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C. (58) 154  
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**CABINET****COMPENSATION FOR COMPULSORY ACQUISITION OF LAND****MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND**

The Minister of Housing in C. (58) 151 seeks Cabinet approval for the inclusion in next session's programme of a Bill to change the basis of compensation for compulsory acquisition of land. I do not dissent in principle from the proposed new basis, and further study of its application to Glasgow overspill and redevelopment operations has somewhat relieved my fears of criticism in that context.

2. I am however not yet fully convinced of the political wisdom of legislating in this sense at present. We shall, of course, be attacked for what will be represented as conferring a benefit on landowners at the public cost. What is perhaps more serious, we shall be in real danger of provoking a Labour declaration not only to reverse the change at the first opportunity, but also possibly to go further and undo the freedom which the 1954 settlement conferred on the private market in land.

3. No doubt because the private market in land is less active in Scotland than in England and Wales and the difference between the two price levels consequently less marked, there is among Scottish Backbenchers little pressure for, and even some opposition to, legislation at this time. But should the Cabinet decide to legislate next session, it will be essential that the new basis should apply in Scotland as well as in England and Wales. In that event I very much hope that a single Great Britain Bill will prove practicable, and the work of drafting is proceeding with this in view.

J. S. M.

*Scottish Office, S.W. 1,  
16th July, 1958.*

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