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LAND - VALUE TAXATION IN FRANCE

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Anyone interested in the ideas of Henry George will be glad to hear that in the French Parliament the ex-President Edgar Faure proposed a declared land-value tax. This comes at a time when the government asserts that it wants to avoid all that would discourage investments and profit and when economic policy requires that capital be put to work freely to build up industry.

Henry George showed that the best way to stimulate the production of wealth is to abolish all taxation save that upon land values. Tax manufactures, he said, and the effect is to lessen improvement; tax commerce and the effect is to prevent exchange; tax capital and the effect is to drive it away. But the whole value of land may be taken in taxation, and the only effect will be to stimulate industry, to open new opportunities to capital and to increase the production of wealth.

One would suppose that the French government, in view of its stated policy to encourage industry, would praise Mr. Faure's proposed declared land-value tax. But instead, the present President, Georges Pompidou, laughed at it in a press conference and said: "I have no spirit fast enough to follow Mr. Faure; I try constantly to overtake him but succeed very seldom."

It is sad that in the native country of Quesnay, Turgot and Mirabeau, who demonstrated that the only tax that decreases the price of land and labor products is a single tax on land, this idea is so neglected, or at best misused to hide unjust privileges.