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COMMENT

Many things are happening that should give us Georgists a lift. Some are reported in this issue. As noted on page 10 in the news about communities re-assessing land, things are happening of which we are not even aware. This is all to the good. It means that results are occurring beyond our own smallish numbers.

While we want to keep in touch with such developments, and maybe help them along, we might also be glad to know that they are taking place beyond our immediate circle. This indicates that there are communities that are adopting principles that we propound on their own initiative and out of their own thinking.

For many years our movement has devoted effort to education in the Georgist philosophy and this has surely been influential in the current wave of interest in land, land value and land value taxation. The effect of education is like a little leaven that leavens the whole loaf so that the influence may surface in a community that does not even know the source of the ideas.

I think we have been justified in giving much attention to education. No matter how far we advance in realizing our proposals, we will always need a core of effort that keeps expounding fundamental principles.

Yet it would also be worthwhile to add a new dimension to our approach, and that is an appreciation of the problems involved in putting our ideas into practice.

When we approach lawmakers and public officials, it is because we want to see our philosophy brought into application. But if we want to enlist their aid we also have to see their side of it. They have very specific jobs - taking care of a particular public service, working with other legislators on matters that come up for attention, performing an assignment that has already been determined for them. To arouse their attention we need to be prepared to take the next step and show how our proposals dovetail with their jobs.

To move from the field of general education into the field of application, we thus have to know something of the specific problems, facts and figures in the case we are tackling. We also ought to have some thought-out program of steps 1, 2, 3, etc. Not that this should be our entire responsibility. On the contrary, solid results cannot be achieved unless the interest and responsibility are shared by community leaders. But we can move closer to their point of view.

This does not mean compromising our philosophy. It simply means enlarging our scope so that we may be closer to translating our ideals into action. It is a great and never-ending job and if we keep at it we will surely make progress.

Robert Clancy