

## DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Discussion on Land Value Rating

At the meeting of the Derbyshire County Council on 28th July a report by the County Valuation Committee on the rating of land values was considered.

The matter originally arose out of a resolution submitted by the Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the material part of which read as follows: "That in the opinion of the Council, the first step towards a reform of the system of rating, is that rates should be levied on land on an assessment based on its full market value irrespective of the use to which the land is being put and as to whether it is in use or not, with corresponding reduction of the rates now being levied on houses and other buildings and improvements."

At the previous meeting of the County Council the following motion was submitted by Ald. T. Cooper, seconded by Mr A. Holland, M.P.: "That this Council is strongly of the opinion that the existing system of rating should be altered, and that local authorities should have power to levy a rate on land values."

But Ald. Cooper agreed that the matter should be referred to the Valuation Committee for a considered report on the question.

The report sets out what the Committee consider to be the arguments for and against the proposal, and the recommendation of the Valuation Committee was that while not approving of the rating of land values it is of the opinion that steps should be taken to secure for public purposes a share of the realized unearned increment of land.

Mr Gent moved an amendment to delete the words "while not approving of the rating of land values" from the recommendation. This was supported by Mr J. Varley.

After discussion the amendment was defeated by 25 votes to 20, and the recommendation was then carried.

The discussion was extensively reported in the *Derbyshire Advertiser*.

### DEBATING THE QUESTION IN SOUTHGATE

At the meeting of the Southgate Town Council, reported at considerable length in the Wood Green (Middlesex) *Weekly Herald* of 31st July, Councillor Owen Roberts moved and Councillor Grant seconded a resolution as follows:—

"That in view of the abnormal increase in land values and the heavy burdens and limitations placed upon local authorities consequent thereon, this Council requests the Middlesex County Council to convene a conference of representatives of all the local authorities in Middlesex, at any early date, to discuss the question of land values in Middlesex and to make such representations to H.M. Government as the conference, after discussion, may deem advisable."

Councillor Roberts said it was the third time he had raised the matter in the Council chamber, and he did not apologize for bringing it up again. He said there was not a place in the whole country providing a more flagrant example of the fleecing of the ratepayers than in Southgate. The system savoured of private gain from public enterprise, and Southgate Council and every public authority that required land was being held to ransom.

Councillor Grant seconded. By having to pay high prices for land in newly developed areas the country and local authority were laying a tremendous burden

on posterity. From neither a political, moral or economical point of view could he see why landowners should have the right to run away with tremendous sums of money. Those who had moved to the new parts of Southgate, whether to live in houses or flats, had to pay tribute to people who were able to exact high prices for land.

Councillor Lauder said that although the country was hard up for taxes for defence purposes we were leaving untaxed and unrated a huge source of wealth which was entirely produced by public enterprise. It was literally true that land developers in Southgate had "got away" with hundreds of thousands of pounds.

The resolution was lost.

The Council then discussed an invitation from the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, Ltd., to appoint delegates to attend the sessions on the rating of land values of the Fifth International Conference convened by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade to be held in London in September. The Valuation Committee did not recommend the Council to appoint delegates, but Councillor Peverett moved that delegates be sent "so that we might be better advised even after the arguments we have heard to-night."

Councillor Lauder seconded, but the Council decided against the representation.

### HAROLD RYLETT

On 9th August, the Rev. Harold Rylett died at his home near Belfast at the age of 85. He was born at Hardcastle in Lincolnshire, and studied at the Unitarian College, Manchester, and soon became interested in political questions. When at Reading in 1877-78 he frequently assisted Joseph Arch in his campaign to organize the agricultural labourers.

In 1879 he went to Moneysea, Co. Down, and while there became an intimate friend of Michael Davitt and chief organizer for Ulster of the Irish Land League. It was at this time that he became acquainted with Henry George.

Rylett was an indefatigable journalist. Tall and handsome, he was also an attractive and impressive speaker.

Among many other activities he was editor and proprietor of the *New Age* from 1899 to 1907. He was on the editorial staff of the *Tribune*, founded in 1905 by Mr Franklin Thomason, but that radical paper collapsed in 1907.

For many years he was English correspondent of Henry George's paper *The Standard*.

From 1904 to 1929, when he retired to live in Northern Ireland, he was minister at Tenterden, Kent.

From an obituary notice in the *Manchester Guardian* (13th August) we take this account of one of his contacts with Henry George.

"Whilst settled at Dudley Rylett presented evidence relating to the nail and chain trades to the House of Lords Select Committee on Sweating. Already in Ireland he had struck up a friendship with Henry George, and in London took a hand in printing a popular edition of *Progress and Poverty*. He had previously taken George to see the nail and chain makers at Cradley Heath, and one morning when the Select Committee was about to begin work George appeared on the scene. 'What are you doing here?' asked George, to which Rylett replied, 'I am trying to explain to these noble lords why these poor people are in such a wretched condition.' 'Well,' said George, 'that is very simple. There (pointing to the noble lords) is the cause, and here (turning to the group of witnesses) is the effect.'"