

SIR JOHN MACDONELL

A "Single Taxer" in 1873

The late Sir John Macdonell, a jurist and public servant of high distinction, who died, aged 74, on the 24th March, made two remarkable contributions to economic literature when he was a young man. His *SURVEY OF POLITICAL ECONOMY* was published in 1871 and was followed by his *LAND QUESTION* published by Macmillan in 1873. In the latter book he declared that the land should be treated as common property and that the rent of land should be taken for public purposes. In one of his footnotes he cites Henry George's pamphlet *OUR LAND AND LAND POLICY*, and in his chapter on "The Principles of the Question" he sets forth the Single Tax idea with astonishing clearness six years before *PROGRESS AND POVERTY* was given to the world. But *THE LAND QUESTION* was written only to be forgotten, and so far as we know the author made no further contribution to the subject. The book was discovered in a second-hand bookshop in 1910, and at the time one or two extracts were printed from it in *LAND VALUES*. The following passages show how Sir John Macdonell saw the truth, and indicate what great ability he had to express and explain it.