

# Frontiers: No Escape from the Wars

An authoritative survey of the settlement possibilities of the remaining underdeveloped or frontier areas of the world, "Limits of Land Settlement" (Council on Foreign Relations, 45 East 65th Street, New York, \$3.50), has been prepared under the direction of Isaiah Bowman, president of Johns Hopkins University. President Bowman and nine other specialists, including several geographers and political scientists, a biochemist and an explorer, have produced a work of prime importance as a source-book for data affecting the formulation of land policy.

They establish that, in the absence of barriers to internal and external trade, the settled areas of the world could support a far greater population. They show that the land problem of today is not one of apportioning colonies and other new territories to the world powers which are clamoring for them to relieve the pressure on their means of subsistence which their socio-economic institutions have generated. It is, they prove objectively, one of using efficiently the land resources already settled and available. Discussing settlement that has already taken place historically, Dr. Bowman notes sagely:

"What these experiments and experiences forecast is that the population capacity of the land depends not on its degree of vacancy, but on the total available resources that land, people, science, technology and market demand, plus transport facilities, makes possible in combinations that are largely unique from region to region and from country to country."

In region after region, the experts' data shows, among other things, how unscientific conditions of land tenure, chiefly in the form of absolute private ownership of land, have checked and sabotaged efficient exploitation of resources. The editor himself summarizes the main point of the work in a statement that the reader will find supported by a wealth of evidence, in the book:

"One conclusion stands out above the rest in a review of the following chapters: new land will accommodate too slow and small a stream of population to be of real social importance to the countries of origin. In our present nationalized world, in which the best lands have been occupied, and restrictive measures are in force, migration is no answer to economic and social strain induced by so-called overpopulation. Nor is military conquest either a practical or rational answer."

It is not free land for settlement that this sorely troubled world needs. What it needs is to "free" the land that is settled. In proving that colonial land settlement offers no escape from the difficulties of reconstruct-

ing the social economy on the basis of land policies adapted to the modern level of technological and cultural advance and to modern living standards, Dr. Bowman and his associates have rendered a signal service to the social sciences.

—W. L.