

LAND TO THE TILLER

SIR,—In Korea, because of low land-value taxes and wide-spread land speculation, it is impossible to buy vacant land (50 per cent of the outlying wards of Seoul is uncultivated and unused, though within the city limits) at a price commensurate with any agricultural use. Some years ago the American Korean Foundation persuaded the Korean Government to release a tract of relatively gently sloping mountain-top land and to provide tractors, "landcrete" block machines, fertilizers, and expert supervision to resettle a group of twenty families. After a long season of very hard work they produced a truly magnificent crop of radishes (the Korean radish-turnip, very important for winter pickling.) They shipped them to Seoul and got a good price, but the income was exactly equal to the cost of transport. There was nothing left over to pay for the fertilizer or their labour. After all their hard work they were left on the relief rolls where they would have been had they done nothing (except build houses in an impossibly remote location) and quite unsuited to finding any other kind of employment. Quite a number of resettlement projects have failed for the same reasons—inflated land prices and costly transport due to distance from market. I wish that the advocates of

82

land-value taxation and free trade would make loud, harsh, and revolutionary-sounding noises. I think they would then convince more people. Being respectable is for kids.

Yours faithfully,

ARCHER TORREY

Korea.