

property, in order to shape the juridical instrument so that private and public planning and building may work without delay and without endless lawsuits. This is to be welcomed.

The Herbert-Wichmann-Verlag is about to publish a series of practicable proposals in the same vein, which, I hope, will serve as a basis for general discussion.

Gustav Bohnsack

Windfalls for New Cities —An Architects View

EIGHTEEN YEARS of study and writing about urban development convince me that every effort should be made to recapture unearned increments in land value.

Seldom in American history has there been such an era of publicly-financed construction—highways, water improvements, utility extension, as in the past fifteen years. Most of these public improvements bring about a rise in land values around them. Highways make once-remote lands accessible, and this promotes an immediate rise in land values. Public agencies buy land for a recreation or flood-control lake, and all lands around the site become desirable at once for higher-intensity use. The evidence is all around us.

The lucky owners of such lands are the benefactors of public investment. Most of them have done little or nothing to create the value, beyond the simple act of ownership.

As a member of Secretary Udall's Potomac Planning Task Force since 1965, I have seen this in many parts of the Potomac Basin—immediate rise in speculative activity, and a jump in land prices following Federal or State announcement of a new recreation or flood-control facility. And, finally, as Real Estate Editor and later Urban Affairs Editor of a large metropolitan newspaper I have written innumerable stories since 1947 of the "windfall effect" of public investments on privately-owned properties. I have seen it happen.

In my view, it is vital that a fair and equitable method be worked out to return to the public purse a larger share of these "windfall profits" inherent in unearned land values. Legislation should be prepared for introduction in Congress that will require—as a condition of all Federal grants to be listed below—that local property tax procedures be improved, so as to speed up the application of increased property assessments on land benefited by Federal facilities.

This requirement should be extended to land areas benefited by highways built with U.S. funds; to those benefited by Federal flood-control and multiple-purpose water-development projects; and those land benefited by Federal open-space and landscape grants programmes; and by Federally-assisted Urban Renewal programmes.

As a general rule, the assessment of those land values lags behind the speculative rise in land values, especially those caused by Federal projects such as dams, National Parks and Interstate Highways In rural counties and



other taxing districts, the time-lag is often quite long: years, rather than months. Many such district tax assessors are over-worked, or otherwise find it difficult to assess land in relation to the rising value caused by Federal investments in the close vicinity. A system of Federal grants should be developed so that a local taxing agency may be eligible for such a grant, the purpose being to speed up the re-assessment of lands benefited by a Federal facility. This may well require the various States to set up—with Federal funds assisting—training schools for tax assessors. This will vary with the locality, and with the need.

—Grady Clay, editor of *Architectural Quarterly*

A Smashing Idea

FLOURISHING Irish industry that will get the knock if and when Ireland ever enters a completely free trade area is the assembly, or rather the re-assembly, of motor cars. Most motor cars at the moment arrive in Ireland in what is known to the trade as C.K.D. condition. C.K.D. stands for "completely knocked down," and it means just exactly that; the cars are manufactured and part assembled in the country of origin, then taken down again and sent to Ireland, in bits, for re-assembly. Windscreens which arrive intact are smashed by men with sledge-hammers so that fresh windscreens of Irish glass can be fitted by Irish workers. Understandably enough, cars made in this way work out a good deal more expensive than cars finished on a conventional assembly line—one small British car assembled in Ireland costs about £50 more than the same car costs in Britain, notwithstanding the fact that the British price includes a purchase tax of another £100—and there is no doubt that the industry will collapse as soon as cars are allowed into Ireland without a tariff.

—From *The Irish Answer—An Anatomy of Ireland*
by Tony Gray, Heinemann. 42s.