

## READERS CLIPPINGS

"He'd Revise Taxes to Fight the Slums," was a large headline in the Chicago Daily News introducing a long letter by Marvin S. Saillard of Aurora. "If all the land in Chicago were assessed and taxed according to its market value, it would be economically unfeasible for anyone to keep slum property," wrote Mr. Saillard in his letter to the editor which was prominently featured.

"In New York and other cities a considerable class of the newly rich is growing bigger and richer," wrote Raymond Moley in his syndicated newspaper column. "These are the speculators who are the modern counterparts of the great rich landed families of yore.

"Through lack of imagination and intelligence in the laws governing land taxes and the administrative process of assessments, it has come to be more profitable to hold land out of use than to build . . . While this country is rich enough to help almost everybody, it cannot in conscience provide for those who amass wealth without production and who live through legalized exploitation of those who do produce."

Harlan Trott reported in the September 27th Christian Science Monitor, an address by James P. Gallagher, associate editor of House & Home, before members of the California Savings and Loan League, pointing out that land costs have more than tripled since World War II. Examples cited were, in San Francisco, \$580,000 paid for a tract offered for \$15,000 in 1948, and the Santa Ana air base which brought

\$19,000 an acre a short time ago; the government paid as little as \$350 an acre for the land in 1942.

Mr. Gallagher was concerned that, because the cost of land has outstripped technological savings made by the industry, it is the land speculator who reaps the benefit in his land prices of all schools, roads, shopping centers, libraries and other public improvements, while the public must stop buying new houses on land that has increased in price faster than has their ability to pay for it.

The speaker urged the league to enlist the aid of public officials and the housing industry to "seriously consider whether tax laws are encouraging land speculation and price inflation" and if so how they could be changed.

Land, which is one-third of our total national wealth, he said, carried less than 5 per cent of the total tax load. He praised the recent study by Mary Rawson, an independent Canadian consultant, entitled "Property Taxation and Urban Development," pointing out three important advantages which would take place if taxes were shifted from buildings to land—with a tax on the potential use of the land, based on its location, instead of its actual use. "Nobody in the home building industry who is concerned with new ideas in the use of residential land," he said, "should be without Miss Rawson's report. [This is available from the Urban Land Institute, 1200 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C., at \$4. See also page 9.]

The Dayton Daily News echoes the warning in editorials written, we believe, by a member of the board of directors of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, whose article in HGN last month attracted wide attention.