

Land, People, and History

"THE way people use their land has a great deal to do with the way they live," writes Elizabeth S. Helfman in a recently published book, *Land, People, and History*. This has often been a forgotten part of history. Somehow it has always seemed more important to keep records of kings and battles and heroes. The peasants had little to say, and the land does not speak at all."

That is an eloquent way of putting it, and in this book the author has given land a voice. The main subject matter is land use, especially agricultural, and conservation of resources; but there is also material on land tenure. Conservation is related to tenure in that abuse of land and man-made erosion are often the result of unfair systems of tenure under which landlords are eager to reap quick big profits, caring nothing for their tenants or for the soil.

Much useful historical information is brought out, and the range is surprising—from pre-Columbian America to modern Oklahoma, from ancient Babylon to modern Japan. One of the most intriguing sections is about the Hunzans of Asia, who live isolated in an unpromising environment and who have developed an agricultural system that keeps them hale, hearty and long-lived. P.S.—they pay no rent or taxes!

The book has a section on Henry George and land-value taxation, which is handled clearly and favorably.

The style seems geared for teen-age readers, but adults can peruse this book with profit. Here are a few quotations:

"Millions of people, not all of them farmers, have had to find out that you can't ignore the laws of nature without bringing disaster on yourself and the millions of other people who depend on the land. Not knowing this, or not caring, is no excuse."

"We must stop trying to subdue nature, trying to make nature do what we decide she should do. Instead, we will have to work with nature, to save the soil on our fields and plains and hillsides. We must do this for ourselves and for all the people who will come after us."

"A Nigerian chief expressed the African feeling for land ownership this way: 'I conceive that land belongs to a vast family of whom many are dead, few are living, and countless numbers still unborn.'"

Readers may order this 271 page book, *Land, People, and History* by Elizabeth S. Helfman (David McKay Company, New York), through The Henry George News, 50 East 69th Street, New York 21, New York, at the regular price of \$4.95.

—R.C.

HOW TO MAKE IT IN REAL ESTATE

Perhaps the ever increasing number of books being published about real estate constitutes some kind of weather-vane, for this has been heretofore almost as unpopular a subject as economics.

From Prentice-Hall publishers alone come two books for real estate men—and there must be many more. Every phase of land development, building and planning is securely shackled by laws, and these must be so thoroughly studied that an ordinary citizen can only venture into this field with a battery of legal experts.

"It must be remembered," say the publishers in this connection, "that in our growing country supply of usable land is becoming more and more limited, and laws regulating its sale and use are increasing in number and severity."