

HIGH LAND PRICES STIFLE INDUSTRY

Why do big business firms in search of new factory sites not come to Cardiff?

The Cardiff correspondent of the *News Chronicle* (30th May) says that the Local Development Committee have had dozens of inquiries from prospective manufacturers and others in the last 12 months, but not one of them has been brought to fruition.

In explanation a member of the Committee said: "There is no doubt that we are ideally situated for many works seeking a site, and although we can give them all the labour, both skilled and unskilled, that can be required, and offer them an unexcelled public service of water, power and light, there are other factors beyond our control.

NO SECURITY

"I refer, of course, to the acquisition of land. What big firm is going to sink large sums of money in establishing works when they have no security of tenure beyond a couple of generations?

"This inability to acquire cheap freehold land is the stumbling block, and we must sooner or later tackle the question seriously if we entertain hopes of attracting new industries."

On the following day Councillor George Williams, Chairman of the Development Committee, stated that there was no difficulty in getting sites. Big landowners such as the Marquis of Bute, the Earl of Plymouth and Lord Tredegar were anxious for the development of the city and put no obstacle in the way in the matter of sites or prices.

In an interview in the *News Chronicle* (5th June) Mr C. A. Gardner, Vice-Chairman of the Welsh League for the Taxation of Land Values, said that everyone in Cardiff knew of the difficulties with regard to land.

"As evidence that this is a fact I would point to the action of the Cardiff City Council (of which Mr George Williams is a member) who recently sent out an invitation to all the local authorities in Wales to take part in a conference to discuss the question of the taxation of land values and the desirability of taxing land that is allowed to remain idle because its owners are holding out for exorbitant prices.

"That step was taken on a motion sponsored by two independent members of the Council and passed by a large majority.

"Presumably the Council took this step because they know full well that the high price of land is retarding development.

"Let us be frank and face the facts. You do not get rid of difficulties by pretending that they do not exist. They do undoubtedly exist, and they must be tackled by Wales as a whole, if possible, but certainly by Cardiff."

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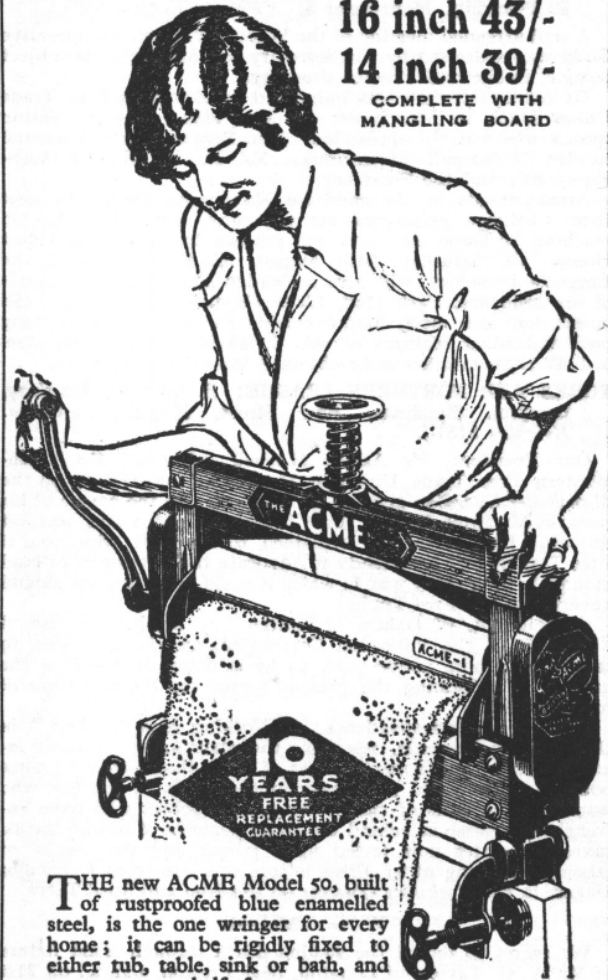
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