

## ***The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 And the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.***

*The following is a list, in date order, of the articles that appeared in the newspapers at the time of the tithe "wars" - those that mention Hooe, specifically, are Nos. 009 and 010.*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Newspaper</b>
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012	1933-10-14	“Tithe War - £200 Subscribed at Bexhill Meeting”	B. O.

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001	1928-02-04	Letter from H. W. Maycock – “The Origin of Tithes” (general notes)	B.O.
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### **THE ORIGIN OF TITHES**

#### ***To the editor of the “Bexhill Observer”***

*I do not wish to incur the Editorial reproach so kindly conveyed in the phrase “This correspondence must now close” so, may I say if you have room for this Mr. Editor, it is my last word.*

*I am sorry Mr. Osborn was hurt at my suggestion that he was not an authority on the Pope and his mediaeval activities. I wrote the words with a smile feeling that here, at any rate, we were in the same boat, and, also, I find I am in the boat alone.*

*His reference to the angry schoolmaster puts me in an even more awkward position. We have ten schoolmasters in our congregation at St. Peter’s, and I am sure that all of them are sometimes angry. I simply dare not resent association with them. I can only plead that in what I said, and in the way I said it, I was not consciously aiming at the compliment of being compared with them.*

*But in spite of the fact that I am not an authority, etc (see above), I was under the impression that “tenth” as distinct from “tithes”, were paid only by the Clergy to the Pope. They were an occasional exaction when the Pope wanted to build a new church in Rome, or carry on a campaign against a German Prince or an Italian Count. They were never paid by the Laity, and have long since ceased. First fruits were similarly paid by the Clergy, and still are. When payment to the Pope ceased they were paid to the Crown. Queen Anne*

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*recognised that the Clergy were paying an extra tax, and decided that it should benefit the Church, hence Queen Anne's Bounty.*

*A very large proportion of the tithe paid throughout the country was a voluntary gift to the parson, made by the original owner, and his land was handed on, or sold by him with this condition attached. The inheritor knew that he had to make this payment, and the purchaser paid so much less for his land because of this charge upon it. Later, it seems, the State made this charge general, and herein an injustice was done, which we should all like remedied.*

*For the voluntary nature of a large part of the tithe, and for nearly all the glebe, deeds of gift and documentary evidence remain.*

*The fact that that tithe, which has got into the hands of, and is paid to lay people or societies, even that which is paid to a non-conformist community (and there are some cases of this), the fact, I say, that all such tithe is not to be touched, only that which is paid to the Church, suggests some other motive than that of "remedying an injustice". I wonder what that motive is? Yes, Mr. Osborne, I wonder.*

*Yours very truly,*

*H. W. Maycock.*

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<b>002</b>	<b>1931-12-12</b>	<b><i>"Tithe Critics Answered – Sir George Courthope hits out"</i></b>	<b><i>B.O.</i></b>
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[**Note!** The following is only part of the article, as it appeared in the "Bexhill Observer", but is the part that refers to tithes - the rest of the article is about the general politics of the day - JWN]

## ***TITHE CRITICS ANSWERED***

### ***SIR G. COURTHOPE HITS OUT***

#### ***"AN ENTIRELY PREJUDICED VIEW"***

*Tithepayers who tried to "draw" Sir George Courthope M. P.. at the Monastery, Rye, on Friday received straight answers to their questions. Sir George, who is himself a tithepayer, said that if anyone had received an unfair deal it was the parson. "I advise you, gentlemen," he said. "who have got an entirely prejudiced and one-sided view, to study the question from all its aspects before expressing yourselves again in public, and I think you will realise you had better leave it alone.*

*Mr. G. E. Butchers, who figured in the recent tithe auction farce at Icklesham, was the first to raise the tithe question after Sir George's address on the general political situation. "Does Sir George consider the 1925 tithe Act a fair, reasonable and just solution of the tithe question?" he asked. "If not, what steps is he prepared to take to remedy it?"*

*Sir George replied, "I believe that if anyone has received an unfair deal it is the parson." We would all hold up our hands in horror is somebody asked that money given by you to the Public Trustee to be utilised for the Church be cut down by half. Yet that is the origin of tithe. The charge was placed by people on their own land to provide an income for the man who ministered to their needs. It is just as much trust money as money placed in the trustee's hands now. The hardships is that we haven't the money with which to pay it but if the settlement had not been made, you and I would be paying higher tithe to-day.*

*Councillor A. Cooke - How can the farmer pay it?*

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*Sir George - He probably couldn't. What is wrong is that agriculture is so depressed that we can't pay rates and taxes or anything else.*

*Mr Butchers -We are now saddled with compulsory redemption we don't want and a fixed charge that does not vary with the value of our property.*

*Sir George - Yes. but from 1918 you benefitted a lot. The moment you see your tithe going down under you complain. To suggest the settlement was: unjust is untrue.*

*Councillor A. Cooke - Why should the farm worker pay 5s a week in tithe, as that is what it amounts to on every man working in England?*

*Sir George - The Church didn't want the 1918 and 1925 Acts. They were both imposed for the benefit of the tithe payer. You were pleased to get off the high payment, and now you think the time of no payment is coming you complain. It's not cricket.*

*Mr. W. Crump - Is it right that a wealthy Church should impose tithe on the poorest industry?*

*Sir George - The Church never imposed tithe. It was imposed by the owners of land themselves. I really advise you gentlemen, who have got an entirely prejudiced and one-sided view, to study the question from all its aspects before expressing yourselves again in public and I think you will realise you had better leave it alone.*

*Mr. J. A. Cooke - The tithe in my parish, Brede, is worth £1,000 a. year. There are fifty workmen there paid 30s. Is it fair?*

*Sir George - The charge was imposed by the owner, and the land was bought with the charge on it. The charge is not unfair.*

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<b>003</b>	<b>1931-12-24</b>	<b><i>Fact and Fiction – Sir George Courthope M.P. and Tithes</i></b>	<b><i>B.O.</i></b>
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## ***FACT AND FICTION***

### ***SIR GEORGE COURTHOPE, M.P. AND TITHES***

*To the Editor of the "Bexhill Observer" Sir,---Some answers, which I gave to questions on the subject of tithe rent charge at a recent meeting at Rye, have excited so much comment that I seek the hospitality of your columns to deal with the matter.*

*In the first place I want to make it quite clear that I hold no brief for the present system. When the Tithe Bill of 1918 was before the House of Commons, I did my utmost to persuade the Government to deal with this troublesome matter once and for all by the wholesale redemption of tithe. I still think that they should have done so. Like other landowners, I am a tithe-payer and find the payment of tithe, or rent charge in lieu of tithe, a heavy burden in these days of acute, agricultural depression. In short, I. am as anxious to be relieved of this burden as any of those who are protesting against it, hut, in my opinion, they are spoiling their own case, and putting themselves in a fake position, by the methods and arguments, which they adopt. Tithe-payers are, much more likely to arouse public sympathy and to secure the serious attempt on the part of the authorities to tackle this difficult question if they base their arguments upon facts rather than fiction.*

*It is foolish to suggest that the settlement in they 192.5 Act was weighted in favour of the Church, because everyone who studied the question knows it to be untrue. In fact whenever Parliament has intervened in the matter of tithe, it has done so for the benefit of the tithe-payer, and never for the tithe-owner*

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*The tithe Commutation Act of 1836 was passed because tithe-payers would no longer tolerate the inconveniences of payment in kind. The Tithe Act of 1691 placed the onus of payment on the landowners in order to relieve the occupiers who had been tithe-payers up to that time.*

*The Act of 1918 was passed to prevent the burden of tithe rising to an excessive figure owing to the price of corn. When this Act came to an end the annual value of tithe rent charge was £131, and, consequently, the 1925 Act was passed to prevent so heavy a burden falling upon the tithe-payer. If this Act had not been passed, the value of tithe this year would be over £136. I urge my fellow tithe-payers, in their own interests, not to ignore these facts, and to base their appeal to public and official sympathy, not upon mis-statements, but upon the simple fact that the burdens upon agriculture to-day are infinitely greater than we can afford to bear, and if our industry is to recover, the country must either reduce our burdens, or enable us to make adequate profits to help us to bear them.*

*Yours truly,*

**G. L. COURTHOPE**

*Whiligh  
Dec 22nd.*

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<b>004</b>	<b>1931-12-19</b>	<b><i>Hailsham Farmers Meeting.doc</i></b>	<b><i>B.O.</i></b>
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### ***HAILSHAM FARMERS' MEETING***

#### ***CRITICISM OF SIR GEORGE COURTHOPE, M. P.***

*The tithes question was raised at a meeting of the Hailsham branch of the National Farmers Union, held last (Thursday) night at the station hotel, Hellingly, when the chairman (Mr C. F. Russell) presided.*

*The hon. secretary (Mr F. L. Grant) stated that the resolution of the Branch expressing concern at the action of the Minister of Agriculture in refusing to institute an enquiry into the 1925 Tithe Act, had been sent forward by the County branch after deleting one word.*

*Mr Grant called attention to a report in the "Sussex Express" of a meeting at Rye, when certain statements regarding tithes were made by Sir George Courthope, M. P. They always understood that Sir George Courthope represented the farming interest but they were now finding out that that was not so. It was stated at the Tithe-payers Association meeting at Rye this week, that Sir George Courthope was a member of the Ecclesiastical Commission. Sir George was not now representing the views of the farmers. If agriculture was to continue to pay tithe, all the industries, should take their share in the support of the national Church. Why not a charge on the cotton industry to provide for the Wesleyan church, or the iron industry to support the Congregational Church, and on the coal mines to keep the Salvation Army. That will be justice.*

*The matter then dropped.*

*"17 years of successful cereal growing without sheep or dung", was the subject of an address given by Mr A. H. Brown, of Hayling Island, near Portsmouth. At the close there was a general discussion, Mr Brown, who was accorded hearty thanks, answered a number of questions*

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005	1931-12-19	<i>"Tithepayers' Demands" – Challenge to Sir George Courthope M.P.</i>	B.O.
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## **TITHE PAYERS' DEMANDS**

### **CHALLENGE TO SIR GEORGE COURTHOPE M.P.**

#### **"CONFISCATION AND ROBBERY"**

*"The Man who fights for justice in the County Court wears a badge of honour. It you go on paying tithe and grumbling, you will go on grumbling and paying. We must get together a resolute body of men who will not pay tithe. Men are coming into this movement by hundreds every week. We would all like to follow the way of compromise and peace, but British Governments seem only to yield to pressure. If you are prepared to stand in with this movement, you will refuse to be bullied or bribed. You will win through."*

*Thus remarked Mr. P. Kedward, former Member of Parliament for Ashford, and one of the leaders of the anti-tithe movement in the country, in a trenchant reply to Sir George Courthope's recent speech, on tithe at Rye, at a crowded meeting at the Cinque Ports Hotel, Rye, held under the auspices of the Rye and Northiam District, East Sussex Tithepayers Association, on Wednesday.*

*Mr. Kedward outlined the demands for which tithe payers should fight, namely, that where in proceedings for the recovery of tithe rent charge it is shown to the court, that the total amount payable in pursuance of the Tithe Acts exceeds three shillings in the pound of the annual value of the land charged, tithe payers should have the right of remission for anything over that three shillings. "That is what you must fight for immediately," said Mr. Kedward. "But you must fight in the long run that the burden he assumed by the whole nation, Why should the wealthy merchant be exempt?"*

*I am here to protest against confiscation and robbery. The confiscation going on is very real. Hundreds of people are paying tithe out of capital. It is a very difficult matter to revalue tithe to-day, and probably the simplest method on which to work is the one I have outlined The Church has no right to claim excessive tithe brought about by excessive war prices. We want a fair tithe and not confiscation. It is not a party political question. Tithe should be limited to-day to what it is supposed to represent. The Parliament that fixed tithe can alter it ". At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr. Kedward challenged Sir George Courthope to a public debate. "I offer to meet Sir George Courthope", he said. "In this town, in public debate on this question du a perfectly friendly and cordial way. I should be very glad to meet his convenience if he would name time and place."*

*The meeting was presided over by Mr. G. Butcher, who was supported by many prominent landowners from all over the district. Mr. Butcher gave a short address, in which he said: "In eighty years time the Church will have accumulated a fund of 10 million pounds. They will probably reap more from investments than we are paying. The Church will be able to turn round and say, "We don't care what the State says. It cannot cut off our supplies any more. The only way of bringing them to any reason seems to be to withhold their supplies."*

#### **TITHES ALWAYS OPPOSED**

*Introducing Mr. Kedward, who entered amid loud applause, Mr. Butcher said, "Something is soon going forward that will bring this matter to a head. That is all I am able to say at present." Mr. Kedward's address was as follows: "The Member of Parliament for this Division made certain statements with regard to tithe that have no foundation in fact, and cannot by any stretch of the imagination be justified by any historical document. I have made a careful study of tithe. In its origin it was a perfectly voluntary payment, and as such was not universal. It gave a tenth of the increase of the land for religious purposes, following the old Jewish custom, but there is no passage in the New Testament that in any way suggests that Jewish custom was continued or even applied to the Christian Church. Before the Romans came to Britain there was a system of voluntary offering.*

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*It was only when the Roman Church fastened itself in this land that tithes became fastened on this country by ecclesiastical law. Certainly a king gave tithe, as certain pleading pamphlets suggest, but he stayed with another king and murdered him, and to obtain pardon from the Pope he gave him tithe. That is the sort of bunkum appealed to. It happened way back in the Dark Ages. Tithes were never imposed with the consent of lay people in this country; since they were imposed by the ecclesiastical authorities' they have been opposed. Before 1836, the collection of tithe in kind had broken down. Many working men were sent to prison by the clergy, who were magistrates, for refusing to pay tithes on their cottages. The personal tithe gradually broke down, and the only tithe that has persisted has been the one on agricultural land. When tithe was placed on the land the population was 750,000, and there were a million acres in cultivation. To-day, there is a population of between 40 and 50 millions, and there are 30 million acres in cultivation. To suggest that tithe was put on waste land is arrant nonsense. Tithes were paid in kind in an age when people were frightened to death by threats of excommunication and damnation. People were asked in the confessional box if they had paid, and so they continued to pay under duress and fear. To suggest, that in these days of enlightenment, that any church should maintain itself by compulsory payments and by pressing people to bankruptcy breaks down under the weight of its absurdity. The Church found they did not gain much by collecting tithes in kind, as much of the land was common land, so in many cases a voluntary arrangement was made, by which money was paid in the place of tithe in kind. "*

*"When the collection of tithe in kind completely broke down, commissioners were appointed to value the tithe. When they made the valuation, they made it on the assumption that not much more corn would be grown, and wages would not go up; they allowed, however, for the fluctuation of the price of corn. The corn grown, however, has dropped 50 per cent., the price has dropped 30 per cent., and wages have increased 420 per cent., so the whole basis upon which tithe was valued doesn't exist to-day. They valued the tithe and put the charge on the land. When there came a time of depression and tenants could not and would not pay, the system broke down. The next move was to shift the tithe from the tenant on to the landlord, a smaller body, and so easier to collect, You have seen the result, the breakup of big estates and the decrease of cultivation. So the question was raised again in an acute form."*

### **NO CONTRACT TO PAY.**

*"When the tithe rose and fell with the price of corn, the parson was in a way a kind of shareholder with the farmer. But when tithe was fixed at £105 and £4 10s. redemption by the 1925 Act, whatever the price of corn, and whether the land produced anything or not, the Church changed from a shareholder to a debenture holder. They say if tithe had been unlimited during the war it would have gone up to £130, and as Sir George Courthope says, it was then to your benefit. But wasn't every member of the community in the same boat as the Church? Didn't we all have to make some sacrifice? What about the Rent Restriction Act and the Excess Profits Act? "*

*"The Act of 1925 decreed that £4 10s, be paid to redeem tithe over 85 years. The tithe holders will have made a capital sum of 75 million pounds out of British agriculture and people will be compelled to redeem tithe in days of an agricultural depression for the future. How can you argue that the National Church should be supported in one industry? There is not a vestige of justice. I have no antipathy against the Church, but when you examine things you find one industry out of it population of 40 million has to pay to maintain a church which has only two million communicants. Farmers sometimes talk as if it were a capital charge. It isn't. There is no contract written or implied to pay tithe. There must be two parties to a contract, and the tithe payer has never been a contracting party. You can sell a farm and never disclose tithe, and a man has no remedy against you. Tithe is not an encumbrance; it is a tax imposed by the Government for a specific purpose. You cannot imprison a man for not paying tithe, because it is not a personal tax. You can only get tithe out of the land. Land of itself produces nothing. Capital and labour must be invested in it before it begins to produce. Tithe has to be pumped up every year by men working on the soil."*

*"I have tried for two years in the House of Commons, by pressing the Minister with questions by introducing a bill into Parliament and seeing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, of whom Sir George Courthope is one, to show that you cannot justify tithe at 105 per cent. and £4 10s. redemption. Queen Anne's Bounty have never tried to justify it. When we met in conference they admitted it was not tithe in the old sense but was tithe imposed in Government, No one suggests that after the charge has persisted for many years you can just wipe it out. No one can justify the fact that tithe falls on one industry alone. If you want to*

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*deal with it equitably, a national Church should be paid for nationally. I have tried every means open, and they have failed. The great vast industry of agriculture is just struggling. I pointed out to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners that agriculture could not bear the charge, and it was driving land out of cultivation. They wouldn't listen, so I took another line."*

### **CLERGYMEN ASHAMED**

*"The British farmer has a good deal of pride, and he shrank at first from appearing in the County Court - (cries of "We did not shrink") - but a man who fights for justice in the County Court wears a badge of honour. When Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries he gave some of the tithes to his friends. He gave some to colleges; much has been bought and sold. In the old days the grower could pass the tithe on to the consumer. Then the corn laws went, and the British farmer had to compete with people who paid no tithe. If you put men on heavily tithed land to compete with men who pay no tithe, British agriculture must fail. You cannot take four Million pounds out of British agriculture. Parliament has dealt with income tax and rates; it has shifted tithe from the tenant to the land lord; it has changed tithe in kind to a rent charge, and it can alter the Tithe Act of 1925."*

*"If you go on paying and grumbling, you will go on grumbling and paying until the grave closes over you. We must get together a resolute body of men who will not pay. Men are coming into this movement by hundreds week after week. We would all like to follow the way of compromise and peace, but British Governments seem only to yield to pressure. If you are prepared to stand in with this movement, you will refuse to be bullied and bribed. You will win through for something is bound to happen. We are not unreasonable people, but we want a number of strong, resolute men pledged to fight for justice in this matter on lines equitable and fair to all. I have scores of letters from the clergymen who say they are ashamed to be taking tithe at its present high price, and I believe they would not do it if it were left to themselves. Whether you can afford to pay or not is not the matter. Tithe is not a personal debt. I shall decline to pay my tithe till the end. Let everyone make up his own mind. You have no defence except in technicalities."*

*"It is best to put forward no defence, and then there will be no costs. Let them distrain on your property and let them wait. If every man who had not paid were prosecuted the courts would be so congested that the whole thing would break down. We will continue to work for the law's breaking down until we get redress. Having put my hand to the plough I shall never turn back till British agriculture is freed of this onerous and detestable tax."*

*Mr. A. Wadman, a large Hailsham landowner, said: "No one is fond of this movement, but it has got to go forward. Tithe ought to have been down to 66 per cent, now. We should demand that tithe go in with the rest of the Government's agricultural policy. If the present policy continues, we will be paying 100 per cent tithe on land."*

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006	1932-01-09	<i>Excessive Tithe.doc</i>	B.O.
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## **EXCESSIVE TITHE**

### **REPLY TO SIR GEORGE COURTHOPE, M.P.**

*SIR – As the above question has now become of national importance, will you kindly allow a space in your widely circulated paper to reply to some of the points in Sir George Courthope's communication of December 22nd. 1931, on the matter.*

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*The letter has impressed me with the utmost astonishment, and in the interest of your readers as well as the tithe-payers, cannot be allowed to remain without comment.*

*I should like to make it understood that the Church was allowed to stabilise tithe at a time when the corn averages were higher than ever before, on account of the submarine operations during the war, and that we, the tithe-payers, maintain that the Church had no moral right to claim an unjust stabilisation on that account, particularly for the long period of 80 odd years.*

*It will be seen from Sir George Courthope's letter that he not only approved of the 1925 Act, but actually did, to use his own words, "use all the possible efforts he could to get the tithe stabilised in 1918". No one knew better than himself at that time that this would include the whole period of inflated war prices. At that time, he was our accredited agricultural representative.*

*He accuses the tithe-payers of having used fiction where they ought to have used facts – which we deny. Having said that, I should like to ask him if he will be good enough to tell us how he has arrived at the various statements he has made? Will he now inform us whether the position he now holds as an ecclesiastical commissioner is placing him in an extremely awkward position, as between the Church interests and the tithe-payers, and thus may be responsible for his neglect to defend the latter?*

*I have just had my attention drawn to an announcement in the "Daily Mail" of to-day's date, that the Norfolk County Council have no less than 1,500 agricultural labourers on their books each receiving £1 per head per week public assistance. Is Sir George Courthope aware that his own constituency, although in many ways favoured, shows every probability of following in the line, and does he think if this announcement with his present attitude had been made known to his constituents before the recent election, that he would have at this moment have been enjoying the honour of being the Member for the Rye Division uncontested?*

*We wonder how he can possibly justify his statement that we have been fairly dealt by, while we are being urged every day to pay demands equal to 43 per cent above what the tithes were when corn was at the present price during the previous depression?*

*He candidly admits that the present demands are constituting a heavy burden in these days of acute agricultural depression.*

*We would like to know what he did during the passing of the 1925 Act to avert the present situation?*

*In spite of the statement of Sir George Courthope that the recent tithes legislation had all been in favour of the tithe-payer, can he, or anyone else, tell us how the tithe that was originally, and always intended to be, a tenth of the produce of the land on which it was fixed, is, at the moment, being collected from those who will or can pay on a basis of 25 per cent, 50 per cent, 75 per cent, and in many cases, over 100 per cent of the annual value of the produce of the land on which it is levied? We take no account of the 4 ½ per cent said to be compulsory redemption in 81 years, as none of the present generation, and most of the next, can never benefit thereby.*

*No plausible or political statement of Sir George or anyone else can refute the conditions as they are at the moment.*

*While Sir George pathetically urges his constituents to adopt some other means to obtain their just rights, what is he doing personally to assist them to obtain justice by any other course? On the contrary, he is refraining from giving any assistance to those he calls his friends to obtain justice by any other method.*

*The whole question is much more serious than most people are aware. I am only a comparatively small tithe –payer of £408 per annum, but the excessive rate of over 43 per cent amounts to more than £170.*

Ours truly,  
ALBERT WADMAN

Priesthaves,  
Polegate  
January 4th 1932

## *The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 and the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.*

007	1932-01-09	<i>Tithe-payers Grievances.doc</i>	B.O.
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### **TITHEPAYERS' GRIEVANCES**

*To the Editor of the "Bexhill Observer"*

*SIR, Tithe-payers do not want sympathy; they ask for a revision of the Tithe Acts in order to secure just and fair treatment. An appeal for quotas, subsidies or guaranteed prices will not put the matter right; in fact the chronic problem has become acute largely through reliance on such assistance.*

*The tithe-payer hardest hit is the farmer who bought his farm in about 1918. At that time the Corn Production Act with a definite pledge that four years notice should be given before it could be repealed, assured him that he would be able to meet mortgage interest and other charges, yet this Act was immediately wiped out with, as it were, a stroke of the pen.*

*Tithe-payers certainly need not base their demand for revision on mis-statements. Facts; there plenty with which to enlist the aid of the public and politicians. Here are a few:-*

*1 – Over about one-third of the country, tithes are exclusively ranging in many cases from 10s to 20s per acre. Here is an actual example by Mr. A. J. Burrows, chartered surveyor, of a farm in Norfolk.*

*Area. 204 acres; rent, £125; tithe, commuted value, £78 16s. 8d.; tithe-owner's income (present value), £86 6s. 5d., equals 8s. 7d. per acre; Land Tax, £10; insurance, repairs, etc., £20; total outgoings, £116 6s. 5d., leaving the landlord a net income of £8 13s. 7d., equal to 10 1/4d. per acre.*

*Tithes are excessive because conditions differ from those at the time of commutation. Much of the arable land has tumbled down to pasture. The cost of collecting, threshing, storing, and marketing has greatly increased.*

*2 – The County Court procedure for remission of excessive tithe is too complicated and expensive, and is necessary every year. The clause of the Act allowing this is a dead letter. There are hundreds of cases of excessive tithe yet Queen Anne's Bounty reports only 19 cases for 1930. In any case, the relief granted is insufficient.*

*3 – The cost of redemption of tithe is too high, being about twenty years' purchase in the case of ecclesiastical tithe, and 13-18 years for lay tithe. In the market, tithes fetch about 10 years purchase.*

*4 – The owner of only part of a tithe area may be forced to pay tithe on the whole unless it has been legally apportioned. Even the cost of reappointment falls on the tithe payer. In order to interest the town dweller, I quote the following incident, which occurred some years back. An estate had become covered with from 200 to n300 small houses – many of them owned by members of the working classes; they bought the land and built the houses without any knowledge of tithe. The company that laid out the estate finally sold all their property, became extinct as a company, and failed to pay any further tithe rent-charge. Later, many men got up in the morning to receive a demand for sum of money they were totally unprepared to pay, which they would find it very hard to raise. and for which they had no idea they were responsible. As regards the statement that whenever Parliament had intervened in the matter of tithe it was done for the benefit of the tithe-payer and never for the tithe-owner, I cannot agree. The original Act of 1836 was of equal benefit to both. In fact, many local commutations and arrangements had already been made prior to the Act on mutual terms, so evidently commutation had some attraction to the tithe-owner.*

*The 1918 Act also was not altogether one-sided. If not passed, tithe would have risen to an uncontrollable figure, as the landlord was restricted from increasing rents. Today, there are signs that the tithe-owners are beginning to realise that "half a loaf is better than no bread!" In any case it will not need mis-statements to prove they cannot get a shirt off a naked man.*

## ***The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 and the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.***

*Only sympathetic co-operation in discussing the difficulties between tithe-owners and tithe-payers will prevent this nudity of the farmer*

*Yours truly,*

*ALAN C. GOLDING, P.A.S.I.  
Agricultural Accountant and Chartered Surveyor,*

*Myrtleholme,"  
28, London-road,  
Bexhill-on-Sea,  
January 6th. 1932*

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<i>008</i>	<i>1932-06-04</i>	<i>"Scene at Tithe Sale"</i>	<i>"The Times"</i>
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### ***Scene at Tithe Sale***

*An auctioneer was seized by the crowd at a tithe sale at Hooe, Sussex, yesterday, and was rescued by police. The scene occurred at Broad-street Green Farm and the auctioneer was Mr. Frank H. Budd, head of an Eastbourne firm, who had been called in to conduct the sale of farm property failing a payment of manorial tithes due to Lord St. Audries. A representative of the firm said that Mr. Budd put up six heifers for auction and received the farcical offer of &pound;1. No better bid being forthcoming, he closed the auction. The crowd seized Mr. Budd, he said, apparently with the intention of throwing him into a pond close by, but he was a 15st man and well able to look after himself, and with the aid of the police he was rescued.*

*He was escorted by the police to a local inn, where, in order to avoid further trouble, he remained until the crowd dispersed. During the disturbance an effigy of Lord St. Audries was burned by village youths. A placard was carried declaring that about 20 farmers at Hooe had to pay &#900 a year in tithes, of which, &#600 went to Lord St. Audries and the remainder to the parson.*

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<i>009</i>	<i>1932-06-04</i>	<i>"Tithe-owners Effigy Burnt"</i>	<i>B.O.</i>
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### ***TITHEOWNER'S EFFIGY BURNT***

#### ***EXTRAORDINARY SCENES AT ABORTIVE HOOE SALE***

##### ***AUCTIONEER BESIEGED IN VILLAGE INN***

*Amazing scenes, following an abortive tithe sale at "Hooe" yesterday (Friday) morning, culminated in the siege, by an angry crowd, of the Red Lion Inn, in an upper room of which the auctioneer, Mr. Frank F. Budd, of Eastbourne, was forced to take refuge. For an hour he was virtually a prisoner in the inn, and when eventually the clamouring crowd quietened and dispersed, he was taken across a field at the back of the inn, through another field in which cabbages were growing: and then over a hedge to, the road-side where a car was waiting to take him back to Eastbourne. Never before has the quiet village of Hooe witnessed such exciting scenes. The siege of the inn was the climax to a morning of angry protests against the tithe levy, and fanners from all parts of East Sussex, together with practically all the villagers, gathered to register their indignation in the liveliest possible fashion. The sale, which Mr. Budd conducted, was at Broad Street Green Farm and the property distrained consisted of six heifers and two pigs. The sale proved a complete farce, as also did one, which preceded it, at Sadler's Farm. This was conducted by Mr. A. Saunders of the Hastings County Court, and though it was abortive. no disturbance was caused, and the proceedings were treated in a good humoured way. The property distrained there was a haystack.*

## ***The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 and the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.***

### **EFFIGY BURNED.**

*Motor cars, over 50 in number, lined the road from the Red Lion to Sadler's Farm, and the crowd was in the region of 300. An effigy of Lord St. Audries, to whom the tithe of both farms is payable, was erected by village youths, near the haystack at Sadler's Farm, and beside it they placed a card bearing the words: - "Lord St. Audries, Approx. £600 a year for nothing. The parson, £300 a year. Total, £900 all out of about 20 farmers at Hooe. Is it fair?" After the Sadler's Farm fiasco everybody made the quarter of a mile journey to Broad Street Farm and here the real trouble began. The effigy and board were carried aloft along the road, and on arrival at the farm they were placed in a prominent position on a mound in front of the auctioneer's stand. On the gate of the cow byre a bill was posted which read: "Lower tithe or none at all means more employment.*

*When Budd reached the farm, derisive epithets were hurled at him, and as he proceeded to read the conditions of sale the paraffin-soaked effigy was ignited and a great cheer went up from the crowd as the flames shot upwards and the straw stuffing crackled furiously.*

### **JEERS AND CHEERS.**

*Mr. Budd's protests were in vain. He continued\_ to read the conditions of sale, but .still the cheering and the laughter went on jeers mingled with the cheers, a pitchfork was thrust into the effigy, and as it was tossed into the air shouts went up from the crowd, "We cannot hear you." Mr. Budd retorted: "It is your own. You won't give me a chance." The noise subsided slightly and someone, shouted: "We haven't heard a single word of what you have said." "I have read the conditions of sale and it is your fault if you have not heard them," said Mr. Budd."In that yard I have two pigs for sale'. That was as far as he got. Again the crowd broke out into prolonged cheering jeering and laughter.*

*Abusive comment were flung at the auctioneer, and behind him stood a man persistently offering Mr Budd cough-drops from a paper-bag!*

*"Will someone make me bid for the two pigs?", asked Mr. Budd. Again, nothing but jeers.*

*"Right " he said, "Once, twice, three times. The pigs are not sold."*

*Catcalls and hooting continued for about five minutes and then Mr. Budd, pointing to a field a quarter of a mile away, said, "Over there you will find six heifers".*

*"Bring them here." yelled the crowd, uproarious in their mirth. A bid of £1 was offered for the heifers but Mr. Budd would not accept this. No higher bid was made, and he declared that the heifers were not sold. An ugly situation immediately threatened. An onlooker approached Mr. Budd and demanded, why he had conducted the sale. I am not personally interested", Mr. Budd replied. "Yes, you are", rejoined his questioner in a loud voice, "Why did you take the dirty job on?"*

*May I ask you a fair question?" said Mr. Budd. "If you buy a house on lease-hold, you buy it with your eyes open."*

### **POLICE INTERVENTION**

*Again the crowd cut short his words and pressed forwards like a great wave towards the auctioneer.*

*With cries of "Stand back" the police rushed to surround Mr. Budd and for a few moments a free fight seemed likely.*

*Walking sticks were brandished angrily, and a young man with a gaily coloured scarf round his neck brought out a short stick and waved it in front of the police. He then jumped forward, apparently in an attempt to reach Mr. Budd, but his way was barred by the police who pushed him towards the ditch. Just*

## ***The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 and the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.***

*when the situation appeared most critical, four more constables arrived. This brought the total to six, and there were also two sergeants.*

### ***AUCTIONEER'S DASH FOR COVER.***

*An unprecedented scene followed. Headed by the auctioneer, under police escort, the farmers and villagers formed a procession and marched four abreast along the country road which leads to the inn. Singing and laughing, they made their way along the road, their good humour apparently restored. But as they branched off from the main road to the inn they made a rush for the auctioneer, who ran at his fastest to the inn, dashed up the steps and entered the closing the door behind him. Police barred the way of members of the crowd who attempted: to force an entry. Other constables hurried round to the back entrance and P.C. Walker; of Catsfield, was struck behind the ear by a missile. The crowd proceeded to form a complete cordon round the inn. No one was allowed inside for a drink unless the police were satisfied regarding his intentions. The Red Lion Inn was, for the first time in its existence, in a state of siege! Inside the bar parlour, with its low, oak-beamed ceiling, farmers discussed the tithe question with heat, and slaked their parched throats with foaming beer. Outside, the one topic of discussion was "Where the auctioneer?"*

*"He's got away", said some, but such a thing seemed, on the face of it, to be impossible.*

### ***ACTING ON ORDERS***

*An "Observer" reporter decided to find Mr. Budd, and eventually he discovered him in a room at the top of the inn, and with him a police constable. Here the "Observer" man obtained an interview, while below groups of people peered up at the window.*

*"Well, we're having a lively time." Said Mr. Budd, and he joked about the whole affair. "These people", he continued, "think that I am attending to-day as a private auctioneer. What they do not know is that I am bailiff to the Eastbourne County Court and I am instructed by the registrar of that County Court, who was asked to employ me by the Hastings County Court. When the County Court employs me I have got to do my job, because I am an official of the Court. I am in much the same position as Mr. Saunders, of the Hastings County Court, who conducted the sale at Sadler's Farm. "It is not the farmers who have created the disturbance to-day. It is the rough lot that have caused all the trouble." Mr. Budd drove to Hooe by car and then sent it back to Eastbourne before conducting the sale. "I did not want the tyres ripped and the car ruined," he said, "so one of my men drove it back." By the time the interview was over the crowd was much smaller, and about one o'clock, after having sought refuge in the inn for over an hour, Mr. Budd made his way out of the building at the back door. Escorted by the police, he walked over the fields to a friend's car, and was driven to Sewers Bridge, where he boarded his own car and returned to Eastbourne.*

### ***"INIQUITOUS ROBBERY."***

*Thus ended another chapter in the story of the East Sussex farmers' revolt against what they consider the "iniquitous robbery" of the tithe system. Prior to the sale at Sadler's Farm the gathering was addressed from a farm cart near the haystack by Mr. G. Butcher (chairman of the Rye and Northiam branch of the East Sussex Tithepayers' Association) and Mr. A. Wadman (chairman of the Hailsham branch). Mr. Butcher described their cause as a just one and its great strength lay in its justice. Those responsible for the collection of tithe had been compared to Shylock. The law allowed them and the Court awarded them their tithe, but they would find when they came to collect it that the farmers could put up just as much opposition as Shylock found when he tried to exalt his pound of flesh. (Applause and laughter). Mr. Wadman declared, "No Member of Parliament cares a damn for us. We are too scattered and our votes do not count much to them". He urged the members of the association to make their voices heard in the matter of tithe, which he said was iniquitous robbery. (Hear, hear)*

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*The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 and the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.*

<i>010</i>	<i>1932-06-11</i>	<i>Hooe Tithes.doc</i>	<i>B.O.</i>
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## **HOOE TITHES**

*To the Editor of the "Bexhill Observer"*

*Sir, - As I formerly collected the Vicar's tithe in Hooe, I feel I must, in justice, correct the statement that was made on a card exhibited at the abortive tithe sale held in Hooe last week:-*

*"Lord St. Audries, approximately £600 a year for nothing. The parson £300 a year. Total, £900, all out of about 20 farmers at Hooe. Is it fair?"*

*Actually, less than two-thirds of the vicarial tithe is due from farmers living Hooe, while over one-third is due, chiefly on marshland, from non-resident owner, the small remainder is due from residents who are not farmers.*

*Whatever Lord St, Audries' tithe may be, it appears that he, as well as other tithe owners, never gets the whole of it, and it should be recognised that recently he paid for very extensive repairs and decorations to the chancel of Hooe Church, which action refutes the statement "for nothing".*

*Yours truly,  
(Miss) B. F. HAYWARD.*

*I, Whydown-cottages  
Near Bexhill.*

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<i>011</i>	<i>1932-06-18</i>	<i>Unjust Tithe.doc</i>	<i>B.O.</i>
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## **"UNJUST TITHE"**

### **NINFIELD PROTEST MEETING**

*Following the abortive tithe sale at Hooe the previous week, at which remarkable scenes were witnessed, a meeting of tithe -payers from many parts of East Sussex was held at Ninfield last Friday. It was arranged by the Hailsham branch of the East Sussex Tithepayers' Association, and the speakers were Mr. A. Wadman (chairman of the branch), who presided and Mr. G. Butcher (chairman of the Rye and Northiam branch of the association): There was a large attendance.*

*Leaflets were distributed among the gathering bearing on one side a drawing of an eagle, with the words "National Church" printed, on its body and "Ecclesiastical Commissioners" on one of the outstretched wings. In its talons the eagle carried what appeared to be a cow and a pig; and lying on the ground were a farmer and a farm- worker, their clothes torn and tattered.*

*Beneath the drawing ran the words "The bird of pray exacts its toll," and on the reverse side various facts were given, relating to tithe.*

### **A NATIONAL QUESTION.**

*Mr. Wadman said the National Association of Tithe payers had a pretty strong organisation in London, numerically, but a more active staff was needed to keep the public informed of what the association was*

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*doing. . They had got to "keep the right side of the public". The question of tithe payment was a national one, and it must assume a national character. In order to do that they must have a body of men to devote their time and efforts to the tithe payers cause, and they could not expect to get such men without paying them. Was there any reason why they should not be paid for their work? It was not like throwing money away for which they were not likely to see some return. Money spent on paying capable men to work for them was really an investment. They would, in fact, be spending money in their own interests which might otherwise have to go towards paying the excessive tithe against which they were fighting. Referring to a suggestion made at head-quarters; that the tithepayers should approach the titheowners with a view to coming: to a more equitable arrangement, Mr. Wadman said: "That is the last thing we ought to do. We are on the right side and are not in the wrong. Let the people on the wrong side come to us and ask for an arrangement. We are not likely to go begging for anything. After that sale we had the other day - and more may be following - we have no reason to be discouraged. We have won all along the line, but what will happen at the next sales I do not know. The Queen Anne's Bounty and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners will no doubt attempt to bring us down. So far they have not been able to do that, and we must keep on, and try to bring about a settlement in relation to the 1925 Act, with drastic amendments. No begging to be relieved of part of the tithe will carry us through. I believe one suggestion was that the titheowners should be asked to be lenient in necessitous cases. 'Who shall say what a necessitous case is? No, I think that idea is a mistake."*

### **"EXCESSIVE TITHE."**

*Mr Wadman added that they might think it strange that he should say anything against the Government in view of what it was doing for them at present; hut he was given to understand - he was speaking from memory - that the Government had involved the nation in something like 14 million pounds, "Do you think", he asked, "that the taxpayers of the country will be willing to pay that money, or any large proportion of it, to enable us to pay 45 per cent too much for our tithe? You know the tax-payer will not agree to it for long. It is not fair that public money should be subscribed all the time a certain proportion of that money is demanded from us to pay excessive tithe". Mr. Wadman stated that he wanted his hearers to bear in mind that it was excessive tithe against which they took their stand. He also said that it was proposed to hold a meeting at Heathfield next Tuesday, the day before the Eastbourne show.*

### **ENLIGHTENING PEOPLE**

*Mr. Butcher said that he agreed the time had come when funds should be put up to obtain sufficient men to go through the country enlightening people on the matter of tithe. That would require a good big fund of money, and he believed the question was to be considered at the next meeting of the National Association Referring to the visit of a deputation of tithepayers to what he described as the agricultural party in the House of Commons some time ago, Mr. Butcher said the was afraid they came away disappointed. The chairman of the Agricultural Party told them the Government had spent a great deal of time and money in improving the conditions of agriculture, and when the effects of the improvements were felt in the industry there would be no more trouble about tithe, because they would be able to pay it.*

*A voice - We do not believe it.*

*Mr. Butcher asked what was the good of their having a little more money in their pockets if they had got to hand it back in tithe. Supposing that the industry did get some benefit, why should the Church go on taking what was an unjust tithe?*

### **RYE MEMBER'S REMARK**

*"There is no more justice in that," said Mr. Butcher, " than there was in the point which the Member for Rye put to your chairman when we said there were a great many in this industry who did not pay their tithe, not because they would not, hut because they absolutely could not. Sir George Courthope said, "I wish, Mr. Wadman, that all the tithepayers could afford to pay their tithe as well as you can. But it does not matter what means Mr. Wadman may have personally. The Church has no claim, either legal or moral, on anything which he may have which has not arisen from the products of his land. There are many people to-day in a similar position who could undoubtedly pay their tithes they would not be paying it out of the substance from which the tithe is supposed to corner. The only money the tithe owners have any claim to is what arises from*

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*the products of the land". Mr. Butcher gave figures which he said showed that the tithepayer was expected to pay two-thirds instead of a tenth of the value of the land, and he went on to say that Public opinion was coming round to the side of the tithepayers. The Press, too, had been very helpful. With regard to the suggestion that the titheowners should deal leniently with necessitous, Mr. Butcher said they were all necessitous cases and they had got to make the tithe owners see that fact.*

### **ENTIRELY FALSE VIEW**

*"We are not going to bow and scrape to them," he declared. "We do not want as a favour what is ours by right. If people begin to take favours it is weakening the whole cause right through the country. I want everyone to stand shoulder to shoulder, and say "No" to any offer which they may like to make. They take the view that our tithe is an absolute debt which we owe to them. That is an entirely false, view. It is not, a debt at all. We may be insolvent, many of us, but we are not .going to them to cringe for mercy. Tithe is not a personal debt. It has nothing whatever to do with a person. It is a matter which deals with the produce of the land, and that only. If they want the tithe, it has got to come from that. They cannot go to the County Court and get an order which says you must pay. If tithe were a personal debt they could go and get an order." A short discussion followed, in the course of which Mr. C. Golding (hon. secretary of the branch) thanked the Press for the publicity given to the association's activities.*

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<b>012</b>	<b>1933-10-14</b>	<b>"Tithe War - £200 Subscribed at Bexhill Meeting"</b>	<b>B. O.</b>
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## **TITHE "WAR"**

### **£200 Subscribed at Bexhill Meeting**

#### **"CHURCH MUST NOT RELY ON DISTRAINT"**

*The climax to a well attended and enthusiastic meeting of tithepayers, at the Victoria Hall, Bexhill, on Tuesday, came with the announcement that a gentleman, whose name, was not disclosed, had promised £100 to the fund, which is being raised to fight certain cases in the courts. The Rev. J. M. Kedward chairman of the National Tithepayers' Association, who was one of the speakers, said this gentleman would take his chance of getting 80 per cent back if they won these cases, but if they lost he was willing to lose his money with them. "All honour to him," commented Mr. Kedward amid loud applause. Mr. J. Hancock Nunn, of Lealands, Hellingly, gave £20 as a free gift and Mr. I A. Wadman, who presided, made himself responsible for raising another £20. Cash and written promises received during the evening amounted to over £200 (including the anonymous donor's £100) and verbal promises of other sums were also received.*

*The meeting was held under the auspices of the Kent and Sussex Tithepayers' Association, which has formed a joint committee to deal with this matter and it is organising an intensive campaign in the two courts to raise £1,000.*

*Mr. F. R. Allan, the general secretary of the joint committee, explained that as most of the cases had arisen in Kent and Sussex, it was felt that the two counties should make a united effort. . The other speaker was Mrs. Rash, a farmer's wife and the authoress of the novel "The Portion of the Levites," and also on the platform were Miss Dorothy Osborn (prospective Liberal candidate for the Rye Division), Mr. George Butchers, and Mr. O. J. Gill (organising secretary of the appeal).*

## ***The Tithe "Riot" of 1932 and the Burning of the Effigy of Lord St. Audries.***

### **LIMIT OF OPPRESSION.**

*Mrs. Rash said that each succeeding Tithe Act was more and more in favour of the owner; nothing had been inserted in any of them to the advantage of the tithepayer. Oppression had reached its limit in the 1925 Act. So far they had done nothing further for the tithepayer in the way of legislation and she did not think they would now. The tithe-owner in most cases was the Church: as a matter of fact, out of three million tithe a year two million went to the Church. She had always stressed the point that they had no particular quarrel with the individual parson, who was having his hard times, although she was not at all sure he was having as hard a time as the tithepayer, "I've always been in the habit of saying the parson is not our enemy," remarked Mrs. Rash. 4. ' But mark this: If they don't soon take cognisance of the state of affairs; if they don't soon find out where they stand and where we stand; if they don't feel called upon, to protest against the injustice of the position, they soon will be our enemies." (Applause.)*

*The present state of affairs was doing irremediable harm to the Church in the land. It might not be so apparent in the towns, but in little country parishes like her own they could see; the ill-feeling, and they had only to go into the churches to see the fall in the congregations. If the Church was to go on having spiritual influence over any section of the community it must not rely on distraint and on the la. (Applause.)*

### **"EXTINCTION OF TITHE"**

*Mr. Kedward asked what was it was they wanted, and added: "We want the extinction of tithe, and we are going to get it. (Applause) I have not paid tithe for four years; but I have not broken the law. I have just taken the course the law has allowed me to take. I never entered into any contract to pay tithe. I was never a consenting party. I was never consulted. It is not a personal debt. It is something that is supposed to issue out of the land upon which it is charged. It has not issued. (Laughter.) There is no profit for me, so there is none to share with them.*

*Tithe had a sad, sorry and sordid history right from the beginning. They could argue about it, hut when they stripped it down it was nothing but an objectionable and onerous tax placed on one section of the community for the benefit of another. And as a tax it was utterly, unfair and unjust because it was not properly or evenly spread.*

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