

## Section 4

### Question 31-40

**Section 4** is a lecture on various issues in land management and ownership systems.

Good morning everyone. Good to see you all looking so full of energy. Today I'm going to give an overview of some general principles relating to land management and ownership. Very important. If we look at history it seems that much of it concerns conflict over religion, economic power and land. Often all three factors are involved together. The first question when asked when talking about land is, "who owns it?" What you can do with land you own, depends on one's political views. A far right conservative may say "ownership is the socially supported power to do what you want with the land you own with no control by government as long as what you do with it doesn't hurt others." You can imagine how different factions interpret "hurt others." By contrast, the political left, socialist and more to the left communist says, land ownership, private land ownership that is, is the root cause of much injustice in the world and that the social protection of private land ownership can result in tyranny and oppression. They therefore argue for state public and cooperative forms on land ownership. I will mention here that most of us here take for granted the idea that everything must be owned by a person, people or organization. But some societies, notably some native North American tribes, seem to have no concept of personal ownership. It was normal for them simply to take anything they needed and for others to take it from them if they needed it. When Europeans settlers came, the Indians behaved as usual which led the Europeans to seeing them as thieves. But the Europeans settlers grabbed the Native American's land, the most important possession, so who were the real thieves. However, in this day and age, it will be futile to think of getting rid of the concept of ownership, but let me return to land ownership. It's a complex issue. For example, should the owner have exclusive control over the rights of way, like traditional footpaths or the migration routes of wild animals, or the ecologically important wetlands? Should the owner be allowed to destroy the whole lot by building expensive houses everywhere? Or what if the owner discovers hidden treasure that once belonged to the royal family? All such things raise questions of the rights of the owner as opposed to the rights of others including animals perhaps. Clearly, diversion views on such questions are a constant source of argument. What do the classical economists say about land ownership? Their positions were often rather ambiguous. Many of

them seemed to consider it a necessary evil and argued that it could not be defended if there was not some obligation to keep and improve the land. This is the concept of stewardship. That the land must be kept in good conditions for future generations. But what if the owners were good stewards of their vast estate but millions were going hungry. The nicest answer was and still is, land reforms as a means of social justice. And in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I mentioned ecological issues just now. Other reasons for restricting the rights of landowners have emerged. You can't cut the trees down because it will cause soil erosion that can spoil rivers hundreds of miles away. Pollution, the need to protect biodiversity, things that reduce the level of what we called – nature's services to the general public, all have led to more restrictions on land owners' rights at least in some countries, especially Europe. At the same time, property taxes have steadily increased to pay for essential services offered by the state or local government such as firefighting. As these threats to the health of our planet get more serious, some people have argued that the ownership of natural capital, forests, wetlands etcetera, will more and more be controlled by communal and not by private bodies. For example, the use by multinational companies of native plant varieties for modified crops and new drugs, plants that they sold and paid for in the past are now increasingly recognized as belonging to the cultures or ecosystem from which they originated. But it seems to me that having the lands in its flora and fauna owned by governments is no guarantee that they'll be used wisely rather than for short term profit. The evidence is that local ownership protected by law is usually the best answer.

Okay, it will soon be time for a break but before we have our coffee, I will give the answers to the questions I asked you last time. What are the differences between the leasehold and freehold? Essentially the former allows possession for a limited time while the latter is a special right granting the full use of a real estate for an indeterminate time. In this country, most houses are sold with the land and the house itself freehold, whereas many flats are sold with a lease which was issued by the freeholder to the original leaseholder. The flat is then effectively owned by the leaseholder for an agreed number of years.

#### Question 31-33

Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer.

Prof. Roberts says much of history is concerned with conflict over **31**....., **32**..... and **33**.....

#### Question 34-35

Choose the correct letters A-C

**34. Prof. Roberts implies that the concept of 'hurting others' .....**

A. is always perfectly clear

- B. is open to different interpretations
- C. becomes an issue when there is no control by government

**35. Prof. Roberts says .....**

- A. some native Americans were thieves
- B. the concept of personal ownership is universal
- C. the concept of ownership is nowhere to stay

Question 36-39

**Complete the following sentences.**

Write **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** for each answer

- 36. Many classical economists considered private landownership.....
- 37. Keeping land in good condition for the future is the concept of .....
- 38. The need to protect has led to increased restrictions on landowners' rights in some countries  
.....
- 39. Prof. Roberts believes that is usually the best way to protect natural resources  
.....

Question 40

Choose the correct letter A-C

**40. The main difference between freehold and leasehold is .....**

- A. the duration of effective ownership
- B. one applies to houses and the other to flats
- C. leasehold does not apply to land