

## RICHARD RAPIER STOKES

The Henry George School lost a noble supporter last month when R. R. Stokes, a Labor member of Parliament for Ipswich, Suffolk, died following an automobile accident at the age of sixty. He was an ardent advocate of land value taxation, a non-conforming Labor party member and a man of means, who frequently angered his Labor colleagues by opposing nationalization. They still made him Lord Privy Seal in the Labor Cabinet.

He challenged Sir Winston Churchill to stand up for his early speeches favoring land value taxation in the campaign with Lloyd George; and during World War II he protested what he called indiscriminate bombing of German cities. It was characteristic of him, however, that in 1937 he offered to make shells and tanks for the British government at cost price—an offer which was rejected.

Mr. Stokes was chairman and managing director of Ransomes & Rapier, Ltd., one of the world's largest manufacturers of mechanical excavators. As reported in The New York Times, "he was one of the first British industrialists to give workers holidays with pay, but opposed their forcible recruitment into labor unions.

"When Japan attacked Manchuria in 1931, Mr. Stokes refused to sell goods to Japan. In 1935 he withheld goods from Italy when Mussolini attacked Ethiopia.

"An opponent of all types of dictatorship, Mr. Stokes refused to sell engineering equipment to the Soviet Union in 1947 because he opposed the enslavement of 17,000,000 persons in the Baltic states of the Soviet Union."

Lancaster M. Greene, a trustee of the Henry George School (New York), recalls the 1936 conference of the International Union for Land Value Taxation in London, at which time Mr. Stokes heard the impromptu debate regarding the issue: a Henry George School or political action? He promptly set aside his two-week holiday period for the purpose of daily inviting friends to dine with him in his Palace Street home in an effort to win their support for the establishment of a Henry George School in England based on the American plan as outlined by Mr. Greene, Mrs. Anna George de Mille and Helen Denbigh.

So to some degree at least, the Henry George School in London owes its existence to the bold efforts of Richard Rapier Stokes.