

may think Mr Lippman's agenda of governmental functions so comprehensive as to come perilously near to that of the overhead planner. But a careful reading of the chapter will show that every item in his agenda conforms to the guiding principle of an ideal liberalism—that of sweeping away all monopolies, from those of the natural resources to the privilege of issuing money, and then by process of law modifying such inequalities of bargaining power as may remain. And if any one entertains a doubt as to whether Mr Lippman is "sound" on the land and taxation question or fully realizes its vital relation to social well-being, we beg him to read and re-read pages 276 and 277, remembering

at the same time that he is treating of general principles and not of the application of them in practice.

As a peroration to a most praiseworthy book the final chapter "On this Rock" is admirable. The Rock on which our author takes his stand is the dignity and the incommensurability of the human soul. As between liberty and dictatorship in any form we may quote his own words—"It is just here I submit, that the ultimate issue is joined, on the question whether men shall be treated as inviolable persons or as things to be disposed of; it is here that the struggle between barbarism and civilization, between despotism and liberty, has always been fought; and here it must still be fought."

ALEX MACKENDRICK.

THE WEST INDIES AND OTHER DEPENDENCIES

Col Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., on the Causes of Unrest

IN THE DEBATE on the Colonial Office Vote, House of Commons 14th June, the Secretary of State, Mr Malcolm MacDonald announced the Government's decision to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the social and economic conditions of the British West Indies and that a scheme of land settlement (by purchase of land) had been decided upon for Jamaica. Mr Lloyd George took part and approved the land purchase plan.

Colonel Josiah C. Wedgwood said: He disagreed completely with Mr Lloyd George if he thought that by putting up money in this country, we could do justice to the people in the West Indies. That method had been tried and it left us with the situation we see to-day. We want a Royal Commission, not to find out the facts, but to do a little straight, honest, economic thinking. The late lamented Mr Malthus wept bitterly at the prospect of a world which would be over-populated and underfed. He discovered 100 years ago that we were moving towards a condition where population would out-run subsistence. We know that that has not happened. As population has increased and inventions have grown, foodstuffs, instead of becoming scarcer have become more abundant. Malthus and his despairing theories were upset completely by the late Mr Henry George. The right hon Gentleman appears still to be labouring under the Malthusian tragedy. Henry George, said in quite simple language, that "Men and hawks eat chickens, but the difference between the two is this, the more hawks the fewer chickens, but the more men the more chickens." And ever since Malthus's day we have been having more men and more chickens. The Secretary of State for the Colonies suggested that the combination of the increased population and the increased productivity of the land in Barbados and Porto Rico and elsewhere was ruining the people of the West Indies and was the damaging result of natural economic laws. Did he believe that an increase of population or an increase of production was a disaster to the world? If that were so, they should surrender themselves to the hope of higher tariffs, land monopoly and a bloody war. The idea that if we halved the population of this country, or the Barbados, there would be greater prosperity and more employment was the economics of the madhouse.

In a great part of the Empire, in Kenya, in parts of the West Coast of Africa, in Tanganyika, in Nyasaland and in Northern Rhodesia different methods were devised by the people who need workers to get labour cheap. In Kenya they had the method of the hut tax, which forced the people to go out to earn money in order to pay their hut tax. In Nyasaland, they had a restriction on the number of natives who leave the

country to go and work elsewhere in order that they may work cheaply instead for employers in Nyasaland. Every sort of device is used, but chiefly the device of taking away the land from the native so that he cannot employ himself.

Col Wedgwood contrasted the conditions in Nigeria, where for the last 30 years there had been no trouble. Why was that? Because a system of land tenure had been established giving satisfaction. All the farmers in Nigeria held their land with security of tenure, subject to paying the rent to the State, which rent was regulated every 7 or 14 years, not according to the use that a man makes of it, but according to the land value. There you had free peasantry cultivating their own land and suffering neither from under-employment nor from over-employment.

In Jamaica the Governor has put forward a scheme, accepted by the Government, whereby £500,000 would be spent in buying land in order to settle the peasants upon it. The British people would be paying interest on that £500,000. We were buying up the land from the people who own it and have taken it from the native inhabitants of the island, and handing the land back to the natives and settling them upon the land! If they would but apply the taxation of land values, it would produce the land settlement that is needed, without coming to this country for money to buy out the landlords in those Colonies.

An example of Government action was what happened in regard to Newfoundland. The Royal Commission had advocated a tax in order to break up the big estates and force the land into the market and into production. That was not adopted. Here we had an impartial body of commissioners inquiring into things on the spot and making this recommendation, but the Colonial Office said: "That is heresy. We must do these other things, but we will leave that out."

Referring finally to the troubles in Palestine, Col Wedgwood said: In Palestine, the land was at the root of the evil. As long as the price of land is inconceivably high, you will have unemployment and stagnation in the country. There are acres and acres, square miles of the country, which could be redeemed and be made productive, but which is still held out of the market while Jews are starving in Poland and Vienna. The land is there for them if they were given the opportunity to use it.

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