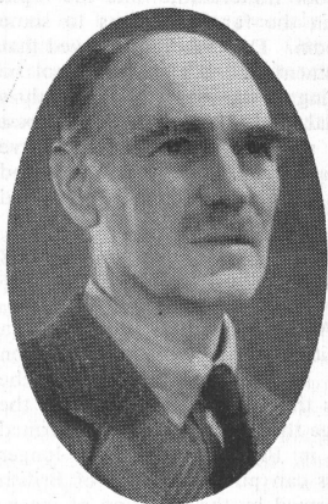


THE PASSING OF A GREAT CAMPAIGNER

Arthur R. McDougal of Blythe, Berwickshire



By the death of Capt. A. R. McDougal, on October 19, in the Peel Hospital, Gala-shiels, after a brief illness, the country is bereft of a noble citizen whose life and work has earned for him the admiration and the homage of a vast company—praise throughout the agricultural community for the example he set as an efficient farmer, and gratitude for the stalwart part he has played in upholding the rights and the liberties of the individual against the evil influences of special privilege. Especially will he be missed by the non-vocal farmers whom he championed when they were

in difficulty over their leases and rents; and no less zealously when he himself became a "laird" on his own farm, which he purchased in 1951. He belonged to a family which has farmed in Lauderdale on the Borders of Scotland for more than 300 years and as tenant he had farmed the 4,000-acre farm at Blythe since 1901.

Capt. McDougal had a remarkable record of public service. He was the "father" of the Berwickshire County Council which he had joined in 1920, and in 1950 was made a Deputy Lieutenant of the County. In politics he was a staunch Liberal and he stood for Parliament at the General Elections of 1929 and 1935, contesting the Roxburgh and Selkirk division. He was unsuccessful, yet the figures are of considerable interest:—

1929		1935	
Earl of Dalkeith (C.)	13,510	Lord W. Scott (C.) ...	18,342
A. R. McDougal (Lib.)	12,232	A. R. McDougal (Lib.)	12,264
R. Gibson (Lab.) ...	9,803	O. Thompson (Lab.)...	6,099

Unfortunately Parliament was deprived of the voice of a member like Arthur McDougal who at these contests (and ever since he began to take an interest in public affairs) made Land Value Taxation and Free Trade his policy, always urging that it be placed emphatically in the forefront of the programme of the Liberal Party, and that too, *speaking as a farmer*, insisting that that policy was as urgently needed for the benefit of agriculture as for every industrial occupation, for housing, employment and all the rest.

Captain McDougal was a member of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, the International Union, the Scottish Land Value Taxation League and the (now incorporated) Edinburgh League, acting as representative of the last named when it submitted evidence to the "Simes" enquiry committee on Site Value Rating. How assiduously he gave himself to the Henry George movement is shown in the many meetings he addressed under their auspices, not only in Scotland but also in England and Wales. He was a co-worker whose voice and pen were ever generously at command. Our older readers will call to mind the incisive and convincing articles he so frequently contributed to our columns, and the reports of his declarations on many a platform as in many a periodical. His theme was a just

system of land tenure and taxation, and in that preaching he never missed the opportunity to expose and denounce the policies that have driven the country far from that justice and along a disastrous road—protectionism, the quotas, the subsidies, the derating legislation, the cheap credits, the marketing schemes and all the rest. In this he drew on himself the hostility of the landlord-dominated sections of the National Farmers' Union, being at one time marked for expulsion from that body at the instance of the branches in Jedburgh and Hawick; his crime, that he had raised the fiscal question into a land question; that he had revealed the truth that the aids to agriculture resulted simply in landlord endowment. But he returned to the charge in a letter appearing in the *Scottish Farmer* and other papers. "I never claimed to pose as an authority," he wrote. "I speak as a plain practical farmer; my critics wish a State subsidy, dole or protection in order to enable the high rents of grain-growing land to be paid at the expense either of the overburdened taxpayer or of the consumers by way of dear food. The remedy, I suggest, is that these rents must come down instead of taxes on food prices going up. We farmers have the best markets at our doors; shackled by landlordism, antiquated leases and sporting rights, we must irrevocably remain a depressed industry; I cannot accept the proposal to put agriculture or any industry on the dole as any remedy at all."

The *Scottish Farmer*, in a leading article, said it would be useful if Captain McDougal's arguments were faced; his critics would make a mistake if they ignored them. That was in 1931. It was a voice not to be silenced. The open demonstration against it soon abated in face of the influence and the popularity which this campaigner won for himself.

Among Captain McDougal's writings were his pamphlets *Agriculture and Protection*, *Agriculture and Economic Depression*, *Agriculture and Taxation of Land Values*, *The Real Cause of Agricultural Distress*, and the Papers he presented at our International Conferences in Edinburgh, 1929, and London, 1936. Much of the content of the book *Scottish Land and Agriculture*, published in 1938 by the Scottish Liberal Federation—an impressive political document now unfortunately out of print—was provided by him. Seized with the teachings in Henry George's works, he helped greatly to spread them; and there must be many who are indebted to him for gift copies of *Progress and Poverty*, *Protection and Free Trade*, *Social Problems* and the booklet *Henry George on Economic Justice*, the collected passages from all the works, which was his favourite hand-out.

These words we echo, pronounced by the Rev. David A. Tosh at the funeral ceremony in Lauder: "As a man fearless on the political platform or in council chamber in pressing for reforms, improvements and the righting of wrongs, he sought to love his neighbours as himself and showed his patriotism by a life of public service. He revered the land and sought to make it holy by seeking to improve conditions, so that the people who lived on and by the land might be holy too."

Captain McDougal, whose eldest son, Major George McDougal, was killed on "D" Day during the second world war, is survived by his widow, one son and two daughters. To them, in their bereavement, and on behalf of all in the cause he so worthily upheld, we convey our sincere sympathy.

A. W. M.