

## NEAR VICTORY IN DERBYSHIRE

During the recent Borough Council elections, Mr. George Musson stood as candidate for election to the Town Council of Heanor, his constituency being the Codnor Ward where his home is. He accepted nomination by the Labour Party on the sole and strict condition that his policy was the Rating of Land Values—that and that alone—and before the campaign was over he had effectually gained the public ear. The opposition he had to face was extremely strong, the other candidate being Mr. C. B. Wood, a popular schoolmaster, head of the biggest and most powerful religious denomination, with 45 years of public service behind him in the Council and all that time having never been required to fight an election. For years, Mr. Wood had been a Labour representative, but either he deserted the Party or they found reasons for opposing him, and the Party got—in George Musson—a candidate who insisted upon fighting on his own chosen ground. But the local influence of Mr. Musson's opponent backed by a sort of hero-worshipping sympathy for that 82-year old veteran proved too strong a combination. It was remarkable that in those circumstances Mr. Musson attracted so many votes, the result being: C. B. Wood, 1,081; G. F. Musson, 899. Against any other candidate Mr. Musson would have won.

personal grounds. In my opinion, the Election should be decided on policies and not on persons.

When local elections are fought, all candidates are lavish with promises to keep the rates down. But much more important is the basis on which the rates are levied. Under the present system, rates are levied on a property according to the yearly rent it would fetch if let in its existing condition. Thus vacant land pays no rates; empty houses are exempt from rates. Slum property, no matter how valuable the site may be, pays less than well-developed property. This system inevitably discourages the best use of land and encourages speculation to hold land or empty houses for a rise in value.

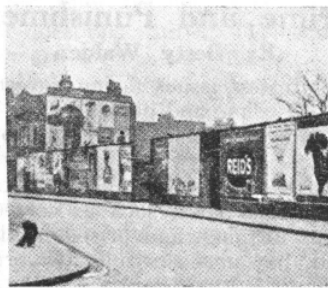
During the last 30 years I have seen Codnor double the amount of land built on in the area. New properties have been built in every direction. Apart from the large number of privately-built houses on all sides, over 200 Council houses have been built in the village. This has meant heavily increased demand for land. It has meant new roads and streets, increased expenditure on education, and those services which the community supplies to its members. These have to be paid for. These, together with the increase in population, have caused a big increase in the value of land in the area.



Well-Improved Site—  
HIGH RATES.



Valuable Site and Tumble-down  
Buildings—LOW RATES.



Valuable Vacant Site—  
NO RATES.

Sir Edgar Harper, late Chief Valuer to the Board of Inland Revenue, said: "The amount of taxation serious as it appears, is not so important as the method by which it is imposed. This side of the question is best illustrated in the case of local rates. These are levied in proportion to net annual value. But it is NOT the annual value of each property in the market, but the annual value of the use that happens to be made of it. Land may have a high value for building, but so long as the occupier chooses to use it for grazing, it can only be rated as pasture. A costly building will have a high rateable value, but on the adjacent similar plot a wooden shanty may be put up, and its rateable value will not be one-fourth as much. And unoccupied land and property is not liable for rates at all. Thus the man who keeps land and buildings out of use pays nothing; he who uses them but partially pays little; he who uses them fully pays more, and he who improves and extends them pays most of all. It is difficult to imagine any system of taxation better calculated to discourage enterprise or to keep industry on the lowest level at which it can continue to exist.

### THE REMEDY IS:

**LEVY RATES ON LAND VALUE: RELIEVE BUILDINGS AND IMPROVEMENTS!**

Following is the text of Mr. Musson's Election Address, sent to 2,700 residents:—

### FELLOW ELECTORS

I have been chosen by the Codnor Ward Labour Party as their standard-bearer in the forthcoming U.D.C. Election. While I did not seek this nomination, I welcome the opportunity of placing before you a policy which we have long advocated—the policy of the Rating of Land Values in lieu of the present antiquated and unjust method of raising local revenue. I ask you to give your vote primarily on this issue. I do not seek your support on

Heanor U.D.C. spent many thousands of pounds in making a magnificent new road to Woodlinkin and Aldercar and the value of land in that district jumped up four-fold. But these improvements were paid for by the general body of ratepayers, or taxpayers, not by the landowners whose land was increased in value. All public improvements, all increase of population raises Land Value. No wonder that a famous political economist, Prof. Thorold Rogers, said, "The landlord sleeps but thrives."

Mr. Herbert Morrison put it clearly when he said; "It is grossly unjust that the landowners who benefit so

much from the existence of the community and from the work of the local authorities should be specifically exempted from contributing their share to the work of the local authorities. The general body of ratepayers, including the residents, the little shopkeeper, the business men, the lower middle class, the owner-occupier who is purchasing his house under a loan: all this body of ratepayers are paying more rates in order that landowners shall pay no rates."

This, ladies and gentlemen, is by no means an over-drawn picture of our rating system.

Every move for increased amenities for Codnor will have my support and probably that of my opponents also. The only difference is that as those amenities will increase the value of the land in Codnor, I claim that these communally-created values should go to the community. The issue then on which I ask your support is the abolition of the present basis of levying local taxation and the substitution of land values as the basis of taxation, such rates to be levied on all land whether used or unused.

It is, I understand, the usual practice to publish a candidate's photograph with his election address. This

is unnecessary. You all know what I look like. Instead, take a look at the photographs of three typical sites which illustrate very well how our local rating system penalises enterprise and encourages the speculator.

This policy has been tried in many of our Dominions, including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and in Denmark. At the last General Election, the party in Denmark who made it the first item on their programme, doubled their representation. In the recent Danish Local Government elections, they made large gains, thus showing that the electors, after trial, found this policy worth supporting.

*So vote for a sane and just rating system!*

GEORGE F. MUSSON.

County Councillor L. E. Searson was chairman of the election committee and he rendered particularly valuable service throughout the campaign, as did Mrs. E. Calladine and Mr. Fred. Grace. Success was in compelling opponents to debate the rating of land values and in making that a live issue; the discussion well thrown open and the seed well sown for the harvest to be reaped on next occasion.

## TEN-MINUTE PAPERS

*(Read at the Week-End School, May 6-8, of the Henry George School of Social Science)*

### Crime and Punishment

By Betty Walden

One of the greatest issues facing governments to-day is the problem of crime and punishment. This problem, like so many others, is being dealt with by reformatory methods.

The Criminal Justice Act of 1948 put into effect several reforms in the penal laws, such as corrective training, the abolition of flogging, and prisons without bars. It also attempted, but unsuccessfully, to bring about the abolition of Capital Punishment.

As regards the abolition of flogging, this is very desirable in itself, as it was a degrading and primitive form of punishment; and hanging is a barbarous practice which, while it goes on, is a disgrace to any community calling itself civilised.

Although the Royal Commission on Capital Punishment recently declared that death by hanging is instantaneous and the most humane form of execution, there is obviously doubt about this in some quarters, as shown by the law that the death sentence may not be carried out on a person after three attempts at execution have failed.

Nevertheless, our present Home Secretary has granted more reprieves than any of his predecessors, and the death sentence is not very often put into effect.

Experts on crime are now beginning to admit, with rather naive amazement, that so far, changes in punishment, whether more or less vigorous, do not seem to bring about any appreciable difference in the number of crimes committed.

It is probably for this reason that psychiatry is now being used more widely as treatment in dealing with criminals. This may help in certain cases, but applied as a general rule, it will have no more lasting effect than other methods, being merely an effort to treat effects instead of removing causes.

A healthy society is one without fear. Neither prison reform nor psychological treatment of individuals will

have any permanent effect on crime until the basic causes of fear and inequality have been removed. Bad living caused by bad social conditions cannot be cured by psychological methods.

Corrective training may help in certain cases, provided the person concerned is fortunate enough to get out of his or her previous environment, but all too often these people are forced back into the same circumstances, and find it difficult to keep straight.

The present crime wave is rather exceptional; it is generally agreed to have its origin in the existence of an army of deserters, of which there are in this country about 20,000. As these men are without identity cards or ration books, the things which give us permission to buy our food these days, they must be living by their wits, since chances of normal employment are closed to them. Men desert from the Forces for a variety of reasons, either through domestic trouble or some other emergency—sometimes through physical fear. In any case they are desperate men, and while being hunted as criminals, and having once escaped from authority, they are only a short step from actual crime.

At present, they have only two alternatives open to them—to give themselves up, facing a period of military detention and probably a further period in the Forces, or continuing their precarious "illegal" existences. There is, of course, the danger that the longer the present attitude towards deserters continues, the less possibility is there of the first alternative being open to them, as they will have also the fear of being detained for further charges after their period of detention for desertion is finished.

A general amnesty to enable these men to return to their normal lives and make a fresh start as honest citizens is the only answer to that problem. Moreover, the additional labour force thereby freed would help to increase the wealth of the community.

With regard to crime in the general sense, the present government's attitude is rather paradoxical. On the one