

With the letters of Syd Gilchrist (Feb. '92), Ivan Robinson and Dorothy Davies (both April '92) in mind I would like to comment on nine months' experience displaying the signs "ALL TAXES ARE LEGALISED THEFT!" and "RAISE ALL GOVERNMENT REVENUE FROM SITE RENT!", prominently on my small van in its Melbourne/Canberra/Sydney travels.

Hundreds of people have reacted positively, one last week was negative.

Conservatively, scores have asked for further information, no-one has questioned the first statement "ALL TAXES ARE LEGALISED THEFT!", so we should capitalise on the P.R. value of that - they all start off on our side! Our job is to keep 'em there not alienate them by exposing them to our own internal confusion (hostility?) over terminology as demonstrated by two of the three "Progress" letters referred to above.

ALL enquiries begin the same way - "what is site rent?". The second query is invariably "would it raise enough money?"

The first question is easy to explain in simple terms but what Georgist can answer the second? We have collectively failed in this area (sidetracked into semantics?), and I suggest our efforts must be concentrated here to produce realistic estimates - an annual Georgist budget?

I have found it easy to portray ALL TAXES as arbitrary, unsystematic, opportunistic and illogical GRABS for money wherever a Government sees an opportunity - indeed THEFT!

The concept of site rent can be explained as the logical payment for the use of something - in this case land. No one expects to have the free use of any other commodity (cars, tools, TVs, video movies, etc.) so why should land be different? No one I have put this question to has come up with an answer,

much to their own surprise! Nor have they ever treated my spiel with scorn as suggested by Mr. Gilchrist.

I myself argued strongly with Bill Pitt against the use of the unwidely used (unused?) term "site rent", and in favour of the more initially understandable "land tax", but I now see the logic and the P.R. advantage to us in condemning ALL taxes as immoral, unethical and unnecessary. It is simpler to lump them all together and bag the lot of them than to explain why some may be acceptable whilst others are not. A CLEAR distinction can then be made in favour of a simple, logical and just source of revenue - site rent. To this end I suggest that in all our literature we always use both terms - in the form "land tax/site rent", to emphasise the difference to both outsiders and confused insiders. It took me a long time to "wake up" to this now obvious and logical difference but I can now express surprise as to how Georgists of long standing remain confused. Perhaps repetitious use of the suggested notation will cause "the penny to drop". None of us can afford to be illogical or confused in the presentation of our platform and we must be collectively consistent.

Mal Booth,
Hensley Park, Vic.