

accordingly, whether the land were used or not.

Thus the owners of unused or under-developed land would find themselves faced with an annual impost, which would compel them either to use the land fully themselves, or to sell it to someone willing to do so.

The benefits of every increase of land value would accrue, not to individuals as at present, but to the community generally.

The Doubts On E.E.C. Deepen

Crossbow, October/December, 1969

THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY has always faithfully followed the lead of the shadow cabinet, and Mr. Heath above all, in believing that our future lies within the terms of the Treaty of Rome. It is one of the party's most important and cast-iron commitments, although the precise nature of the Commitment can seldom have been particularly clear to the majority of Conservative voters. The only thing that stood in its way, it was understood, was the villainous General de Gaulle.

De Gaulle, however, is gone. And the balance of payments costs, the higher cost of living and the loss of sovereignty that entry into Europe may entail are taking a heavy toll of loyal supporters. The entry of Enoch Powell into this dispute as an anti-marketeer is far more dangerous to party unity than he ever was as an opponent of immigration. The doubts that Enoch Powell and others have raised can be expected to grow as the prospect of further negotiations becomes imminent, and it is reasonable to assume that they will spill over into the shadow cabinet. For the present, the leadership will doubtless be eager to confine debate to the question of 'how to get the best terms'. But this will serve only to confuse still more utterly people who do not know what to think on this issue, but are beginning to realise that it is going to affect their lives deeply. Mr. Heath has already shown an awareness of this concern, but the confusion that exists could well split the party. The shades of Tariff Reform are hanging low over Enoch's speech.

Dutch Author On Land Rights

MR. SIEBE SEVENSTER is the author of a new book recently published in the Netherlands entitled *Creative Gerechtigheid door Grondrecht*, the literal English translation of which is "Creative Justice by Landright." We have no term that exactly equates with the word "grondrecht" or the Danish "grundskyld" (ground dues) but readers will appreciate the meaning that is conveyed by the term "landright."

This new book presents the concept of equality of

opportunity that would be afforded by a tax on the unimproved value of land. It also deals with inflation, unemployment and taxation. It discusses rent and the function of rent, showing how justice (or as the author terms it, "creative justice") can be achieved through the collection of land rent for social purposes, comparing it with the "distributive justice" that is meted out by authority nowadays by taking by taxation from one man and giving to another. With "creative justice" liberty, peace and prosperity will follow, whereas under "distributive justice" inflation, unemployment and punitive taxation is the order of the day.

Mr. Sevenster makes the point that in the Netherlands religion plays a fairly important role in politics and this tends to hamper people's thinking on economics and ethics. He describes how the various political parties and their supporters relate their economic and social views to their religious convictions. Thus things are seldom what they appear to be on the surface.

The book is dedicated to the author's father, now in his eighty-eighth year and still editing the Dutch paper *Ons Erfdel* (Our Heritage).

As the Netherlands is a densely populated country with high land prices it is interesting to read Mr. Sevenster's views on how equal rights to land would solve many economic problems. In the course of this he demonstrates the absurdity of the view taken by some critics that land-value taxation is workable only in the wide-open spaces and undeveloped areas of the world.



Grants Without Strings

THE 1969 HOUSING ACT aims among other things, at improving the grants available for renovating older houses. One of the radical changes which came along with the new grants was that money obtained from the local council would no longer have to be repaid in whole or part if the property was re-sold within three years of the issue of the grant, as was previously the case.

The instructions which have been sent by the Ministry to local authorities on how to operate the Act state categorically that when improvement work has been carried out to the satisfaction of the authority, the grant is to be paid unconditionally and will not be repayable under any circumstances. That means that property companies and small developers can use the grants to improve property which they intend to re-sell later.

—*London Property Letter*, Oct. 11