

Reviews—Books and Pamphlets

LAND IN OUR NATIONAL ECONOMY, by Roy A. Foulke. Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., New York. 75 pages.

Reviewed by
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THIS fascinating booklet written by the head of the research division of Dun & Bradstreet, shows the importance of land from the time of the Jamestown Settlement to the space orbiting present. Harlan Trott, San Francisco correspondent for The Christian Science Monitor, wrote of Mr. Foulke's work, it "certainly justifies the assumption that the land question is not something that was settled the day Oklahoma came into the Union. It would seem to be a continuing economic challenge." Further he states, "the study together with its footnotes may bring readers' opinions about the present dull state of business into wider focus—into the realm of cause as well as effect."

In 1952 a Presidential committee opened an extensive five volume report on "Resources for Freedom," with the following statement: "The question, 'Has the United States of America the material means to sustain its civilization?' would never have occurred to the men who brought this Nation into greatness as the twentieth century dawned. But with the twentieth century now half gone by, the question presses and the honest answers are not glib."

"Material means," according to the committee's report, stands for "the contents of the earth and its physical environment." Mr. Foulke reminds us that from this thought it is but a step "to the realization that every material thing we have, all wealth, all capital

comes directly or indirectly from land by the application of labor and capital."

In discussing the vital importance of location to individuals in society, Mr. Foulke quotes "one of our great economic philosophers of 75 years ago, who said 'land is necessary to all production, no matter what be the kind or form. Land is the standing place, the workshop, the storehouse of labor. It is to the human being the only means by which he can obtain access to the material universe or utilize its powers. Without land man cannot exist.'"*

The people of a "megalopolitan" city may forget the importance of land in their concern with gross national product and other statistical concepts. The city child thinks milk comes from the milkman and gasoline from a service station, but all things still come from "the contents of the earth and its physical environment."

The author devotes the second half of his booklet to an up to date listing of ratios for 72 lines of business activity. This has long been a useful tool to executives who study Dun's to discern relative business wealth and is invaluable for reference.

That one-half of the book should be purely an invitation to think creatively is exciting and stimulating. Thoughtful improvement of our communities leads to improvement in man's attempts at cooperation and consequently to a richer civilization. Mr. Foulke does a great service in considering where land belongs in our estimate of social and economic survival. According to an ancient proverb, "all else passes away, the land only remains." How simple and basic a truth that is.

*George, Henry. *Progress and Poverty*, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York.