removed at the same time as the tariffs were increased. It must be remembered that the quota could have as savage an effect on consumers in this country as any tariff that has ever been used.

The general position was that the incidence of duty over the whole field was rather less than before the war. There could not be any accusation that we had suddenly swung over to a

CHEAP FOOD or Dear Food?—that is the question. Write for particulars to the Secretaries, the Cheap Food League, 24 Austin Friars, London, E.C.2.

high protective system. It was better to take a long time on tariff applications, to get the thing thoroughly done and to see that everybody who ought to be consulted was fully consulted. In general the object of tariff changes was to have a stable tariff and to have it over a long period. Substantially the National Farmers' Union had got what it had asked for, although it had not got everything.

*The Orders were approved.*

### "SHEER POLITICAL HYPOCRISY"

Apt comment on these deliberations was made by the *Manchester Guardian* in its leading article, December 11:—"For sheer political hypocrisy it would be hard to beat last night's debate on the new horticultural tariffs. Under pressure from the National Farmers' Union the Government has raised tariffs on a range of fruit and vegetables; to appease its friends it even went cap in hand to Geneva and persuaded the other countries most reluctantly to agree—all on the plea that the tariffs were only little ones. Yet at the same time Ministers are loud in their protestations that their sole aim in life is to cheapen the people's food. Tory hypocrisy about tariffs is no new thing; it is to be expected. But for the Labour Party it is new and deplorable. After voting first this way and then that in its private councils the Parliamentary Labour Party decided to support the tariffs. It would not throw over its former Minister of Agriculture who has spent eight years trying to make the farmers believe that they have only to ask to receive and that Codlin is a better friend than Short. But even the chosen speaker for the Opposition, while contending that producers needed protection from the foreigner, was candid enough to admit that foreign produce was liked because it was better packed and graded. In other words the foreign producer is efficient, the British producer—for all his transport advantages—inefficient. But, so the Labour Party argued, the British producer must all the same be protected in his inefficiency. This is strange doctrine for the Labour Party. It is a sign of how far it is willing to drop principle for the sake of vote-catching."

### "SOMETHING WRONG SOMEWHERE?"

SITE VALUE 1,300 TIMES THE RATEABLE VALUE

In the House of Commons at Question Time, December 1, the following exchange between MR. R. R. STOKES (Lab., Ipswich) and MR. R. A. BUTLER, Chancellor of the Exchequer, took place:—

Mr Stokes asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the rateable value of the Stag Brewery, Pimlico, is £6,438; and whether he is satisfied that this valuation bears a proper relation to the land value of the 7.9 acres occupied by the brewery and offices.

Mr. Butler: "I understand that the present rateable value is £6,845. Rating law does not require a separate valuation of the site and none has been made."

Mr. Stokes: "I know, but that is not an answer to the Question I asked. Is the Chancellor aware that as long as 25 years ago land in the neighbourhood was sold at £100,000 per acre, which would make this site then worth more than £800,000? Is it not quite absurd that the rateable value should be very nearly less than half of 1 per cent, taking into consideration the value of the land as well as the buildings? Surely there must be something wrong with the whole rating system?"

Mr. Butler: "I cannot go further than saying that the rating law does not require the separate valuation of the site. On the general question of revaluation the right hon. Gentleman will be aware that revaluation is at present not only under active consideration but is the subject of action."

Mr. Stokes: "I know, but can the Chancellor say when he is going to do something about it because many Governments have evaded this issue for quite a long time?"

### J. W. FOLEY

As we go to press we regret to have the news of the death of J. W. Foley, of Liverpool, a member of the United Committee, a life-long and ardent worker for the movement. A further notice will appear in our next issue.

## AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY-TWO

### Mr. E. J. Craigie's Remarkable Industry

Ex-member of the South Australia Parliament, past President of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, secretary over a long span of years of the S.A. Henry George League and editor of its journal *The People's Advocate* (lately merged with *Progress* of Melbourne), Mr. E. J. Craigie is supposed to be in retirement. At least, he did formally retire from his official duties into private life and that was in the summer of 1950. But since then his activity has been unceasing and his vigilance is as keen as ever it was. From his home at 8 Grant Avenue, Rose Park, Adelaide, a "Land Values Rating Central Committee" having been formed, he has headed the campaign to defeat the designs of an eight-man reactionary group called the "Municipal and Local Government Association" who have tried to promote legislation whereby it would be *obligatory* on local authorities to levy their rates on land and improvements taken together. This would mean that the option by which the local authorities can levy their rates on the value of land alone would be annulled. The proposal was submitted to the Councils in 1949 and again in 1952 and on both occasions the majority of the Councils were either opposed to it or were disinterested. For countering this third attempt Mr. Craigie lately issued most persuasive and convincing literature, consisting of a printed pamphlet and circular to the mayor or chairman and to the members of every local authority throughout the State. The result has been gratifying and Mr. Craigie is to be highly complimented upon it. The plot, for such it was, to make the iniquitous "composite" system of rating everywhere mandatory, thereby abolishing the Rating of Land Values where it is in force, and without giving the ratepayers any chance to decide the matter, has been scotched at least for the time being. The Minister of Local Government had secured leave to introduce a Bill to amend the L.G. Act, but the response to this third appeal to wipe out Land Value Rating was so poor that the Bill was not introduced.

But to relate Mr. Craigie's activities in other directions, his travels from place to place, his meetings and debates would tell of astonishing achievement for a man of his age. These are some of the items from his diary of recent months: On July 4, he assisted at the Marion Council election when the Mayor and three of the four Councillors who had refused to grant a land value poll were beaten. There was later a conference with the new mayor, the friendly councillors and the town clerk in the matter of causing a poll to be held. On August 17, a public meeting in Cambelltown for organizing signatures to the request for a rating poll. On September 17, to Riverton, about 80 miles north of Adelaide, to address the annual meeting of the Mid-North Local Government Association. On October 21, debate with Mr. Vernon Shepherd, the most conspicuous and determined *opponent* of Land Value Rating, at the Warradale Park Progress Association; in the same month a public meeting at Hectorville. In August an interview with the mayor of Port Pirie, a town always cited by Mr. Shepherd in debate where Land Value Rating is the system and of which that opponent says that although it is rating to the limit under the Act, it is unable to raise the rate-revenue it needs. What is disguised is the very low and wrong valuation. It was proved to the mayor by comparisons between his town and Whyalla just across the gulf and Port Augusta just above it, the valuation of each being nearly double that of Port