

ECHOES FROM MOSS SIDE WEST

Mr Arthur H. Weller's Victory



COUNCILLOR ARTHUR H. WELLER, J.P.

In the Municipal Elections on 1st November Mr Arthur H. Weller, J.P., Secretary of the Manchester Land Values League, stood as "Land Values Candidate" in the Moss Side West Ward, Manchester.

The result of the voting was:—

Arthur H. Weller (Land Values)	.. 2,016
Thomas Dunham (Conservative)	.. 1,770

The seat was gained from the Conservatives, Mr Dunham having been representative for the ward in the City Council.

On 2nd November the *Manchester Guardian*, in a leader on the previous day's elections, said: "Mr Arthur Weller, fighting upon the Land Values Taxation issue, gained a remarkable success in Moss Side West," and also, on another page, said that Mr Weller's majority of 245 amply justified his fighting on this sole issue. If the recipe is required for achieving similar results in other places, the answer is: first, get a candidate whose personality, like Mr Weller's, has impressed itself upon the life and mind of a locality by 20 years loyal advocacy of a great principle. Local circumstances rather than choice made Moss Side, Manchester, the district where Land Values doctrine has been preached in season and out. The opportunity was so used by Mr Weller that the electors have been compelled to recognize his dogged persistence.

The further ingredients are, attractive literature and its judicious circulation. Much credit is due to the local Moss Side Land Values Association, under the secretaryship of Mr John Garner, who have made a quarterly house-to-house distribution of well-chosen leaflets, during the last two years. This kept the interest alive, ready for the appointment in October of the election committee, with Mr W. Withington as chairman.

Again, the election literature itself was of an unusually telling kind. A special edition of Mr Weller's

monthly journal, the *Porcupine*, was left at every house, as a first step in the campaign. As this is a type-written sheet, it probably received special attention from the electors. The address was also something different and better than the usual municipal candidate's apology for standing. This and the poll cards were adorned with two of Mr Andrew MacLaren's cartoons on land monopoly.

Special attention must be drawn to the new plan decided on by Mr Weller and his committee, that is, of concentrating on the canvass. This kind of work had not been specialized in on previous occasions. Now, however, we determined to canvass as thoroughly as our small band of workers would permit. The result was to confirm our view that this election would be won on the doorsteps of the people. We found it more effective, for election purposes, than open air meetings, though these were held, and also the usual indoor meetings.

Our experience was refreshingly unexpected. We found that canvassing was not necessarily a matter of heated arguments; most often it required a word or two, mentioning the candidate and his policy; noting the reply and passing to the next house. Also it did not require two workers to call at each house; we went out two by two, but called one on every other house. It was surprising how the most reserved and quiet workers came night after night to the committee room, not to discuss the prospects of success, but to ask for more canvass work, and to go out and make success sure. A first complete canvass of every house was made, and a good proportion of the second canvass. On the Saturday previous to the Tuesday's poll the canvass results justified an estimate of 2,050 votes for Land Values. Mr Weller's actual vote was 2,015: a tribute to the thoroughness with which our canvassers did their part of the work.

These matter-of-fact details are given in the hope that they may be of guidance in many a similar fight. We had about three motor cars against about a dozen. Against us was the highly specialized and practised Tory party organization. The factors that enabled Mr Weller to increase his poll under these circumstances are worthy of close study. The policy, the candidate, the work, these are the three essentials of success, according to Moss Side West experience.

The work has been doubly justified by the signs already of new attention that has been forced on to the Land Value policy. Our new Lord Mayor makes reference to the need for rating Land Values in his inaugural address to the City Council. A bye-election candidate is just now announced as being a "supporter of the Taxation of Land Values." They are, in these parts, certainly paying more attention. Now that we have at last a progressive preponderance in our Manchester Council, Mr Weller's triumph has come in the "nick of time." At the same time, it is a personal triumph, and we, in Manchester, are grateful to him for his leadership and example in hard work.

D. J. J. O.

The election of Mr Arthur H. Weller as a representative of the Moss Side West Ward on the Manchester City Council was celebrated at a Social Gathering held in the Edinburgh Hall, Moss Side, Manchester, on 30th November. Mr Weller's success has brought new life and inspiration to the Manchester League, and there are high hopes of the extension of the propaganda in many directions. The new Land Values member of the City Council can be relied upon to make the most of his opportunity. In behalf of our united movement we again offer him heartiest congratulations.—[EDITOR, *L. & L.*]