

# Monthly Bulletin

OF

## The English League for the Taxation of Land Values

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### The Member for Ipswich.

In reply to a letter conveying the good wishes of the Executive of the League, Mr. R. R. Stokes, Labour Candidate for Ipswich at the recent By-Election and now M.P., wrote to the General Secretary:—

"I am most grateful to you for your letter of 11th, February and hope you will tell the members of your Executive Committee that I appreciate their good wishes very much. I am doing my utmost to ventilate the Henry George principles and if the result on Wednesday goes in my favour, you may be sure that I shall do my best to achieve the end we are all working for."

Neither in his election address nor in his speeches did Mr. Stokes leave any room for doubt as to the "platform" on which he stood for election. He put forward the "gradual abolition of the private monopoly of natural resources through the taxation of land values [as] the most potent remedy for the evil distribution which is the cause of poverty and distress.\* Land values are the creation of the community and arise out of its presence. The land-owner contributes nothing by his ownership as distinct from his management." "I stand as a Free Trader." "The problem to-day is not between the Nations who have and the Nations who have not, but between the peoples of all Nations who have not and the people who have." He challenged the policy of the "National" Government all along the line. He had against him a gentleman whom the *Times* described as "a good Government candidate."

But to the astonishment of the *Times*, he "did not find his advocacy of the taxation of land values the millstone in Ipswich which it might have been elsewhere." (Echo answers "Where?")

There was, as the *Times* confesses, no apathy in this election. Very nearly 83 per cent. of the electors went to the poll. Mr. Stokes wiped out a Conservative majority of 7,250, was elected by a majority of 3,161. The *Daily Telegraph*, which thought that Mr. Stokes had spoilt his chances by stressing the taxation of land values, reports the

Conservative party leaders as regarding this "as far more of a local than a national victory whatever that may mean, and quotes the (*Social New Leader*) as saying that "very few Labour supporters would pretend that Mr. Stokes, engineering employer, is a Socialist. He is a Liberal land-taxer," while the *Daily Herald* calls his return as a great Labour victory.

The Government will not fail to note the moral of this election. But there is also a lesson in it for the Labour Party as well as great encouragement to members of the League to re-double their effort for the Cause to which Mr. Stokes has done a splendid service.

### Values and Rentals.

"A penny a year is the rental, on underlease 2000 years, of houses and a shop near Royal Station, Paddington. The premises produce a net income of £480 a year."—*Times*, February 9th. The premises were put up to auction on February 16th. It would be interesting to know the history of this property.

"The site of the New University Club premises, St. James's Street and Arlington Street, about 9000 square feet, is to be let on building lease. Possession will be given at midsummer. The ground rent will be paid by public competition . . . . The freehold was recently sold for £100,000, pursuant to a resolution of the Club."—*Times*, February 8th.

The price at which the freehold was sold is at the rate of £483,000 per acre.

If the valuation proposals of Snowden's Finance Bill, 1931, had not been repealed by the "National Government, we should probably, by now, have an official record of the value of these two sites ready to serve as the basis of a national tax and the rates.

### Milk.

Mr. R. H. P. Orde, hon. sec. of the British Hospitals Association, states that "since October 1933, when the Government's Milk Schemes began to operate, it has cost the British Hospitals £400,000 more. This is the way in which our landlord-subsidised Government dispenses "the milk of human kindness" for the benefit of the suffering?

\*[During the election, official figures were published showing that the number of people on out-door relief in Ipswich had increased from 428 in 1931 to 1015 now—an increase of 137 per cent.]

## Good Security.

The City of Johannesburg has been appealing in the British money market for an issue of £2,000,000  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. Inscribed Stock at £99 10s. per cent. The prospectus gave the following information about the local rating of the City:—

"The Rating Power is 4d. in the £ on Land Value plus 1d. in the £ for Road Construction and 3d. in the £ on Building Value, but the Council have the option to impose the rate upon the Land Value only, up to 7d. in the £ plus 1d. in the £ for Road Construction.

"The present rate is 4d. in the £ on Land Value plus 1d. in the £ for Road Construction and no rate on Building Value.

"The Rateable Value is: Land £50,151,083; Buildings £61,992,927."

Opponents of the rating of land values may be surprised to learn that a rate fund, raised from land values only, is considered by a great municipality as good security for a loan of two millions.

## Prosperity?

The latest return of the numbers of unemployed on the registers of unemployment exchanges in Great Britain gives the total, as on January 17th, of 1,827,607, an increase of about 162,200 as compared with December 13th, 1937, and of about 195,000 as compared with January 25th, 1937.

It is poor comfort for these victims of an unjust social system to learn that all is going well with the landholders of Middlesex, for the Medical Officer of Health for the County has stated that the population is increasing by 1400 immigrants a week. "Population makes land values," and as the M.O.H. says, creates housing problems.

## Hire-Purchase.

Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., is to be congratulated on her success, as a private member, in securing the attention of the House of Commons to the worst evils of the Hire-Purchase method of doing business. She is trying to deal with one of the phases of the great poverty question. Housewives in poor districts are beset, usually at times when their husbands are not at home, by very persistent canvassers, who offer them "on easy terms" goods which they would be glad to possess if they could afford to pay outright for them. If they succumb to the canvasser's persuasive eloquence, they are induced to sign an agreement giving the seller of the goods powers which often result in the seizure of the goods and the loss of the instalments already paid. At the back of these evils lies the great social curse of unemployment. Too often the canvasser is an unemployed man whose last hope of earning a living is to undertake this sorry business and earn his commission by coaxing women into mortgaging their own or their husbands' future earnings. If unemployment strikes the hire-purchaser, a domestic tragedy results. Under a

social system founded on what Tolstoy calls Great Iniquity, it is perhaps wise and necessary to protect the poor even against what seems to them to be a way of escape from poverty. But, who do not understand what poverty means to those who endure it, their own foolishness. But, even these things ought ye to have done and leave the other thing undone." And "the other thing" is, to wage the fight against Poverty, the main cause—the monopoly of "the field of all labour and the source of all wealth."

## To our Members.

The League's financial year closes on March 31st on which day the accounts for the year 1937 will be closed and prepared for the auditors. The Executive earnestly appeals to all members to pay their subscriptions not yet paid, to put their right with the Hon. Treasurer as early in the month as possible.

Members are reminded that a subscription of less than 5s a year enables them to receive the monthly organ of the Movement, "Lantern Liberty," which not only reports the activities of Georgist organisations at home and abroad, but also contains a mine of facts and arguments for use in public and private propaganda.

## Meetings in March.

- 1—Stamford Hill Women's Co-operative Society, Earlsmead Hall, High Road, South Tottenham. Fredk. Verinder, "Who should pay the Rates?" 2.30 p.m.
- 2—London Co-operative Society, West London Political Council, New Labour Hall, West Green Road, N. 15. Fredk. Verinder, "Taxation and Rating of Land Values." 8.30 p.m.
- 9—London Co-operative Society, Putney Football Council, Brandlehow Road L.C.C. Stadium. A. C. Blackburn. "Economic Causes of Unemployment." 8 p.m.
- 30 Putney Women's Co-operative Society, Guik Platt Mission Hall, The Platt (near Putney Bridge): A. C. Blackburn. 3.15 p.m.
- APRIL 5—International Friendship League (Greenwich Group, Prince of Orange Station, next Greenwich Station: A. C. Blackburn. "The Problem of War." 8.15 p.m.

A. C. Blackburn addressed a meeting of the International Friendship League (Feb. 16th) on "Free Trade."

## Personal.

Leon MacLaren, son of Andrew "of that ilk" a member of the League Executive, has been elected to the Bar.

G. A. Goodwin, C.M.G., has issued, in a 10th edition, his booklet on "A Root Cause of the World's Discontent," with a very telling illustration (from the League Office).