

value whether the land is improved or not. It concedes relief that is as unjust to other ratepayers and as creative of monopoly and privilege as the complete exemption of vacant land, which is due to a different set of circumstances and to which often more attention is directed by way of revealing the abuses of the law as it stands. From one central acre thus favourably treated under the existing system the Taxation of Land Values would secure as much additional revenue to relieve improvements as would be obtained from hundreds of acres of vacant land in the outskirts.

### COMPENSATION CASES

"I had a great many compensation cases where lands, etc., had been taken for public or company purposes—the great difficulty being to get the true value. I have known £100,000 asked on one side and £10,000 on the other. Railway companies were especially plundered in the exorbitant valuation of lands. No one could deal with the *real value* because there was no such thing known in the Compensation Court.

"On one occasion I was travelling north, retained on behalf of a railway company. In my judgment the claim would have been handsomely met by an award of £10,000. In my carriage I observed a gentleman busy making calculations on slips of paper and every now and again repeating the figures to himself. When we got to a station he threw down his paper and when we started commenced again, but at every stoppage on our journey he increased his amount.

"After we had travelled 250 miles the property he was valuing had attained the handsome figure of £100,000.

"The next day when he stepped into the witness box he had not the least idea that I had been his fellow-traveller; his name was Bunce. 'I understand you come from London; when did you view this property, Mr. Bunce?'—'I saw it this morning, sir.'

"'Did you make any calculation as to its value *before you saw it*?'

"This puzzled him, and he stared at me; it was a hard stare, but I held out. He said 'No.'—'Not when you were travelling? Did it not pass through your mind—'I wonder, now, what that property is worth?'—'I dare say I did, sir.'—'But don't *dare say* anything unless it's true.'—'I did run it over in my mind.'

"'Did you make notes; let me have them?'—'I tore them up.'

"'Why? What became of the pieces?'—'I threw away.'

"'Do you remember what price you had arrived at when you reached Peterborough, for instance?'

"The expert thought I was someone whom we never mention except when in a bad temper, and he was more and more puzzled when he found that at every stoppage I knew how much his price had increased.

"The case was tried by an arbitrator and the amount was soon arrived at by reducing the sum claimed *by no less than £90,000*!!

"In another claim £10,000 was reduced to £300.

"I shall never forget an attorney's face, who, having been offered £10,000 for a property, stood out for £13,000.

"At the end he got two thousand *less* than the offer and so had to pay all the costs.

"I was retained to assess compensation for the immense block of buildings acquired for the space now occupied by the Law Courts. The Commissioners declined to send me a general retainer, which would have been one small sum for the whole, but gave a special retainer on every case. If my memory serves me, on one occasion I had 94 of these. I could have been retained for the whole for five guineas."

—Extracts from REMINISCENCES OF SIR HENRY HAWKINS (Lord Brampton), page 181.

### COL. WEDGWOOD'S CAMPAIGN

#### Renewed Pledge by the Prime Minister

THE RIGHT HON. COLONEL JOSIAH C. WEDGWOOD, M.P., Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, has recently addressed a number of meetings and has not failed to emphasize the relation of Land Value Taxation to housing and employment. The question, reported below, to the Prime Minister in the House of Commons, shows that Mr. Wedgwood's declarations as a Member of the Cabinet are being duly noted by the "enemy," and the Prime Minister's reply is a further pledge of the Government's intentions in the matter.

The following are extracts from two of Mr. Wedgwood's speeches:—

"The Government was improving trade on sound lines by opening up dealings with Russia, breaking down the deadlock on the Continent of Europe, and by reduction of the taxation of necessities increasing the spending power of the community in the steady staple industries. And, as a result, unemployment was decreasing steadily. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that he was preparing to tax land values with a view to reducing the price of land. As land was the raw material of all industry, easier access to land meant more opportunity to start production and give employment. After all, the useful employment we all wanted must depend on the permit to use the earth. Labour was unlocking the door by the only means possible short of violence."—(Redhill, 1st June.)

"Low wages were caused by the competition of unemployed men for the jobs of employed men. . . .

No one recognized more firmly than the Labour Party that you could not make jobs for people by squandering the money of the taxpayer on non-productive work. What we required was to increase the amount of useful productive work in the country, and as all such work depended upon the access of labour to the raw materials contained in the land, they looked forward to the opportunity which should be given in next year's Budget to make it easier and cheaper for labour to get to the land by taxing land values, and so breaking the land monopoly in this country.

"We are going to do it in next year's Budget, and if they cannot turn us out before then—and, believe me, I do not think that they can—we shall have them on the run next year.

"We will have a bonnie fight if we do go to the country, and the fight will be on the fundamental question as to whether the land of England is to belong to the people of England and whether we are to get it back."—(Newcastle-under-Lyme, 14th June.)

#### THE ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT

In the House of Commons on 23rd June, Col. C. A. V. RHYS (Conservative, Romford) asked the Prime Minister: "Whether his attention has been drawn to a statement by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster at Newcastle-under-Lyme, on 15th June, that, by means of taxation of land values, the land of England could be secured for the people; and whether it is the policy of His Majesty's Government to thus nationalize the land without compensation?"

The PRIME MINISTER replied: "The paraphrase of my right hon. Friend's speech contained in this question is not very accurate. The Government believe in the Taxation of Land Values, but the hon. Member must wait for the production of their proposals."

Mrs. Fels is once more on this side of the water and with interesting views as to the course of events in the coming Presidential election in the United States. She is immensely pleased with the progress of the Land Values movement in Great Britain and wishes to be remembered to all old friends and co-workers.