

SIR,—In your issue of the 31st inst., Mr. Leadam, in a letter of considerable length, states his objections to the scheme of Land Nationalisation proposed by Mr. A. R. Wallace. In your paper of last week Mr. Wallace briefly but effectively disposes of Mr. Leadam's main objection, namely, the breach of faith involved in repealing an Act of Parliament passed in the landowners' interest two hundred years ago. Mr. Wallace declines to notice Mr. Leadam's further criticisms, partly because another correspondent—"Inquirer"—had satisfactorily dealt with them, and partly because he is content, for the rest, that both his own and Mr. Leadam's letters should appeal on their respective merits to the impartial judgment of your readers. Personally, I do not regret that all Mr. Leadam's objections have not been seriatim replied to by your correspondents, nor is it my present intention to deal with them. What does concern me, however, the sole reason that now prompts me to address you, is to arraign specially Mr. Leadam's method of treatment. Reading Mr. Leadam's two columns of criticism for the first time, and keeping well in view, not only the thoughtful, well-grounded proposition of Mr. Wallace's scheme, but the vital principles underlying them, it is impossible to resist the impression that Mr. Leadam is speaking to a nisi-prius brief, or is approaching this great subject in a petty, parochial spirit.

Mr. Wallace's scheme at the outset enunciates a general principle clear as noonday, and to my mind both logically and ethically unassailable. It is this, that unrestricted private property in land is inherently wrong, and, as a consequence, inimical to the best interest of the people. The obligations lie upon Mr. Leadam, it seems to me, either to deny or to affirm the truth of this principle, since the main lines of the scheme radiate from it as from a common centre. What he does, however, is to leave us to gather by implications from his second paragraph that he is in favour of things as they are, though not averse to necessary reforms. Here, however, we light upon an instructive passage. "I cordially agree," says Mr. Leadam, "with all land reformers, as dis-

tinguished from land revolutionists, that accumulation should not derive artificial encouragement from law." Mr. Leadam, while apprising us of his dislike of revolutionary tendencies, is careful to conceal the distinction between a land-reformer and a land revolutionist, and fails to indicate the precise point at which the former ends and the latter begins. Here, then, in view of this ill-concealed antagonism to Mr. Wallace's proposals, I revert to the consideration which, as I have said, prompted this present letter, namely, what possible value can attach to a criticism,—however apparently candid and intelligent—which starts by ignoring the cardinal principle upon which the entire scheme rests, the scheme itself being indirectly snubbed as revolutionary! To my mind, Mr. Leadam's two columns of so-called criticism represent simply a waste of time, and Mr. Wallace, rightly, as I think, declined to bestow serious notice upon what he aptly terms "the wild and improbable forecasts" of the effects of his scheme. Ignoring the vital underlying principle of this scheme, and determined to champion the existing system, Mr. Leadam was constrained to rest his case upon what at best appears to be feeble, doubtful argument. His excessive anxiety for the safety of vested interests, his indiscriminating reverence for statutory law, his laboured efforts to minimize the evils of our present land system—in a word, the petty parochial spirit in which, as I have remarked, he approaches the solution of a problem unexampled in importance, have, speaking for myself, this one effect—they induce, not conviction, but nausea.—J. A. PARKER, Gothic Villa, Isleworth, November 17.