

tection, fire protection, municipal transportation, parks, and schools.

Since Chicago tax money creates and maintains these facilities, and since what rises in value when they are provided is Chicago land—not Chicago buildings, which can never be worth more than it would cost to create others like them—is it not entirely fair that the Chicago landholder pay for what he gets? It is not merely unfair to ask the building owner to pay; it is, as the evidence demonstrates, inexpedient, because it drives him out of the city. The land cannot go away; the prospective industrial building can, and now does, and when possible in the future will—until Chicago changes its tax policies—leave the neighbourhood of our low cost urban housing, spreading across our land like a cancer in an eternal search for something not really there either, while it leaves the unskilled and unemployed behind in the inner city.

As Prof. Becker says, in the carefully dry language of the professional economist: "Converting the uniform real-estate tax into a land-value tax would provide an immediate stimulus for economic develop-

ment and use of urban land."

Dr. Carl H. Madden, the Chief Economist of the United States Chamber of Commerce, puts the matter this way: "A powerful tool for rebuilding urban centres through private initiative lies in reforming the property tax. Higher taxation of location values and lower taxation of improvements would help to push land into more effective use."

Land-value taxation suggests that there is no need for us in the United States to continually throw away our used cities and get us new ones. All we require is a method of securing access to building sites, to the surface of the Earth, within the boundaries of the cities we already have; and that, it will provide. And ought not this be done? For is not the planet Earth the common inheritance of mankind?

How much longer can we survive free, with city tax policies which drive industry away from its natural employees in a constantly widening sprawl, wasting our countryside in one way and our cities in another?

GALLOPING GOVERNMENT

DON Quixote had his problems.

Jousting with windmills must have been a formidable undertaking. Especially if the blades were anything like the 200ft. monsters which ERDA—Energy Research and Development Administration—will test. These are intended to produce energy by wind for electric power. Located in a windy area of Colorado, hopefully the giant blades will not woosh everything off into New Mexico.

Back to Don Quixote. Windmills are fixed in place. He knew where his target was as he planned his strategy to overcome it. Today's counterparts of Don Quixote—intent on battling current evil—have a more elusive task. Observe government in these times. It is made up of men and women who play the role—knowingly or not—of Headless Horsemen, or Horsewomen, or Horsepersons if you will.

A Headless Horseperson is constantly mounting his/her steed to gallop off in all directions at once. An enthusiastic media cheers them on, cameras at full tilt and inkpots flying. The Headless Horseperson may have no idea where he/she is going, or where he/she will arrive, but each de-

parture has the fanfare of a winged Pegasus ascending into the clouds. And governmental process becomes a hodgepodge full of ineptitude, waste and worse.

Little wonder that the public is bewildered, agape. Let us suppose the officials at a football game went berserk. Instead of enforcing the rules, without fear or favour, they usurped the role of quarterback, snatched passes, threw blocks and even sallied into the stands to sell peanuts. It might be energetic, dramatic even,

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but productive—alas, no. How long would the fans stand for it?

Congress, state legislatures, county ruling bodies, city councils all have the depressing tendency to be Headless Horsepersons. Being headless, it is not easy to tell whether the guiding direction comes from the foreparts or the hind. And once a Headless Horseperson, always a Headless Horseperson—through the years—through successive elections—from local to high federal offices.

So sessions become longer, staffs

multiply, paperwork is enormous. Before adjournment there is a frantic burst of energy. The long-suffering electorate hopes for its public servants—a euphemism—to become more stable and efficient.

To concentrate on fewer objectives is the beginning of wisdom—paraphrasing Job and Solomon. 1. Concentrate on land. It is basic to all human endeavour. Land can be beneficent Mother Earth for all her children—or an object of distortion and inequity. It starts with handing out special privileges in land—how land is assessed for taxes. If land is under-assessed for the favoured, it can destroy even the best of communities. Land can be the beginning of monopoly, speculation, tax evasion.

And objective 2. To control zooming budgets and crippling deficits, those in governing bodies should spend our tax dollars with the same prudence they use when spending their personal funds.

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PERCY WILLIAMS

As we go to press, we are sad to report that Percy Williams, Executive Secretary of the Henry George Foundation of America, died on December 27, 1977 at the age of ninety.