

## THE GEORGIST JOURNAL

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### COMMENT

As I was browsing through a scientific magazine I found an item on the development of a new electronic device. The article rejoiced that this device was more simple as well as more effective than its predecessor. Elsewhere in the same issue was an article about some legislation promoted by a certain Senator who was accused of being "simplistic" in his approach.

He may or may not have been, but what struck me was the use of the two words "simple" and "simplistic." The magazine was using "simple" in a complimentary sense in a field in which it was at home, and "simplistic" in a pejorative sense in an area which was outside its province.

"Simple" means plain, natural, unmixed, uncomplicated, straightforward. "Simplistic" has come into use more recently (an older dictionary gives it as pertaining to medicinal herbs) and is taken to mean oversimplified, giving a too simple answer to a complex problem.

The Georgist proposal, the single tax, is frequently dismissed as "simplistic." Such is the charisma of this "in" word that no further comment is usually required - thus the criticism is itself simplistic.

The confusing complications of today's social, economic and political problems admittedly have us in a whirl. So knotty seem the problems that it must be tempting to dismiss a simple explanation as simplistic. When we say, however, that the land question is at the bottom of it all, this is based on a thorough inquiry that does not overlook very much en route to a solution.

Curiously, many of those who are ready to use the word "simplistic" against Georgist ideas often come up with another answer to our problems - that the government must spend more money on these problems, whether it be slums, transportation, education, poverty or whatever. If ever there was a simplistic answer, there it is! Upon inquiry we find that more and more money does not improve the situation but usually makes it worse, leads to more bureaucracy, corruption and inflation, and adds still more burdens on the taxpayer.

So be prepared to defend the Georgist philosophy against the charge of being "simplistic." It is not a random answer tossed off from the top of one's head, but rather a well thought out, fundamental and simple answer to today's basic economic problem.

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Editor