

of Finsbury and Holborn interviewed the present owners of the site, and an alternative scheme was evolved for the consideration of local authorities and persons concerned. The new proposal is that only about six acres should be acquired at a price of £330,000; this purchase carrying with it the transference by the owners of their interest as owners in the open spaces of Brunswick and Mecklenburgh Squares, adjoining the Foundling site, and to which the tenants of houses in the squares concerned have private rights of use and of maintenance at their own expense.

At a meeting of the Finsbury Borough Council held on 24th June to consider the alternative scheme, Councillor Du Cann spoke of the owners as "hard-headed business men dealing with idealists and never abating their price." The Mayor pointed out that the site had been valued by Mr Hunt, the L.C.C. valuer, who held the price was a fair one.

**The Better Plan.**—This is what happens under the present system. The people who are so active in advancing the appeal for money to acquire this site are just they who oppose the principle of taxing land values—Professor Trevelyan, Sir E. Hilton Young, M.P., Mr Stuart Bevan, M.P., and their associates of the town- and country-planning and playing-fields organizations.

Assuming that the price placed upon the Foundling site by the owners is a "fair one," it reflects the services rendered in that district in the matter of lighting, water supply, sanitation, policing, and the like; services that are maintained by the general body of ratepayers. Can any good reason be given why the owners of this site should not pay rates on its value? Why should others in the neighbourhood who have improved the amenities have to pay rates on their improvements in order to maintain these services? The economic effect of the land value policy—apart from its appeal to plain justice—would be to bring down to its natural level the price of all vacant land, by forcing land into the market. When land is thus cheapened there will be no difficulty in providing permanent open spaces and playing fields, or in preserving the amenities of town or country.

**Local Authorities and Land Prices.**—In the House of Commons debate on the Budget Resolutions, 6th May, Sir Wm. Mitchell-Thomson said:

I do not believe that in the course of these discussions one case will be brought forward in which it can truly be said that a local authority which rightfully desires to get land for public purposes is unable to do so at a fair market price.

Sir Wm. Mitchell-Thomson is answered by fact and figures from painful municipal experience that is beyond dispute. The scandal is so notorious that local authorities have been compelled time and again to pretend that they are not in the market, and they appoint agencies to act for them. Here, for example, is the confession that Mr E. C. Fawley, Chairman of the Middlesex County Council, made in an address to the Federation of Ratepayers' Associations of Middlesex, reported in the *Tottenham Weekly Herald* on 13th March.

Mr Fawley said:

"Highways were very costly, and the need for vision was evidenced in this work, but they could not do all that was needed. How many of them were there who had not said, 'When are you going to do that corner?' 'How long is this road going to remain in this dangerous state?' 'Look at this narrow road. When is it going to be done?' There were 34 authorities in the County, which was larger than the whole of the County of London. All wanted things done. All said, 'We must have this done; why the delay?' It was not

always the County's fault, but often that of the Ministry. The cost was great, largely because it had been left too late. The area had developed, and they had to buy land in developed areas.

"In one case they paid at the rate of £70,000 per acre for a small area essential to the job. They sold about half of it at the rate of £44,000 an acre. They were compelled to buy, and had to pay through the nose for it. *A special committee had been set up to buy land, etc., without the owner knowing who the actual buyer was.*" (The italics are ours.)

#### **India. Land Value £3,000,000 to £750,000,000.**

"The writer may give an instance from his own experience. We took over the Punjab 80 years ago. It had then an area of 80,000,000 acres, of which 12,000,000 only were under precarious cultivation. The average value was then five shillings an acre. There were no roads, railways or canals. When he left the Punjab in 1920 there were, as the result of security, railways and canals, 30,000,000 acres under cultivation, 12,000,000 acres irrigated, and the average value was £25 per acre. Thus the capital value of land had risen in 70 years of British rule from £3,000,000 to £750,000,000."—(*The Daily Mail Blue Book on the Indian Crisis.*)

For the above we are not indebted to anyone who is advocating our policy, but to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., former Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab. The facts, on such authority, are not likely to be challenged, but it is strange how few seem able to draw the moral from them.

It is an example on a large scale of how material improvements inevitably raise land values without any proportionate gain to the labouring masses.

### **GEORGE B. ORR**

We deeply regret to have to announce the death of George B. Orr, which took place at his home in London on 27th May after a trying illness. Mr Orr had been identified with the movement for the past twenty-five years. He had served as Vice-President of the Yorkshire League, and in taking up his residence in London became for a time a member of the United Committee. He was a keen Free Trader, and both in business and political circles never failed to uphold the principle. In argument he knew how to identify the Free Trade crusade with the Land Value policy, and unless both were connected with any possible campaign he was not much interested.

He took an active part in the 1909 Budget agitation, and the famous illustrated poster issued by the United Committee pointing to land monopoly as the direct cause of unemployment in urban and rural districts, was his idea. The poster from the first was a decided success. It appealed to very many candidates and agents throughout the country and had its own influence, in the ferment of the day.

Among his friends and associates George Orr was known for his independent thought on industrial questions. A Liberal in politics, he was not identified with any Liberal organization. His interest in politics no one could doubt, but he preferred to consider any project on its merits and not as a party man. Even in his Henry George convictions he preferred to go his own way, though he kept in constant touch with the work of the United Committee. In the name of his many friends in the movement we extend to his son and daughter, and the family circle, our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

J. P.