

An economically free democracy is the reverse of all this. Production is motivated by the freely expressed demand of individual consumers, and producers have to adjust their activities so as to provide for the maximum satisfaction of the needs of consumers, themselves included in that capacity.

Production motivated upon any other basis involves inexorably and inevitably the waste of land, labour and materials—the diversion of productive capacity from satisfying those needs which men feel most urgently to others which they feel less urgently.

In the last twenty-five years there has been an unexampled output of writing upon economic topics of all kinds, and of political policies dealing with economic questions. But it is open to doubt whether there has ever been a period in which the fundamental principles and objects of economic policy have been so obscured. These three pronouncements on agriculture are not isolated examples, but typical examples of the lack of basic thought in economics. If the world is ever to move out of the era of restriction into that of plenty, some hard, practical and un sentimental thinking will have to be done.

GOVERNMENT POLICY

During a three days' debate on reconstruction problems in the House of Lords, 8th to 10th December, Lord Woolton (the recently appointed Minister of Reconstruction) said that legislation in connection with the acquisition of land was a matter of great urgency. The Government would make known its intentions in a White Paper which would be available shortly after Christmas. It would cover the question of compensation and betterment in its widest sense. The Bill would define the scope of the powers of purchase, the procedure to be followed in exercising those powers and by whom purchase would be made. It would include the necessary provisions with regard to the basis of purchase, including the 1939 ceiling. The Bill would provide for the acquisition of all land essential to the proper planning of an area, including land which lay outside the immediate limits of the area devastated. That would also apply to obsolescent areas which needed restoration.

At the moment of writing the White Paper has not appeared. The ineffectiveness of the 1939 ceiling was exposed in our October issue (p. 79). There is no indication in Lord Woolton's statement that the Government understand the need for eliminating speculation and reducing the price of land for all purposes, but we withhold further comment meantime.

**TO ALL OUR READERS
A GOOD NEW YEAR**

MOSLEY AS LANDOWNER

IN THE Debate on the Address in reply to the King's Speech, House of Commons, 7th December, Rt. Hon. J. R. Clynes (Platting—Labour) said: "The Amendment speaks, and my hon. Friend who moved it spoke, on the theme of our land. I have been recently interested in a number of figures affecting a large block of land in Manchester. My interest is deepened for the reason that I happen to be the senior Member for Manchester, and lately the name of Sir Oswald Mosley has been in frequent use in our discussions. I find that in 1596 a Mr. Mosley bought Manchester land for £3,500, and in 1846 the Manchester Town Council, as it then was, paid the Mosley family £200,000 for certain land which was required for public use. The present Sir Oswald is the sixth baronet. He inherited a fortune of £247,000, and an adoring grandfather threw in as a little additional pocket money an extra £60,000. That is the way all over the country and throughout the years private ownership of land has travelled. It is a fine thing to have a land to fight for and die for, but it is a finer thing to possess the land at all, for it to be the property and in the gift of those who use it for the maintenance of the nation as a whole. We have seen through our history the doctrine expressed in that splendid bit of doggerel, as I think it to be:—

'The good old rule, the simple plan
For those to take who have the
power
And those to keep who can.'

"There have been recurring cases of disputes on the question of land ownership, but here, as in some other respects, we see some glimmer of the dawn, and now we are promised a little more in the way of land ownership for the masses of the people than hitherto we have seen."

A correspondent, Mr. F. W. Balch, wrote to the *Daily Telegraph*, 13th December, as follows: "In a recent debate, Mr. Clynes referred to Sir Oswald Mosley's family selling for £200,000 land which their ancestors had bought 250 years earlier for £3,500. Mr. Clynes should take warning from the gross lack of judgment on the part of Sir Oswald's ancestors and invest his £3,500 in 3 per cent. War Loan, which in 250 years' time should amount to eight millions. Quite a nice sum for his descendants to look forward to."

To this, Mr. F. C. R. Douglas, M.P., made reply on 16th December: "The comparison between an investment in War Loan and a purchase of land is entirely fallacious. The assertion that £3,500 invested in 3 per cent. War Loan would after 250 years be worth about £8,000,000 is obviously incorrect. The stock would still only be worth the market value, which might be somewhat less than the par value. What your correspondent appears to have in mind is accumulation at compound interest by reinvestment of the divi-

dends as they are received, although the figure he gives is in fact erroneous. This is an entirely different set of circumstances from the purchase by Sir Oswald Mosley's ancestor for £3,500 of land which 250 years later is worth £200,000. The fortunate owners of the land have during all that period been able to enjoy an increasing income from the land which has, at the same time, increased in value without any saving or sacrifice upon their part."

REVOLT IN BOLIVIA

LIGHT IS thrown on conditions in Bolivia in various Press references to the revolution that has taken place.

In the *Manchester Guardian* of 22nd December, its diplomatic correspondent wrote: "Bolivia is one of the world's great sources of tin and tungsten and to an appreciable extent also of oil. She [for 'she' read the working population] is also a producer of natural rubber. A great part of the minerals are sold to the United States. . . . The workpeople in the tin mines are wretchedly underpaid, in spite of the high prices paid for the metals. Senor Toledano, the great Mexican labour leader, after a visit to Bolivia, informed Vice-President Wallace of the United States, that miners were working in the mountains at a height of 12,000 feet naked and shoeless for ninepence a day. There is a depressed, land hungry proletariat working on the great estates."

The Times, 21st December, Washington correspondent, stated that the revolutionary manifesto declares that the "regime of political and economic oppression" has ended, and that the revolutionary movement means the "economic redemption" of the Bolivian people. The importance of Bolivia as a tin supplier was also stressed.

According to the *Daily Herald* of 21st December: "The Bolivian Labour Party has long been accusing absentee controllers of the International Tin Cartel of blocking any improvement of the terrible conditions under which the miners live and work. The uncrowned ruler of Bolivia is Simon L. Patinō, fin king of the world, who took a supposedly worthless tin concession for a bad debt. To-day he is a multi-millionaire and directs his vast holdings from a luxurious suite in the Waldorf Astoria in New York. Where he fits into the revolution is uncertain, but maybe it means the end of his long reign."

"Look over the world to-day," Henry George says in *Progress and Poverty*, "in countries the most widely differing—under conditions the most diverse as to government, as to industries, as to tariffs, as to currency—you will find distress among the working classes; but everywhere that you thus find distress and destitution in the midst of wealth, you will find that the land is monopolised; that instead of being treated as the common property of the whole people, it is treated as the private property of individuals; that, for its use by labour, large revenues are extorted from the earnings of labour."