

## THE TOLL PAID TO LAND MONOPOLY

Speaking at a Land Nationalization Conference in Glasgow on 23rd March, Mr T. Johnson, M.P., gave some striking examples (reported in *Forward* of 30th March) of land values appropriated by private individuals. These cases, many of which are already familiar to our readers, illustrate again the argument for land value taxation and are a convincing answer to any policy for buying the landlords out. We quote Mr Johnson:—

“Two years ago, vacant ground in the Garngad (Glasgow) was bought for the new steel houses with Government money. The land had been unused for 20 years. The Government paid £3,125 for it.

“The land had been valued for taxation purposes at £1 per annum. But the proprietors got £3,125 for it.

“Every year the proprietors had been paying 5s. 1d. of local rates on their £1.

“In the same year the Government bought land for building of steel houses at Shettleston for £10,425. This land was valued by the owners for annual taxation purposes, and was on the valuation roll at only £133.

“Sir John Gilmour, the Secretary for Scotland, said £10,425 is “a most reasonable price.”

“In Edinburgh, land at Princes Street Gardens, feued in 1760 at 10s. per acre, was found to have a capital value of £1,000 per foot of frontage.

“In 1772 one site at Princes Street feued at £4 13s. 4d. annually, plus a lump sum down of £153, was sold in 1905 for £100,000.

“At Leith Walk, Edinburgh, land in 1804 feued at £4 per acre was now sold at £300 per acre per annum.

“There was the case of the land at the foot of Union Street, Glasgow. Messrs. Boots, the Cash Chemists, had bought it for £21,699. But when the Town Council in September, 1926, got 94 square yards of it for street widening, they had to pay £25,000.

“And there was land bought in 1926 by Glasgow Town Council from Mrs Morgan of Polmadie. It was on the valuation roll at £1 per acre per annum, but the Corporation had to pay £61,850 for 58½ acres of it.

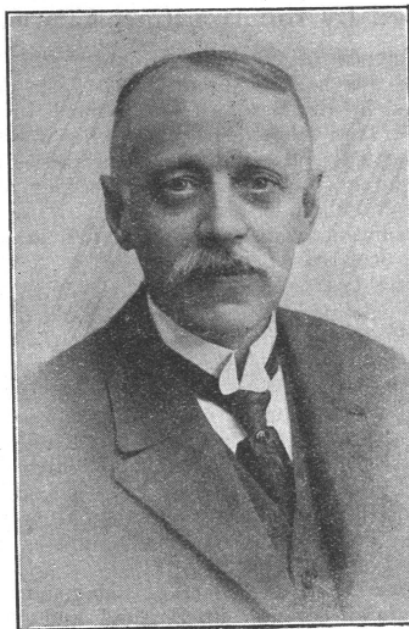
“The Earl of Bute, or whatever his title was, now calls himself ‘Mountjoy, Ltd.’ for taxation purposes. Last year Old Cumnock had to get land from him for a sewage scheme, and ‘Mountjoy, Ltd.’ charged £400 per acre for land rated on the tax rolls at less than £2 per acre. And worse than that he charged them 1s. 6d. per yard per annum for wayleaves of a sewage pipe under the bed of a river. There were 914 yards of it.

“The same worthy in 1926 wanted £40 per square yard for land in Cardiff. So far they were only operating in yards. Wait until they begin to sell us feet and inches!

“The same steady predatory rise went on in the country as in the towns. The late Lord Eversley had examined carefully the economic statistics of 11 agricultural parishes in East Aberdeenshire, and he had discovered that between 1860 and 1908—a period of general depression—land rent went up on an average 36 per cent, the population went down 1,747, and 363 crofts disappeared altogether from the roll.”

Concluding his speech Mr. Johnson said (as reported in the *Irish Weekly* of 30th March) that “he hoped they would never float a loan to buy landlords out.”

## FRANK KNOWLES SYKES



We deeply regret to announce that Frank Knowles Sykes, a member of the United Committee and for many years a keen worker in the cause of Land Value Taxation, passed away on Sunday, 3rd March.

From 1906 to 1914, the home of Frank Sykes at Edgerton, Huddersfield, became an open hostel for those who upheld the doctrines of Henry George. It was ever a source of aid and encouragement to a vigorous and unselfish band of young pioneers.

Then came the War, leaving its legacies of broken health and shattered business. Frank Sykes was hard hit, but he began life over again with that manly fortitude and cheerful courage which only a man with the “stout countenance” of a Bunyan can command.

Beautiful in personal character, upright in business (in the cloth trade he was loved and respected by all who knew him) and unswervingly loyal to his religion, he never lost sight of his ideal—a state of society the motive power of which would be social justice and economic righteousness.

To his dear wife, who so nobly sustained him in all his service for the common good, and to the loved ones of his family circle we extend our deepest sympathy in their sad bereavement.

JOHN ARCHER.

At a meeting of the Whitechurch (Salop) Council on 27th February protests were made against alleged attempts to profiteer at the expense of the ratepayers on the part of some landowners who were asking high prices for land required for street and road improvements. The Chairman (Mr A. E. Bourne) said that 30s. a square yard was being asked for land required for street widening for the safety of the public, when adjoining land had been purchased by the Council at 4s. a square yard. Important street improvements were thus being retarded by the high prices asked by some owners for plots of land required by the Council.—*Liverpool Post*, 28th February.

The price named by Mr Bourne is equivalent to £7,260 per acre.