

# Isn't One Tax Enough?

by RUSSEL CONKLIN



THE great rent fund remains a huge untapped source of public revenue. It is unearned income. It grows all the time. Why not take it in place of the multitude of taxes on production we now have?

Increased population puts constant pressure on the land—not in the old Malthusian sense—but in ever-increasing rents and royalties for the non-producers. The economics are so simple: Increased population means greater demand for land. The supply cannot be increased. So the price goes up. The community creates this value—the community should take it for public purposes. Set the producers free.

Political freedom without economic freedom is nothing. A hungry man doesn't want to vote. He wants to eat.

If some are escaping taxation, others must be paying for it. If some are paying taxes for others, they are being deprived of what they produce. What a man produces should be his own. Taxes on production rob the producers for the benefit of the non-producers. Justice demands the taking of unearned income for public purposes. Free the producers to produce.

*Monopoly* is a nasty word. It sounds almost as bad as *communism*. If free enterprise is to survive, it must find a middle ground. We must free our system of monopoly of all kinds if we are to save ourselves from communism.

Land is the only thing over which a complete monopoly can be established. Only with legal sanction is

such monopoly possible. Exclusive right to the use of the natural resources of the world can rightfully be exercised by none but the people themselves. Let the country own its natural resources and individuals may keep what they produce. Common property in land can be secured easily and simply by the taking of economic rent.

In a country as rich as ours, poverty is absurd. No man is free who has only the right to vote and is denied the right to work. The earth belongs to the living. Some land in Chicago sells at the rate of \$30,000 a front foot; that's \$13 million an acre. Urban values exceed farm values several times over. Land value taxation would fall most heavily on cities.

Why are some people so eager to see the city grow in population? Could it be that every increase in the city's census coincides with an increase in the price of land in that city? Land in New York City is certainly worth more than land in Podunk. Why? People make land values.

Vast supplies of valuable land are held in cold storage by speculators, just waiting for the price to rise. And the price will rise when the people come.

Income taxes are always subtracted from earnings. Excise taxes are always added to the price of purchases. The consumer who lives by his own earnings is squeezed in the middle.

The reason so many people do not become advocates of just taxes on un-

earned income is that they have received some of the benefits of increased land prices in the past or are hoping to make some of this easy money in the future. This plan hits at the self-interest of too many people. Everybody seems to be a potential land speculator. If you do not believe in taxing unearned income, you probably are scheming now as to how you can get some of it. Many people seem willing to pay this tremendous price of present-day taxes in the hope of getting some of the tax-free windfalls. The trouble is that so many of us never get anything except what we earn by our own labor. But it would be something to get all of that. When anybody escapes his just share of taxes, somebody else must pay it. Are you now paying somebody else's taxes?

Those of us who live by our own earnings should demand that we get all of those earnings and not have some of our just wages used to subsidize the landowners who reap tremendous profits from public improvements. Who do you suppose paid that profit which was earned on land near the freeways? Do you suppose that's where some of your taxes went? When the state condemns land for a new highway, it always pays the top price to the landowner. Some of these land holders just got control of the land when they learned of the proposed road. Whose money are they paying the speculator?

It's high time to take the tax off earnings and production and put it where it belongs: on the unearned income.

*"I leave the sunshine*

*to the*

*flowers . . .*



I leave the moon above, to those in love . . ." so ran a well-known song in the days when you could ride on the streetcar for a nickel.

The way to live without fear of the future, some would say, is to expect the best but prepare for the inevitable. Most people agree that peace of mind results from making a carefully executed will. And what better cause could one endow than the institution which is pointing out steadily year after year, the solution for many of the world's social ills?

Recently someone left a bequest to this school, however, and occasioned inconvenience, which was certainly not desired, because the name and address were not stated in the accepted legal form. Here it is: "I give, devise and bequeath to the Henry George School of Social Science, a New York educational corporation of 50 East 69th Street, New York 21, New York, the sum of \$———(or property, with description), to be used for the general purposes of the School."

If you are one of those readers who prefers joyously to act now and "live it up," you may send us a tender (legal) valentine and make us very happy. Any amount will be gratefully received, but if you send ten or more tax-exempt dollars your Henry George News will come to you as a free gift for one year. Bless you good. We love you, too!