

## VIEWPOINT

production to a minority that renders no service in return. They cannot increase their own rewards in the face of the demands of these privileged non-producers.

The secondary, devastating effect of the legislative conivance, which converts a rational, harmonious public fund into a private perquisite, is resort to taxation that strikes most heavily at producers according to their degree of industry. Taxation is the notorious cause of rising costs and reducer of incomes; it now takes at least half of the average person's income, much of it to be expended on welfare, the necessity for which would largely vanish if land were freed by the restoration of rent to the public.

When the law of rent is really understood, not only will the superstition that arbitration courts can raise wages in general be exposed, but the downward pressure on wages by speculative land-values and taxation will become an historical notoriety like the inquisition or any other such repellent aberration.

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Obituary

THEODORE MAXWELL EDWARDS

It is sad to record that another scholarly and dedicated Georgist, Max Edwards, passed away on January 8th, 1978. Although a few years ago a stroke caused paralysis of limbs on one side and also deprived him of speech, mentally he was bright as ever and his capacious memory never failed. Using an alphabet chart, he conversed with considerable animation and so quickly that one had to be very wide awake to keep up with him. Seemingly he regarded disaster as a challenge. His cheerfulness was inspiring and beautiful. His courage was superb.

Throughout his years of activity he wrote many letters and contributed to Georgist journals. His efforts promoted a wide distribution of George's books and relevant literature. When residing near Gosford he presented books by Henry George to the town library and bestowed a similar benefit on the library of his last place of residence, Hornsby.

As a teacher he observed the disadvantages of the children of the very poor, particularly the aboriginal children with whom he felt great compassion. Having long experience in high school teaching he was not only efficient but also patient as an exponent of Georgist philosophy and practicable proposals.

Taking note of social conditions he travelled in many lands including Russia. Having learned to speak the language he had hoped to converse with people in various occupations, but as he was not permitted to go or stay anywhere without

his official guide, there was no freedom of speech.

In disposition he was gentle and unobtrusive. The philosophy of Henry George was vitally a part of himself. Despite the difficulties and frustrations which beset the Georgist cause, he was on all occasions, courteous. Though sadly missed by his associates he is most affectionately remembered.

Max had two sons and two married daughters, Mrs Kirkwood and Mrs Frazer. Sadly, one of his sons who became a barrister, died in London in consequence of an accident. Our deep sympathy is extended to Max's widow Mrs Maud Edwards of Hornsby, the children and relatives.

IVY AKEROYD

As a tribute to Max's memory the committee has resolved to make gifts of copies of George's principal works to several district libraries, including Hornsby. These will be designated as Max Edwards Memorial Gifts. EDITOR.

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## JUSTICE AND LAND TENURE

By S S GILCHRIST

Who should own land?  
How should land be distributed between individuals?

Should individuals and some families have the legal right to hold sites and resources forever, and others to be deprived of access to sites forever, except by paying tribute to the land owners?

With our present land tenure system, past governments have issued permanent titles to sites and these titles are maintained by present governments. These titles give the holders the perpetual opportunity to get all the benefits they can from the site, but in doing this the government continually deprives the remainder of the community of such opportunity. Laws such as trespass, backed by police action ensure this situation. This is most unjust as it creates permanent privilege AND permanent disadvantage, particularly as title holders can lease sites, and the landless must pay another individual for permission to use part of Australia.

The fact that titles to land privilege can be bought and sold, does not alter the fact that the titles are government maintained privilege. The distribution of site value privilege is of course unjustly disproportionate. It is this maldistribution which is the main cause of unearned riches on one hand, and of undeserved poverty on the other.

The basic privilege of land owning is increased many fold by the benefits and services which are provided at the community's expense such as roads and highways, bridges, police

protection, schools and teachers, hospitals, fire brigades, libraries, parks and gardens, subsidised rail, bus and ferry services and many others. If any of these services became unavailable in a given area, then the worth of sites is less and prices would fall. Virtually the whole worth of land, as indicated by its market price, is created by the opportunities, advantages, services and benefits all provided at the expense of the community. Even the presence of the community itself increases the value of the land privilege. Ask yourself what are the things which make any site more valuable (or attract greater price) than another site?

As site holders obviously are getting benefits at the expense of the community, is it not simple justice for them to pay the provider of the benefits according to their market value? This is in fact already done to a small extent by some local governments which obtain their revenue from rates on the 'unimproved' land values, but it is clear that the full worth of the privilege is not collected, as the titles still exchange for considerable amounts. It is the duty of government to charge able bodied people for these services.

A good government will steadily increase site value taxation for revenue for central government and it will reduce other taxes such as sales tax and income tax which are unjust and uneconomic. (Briefly site taxes cause prosperity whereas other taxes and deficit budgetting cause depression and unemployment).  
 \* Increasing site tax removes privilege. Site Value Tax is not so much a tax as a payment for services provided at government expense.  
 \* Site taxes encourage land speculation. The land, and discourages land speculation. The fuller use of land causes fuller employment opportunities.  
 \* Remember: The value of land is continually maintained and increased by the continuous stream of services provided by the community.  
 \* It is absolutely just and economically sound that we each and all pay for the worth that the community is providing to us.  
 \* Uniform site taxation should be instituted by central government on all sites without exemption and the rate should be increased steadily each year.  
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## THE LAW OF RENT IS BASIC

"Finally I must insist that the crux of the Land question is the classical theory of Economic Rent, dubbed by Lassalle the Iron Law of Wages. Like the roundness of the earth, it is unfortunately not obvious. It is the pons asinorum of economic mathematics. Our politicians cannot draw their conclusions from it any more than Shakespeare could draw his from the Okapi or the axolotl: they simply do not

Good Government

know of its existence. Karl Marx, by an absurd reference to it in 'Das Kapital', proved that he did not understand it. John Ruskin, after a very promising beginning as an economist by his contrast of exchange values with human values, was stopped dead by it. Yet Marx and Ruskin had more brains and keener interest in social questions than three or four average Cabinetts or three or four million average voters. It is the rock on which Liberal Cobdenism has been broken and Socialism built in the struggle between plutocracy and democracy".  
 (George Bernard Shaw, "Everybody's Political What's What?" (1944), page 22.)  
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## BOOK WILL DETAIL HARE-CLARK SYSTEM

The American who came to Tasmania to study the Hare-Clark electoral system 22 years ago, has been commissioned by the Government to write a book on the subject.

Dr George Howatt never went back to the US, and has since become the world's best-known authority on the system. Already he has written a number of reports and will use them as a basis for his book. The State Government has made a cash grant available through the University of Tasmania. But Dr Howatt said at a news conference that he had not set a target date for completion of the book.

He said that when he arrived in Australia in 1956 on a Fulbright scholarship from the University of Pennsylvania, he believed the Hare-Clark system was the best in the world. "And my opinion has not changed," he said. He said the grant would be used to research refinements in the system. The most urgently needed reform was to adopt a change in which the final result was taken from the State-wide majority. Dr Howatt said that this could be done by relating the composition of Parliament to the State-wide vote. As it was, the results in each electorate were calculated in isolation. But under Dr Howatt's proposal the seventh member in each electorate would be elected according to the State-wide majority. This would mean the candidate would be elected on the State-wide trend, not by the trend in his own electorate.

Dr Howatt said that this would also allow an immediate evaluation of the election result. If an early trend favored one political party, then there was no way it could lose. Dr Howatt's changes would ensure a majority of 20-15 every time. The present Government has a majority of only one seat.

Dr Howatt said he was aware of the grant in October last year. The idea of a book on the system originally came from a former Liberal Premier, Mr Angus Bethune. But it was taken up after the declaration of the 1976 poll by the then Premier, Mr Neilson. Mr Neilson backed Dr Howatt's proposals to modify the system to make