

also a problem. Too often well-meant regional incentives are simply bled off in the price of sites – often publicly owned – and there is some evidence that public-sector valuations are excessive. This needs study both of the proper site-tax regime for such zones, and of detailed administrative practice.”

Two *Land and Liberty* writers look at aspects of life and investment in the North-East, one of England's most depressed regions: the social conscience of its outspoken Bishop of Durham, and the economic impact of public investment in a mass transit system.

mission

unjust conditions of land tenure from obtaining a fair reward for his labour, and often no opportunity to use his labour at all, the need is to correct that specific defect in the system.

It does not call for scrapping the whole economic machine and thus condemning able-bodied, intelligent people to lives of dependence on State charity. It calls, instead, for a simple measure of reform under which the people as a whole resume ownership of their country's natural resources.

If David Jenkins really wishes to bring his Christian mind to bear on the problem of the unemployed and the deprived in our society, he would do well to consider the words of another bishop – Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Neath, who wrote, just over one hundred years ago:

“The land, therefore, of every country is the common property of the people of that country, because its real owner, the Creator, who made it, has transferred it as a voluntary gift to them.”

“How can any just government suffer any longer a system of land tenure which inflicts irreparable ruin on the general industry and prosperity of a nation, and which is maintained solely for the purpose of giving the landlords an opportunity of plundering the class of industrious, improving tenants which it is especially bound to protect and defend?”

“Now, a system of land tenure which thus despoils the people of a nation of a vast amount of their earnings, which transfers a valuable property which they have created by the patient, painful and self-denying efforts of their labour, to a class who do not labour at all, and make no sacrifices whatever, can, I think, be fairly characterised as a system of national spoilage.”

If he were to read Thomas Nulty's essay, David Jenkins would realise that his search for justice still has a long way to go.

1. *The Guardian*, 15 April 1985.
2. From an essay “Back to the Land”, addressed to the Clergy and Laity of the Diocese of Meath, April 1881.

METRO IS ON RIGHT LINES

By Henry Law

*on house prices has been the subject of a report produced by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory.**

The study has monitored the values of properties close to (within 200 yards) of Metro stations, compared to the values of similar properties unaffected by the Metro. Values were assessed by the District Valuers at quarterly intervals, using the evidence of local property sales.

Estimates were cross checked by comparing them with actual selling prices. The survey covered the period between January 1979 and January 1983, from 20 months before, to 20 months after the opening of the first section of the Metro.

The prices of houses near the Metro rose, on average, by £360 more than similar properties further from the system. The increases in value commenced about two months before each section of the Metro opened, and continued for about four months. The differentials then stabilised, and were maintained thereafter.

That improvements in public transport should put up property values is only to be expected, but it is unusual to be able to put a figure to the increase. It would have been interesting if the survey could have made an estimate of the aggregate increase in property values due to the Metro.

In the absence of a properly calculated figure, the best that is possible is a rough and ready calculation which could give an idea of the order of the value involved.

Assuming 15 houses to the acre, there would be about 1,500 houses within a 400 yard radius of each station, and in all, perhaps 60,000 houses might have been affected. This gives an aggregate increase in the order of £20m, which is about 8% of the construction cost of £270m. This is probably an underestimate, however, because many of the stations are in commercial and industrial areas and would have been subject to much higher increases in value.

There is also the point that houses further from the Metro stations would themselves have benefited from the improvements to bus services which were implemented as the Metro opened. The value of these houses would also have increased.

Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see that someone is aware that improvements in public transport generate returns over and above those which can be measured in terms of traffic receipts. These wider benefits are reflected in property values.

This survey, in attempting to quantify the benefit, has demonstrated in a striking way the inadequacy of measuring the worth of public transport solely by criteria of crude profitability.

*M.W. Picket and K.E. Perrett, *The effect of the Tyne and Wear Metro on residential property values*, Transport and Road Research Laboratory Supplementary Report 825, TRRL Copthorne, Berkshire, 1984.

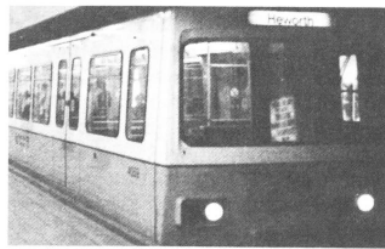
MOST British cities got rid of their trams in the 1950s. The last stronghold was Glasgow, where they lasted until 1962. In retrospect, replacing trams with buses was not a wise move. Electric trams do not pollute the streets, and the modern vehicles which ran in Glasgow were smooth, quiet and luxurious.

The trouble, of course, was that trams got in the way of cars, which made them unacceptable to the motoring lobby. The trams had to go.

European attitudes were more enlightened, and in many towns the tramways have been transformed into sophisticated light rapid transit (LRT) systems, with reserved tracks segregated from ordinary road traffic. Subways have been built for trams under the centres of some towns, and in others, the trams have the exclusive use of streets otherwise reserved for pedestrians.

LRT is a compromise between bus and rail. It combines the speed and reliability of rail transport with some of the economies and flexibility of bus operation; by upgrading tramways into LRT systems, it has been possible to provide good quality public transport at relatively low cost.

Another way of creating LRT systems is to convert existing conventional railways. Run-down suburban railways have formed the basis of the Tyne and Wear Metro, the first LRT in Britain, which opened in sections between 1980 and 1984.



● Metro in action

THE KEY element in the Tyne and Wear Metro is the use of lightweight articulated vehicles based on continental tramway practice. This made it possible to replace conventional railway signals with what are essentially traffic lights, the entire system controlled from a single control centre. Ticketing arrangements were also simplified, with a zonal fare structure.

Eight miles of new line were added to the 25 miles of existing route, including tunnels under the centres of Newcastle and Gateshead, a new bridge across the Tyne and a diversion which uses land originally intended for a motorway.

New stations were built close to important central destinations, and bus services were co-ordinated, with convenient interchanges to the Metro.

All this has dramatically improved the public transport service on Tyneside, to the extent that it is an attractive alternative to the private car.

Naturally, there has been an effect on property values, and the impact of the Metro