

would be an interesting experiment. How would the occupiers of these expensive houses fare, if there were no plumbers, carpenters, scavengers and other workmen in Middlesex? And what would happen to the land values of Middlesex if these services could not be obtained? Perhaps the values of those houses which the committee desire to encourage would, for lack of tenants, fall to the level where the public services cost more than the rates. If so, its last state would be worse than its first.

FARMERS AND HIGH RENTS The Position in Wales

At the meeting of the Council of Agriculture for Wales at Shrewsbury (*Western Mail*, 19th December), Mr William Edwards proposed a resolution, which was carried, declaring that the time was ripe for the establishment of a rent court or other body for the purpose of fixing fair rents for agricultural holdings in Wales. All the information in his possession, he said, led him to the conclusion that the amount of rent paid by the agriculturists of Wales today, at the very depth of the depression, was greater than it had ever been before. That meant that the sleeping partner in the industry took a larger share of the profit than ever. Then there was a new sleeping partner whose grip on the industry was becoming tighter every year—the financier, who also was taking more in rent and interest than ever before.

MERE RENT RECEIVERS

If they were to continue to be a democratic country a change must come before long for two reasons. One was that the landlord as such had ceased to perform any function in rural economy. Landlords in Wales were fast becoming mere rent receivers.

The second reason was to be found in the applying of public money on a lavish scale by the State to prop up the industry. Between £20,000,000 and £30,000,000 of public money was being used yearly to keep the agricultural industry going, and with what result?—the present serious state of agriculture and the deep depression felt everywhere.

There was nothing to show that the £30,000,000 had had any effect in putting new life into the industry. His own impression was that the poor farmer received the money in one hand and paid it out with the other in rent or interest, and he hoped the council would face the realities of the situation, for he was firmly convinced that control at the top would have no effect in putting new life into the industry until they had control at the other end over the land.

Mr T. Lloyd Jones said he knew of instances in which tenants had asked in depressed times for a reduction of rents, raised in prosperous times shortly after the War, and had been reminded by the landlord that as they had been relieved of their rates they should be able to pay the rents.

At a meeting of the Hampshire County Council the Agricultural Committee called attention to the fact that there is in the north of the county an estate of 2,500 acres "which has been seriously neglected for a number of years, the land being practically derelict and many of the buildings ruinous," and "approximately 500 acres of this estate are infected with injurious weeds." The committee recalled the many efforts they had made to secure the proper cultivation of the land, in all of which they had been unsuccessful. As a last resort they approached the Ministry of Agriculture with the view of getting them to acquire the land, under the provisions of the Agricultural Land (Utilisation Act) 1931, but when last year a deputation waited on the Ministry they were told that there were no funds available. The committee now reported that they "are renewing their application to the Ministry in the hope that Parliament may be asked to make the necessary provision for taking the work in hand next year."—*Hampshire Observer*, 1st December.

These are amusing speculations. The fallacy that has led the committee astray is failure to observe that public services, as well as all the other advantages of living in a civilized community, are reflected in the value of land. The occupiers of houses rated at £26, or at any other value, should not be expected to pay the full cost of public services when there is a communal value available, which they have created, sufficient to defray this charge.

A RADICAL STATEMENT Capt. A. R. McDougal's Platform

As reported in our last issue, Capt. A. R. McDougal has been adopted as prospective Liberal candidate for Roxburgh and Selkirk. In his speech accepting nomination Capt. McDougal said: Whilst I feared what a Tory Nationalist Government might do, I did not quite appreciate the full measure of the danger. I did not imagine that they were capable of wholesale breaches of pledges, and that they would use the majority obtained by panic to push a purely Tory policy to the extent they have done. Who of us thought that they would indulge in such wild reaction, would tax the food of the people by millions, would shift the burden of taxation from the rich to the poor? Who thought of these infamous Marketing Schemes whereby liberty is hampered underfoot and the consumer mulcted to the tune of over £20,000,000 a year? I consider the present state of affairs a far greater crisis and emergency than the crisis of 1931, and it is because of a sense of duty that I am willing to go forward again. In the path I am taking there are few if any rewards, but plenty of penalties—financial, social and otherwise—but someone must take a lead to restore our liberties.

My views are well known and have not changed. I stand for a return to Free Trade—to freedom for the individual to buy his goods in the cheapest market, and, in particular, food. I stand for the right of the community to take in taxation the land or site value it has itself created. I stand for the shifting of the burden of the rates from the houses on to the land by means of a drastic Land Values Tax, whereby houses will be derated, and, as regards rural housing, the first charge on the land should be decent houses for those who work on the land. I stand for drastic revision of our land system so that the public will no longer be fleeced unmercifully whenever a bit of land is needed or a spring of water required. I stand for greater and wise expenditure on National Development and Housing. I stand for the abolition of all statutory powers of compulsion now held by Marketing Boards. I stand for the freeing of road transport from vexatious regulations, regulations imposed with the view to making road transport dearer. I would say we attack no individual or class, and that we put the community as a whole first. Let the electors decide our case on its merits.

OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY

"If you owned a tract of land so far removed from a good road that you couldn't give it away, and the State should come along and build a beautiful new highway right through the centre of it, how would that affect its value?"

"O, boy! I'd be rich as Croesus!"

"With other people's money," I added laconically.

"Other people's money—how come?"

"Other people would be taxed to pay for the road. They would feed the cow and you'd get the milk."

"But somebody must get the milk; why not I as well as another?"

"No reason at all, except that the milk belongs to those who feed the cow—the general public, or rather the public treasury—while other people's money belongs in their own pockets. In this way the highway would pay for itself, and nobody would be out anything."

"Sounds like Henry George," he said.

And it is Henry George, but it's common sense, too.—Horatio in the *Broom* (San Diego), 22nd October.