

no more complex nor intractable than those met and solved under the present orthodox system. It must not be forgotten that in Whitstable perhaps 99 per cent of sites were valued without difficulty. The real problems arose on the remaining one per cent."

This is gratifying confirmation from the valuer concerned that the difficulties of the system alleged to exist by the opponents of site-value rating are no more than imaginary.

As to the figures in the Simes Committee's Report, long accepted as the definitive assessment of site-value rating and extensively quoted by subsequent researchers, the Whitstable valuation invalidates their estimates completely.

The Majority Report of the Simes Committee contained the following statement:

"We have examined the figures of annual value used for income tax and rating purposes and have assumed increases to cover the possibility of considerable under-assessment. If it is assumed that the proportion of the total value of the total property attributable to the site would be somewhere between 20 per cent and 50 per cent it seems that the site-value assessment for England and Wales could not exceed £300m. and might very well be not more than a third of this figure."

So far as Whitstable is concerned this is very wide of the mark indeed. If the estimate of "between 20 per cent and 50 per cent" be averaged to 35 per cent then the Whitstable figures show the Simes estimate to be less than half the real figure. A rate of 12s. 5d. in the £ on site values would be sufficient to raise the revenue obtained under the present rating system — other things remaining as they are.

Thus the two most persistent myths surrounding site-value rating — the difficulties of valuation and the inadequacy of the revenue obtained — have been thoroughly exploded. The valuation is easy, and revenue is more than sufficient.

Whitstable may not faithfully mirror the situation in other towns or over the whole country but there is no reason to suppose that on average, site values elsewhere would show a much lower relationship to present rateable values than that revealed at Whitstable. Indeed there is every reason to suppose that the overall proportion of site value to present rateable value would be even higher. But this awaits the much needed, and we think inevitable, valuation of the whole country.

A special article on the Whitstable Report appears on page 30 and other relevant articles on the following pages. A more detailed analysis of the Whitstable Report will be given next month.

Public Charges Upon Land Values. A study of the effects of local government rating systems upon the social and economic development of the Australian States. Contains results of research by members of the Land Values Research Group. Published Melbourne, 1961. 1s.

A NEW BOOKLET AND A NEW APPROACH

A TEXT BOOK in miniature on the philosophy and economics of Henry George, with generous space devoted to an exposition of its practical application, has been written, published and distributed by Mr. T. A. Ende. *Taxation and Rating in the Twentieth Century* is attractively produced and runs to only eight pages. As an introduction to the practical basis of land-value taxation and its application in practice it is ideal.

The author describes himself as one who has been thirty-six years in the landed property profession, and says that his booklet is intended as "an appeal to all factions to replace an archaic, complicated, confiscatory, deterrent and inflationary system of rating and taxation with one which is fair, simple, economic, stimulating to industry and commerce, non-confiscatory and anti-inflationary."

The author begins by contrasting the political philosophy of Henry George with that of Karl Marx. He observes that even the so-called "right wing" have succumbed to the socialist philosophy through having no real answer to the alleged evils of capitalism.

To avoid any possible misunderstanding of his exposition, Mr. Ende defines his terms and states the simple but fundamental principles of the production of wealth, contrasting the actual distribution of wealth under two different systems of taxation.

On the evils of our present land system Mr. Ende seeks to blame no individuals or groups. For him there are no scape-goats.

"Who pockets the share of the produce of labour appropriated to rent or its capitalised equivalent? Mostly eminently respectable people who cannot avoid having publicly-created land values dropped into their laps."

Perhaps the most important section is that devoted to the effects of land-value taxation upon individuals and classes in the modern age.

The author comments: "... the proposal to tax land-values is not a proposal to tax "landlords," "land owners," "land speculators," "speculative builders," "capitalists," "the rich," or any of the other bogeymen brought out by the political orator in his appeal to the greed or envy of his hearers. It is a proposal to tax everybody in proportion to his use of land and the value of it."

Mr. Ende does not just hope for a wide circulation of his booklet — he is seeing to it that it gets it. Of a first edition of 20,000 copies, 15,000 are being distributed to members of parliamentary and local government.

Mr. Ende has put no price upon his publication. Requests for a free copy may be made care of 177 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, S.W.1.

The author is to be warmly commended both for his enterprise and for his generosity in making this excellent pamphlet so freely available.