

It Won't Shift Until you Push

"REMEMBER," says a sticker produced by the British Movement, and still found adhering to odd places such as lamp posts and Underground train advertisements - "when you wear a poppy, that those who fell fighting for Britain in two world wars did not do so for Britain to become Afro-Asian through immigration."

True. It is also true to say that they did not die so that Britain should become another hotbed of racial prejudice, or that she should be torn apart in industrial strife; or that she should become a member of the E.E.C., or that she should stay out of it; or that more British lives should be given to retain Ulster as a part of the UK; or that the Irish should be left alone to solve the problem among themselves.

But there is one thing that those who fell in the two wars did die for, and that is - unless I have been shamefully misinformed, or

have after all got my priorities hopelessly mixed - that people like us, who value freedom to choose how we shall live shall continue to be free to do so. And part of this freedom is the right to elect a parliament, out of which shall be formed a government.

The fact that you or I do not always get the kind of government we want, or expect, or even deserve, in no way discredits democracy. In theory, at least, those

Robert Miller's Occasional Column

who govern us are responsible to us, and we are responsible for whatever they decide to do: to make war, or preserve the peace; to tax us this way, or that, and to spend the proceeds on whatever project or scheme they in their wisdom may choose.

What many of us are critical of, however, is the kind of democracy we now enjoy - or suffer, or tolerate, depending upon how strongly you feel about it - whereby any-

thing from fifty to sixty per cent of us nearly always get the kind of government we do not want, and where substantial minority parties are sparsely if ever represented.

Many of us continue to complain about this, but few of us take the trouble to do anything about it. So at least that part of our democracy works, in that since we persist in putting into power parties which have no intention whatever of changing the electoral system, we do in fact get what we deserve - false representation.

Let no conservative (with or without the capital letter), for instance, complain about the coming of more nationalisation when only 40 per cent of us want it, for when that party was in office it could have changed the voting system so that this particular anomaly could never have arisen.

The answer is to support and work for a party or even a nucleus of dedicated men within a party - which *will* undertake to reform the system. In the meantime, most of us must resign ourselves to the government we truly deserve for our apathy.

Miscellany

The Child's Guide to SVR

(Hector Wilks at the Land Institute's Conference on the Government's Land Nationalisation proposals.)

THE objectives in paragraph 16 of the White Paper "Land" are precisely those objectives which could be achieved so much more easily, so much more painlessly on a much more sound economic basis by site value rating.

Up to and including page 3 the White paper could be a child's guide to site value rating. Under the Government scheme there is going to be a capital levy which will be used for revenue purposes. My economist friends tell me that that is the way to financial suicide, to use capital as revenue. Site value rating does not do that, it takes the annual increment of your development value and uses that as a revenue basis. It takes a revenue increment annually on the full development value where

that development value is capable of being realised. This will winkle out your land hoarder and it will make him, from the word "go", start paying a tax on his development value to the community. You do not have to have all this acquisition and management and the resale. Site value rating would carry out the Government's objectives here with a smaller band of professional people than there is in the public sector at the moment. This paper will need a devil of a lot more planners and valuers and there is a lot to be said for the imposition of a site value rating scheme instead of the compulsory purchase and confiscation elements set out in the White Paper.

Missing the Point

COMPLAINTS are being voiced that oil sheikhs are investing millions of pounds in residential building land throughout Britain. It is being done by financing small

developers on short term loans charging only 10½ per cent interest but demanding 25 per cent of the profits.

A property consultant, quoted in *The Guardian* January 20, said that the danger was that if the loans were foreclosed, these people would own small parcels of land throughout the country.

"They could virtually buy up all the building land in small plots for next to nothing and sit on it. Within three years they could control where we live and what we live in" he said.

Whatever the danger that Arab landowners might behave just like British landowners have always done, the point is missed that it is land ownership *per se* that affects the lives of people in this country not the nationality of the titleholders or where they get their money from.

The hatred of the British landlords by the Irish frequently blind-