

could prevent the whole tragedy being re-staged at an early date. He seems to recognize this objection for he says later that "something might also be attempted to prevent a repetition of the disaster" though what this "something" is he does not tell us. "At bottom the salvation of working farmers lies in getting them to realize that, hereafter, work rather than rising land values must be relied on for profit in agriculture."

Once again no suggestion is made as to *how* this consummation is to be attained so long as the law allows these land values to be privately appropriated. Mr Chew comes very near the point when he declares: "An ideal solution of the farm problem would establish a perfect identity between the agricultural capitalist and the farm operator. Under our property system that is inconceivable." Then why not deal with "our property system" which blocks the way? The step we should take is to make title to land contingent on payment of its economic rent to the community. Only so long as this payment is made to the community should title to land be recognized by the community. This would be accomplished through the taxation of land values and with the coming of that simple though radical reform the whole situation, both agricultural and industrial, would be changed and the aims of Mr Chew as expressed in the *New Republic* would come within our reach.

With this alteration in "our property system" the forestalling of farm operators by land speculators would automatically cease and with it both inflated land values and over-mortgaged farms. Forestalling land speculators being out of the way, all land desired for *bona-fide* farming would become available at *natural* rents and it would be borne in on every farmer that only by productive work, and not by pocketing rising land values could he hope to make a living, for land values would have passed into the possession of the community in substitution for present taxes on industry. With that passing it would pay no man to acquire land except to use it, so that only those who used land would have land. Land values being public revenue the need for taxes on the farmer's industry would disappear and he would no longer be called on to bear the enormous burden which the tariff system of the United States now imposes on him.

Mr Daniel Hopkin, the Labour Candidate at the recent Carmarthen by-election, made Land Value Taxation the foremost plank in his campaign. Miss Helen Keynes and Alderman Longbottom, Labour candidates in Epsom and Halifax respectively, have also strongly urged the land value policy; and in the Holborn by-election, Mr T. E. Morris, the Liberal candidate, kept the question before the electors.

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Among the scores of Press clippings we have received of letters and articles by our correspondents we gladly notice those of Jabez Crabtree and C. H. Jones in the *Keighley News*, Herbert Wood in the *Sunday Times*, J. H. McGuigan in the *Portsmouth Evening News*, George Linskill in the *Daily Herald* and the *Grimsby Telegraph*, G. A. Goodwin in the *Prestatyn Weekly*, J. C. Geddes in the *Dundee Courier*, John Peter in the *Glasgow Herald*. Many other letters from correspondents are mentioned elsewhere in our columns.

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## SIR EBENEZER HOWARD

The recent death of the founder of the Garden City movement recalls many things of interest to those who have devoted their attention to the problems connected with land. The movement took into consideration other problems not connected (at least directly) with land, but it may be said that Sir E. Howard recognized the land problem as the fundamental one of those which trouble humanity. He was acquainted with the views of Henry George, he was associated with others who have devoted their attention to the subject, and he desired to try an experiment which should not only accomplish something in itself but should teach the world some lessons which the world seems very slow to learn. He saw that the results of progress tend to concentrate in increasing the value of land, and the principle on which he desired to proceed was that of buying an area of "cheap" land, settling an industrial, residential and agricultural population upon it, and applying the resulting "unearned increment" for the benefit of the group of people whose activities had created it.

The experiment might have a small beginning, but Howard's strong point was that an association of persons, agreed among themselves and willing to take a little trouble and to risk a little money, could make that beginning in a reasonable time, while it might require ages before Government action could accomplish anything. Having been an official reporter in the House of Commons, he knew something of legislative proceedings and of the amount of time which they consume.

The experiment began to take practical shape in 1904, when "First Garden City, Limited" purchased about 4,000 acres at Letchworth and proceeded to develop it. The land was not to be sold, but let on lease, the dividend of the Company was to be restricted to five per cent and any surplus to be applied for the benefit of the district—especially, it was hoped, to the reduction of rates.

There were many difficulties, not the least being the war, in consequence of which many improvements remained only partly completed, without producing any return upon their cost. The dividends got considerably in arrear, but a beginning has now been made in the reduction of these arrears. And Letchworth has now about 14,000 inhabitants and possesses many advantages over other places of similar size, a tribute to the thought and energy of its founder. It is a matter for general congratulation that Sir Ebenezer lived to see so much of his design accomplished.

Some disappointments in such a scheme are inevitable, but useful experience is gained from them. A concrete illustration has been given of the advantages to be obtained from eliminating some part of the evils due to private property in land. On the other hand, the experiment shows the limitations inevitable to experiments of a partial character, to the formation of colonies or "enclaves," to all movements of the type sometimes described as "a wheel within a wheel." But the advantages realized should help to give idea of the possibilities of a policy which should combine the opening up of natural opportunities with a reform of the existing absurdities of local and imperial taxation.

G. C.

The rate relief by subsidy from motorists will, both in town and country, lead quickly to a higher level of rent of land and higher prices demanded for land, and it will ultimately crystallize out in land values to the benefit of landowners.—DR PERCY McDougall in the *Manchester Guardian*, 20th June.