

Noah D. Alper's Brief Cases

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Mail fraud charges have been brought against seven men in the sale of Oregon desert land described as Lake Valley in promotion material which came to the attention of the Department of Justice. According to a UPI news release "the indictment charged that the group bought nearly 7,000 acres of desert wasteland in Harney County, Oregon. The land was offered for sale at \$395 an acre by mail to potential customers in several western states. Department of Justice officials said local authorities estimated its value at \$20 an acre."

AMERICAN MOVIES STIR SOCIAL REVOLT

"The peasants and Indians are not going to wait 20 or 30 years for reform," said Edmundo D. Flores, a Mexican economist in a talk at Washington University, St. Louis. "They have learned from American movies that their miserable conditions can be improved, and are aware that with nearly all productive land owned by three to five per cent of the population, only drastic redistribution will benefit them." He also warned that funds distributed to most South American republics through the Alliance for Progress served to enrich entrenched landowners, and predicted social explosions unless land reforms and equitable taxation systems were instituted.

KENNEDY KINSMAN JAILED IN IRELAND

From Dublin came a dispatch purporting that a nephew of President Kennedy's grandfather, James Kennedy of Dungastown, was jailed by the British as a rebel, serving three months at hard labor in 1888 for "resisting and obstructing the Sheriff." During that period "Ireland was ruled by the British, and the land war, a period of civil disturbance and anti-British agitation, was in progress," according to the Dublin news report. Of greater significance for newspaper readers, might be the fact that the "period of civil disturbance and anti-British agitation"—in other words, the land question, was the reason why the Kennedy's came to America, with results that are well known.

CULTURE'S COSTLY HALF-ACRE

An editorial in the Labor newspaper of Washington, D. C. has again made reference to Henry George's proposal in reporting a land deal. "A half-acre of land for the National Cultural Center was purchased recently for \$774,000," the editorial notes, and "three additional acres will cost the taxpayers more than \$5 million for the bare land before construction can begin. Yet this is far from the highest-priced land in Washington."

Government or private agencies have to buy land from speculators at fantastically high and rising prices, and, states the editor, "this is a gigantic road-block to adequate home building and the entire construction industry."

He suggests "heavier taxes on land values," because this "would discourage wealthy owners and speculators from holding land off the market while waiting for bigger unearned profits . . . the proposal originally made by Henry George in his still renowned book Progress and Poverty." He adds that Henry George "also advocated lightening taxes on homes and other buildings to encourage the construction industry, provide more jobs and wipe out slums."

This "still renowned book" is still a friend to man.