

## Dukes of England

In the November 15th LIFE, English Lord Kinross views "The Dukes of England." Today, apart from the princes of the realm, Britain has 26 dukes. Their privileged prefix is "His Grace".

"Is this the twilight of the dukes?" asks reporter Kinross. Social revolution has stirred Britain throughout the twentieth century. The trend started during the reign of Edward VII, with a radical policy of taxing the lands of the rich, helped by a budget speech by Lloyd George, Chancellor of Exchequer, castigating ground landlords. World War I accelerated the process. By Armistice time, dukes were paying 10s. in each pound to the government and turning their estates into limited companies to avoid death duties.

Averaged, each duke has 8.5 titles; 3.6 homes; 45,000 acres of land; 1.1 wives and 2.2 children. Their combined wealth is more than \$250 million dollars. They own a substantial proportion of Britain's land. Only four have incomes less than \$100,000 a year; four have fortunes of more than \$25 million, and one-half are millionaires in pounds.

"Moreover," says Kinross, "this wealth has accumulated from generation to generation, throughout the centuries, together with vast landed estates, sometimes honeycombed with coal mines; palatial homes, sometimes hemmed in and encircled in the last century by industrial cities.

Last created and richest is the second Duke of Westminster, Baron Grosvenor of Eaton. In 1677, Grosvenor married a Miss Davis, heiress to marshy Ebury Farm, whose rent roll is four shillings per year. Today Ebury Farm is London's city of Westminster, valued at \$80 million and brings the Duke a huge annual income.

Best known is the Sixteenth Duke of Norfolk, hereditary marshal of England, premier duke and earl since the age of nine. He inherited \$85 million, with the feudal castle of Arundel, estates in Sheffield, Sussex, Derbyshire, Norfolk House in London (sold for \$1,500,000), priceless art treasures and one and one-half tons of gold plate. He now serves as Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture.

Eccentric and a pacifist is the twelfth Duke of Bedford. His father said he owed his wealth to "the fortunate possession of a few lodging houses in Bloomsbury." The Duke says war taxation reduced his income to one-quarter of that of his father.

"Whether or not the dukes are a vanishing species, doomed to extinction by death, taxes and the progress of social revolution re-

mains to be seen. Meanwhile, however, they are justifying their brave titles and traditions by fighting in their country's war on land and sea," concludes Lord Kinross.