

WHAT THE QUOTAS WILL COST

By Capt. A. R. McDougal

The *Daily Herald* (London), 18th November, carried another striking page article by Captain Arthur McDougal, entitled "Cut the Surplus—Don't Throw It Away." As a practical farmer, the writer condemned the meat quotas in plain set terms: "Since a rise of one penny per pound on foreign meat alone will put over £6,000,000 into the meat trusts' pockets, one is not surprised at their agreeing, but as the consumer is to find this money he cannot be expected to share in the Government's futile pride.

"A penny a pound rise means annually £4,000,000 on Dominion supplies and £7,000,000 on home supplies, so that altogether the consumer will be taxed nearly £18,000,000 for a penny rise, £10,000,000 of which will go overseas or into the meat magnates' pockets, and the rest absorbed in increased land values.

"The only beneficiaries ultimately of the great meat quota will be the big meat trusts and such landowners as demand and exact a rack rent or price for their land.

"To talk of a surplus supply of meat is folly and worse in face of the fact of nearly three million unemployed and probably over fifteen million not getting enough meat. The meat quotas mean in reality that thousands of tons of meat will be destroyed.

"How can the 'National' Government, slave of vested interests though it be, decree the destruction of huge meat supplies, when our starving millions need it? Wages, salaries, unemployment benefits, rates of interests—all have been cut, and now we have this wanton destruction.

"A heavy reckoning is in store for those selfish or foolish rulers who, at the behest of vested interests in trusts and land, prevent the people from obtaining without hindrance the gifts of a bountiful Providence.

"The wheat and meat quotas will cost, perhaps, £23,000,000 next year, and all of it will go into private pockets."

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In the columns of the *Forward* (Glasgow), 17th December, Capt. McDougal concludes a discussion with Mr Tom Johnson and Mr J. F. Duncan.

"It is utterly futile to try to create prosperity by causing scarcity and damming up supplies overseas. More Consumer Purchasing Power is the immediate remedy, and the permanent remedy is Land Reform and Land Value Taxation.

"As Mr Duncan says, I am a Henry Georgian. I would suggest that it is not Capital that is hurting Labour. It is Land that is robbing both Capital and Labour, and Land looks on and laughs whilst Capital and Labour fight over the plunder which Land meantime annexes.

"The mass of voters are not quite satisfied either with the Liberal or Socialist Parties, and there is a great support awaiting any Party that really makes its first planks Drastic Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade, and sticks to it with no compromise."

The Reference Library of *Land & Liberty* could be helped by spare copies of standard works on the Enclosure Acts. This assistance is needed for a pamphlet on the subject which is now in preparation by one of our able students. The historical information that such a pamphlet would contain is continually in request. We already possess *The English Peasantry and the Enclosure of Common Fields*, by Gilbert Slater; *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, by Albert Gasquet; and *The Economic Causes of the Reformation in England*, by Oscar A. Marti, Professor of History, Central Missouri State Teachers' College, 1929.

BRISTOL UNDER TRIBUTE

Three of the sites bought by the City of Bristol (in 1919, 1921 and 1929) for housing purposes are those at Sea Mills, Shirehampton and Southmead.

Striking information was given about these sites in the Election Address of Mr R. St. John Reade, standing as Labour Candidate for the Westbury Ward, 1st November. The details are:—

Housing Estate.	Acres.	Price.	Gross	Net
			Annual Value.	Rateable Value.*
Sea Mills	... 187	£28,050	£280½	£67
Shirehampton	... 42	£24,600	£328	£78
Southmead	... 422	£54,016	£527½	£128

* Reduced by virtue of the Agricultural Rates Acts.

The total area was 691 acres, and the total purchase price was £106,666, being equivalent to £154 per acre. The previous "gross annual value" of this "agricultural land" was £1,136, and the net rateable value on which rates had been paid previous to purchase was £271. The price was 90 times the gross annual value and 400 times the value on which rates were paid.

While this valuable land was withheld from use against the needs of the community, the City received yearly no more than £169 from it in local rates. On the other hand, when the City was obliged to buy it for housing purposes, the owners received the "real market value" (wholly created by the community) amounting to £106,666.

This market value is equivalent (at 5 per cent) to an annual value of £5,333. If the rates in Bristol (at 12s. 6d. in the £) had been levied on *that* land value, the proprietors would have required to pay, every year, the sum of £3,333. In these circumstances, how long would the proprietors have been content to speculate in the value of this so-called "agricultural land"?

The rating of land values would break the iron ring of land monopoly around our towns. By the same token, since land value rating necessarily means the abolition of rates on houses and all improvements, the housing problem would be solved through it, without Housing Acts or Housing Subsidies, which have so scandalously enriched the land monopolist everywhere.

Mr St. John Reade points out how much more unjust the conditions are since the passing of the 1929 Derating Act. This relieved "agricultural" land of *all* rates. There are thousands of acres of such land around the City. "It will sell, as building sites, for hundreds of thousands of pounds, *but it does not pay one penny to the rates. The growth of the community creates this land value. The landlord pockets it and grows rich in his sleep.*"

Mr St. John Reade, though defeated at the poll, secured 2,725 of the 6,632 votes cast. In a leaflet accompanying his Election Address, he threw light on this land transaction from the "distant" financial point of view. For the purchase of the land, £106,666 was borrowed at 5 per cent. For eighty years the ratepayers will have to pay £5,597 a year (£5,333 interest and £264 sinking fund)—altogether £447,760 for the identical pieces of land which, previous to purchase, had been valued for rating purposes at £271 a year.

And there are those who imagine that the land question has nothing to do with housing, putting their faith in town-planning so called, criminally blind to public scandals of this character. This Bristol case is no isolated example. Every town in the country has the same bitter experience.

A. W. M.