

- 1) Repeal the Conservatives Housing Finance Act.
- 2) Forbid local authorities to "make a profit from their housing responsibilities."
- 3) Give greater financial help to areas with the greatest need, including help with the purchase of expensive sites.
- 4) Give council tenants legal protection against eviction.
- 5) Urge local authorities to involve their tenants in the management of estates.
- 6) Create a House Building Agency to help local authorities who have particular difficulties, and to carry out essential home building programmes "where a local authority refuses or neglects to discharge its housing responsibilities."
- 7) Increase security of tenure for tenants of furnished accommodation.
- 8) Introduce measures to eliminate profiteering in private accommodation, including authority for local councils to purchase privately rented property, and for tenants to take over rented properties on a cooperative basis.

The above measures can cause more harm than good to those most closely affected - the home-seekers. And one does not have to be a political opponent or a landlord to condemn these measures for they stand condemned by the bitter experience of past action embodying the same philosophy of dealing with effects rather than with causes. Mr. Wilson is falling into the same trap as that which brought his leadership into disrepute during his last premiership and precipitated his downfall at the last election. That Mr. Heath has nothing better - or worse - to offer is beside the point.

Land Hoarding-Tax

IN HIS BUDGET speech Mr. Barber referred to the statement in the White Paper on Counter Inflation State II that proposals would be made concerning building land, and said that full details would be given later. In the meantime he would outline the proposed scheme.

This was that a special Land Hoarding Charge would be levied on land owners in receipt of planning permission who did not complete the permitted development within a specified period. The charge would be levied on the full market value of the property as on the day following the grant of planning permission, or on the day of the full announcement if later, and would accrue day by day from the end of the permitted completion period. The charge would be secured on the land itself and would be collected by the Inland Revenue.

We must await a more detailed statement from the Government as to exactly how the proposed tax will work, and its implications. Meanwhile the first criti-

cism that comes to mind is that the new law will not (apparently) prevent a land speculator from *not* applying for planning permission until it suits him.

So far as we can see at the moment, this tax might have some effect in bringing more land into use but let us be clear on one point; this proposed new tax has no relationship whatever with the taxation of land values as understood by those who have advocated it over the years. As with a tax on vacant land as such, it comes off once the site is built upon.

Taiwan Tries Land Reform and Adam Smith

IT IS BEING increasingly suggested that the traditional approach to developing underdeveloped countries - establishment of capital intensive, urban located industries - is not the right one. The world's most successful developing country, Taiwan, has achieved its success by pursuing policies that are virtually the reverse of orthodox economic theories.

The unorthodox view has been reinforced by two developmental economists, one American, one British, in a book* based on several years' experience of the failures of current policies.

Poverty in developing countries, the authors assert, is due to lack of access to the means of production, to credit, to the market and to technical knowledge. Neither foreign aid nor increased output will relieve poverty unless access to these factors is provided.

The emphasis must be on developing the small farm and the market town, to give a continuous succession of small advances, millions of individual actions by millions of individual people. The poor would learn to organize themselves and improve their own lot.

Apart from technical information, credit, and marketing knowledge, there must be honest land reform or equitable land tenure arrangements. The increased income that would come from the land reform and intensive small scale farming would support the creation of labour intensive village industries, providing badly needed rural employment. What is most important is creating the conditions of access, to give the poor people a chance to produce their own wealth.

* *Development Reconsidered* by Edgar Owens and Robert Shaw.

ESME MARTIN

It is with much sadness that we report the passing of Esmé Martin, wife of Stephen Martin on March 4. Esmé Martin was more than a mere onlooker at the activities of her husband, she participated in many ways giving help that only she could give to the various enterprising campaigns initiated by Stephen Martin and his colleagues in North-West Kent.

The Henry George School of Social Science particularly benefited from her cheerful and competent help.

To Mr. Martin and his family we offer our sincere condolences.