POSTBAG - OUR OWN AND OTHERS

Land Tenure in Jordan

We are pleased to print the following letter which has been received from the Secretary of the Legation in London of the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan.

"Our attention has been drawn to the paragraph 'To Help Backward Areas' in your issue March/April, 1952, in which the Honourable William O. Douglas, Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, said on December 15, 1951, that in 'the country to the east of Israel people live in squalor with no opportunity of escape. Some men own 200, 600, 1,500 villages. They own every piece of property in these villages ; the mud houses, the community bath house, the fields, the animals and the water in the irrigation ditch. They even own the people who, for all practical purposes, are their serfs.'

"The above remarks have absolutely no relation to fact in the country to the immediate east of Israel, i.e., Jordan. Mr. Douglas appears to have no knowledge of conditions in this country. Far from owning many villages, no landlord owns even so much as one village. With regard to feudal systems, even in the Middle Ages when feudal systems operated all over Europe, no such system was in the country now known as the Kingdom of Jordan.

"Your readers may be interested in a full account of the system of land tenure in Jordan, which I hope to let you have before long, and which has not been previously published in England."

California's Alien Land Law

The Editor, LAND & LIBERTY,
Sir,

California's 32-year-old Alien Land Law is disallowed by the Supreme Court of California, for the reason that it violates the equal protection commands of the U.S. Constitution, as provided in the 14th Amendment, adopted in 1868. The fact that this same law was upheld by the Supreme Court of the U.S., and of California in 1923, and in later test cases, such as *Oyama v. California*, 332 US 633, in 1948, when the Court issued five different opinions interpreting the Constitution, gives the present decision historic importance.

This California law, adopted by our legislature in 1920, prohibited any alien from even "occupying" farm land, if he was prohibited by federal law from becoming a citizen of the U.S., because he had been born in Japan, China or other "Oriental" nation. It did not affect any alien born in Germany, Italy or other country, who could have become a U.S. citizen, but chose to live in the U.S. as a citizen of his country of birth. Because of treaties with China, and most nations of Asia, this California law has, in recent years, discriminated against, and only against, persons born in Japan, who had lawfully entered the United States. A few other western States enacted similar laws, the object and purpose of which was to prevent "Orientals" rising above the status of tenancy. All the statutes of other States have now been ruled unconstitutional, or repealed by the State legislatures. Yesterday's historic decision by the California Supreme Court buries the last such discriminatory and unconstitutional land laws, and will bring new hope and great joy to readers of LAND & LIBERTY, and to all who subscribe to the Human Rights principle affirmed in the Declaration of Independence (1 U.S. Statutes, page 1), preamble to the Constitution and the Constitution itself. "The supreme law of the land." The case decided is *Sei Fujii v. California*.

It is possible an appeal will be taken to the U.S. Supreme Court, but in view of that Court's interpretation of the 14th Amendment in *Shelley v. Kraemer*, 334 US 1 (1948), there is every ground for confidence that this California Supreme Court decree will govern.

The Attorney General of California, and attorneys generally have bitterly criticized and attacked any one who even dared to express a doubt about the constitutionality of this 32 year old California law. Attorneys generally have insisted it was constitutional, and some day a book may be written reviewing some of the injustices and suffering it caused, especially to Japanese who had lawfully come to the United States many years ago, but who could not become citizens if they had been born in Japan, no matter how eligible they would be, had they been born in another country.

Cordially yours,

San Francisco, April 18. J. RUPERT MASON.

Instead of Co-Ownership

The Editor, LAND & LIBERTY.
Sir,

The proposals of Mr. Brinsley Bush for dealing with limited liability companies, published in your April issue, is understandable in view of his stated belief that "the transference of all taxation to the site or land value is not enough to put us right."

In order to avoid confusion we ought to regard land not as "property" in the economic sense, but rather as a separate and special factor in production. It is the free gift of nature, which capital is not, and as such we all have equal rights to it. Mankind's great and permanent problem is the adjustment of the greatly differing value of land to men's individual rights so that all are treated equally so far as land tenure is concerned. Henry George has done that for us. He is the only one who has done it in his proposal for the collection of the rent of land for the public revenue and returning it to us by spending it on the public services.

The consideration of the effects of the full application of the Land Value Taxation policy pursued to its logical conclusion is an instructive, inspiring and adventurous intellectual exercise. Such a consideration will yield certain deeply satisfying conclusions which no one who has once grasped them will ever relinquish. I will list a few very important ones.

In the first place land will be held at valuation rent. Speculation in land will cease. Both labour and capital will move with maximum freedom to new sites, expanding old forms of production and adopting new ones. Unemployment as a social malady will be unknown. Production will rise to the maximum and because of the ability of men to obtain capital, to put themselves to work and to change jobs, the product will be shared out with a reasonable equality that would at the same time reflect the varying contributions made both by labour and by capital.

In the second place we know from the course of events in Denmark and in Queensland that under the Land Value Tax, values in improvements cannot be left by their owners to maintain themselves untended like the grass in the field. They tend to run down, the speed being proportional to the amount of tax. As it is the permanency of the values of these improvements to land that are the lock, stock and barrel of what we call "Capitalism," the apparent need for enforced