

Preface

THIS BOOK DEALS WITH THE EFFORTS MADE BY VARIOUS peoples to take for public purposes their geologically and socially produced land values. So far as possible, the reports have been prepared by persons who have had direct knowledge of the developments they have described and in which they have been active participants.

The reader is entitled to know the basic beliefs of those who have brought this book to completion. They come from many lands and may well differ on minor points, but they all agree that socially created land values should be used for the support of the societies that create them. They believe, too, that only when this fund is exhausted should taxes be imposed on the wealth and income created by individuals.

It is the great merit of land-value taxation that it is a device which permits all to share with approximate equality in the geologically and socially created land values without attempting to "divide" the land itself. An equal division of the land is, at best, only roughly possible in the crudest kind of rural economy. In more advanced countries no such attempt could be seriously considered. Urban land cannot be "divided" among its residents, but the annual value of such land (apart from

improvements) can be shared among them with approximate equality by devoting such community-created value to public purposes.

In conclusion we should remind the reader that the work of the contributors has been, in every sense, a labor of love. For it they deserve the gratitude of all who believe in the just distribution of man's heritage. Because of space limitations some of the reports had to be cut considerably—a painful operation—for which we can only plead necessity and crave forgiveness. We must acknowledge, too, the unfailing co-operation of the publishers. Miss V. G. Peterson of the staff of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation assembled most of the material and for countless other services deserves the credit for the better features of this work.

THE EDITORS