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Agri-Business Column <<

*BC By Ferdie J. Deering

Land ownership, as we know it, may end before the 21st century. Some people are demanding this. Quite a few others think that public ownership and control of land is inevitable. Many claim that it is necessary in a crowded, hungry world.

Private ownership and control of property has been a cherished privilege of American citizens for two centuries. It is a quality of freedom and it will not be given up readily.

Public ownership and control of property has been an ingredient of dictatorships for centuries before this continent was settled. Government control takes precedence over individual land ownership rights in most of the world's 152 nations today.

Demands have been heard in Washington for more than a decade for a "National Land Use Policy", a "National Water Policy" and other national policies. A policy is ineffective unless it includes power to implement and enforce its provisions.

National land use planning bills have been defeated repeatedly in Congress but new legislation is expected in 1977.

This is in accordance with policies being advocated by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlement, which met ~~the~~ this summer in Vancouver, British Columbia.

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"Land, because of its unique nature and the crucial role it plays in human settlement, cannot be treated as an ordinary asset, controlled by individuals and subject to the pressures and inefficiencies of the market," the UN document says.

~~by~~ Obviously, it refers to the free market and suggests political control as the answer. In another place, it says:

"Private land ownership is a principal instrument of accumulation and concentration of wealth and therefore ~~contributes~~ / contributes / ~~contributes~~ to social injustice; if unchecked it may become a major obstacle in the planning and implementation of development schemes."

Neither Karl Marx himself nor other leaders of the world communist movement would be likely to argue with that statement. It agrees with communistic principles.

The July issue of National Geographic ~~magazine~~ magazine takes a look at "This Land of ~~Ours~~Ours" for the 21st ~~century~~. / century. / Here are sentences from a panel of "Five Noted Thinkers".

Gerard Piel, publisher of Scientific American, said: "On the question of land use, I think it is perfectly clear that we are going to see the end of suburbia."

Richard F. Babcock, Chicago authority on planning and housing law, said: "I believe another feature of the year 2000 will be that large-scale ownership of the land will be treated

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much as we treat public utilities today."

Isaac Asimov, biochemist and humorist, said: "Our concept of land use now may include not only the land on the surface of the earth. We can colonize the moon or build space colonies."

Buckminster Fuller, inventor of the geodesic dome and the tetrahedral city, said: "In times past, with 90 per cent of humanity living on farms, the human race ~~//~~ was inherently remote. Every nation looked out for its ~~/~~ own welfare. ~~//~~ But now we are in absolute ~~proximity~~ critical proximity. A completely new world has come about."

~~/~~ Edmund N. Bacon, city planner, said: "The great illusion of the suburban experience was that man can experience nature by owning pieces of it. Nature eludes ownership."

In a 32-page special on "America's Third Century", U.S. News & World Report also assembled a number of famous persons to present a symposium on our future. They covered many topics.

In summary, U.S. News says "Instead of reductions in big government, the prospect ~~/~~ is that its activities at all ~~level~~ / levels / will grow." It concludes that agriculture is bound to prosper as world population doubles, to around 8 billion people.

"Family farms will give way to larger plots managed by

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college-trained farmers, but often owned by someone else," says
the article. It does not say who "someone else" might be.

If present trends prevail, with federal ~~ag~~ agencies
exercising increasing authority over business, agricultural and
individual activities, "someone else" might be "Big Government".

Some environmentalists and officials seem to regard
agriculture and agri-business as being of little significance,
ignoring every person's need for food. The Urban Land Institute
newsletter, called "environmental comment", had this to say:

"Although there are many agricultural aid programs
administered at the federal level, the most significant efforts
to establish legal/administrative programs to preserve a dwind-
ling industry are appearing at state and local levels."

Agriculture is not a "dwindling industry". The truth
is that agriculture is booming with the most nearly free market
it has had in a generation of farmers and world demand for food
is increasing faster than food production is being expanded.

If this nation is to continue to provide food for a
substantial portion of the world's population, we need to elect
officials and legislators who will cool off the "hot idea" that
farms will run better if land use planning takes place in
Washington.

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