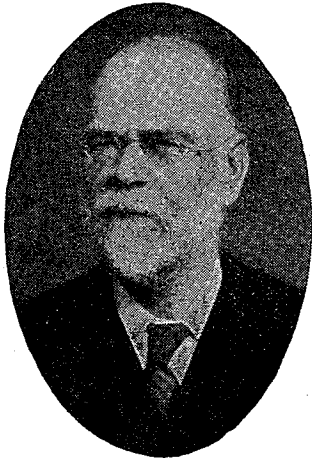


## SIR EDGAR HARPER

By the death of Sir Edgar Harper, F.S.I., F.S.S., Hon. F.A.S., the movement has lost a stalwart supporter, and the writer of this note a dear friend of more than 40 years' standing.



He passed away in London, after a long illness, on 23rd January, at the age of 74. He was in the service of the London County Council for nearly 30 years; was appointed Assistant Valuer in 1891 and Statistical Officer nine years later. In the course of his work he acquired an unrivalled knowledge of the problems of valuation and rating which strengthened his enthusiasm for the taxation and rating of land values, and made him one of its best informed and most persuasive advocates. The writer remembers with gratitude his readiness to give help, privately,

on difficult problems as they arose, and throughout the whole of his public service he gave financial help to the English League, although his official position prevented him from publicly identifying himself with its activities.

After the passing of the 1909-10 Finance Bill, Mr Lloyd George asked the London County Council to allow Mr Harper to serve on a Treasury Committee on Imperial and Local Taxation. The Council, probably on account of Harper's known Radical views on the subject, first suggested another of their officers, and then refused to "lend" any of their officials to the Treasury. He resigned his position at County Hall, at considerable financial sacrifice, being, as Mr Lloyd George stated in the House, "a very independent man," who would not submit to the snub publicly administered to him by the Council. He agreed to serve on the Treasury Committee, as Mr Lloyd George assured the House, without any promise from the Government to find him another office. Some months later he was offered and accepted the important post of Chief Valuer to the Inland Revenue, and thus became responsible for the carrying out of the National Land Valuation, called for in the Finance Act, 1909-10. He was retired under the age limit in 1925.

At the first public function that he was able to attend after relinquishing his public office, he expressed his joy at being at last "unmuzzled." Henceforth he was free to give full expression to his views by voice and pen. When a knighthood was conferred upon him in 1920, he valued it chiefly as a compliment to the good work done by his department. When the English League offered to nominate him as a Vice-President he declined the "honour," and said that he would much prefer to be a member of "the working body"—the executive committee—to which he was elected at the Annual Meeting of the League in 1926. He also served as a member of the United Committee. He had never hesitated to express his views, so far as opportunity permitted, in giving evidence at public inquiries when representing the L.C.C. For the League he wrote pamphlets on "Trade Depression and Unemployment" and "The Root Cause of the Coal Trouble."

The League also reprinted from the *Contemporary Review* his article on "The Speculative Element in the Value of Land." An article on the Rating of Land Values, specially written in view of the November Municipal Elections, was circulated to a large number of provincial papers, and printed by many of them. He gave evidence on behalf of the Executive before the public inquiry into the enclosure of London Squares. The pages of *Land & Liberty* have often been enriched by his contributions. Illness cut short his activities, and the death of this great public servant and faithful disciple of Henry George now leaves a vacancy in our ranks which it will not be easy to fill. The sympathy of all who knew him will go out to Lady Harper in her bereavement after her short married life clouded by his long illness.

F. V.