

what wonder that farms are improving in value or that that improvement will be permanent. It is not speculation that is sending up the prices, but genuine, honest enhancement of the basic element of national life, the farms and gardens of our land."

Here we are told quite frankly why the price of land has risen. But what have the landowners done to make the land more valuable? What "Arbiter" himself disregards is that the higher price puts an additional burden on agriculture and the farmer as farmer is no better off.

The Institute of Medical Psychology is about to sell for £72,500 the freeholds of the properties at Nos. 7-17 Store Street and 6B, 6c, 7 and 8 Ridgmount Street, Tottenham Court Road, London. The Charity Commission is supervising the negotiations and invites any higher offer. The freeholds are near the headquarters of the University of London.—*The Times*, 22nd October.

A building site at 22 Port Street, Stirling, has been sold for £3,500, stated to be the "reduced upset price." It was formerly occupied by the premises of Somerville and Valentine, ironmongers, which were destroyed by fire some time ago. It was acquired by Mr. J. D. Valentine, a partner in the firm to whom the property belonged.—*Glasgow Herald*, 15th October. No mention is made of any feu duty.

These are examples of site values. What were the previous rateable values? Can some reader inspect the valuation lists and let us know?

Mr. John A. Parks, Chief Valuer, Calcutta Improvement Trust, in an article in the *Estates Gazette*, 25th September, on the experience of the Trust, explained that the assessments for rating purposes fixed by the Calcutta Corporation, are made by two methods: (1) on the fair rental value if the premises are built for letting purposes and are let, and (2) on 5 per cent of the value of land plus the depreciated value of the buildings if the premises are built for the owners' occupation. "This latter method of assessment," Mr. Parks says, "which is based *inter alia* on the land values of sites every six years, does offer some example of the working of a *de facto* levy on increase in values, due to the operations of the Improvement Authority and other causes."

The object would be better achieved if (and justly) the rates were levied on the assessment of land values *only*, and all buildings and improvements were exempt.

I walked with Sefula Khan through his barley field. The blades scarcely reached my calf, and the grain was only half the size it should be.

Sefula Khan said: "If we had 10-inch instead of 3-inch ploughs, if we need not give half our produce to the landlord, there would be no famine."—Lieut. (R.E.) E. E. A. Rouse, Indian Command, in the *News Chronicle*, 4th October.

TORY REFORMERS

UNDER THE title of *Forward—By the Right*, a group of Tory Members of Parliament calling themselves the Tory Reform Committee has issued a statement of principles. For the most part this contains vague platitudes capable of more than one interpretation.

It is interesting to observe that there is no express mention of tariffs. In a section on Empire unity we find: "Only if the Commonwealth can be regarded as an economic unit can it deal with America and Russia on equal terms. We consider, therefore, that the nations of the Commonwealth should be free to order their economic relations with each other, as are the States of America or the various Soviet Socialist Republics, without necessarily incurring claims to equal treatment from foreign powers." If by States of America is meant the States comprised in the United States of America, then it is not true that they are free to order their economic relations with one another as they please. On the contrary they form part of a federal union in which freedom of trade must be maintained. It would be interesting to know whether the Tory Reform Committee does believe in complete free trade between all the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations. And if so, why not between all the nations of the earth?

In a section on individual freedom of choice, the Committee say: "We believe in the freedom of the individual to think, speak, write, vote and buy as he wishes, subject only to the overriding interests of his fellow citizens." And again: "The consumer, and the consumer alone, knows what he wants and must be free to express his choice by his purchases. This freedom is as fundamental to economic democracy as is the vote to political democracy." It that means anything, it means that tariffs, quotas and other restrictions upon the purchase of goods from abroad must be wholly abolished. It means that people must be free to purchase goods without regard to whether they are produced in this country, or in the Commonwealth, or anywhere else. If this is to be the policy of the Tory Party, then it must abandon the protectionism which for some forty years has been its consistent policy. And if the Tory Party does not give up its tariff policy, what will the members of the Tory Reform Committee do then?

On the land question the Committee say: "We believe that the private ownership of land serves a useful purpose." What that purpose is they do not explain. At another point we read: "We regard private property as indispensable to political freedom and consider that a widespread distribution of private property should be the aim of Parliamentary government." There is much truth in this, so long as we do not class the power to exploit, the power of monopoly, as private property; but if we mix up self-earned private property with special privilege, we are no nearer to a solution.

SCOTTISH LIBERALS

AT ITS annual conference, held in Edinburgh on 6th October, the Scottish Liberal Federation passed a resolution, moved by Lady Glen Coats and seconded by Capt. L. Gellatly, demanding immediate legislation to give effect to the main principles of the Beveridge social security plan. On the motion of Capt. A. R. McDougal the following important rider was added to the resolution and was unanimously adopted:—

"That the benefits arising from the adoption of the Beveridge Report will not be fully realised unless—

"(1) We return to Free Trade so that goods may be cheap and plentiful.

"(2) We free the country from the insatiable demands of land inflation by taking for the people those Land Values which are due to the efforts and presence of the community, by taxing Land or Site Values, and by remitting taxation on commodities produced by man's hand or brain."

There was a lively debate on the subject of agriculture, on a motion that had been submitted by the Duke of Montrose and Mr. J. M. Bannerman. It was a long statement containing all sorts of desiderata, continuance of controls, stabilised prices, and in general State direction and State patronage for the farming community, without a hint that the rent or price of land or present methods of taxation had any bearing on agricultural conditions.

Capt. A. R. McDougal moved:—

"That the motion be rejected, and that instead we reaffirm previous resolutions on Agriculture and endorse Liberal Agricultural Policy as contained in the booklet 'Scottish Land and Agriculture,' published by the Scottish Liberal Federation in 1938; that we ask the Executive to cause to be prepared and published a short memo. on Liberal Agricultural Policy in accordance with established Liberal principles."

The motion was unanimously adopted. On both counts the Federation has done well in its stand for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade.

The booklet *Scottish Land and Agriculture* named in this motion is a brilliant exposition in favour of Land Value Taxation, one of the most competent and convincing statements anyone could wish to have, irrespective of his or her party affiliations. Its criticism of "land nationalization" is particularly able. It rebuts all protectionist arguments. It has informing chapters on the deer forests, land settlement, tenant farming, smallholders, farm workers, game damage, etc. The previous resolutions of the Party are reprinted. The booklet (107 pages, price 6d.) is published by the Scottish Liberal Federation, 26 Frederick Street, Edinburgh. Copies at 8d. each by post may be had from our offices.

The Conference also adopted (on the motion of Capt. A. R. McDougal) an "emergency resolution" on Land Inflation and Insecurity, stating that