

Reports from Overseas

A little over three years ago, Dunedin, New Zealand's fourth largest city (population 71,9000) adopted site-value taxation, as a result of a vote of the taxpayers, by a large majority. The effect was to remove about \$2,200,000 of taxes from improvements and to reimpose them on land values.

According to H. Bronson Cowan, there soon was an upsurge of new buildings. The changes were so marked that the Auckland Weekly News published a full page well-illustrated article describing them. This stated that the change to site-value taxation had "sharply accelerated" the improvement which "promised to change the skyline of Dunedin considerably within the next few years."

Auckland Likely to Change

Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, is considering following Dunedin's example. Last July a committee appointed by the City Council to examine what the effects would be were the city to change to site-value taxation recommended its adoption. The necessity of improving the city's decadent areas was the reason the committee was appointed. The report showed that the effect would be to curb speculation in land values, improve housing conditions, and benefit people in the middle and lower-income groups.

Report of a Government Commission

Last December the Local Government Commission, a body with wide powers concerning municipal conditions, recommended to the New Zealand Government that it should make the use of site-value taxation mandatory by all municipalities. Out of 280 municipalities 190 are using that system and only 98 the other two systems. One is the capital system, as

used in the United States and Canada, and the other the annual system, as used in Great Britain.

The Commission stated it was "satisfied that the site-value system is . . . more ethical, expedient and equitable than the existing system." This recommendation is receiving the attention of the Government.

Jamaica Favors Site-value Taxation

The Government of the Island of Jamaica has passed legislation that will, if approved by the Upper House, make the use of site-value taxation universal throughout the island. In introducing this legislation Hon. Mr. Seivright said that the Government had been influenced by information contained in reports of the International Research Committee on Land Value Taxation.

Land Value Taxation in Australia

A notable advance in land values taxation in the State of Victoria, Australia, took place within recent months when the State Rivers and Water Supply Commission changed over from taxing both land and improvements, under the annual system of taxation, to the taxation of land values only. The Commission administers 30 irrigation districts with an area of over 2,000,000 acres. The change was favored by 11 of 18 Advisory Boards. The revenue involved approximates \$925,771 (Aust.).

Municipalities which are using site-value taxation for municipal purposes are beginning to include water and sewerage services as well. For the most part these services are under the control of separate trusts. The City of Mildura and the Borough of Wangaratta made the change when they adopted site-value taxation for municipal purposes last August by large majorities.