

men who have most economic power in the modern world derive it from land, minerals and credit, in combination. The conquest of economic power demands as its first step the ousting of the monopolists. The harm that is done by the great industrialists is usually dependent upon their access to some source of monopoly power."

It is difficult to believe that the writer of those words is the same person who now delivers the Reith lectures. The italics in the passage referring to Herbert Spencer are ours. The B.B.C. is undoubtedly a very respectable institution!

F. D. P.

BERNARD SHAW AND HENRY GEORGE

We are pleased to print the following letter received from Mr. NOAH D. ALPER, Executive Director of the Henry George School of Social Science in St. Louis, Missouri:—

"I was indeed glad to see in *LAND & LIBERTY* the letter stating Bernard Shaw's position on the economic presentation of Henry George and that of Karl Marx. The statement from the great wit and playwright usually quoted on his economic position is this: 'I went one night quite casually into a hall in London, and I heard a man deliver a speech which changed the whole current of my life. That man was an American—Henry George. . . . Well, Henry George put me on to the economic tack of political science. Very shortly afterwards I read Karl Marx, and I read all the early political sciences of that time; but it was the American, Henry George, who started me. Therefore, as that happened at the beginning of my life, I have thought it fitting that now at the end of my life . . . I might come and give here in America back a little of that shove that Henry George gave to me.'

"I remember delaying an important engagement to hear the finish of the radio speech here in the United States that was to accomplish this unfortunate objective. I say 'unfortunate objective' because if it was the 'shove' that Henry George gave him that oriented him he had no idea then or later, in what direction Henry George would have him go. And, sure enough, after talking a full hour, about what, I do not remember, he said his brief lines (in a period of time past his allotment on the radio) about Henry George. I felt pretty much put out about his feeble effort to interest American youth in George.

"As time went by I became more and more suspicious of the situation of G. B. Shaw and Henry George. I wondered if we Georgeists did not assume far too much about Mr. Shaw. A few years ago I decided we had 'hoodwinked' ourselves. For G. B. Shaw never said he was a 'Georgeist.' That we could only infer. He said George shoved him, and in his confusion he went for Marxism. If he ever read *Progress and Poverty*, there seems little evidence that he understood it. If he had any concept of economics as a natural law science, he kept it to himself.

"Man of letters that he is; playwright and wit that he is; vegetarian and whatever else he may be, in the field of economic thinking, he cannot be rated with the same distinction. I hope the Georgeists have had enough. I hope they will delete from all their literature and apologise for the presence of all reference to George Bernard Shaw. For any intelligent American who knows the political and economic position of George Bernard Shaw to-day, to lead him to read Henry George by reference to

statements of this man, is unfortunate to the man (for he will not do it if that is where George's ideas lead) and really an insult to Georgeists."

THE B.B.C. AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

One of our readers has submitted for our inspection a letter he received from the Secretariat of the B.B.C., together with copies of his letters to that body. The correspondence is as follows:—

Mr. X to B.B.C.—January 4th, 1949.

I am making an enquiry on behalf of a local discussion circle at which the subject of broadcasting is often introduced. The query is as follows: On radio programmes concerned with subjects affecting society as a whole—such as trade, industry, land use, education and politics—talks are frequently given by professional experts or specialists, and by representatives of particular bodies or interests. There is, however, an opinion held by a few that on social questions the ultimate responsibility must rest with the average citizen, an amateur representing no profession or particular interest, and realising that he must think these things out for himself, not delegate his thinking to anyone else. Could you tell me on how many and which occasions the Corporation has asked or allowed such an "ordinary person" to make an appeal to the public to think and investigate such questions independently and not under the direction of experts, specialists, etc.?

B.B.C. to Mr. X.—January 11th, 1949.

It has never been the B.B.C.'s policy to suggest to the listener that his thinking on social questions should be left to others, and indeed we try to supply him with accurate information on the questions of the day so that he may be helped to think for himself. I am afraid I cannot undertake to supply you with actual statistics but there have, of course, been a good many programmes in which such questions have been discussed by the ordinary man and woman, for instance, series such as "To Start You Talking," "Public Enquiry," "It's My Opinion," and "Speak For Yourself."

Mr. X to B.B.C.—January 12th, 1949.

It appears that to anyone who might ask "Has the Corporation at any time allowed an ordinary person to make an appeal over the radio to the public to consider and investigate social questions independently and not under the direction or influence of experts, specialists, etc.," the answer would be: No! Furthermore, if it is stated that some of the series of B.B.C. talks have been deliberately aimed at discouraging the acceptance of specialists' views on subjects which preclude specialisation, i.e., the general interest, no specific instance or practical outcome can be cited in support. I am afraid your letter would give me very little assistance in arguing a case against those who oppose the B.B.C. monopoly. I have heard critics quote different bodies interested in specific social reforms, neither hastily concocted nor lacking the confirmation of acknowledged authority, which always seem to escape the notice of the B.B.C.

The above correspondence is timely, in view of the announcement that Sir Cyril Radcliffe has been appointed chairman of the inquiry to be made before renewal of the B.B.C.'s Charter. It is not without interest to note that the B.B.C.'s Director of Talks, soon to be transferred to New York, spent a long time during the war as personal assistant to Sir Stafford Cripps.

DEVELOPMENT CHARGES - - A GRIM CATALOGUE

Mr. V. M. Crook, chemist and sub-postmaster at Parkgate, Liverpool, anxious for his customers' convenience, wanted to move to premises next door and set up the post office there so there would be more counter space. But the Central Land Board demanded £100 development charge.

The General Post Office told the Central Land Board: "In the interests of the public service it is considered imperative to have the Post Office transferred to more suitable accommodation." They asked that the £100 charge be waived or reduced as this was a matter in the public interest. Sir Malcolm Trustram Eve, chairman of the Central Land Board, said: "There are no provisions whereby Mr. Crook can be granted exemption from payment, even though the Post Office authorities consider the development desirable."

Mr. W. H. Howe, vice-chairman of the Parkgate Conservative Association, told the *Echo* to-day: "For the public to be held to ransom over a thing like this is a disgrace."—*Liverpool Echo*, February 9th.

At a recent sale at Tunbridge Wells two lots of accommodation land were put up for sale. The first was of approximately 2 acres, let at £4 per annum and with an "existing use" value of about £120. The second was 5 acres, let at £5, with an "existing use" value of about £150. They sold for £400 and £1,300 respectively. The local authority were underbidders at £1,200.—*Sunday Times*, January 8th.

This is the notorious case where the auctioneer forewarned the bidders that the Act had pegged the sale price of such land and they must beware of liability for the development charge. So much for the fiction that market prices have been stabilized at "existing use" value and that land speculation has been killed.

George Hankin built a forge in Silver Street, Doncaster. When he moved to be nearer the racecourse, he rented it to Harry Round who now wants to spend £196 on converting it into a green-grocery shop. Under the Town Planning Act, Mr. Hankin was faced with a development charge of £1,050 (the alleged value of the permission to sell greengroceries instead of conducting a forge). After negotiation, the development charge was modified and fixed at £900.—*Sunday Empire News*, February 6th.

One of the earliest reported cases (in the Press of September 22nd) of the development charge extortion was that of Mr. James Leggett, in Bury St. Edmunds. He had purchased a bit of ground in Highbury Road 23½ft. x 160ft. for £200 and was about to build his future home. Before he could have permission, the development charge would be £194. The authorities explained to him the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, by virtue of which the "existing use" value of his plot was only £6 and he should not have paid more than that for it. The unrestricted use value was £200; ergo, the development charge of £194 was leviable. The plot of land will therefore cost £394 before building can commence.

Lothlingland Rural District Council was some time ago in negotiation for the purchase of the large house in Rectory Road, Lowestoft, for use as its offices and for meetings. The owners stood out for £5,500, but the Council regarded that price as excessive and resorted to compulsory purchase powers. The District Valuer estimated the value at £4,100. In the interval, before purchase was undertaken, the Town and Country Planning Act was passed. Now, under a new valuation, the Council will be required to pay £5,750 for the property. Why? The self-same District Valuer gives the following explanation: "A year ago the property was valued at its 'existing use value' at that time. Later the property was used as the Council's offices. Therefore, the 'existing use value' at the date of the notice to treat was different from that at the date of my report. In these circumstances the basis of my valuation had to be altered."

Mr. W. S. Maskery, on leaving the R.A.F., paid £337 10s. for a plot 25 x 60 yds. in Four Oaks, and a building licence was granted to him on August 26th. The Central Land Board informed him that the "existing use value" of his land was only £26, and that its value by the building of the house (*sic*) will be £525, resulting in the levy of a development charge of £500. Total cost of the land to Mr. Maskery is, therefore, increased to £837 10s. Taking the cost of building and furnishing into account, he can't afford to pay, and all he has is a useless building licence.—*Birmingham Mail*, November 1st.

The Act merely creates a vested interest in perpetuity in the actual stone and lime (or brick and corrugated iron) of every building as it existed on July 1st, 1948. So long as you go on patching it up or repairing or reconstructing it within the permitted limits you are all right, and so long as the building holds together it can go merrily on changing "ownership" at any old price without a penny-piece of development charge being payable. If, on the other hand, you try to expand and improve, then you will be soaked.—"Forty-niner," in the *Glasgow Herald*, September 13th.

The Clarendon Engineering Company who have nearly completed a large building in Parkers Drive, Leicester, have planned a big extension to deal with the production of a newly-fashioned stocking machine. The Company have been told that under the Act they must pay £12,200 development charge before the new extension can be started. "This is a monstrous demand and hamstringing all the initiative that has gone into this enterprise," the managing director said.—*Sunday Dispatch*, a December issue.

In a statement reported in the Bournemouth *Daily Echo*, August 26th, Mr. D. C. Treherne, chairman of the Wimborne and Cranborne Rural District Council, spoke of the difficulty his counsel had in getting land which in some instances had been practically agreed with the owners before the new legislation. The apparent cause was the development charge which is payable under the Act, and presumably all local authorities will encounter the same difficulty as that which the Wimborne and Cranborne R.D.C. have already met.

Only a few of the 200 Coventry people who were recently granted private building licences have been able to buy sites for their houses at prices they could afford to pay. Their frustration has been caused because the Town and Country Planning Act is not working as it was intended to work, and local planning officers have been surprised at the situation revealed by the experience of these holders of building licences, who now cannot buy land at the proper price. Those who have land to sell have no confidence that they will be equitably treated under the Act. They fear that it will mean financial loss for them. And so, as one local officer commented to-day, people who have been granted licences "are going round in circles," from the Council to the builder and then to the district valuer, unable to buy the land on which may be built the houses they need so desperately.—*Coventry Evening Telegraph*, September 13th.

Laying down a new football pitch is "development" within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning Act, it was stated at a meeting of East Suffolk County Council to-day. The promoters of a sports stadium who were levelling a site for a football pitch ceased work at once after receiving such a warning from Mr. G. C. Lightfoot, clerk to the county council.—*Daily Telegraph*, October 6th.

In Scotland, under the feuing system, land is leased on perpetual tenure at a fixed annual rent or "feu duty," the parties concerned being the "feuar," or "vassal," who pays the "feu duty" to the "Superior" (ground owner) who receives it. With that explanation the following discussion, reported in the *Press and Journal* of August 31st, will be better followed. Mr. A. T. H.