

RUPERT EAST

Mayor of Aylesbury



Our hearty congratulations go to Councillor Rupert East, of Aylesbury, who on 9th November was unanimously chosen Mayor of the Borough for the ensuing year. Councillor East has many years of public service to his credit, having been elected member of the (then) Urban District Council of Aylesbury in 1910. Except for a short period in 1928, when he resigned from the Council (being re-elected at a by-election in January this year) his local government administration work

has been continuous, and in its course he has occupied the chairmanship of many committees. In the political life of the town, of which he is now chief citizen and where his business is centred, he has long taken an active part. For 20 years he was hon. secretary of the Mid-Bucks Liberal Association and in that capacity, as well as in his place in the Town Council, he has used many an opportunity to advance the case for the taxation of land values.

It was characteristic of him that, in his address to the Town Council expressing his sense of the honour just conferred, he did not content himself with a review of the progress and future of the Borough (conventional on such occasions), but he worked into his speech his advocacy of the civic reform that was most needed. He said:—

No matter how one might cry for economy, or for the rates to be kept down, the community's insistence on an ever-increasing standard of efficiency increased the total of expenditure. The problem of a local governing body in the past had been to provide necessary public services, not forgetting the roads and so on; but it seemed to him the problem of the future was to discover ways and means of paying for them. He held the view that most of those services—most of which were termed burdensome and sometimes unremunerative—had reflected themselves in the value of Aylesbury's sites. He hardly needed to instance the remarkable increase of rents obtained and obtainable by centrally situated properties in the borough. The revaluation of properties, in his opinion (and probably that was now realized by the occupants), had tended to throw upon them a larger share of the burden, particularly upon those properties which had been very much improved. In other words, it had acted as a heavier fine on improvements.

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Unfortunately, it had still left untouched valuable sites left derelict or under-used, and until public opinion was fully aware of the way in which the present system operated to the disadvantage of those who put their properties to the best use they would not be able to get any change.

Mayor Rupert East is one who knows his *Progress and Poverty* and who for years has been a loyal supporter of *Land & Liberty*. He was present at the three International Conferences in Oxford, Copenhagen and Edinburgh. He has attended hosts of gatherings for promoting the land value policy, so that his circle of personal friends within the movement is very wide indeed.

We are sure our readers will join with us in wishing Rupert East a successful term of office as Mayor of Aylesbury.

A LAY SERMON

By Alexander Mackendrick

"It matters not what bats and owls may think."

(Emerson.)

"Eyes and ears are bad witnesses to barbarian souls."

(Heraclitus.)

The question as to whether vision or reflective intelligence is the more important part of a good man's equipment for his battle with the forces of evil, is one that meets us in many forms. In the texts quoted above the case for each side is stated squarely and succinctly. If it is true that mere thinking avails nothing where the senses do not report accurately upon the facts of the outer world, it is equally true that the knowledge that comes through sight and hearing is worthless until it is rightly interpreted and accurately translated into terms of life by the power of thought. On the metaphysical plane even a partial blindness to the truth of things or a slight obliquity of the inner vision may to that extent invalidate any reflection that may arise; while clear vision may tell a misleading tale if there is even a small defect in the power of logical interpretation. It is thus that a seemingly inevitable bias or over-emphasis in both the intellectualist and the intuitionist modes of interpreting experience has coloured the stream of thought right down through the ages; as may be seen, for example, in Solomon's declaration that "For lack of vision the people perish," and in Hosea's lament that "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

Something is needed to reconcile and bind together these antithetical methods of apprehending the world of experience, and to show them as but the obverse and reverse sides of the faculty of apperception; and the familiar word "Understanding" may perhaps serve the purpose. Recent developments in psychology have demonstrated that the process by which we fully understand anything demands much more than the action of the intellect even at its best, and must engage the entire character of the investigator including the sympathies and the hidden potentialities of the sub-conscious mind; and this new light upon the mystery of our mental make-up comes as a wholesome corrective to the logic-chopping and theory-grinding habits into which some thinkers of former generations have led us. Thoughtful men, however, in all ages have probably been conscious of the impotence on the one hand of pure reason and the inadequacy on the other of mere illumination, as a guide to right conduct or as a means towards "seeing life steadily and seeing it whole." It was probably under pressure of some such feeling that the Psalmist, in a passionate reaching-out for something more trustworthy than either reason or