

The Right Kind of Tax

By MARY HUTCHINSON (Victoria, Australia)

Some of our friends think we should not use the word "tax" to describe the Georgist proposal, as it tends to put people off because of course it is a hated word among the general population. I know that purists can say that rent is not a tax really and is rather a collecting of the rent due to Government for public expenses in lieu of taxes on personal earnings.

But I don't believe for one moment that our use of the term "tax" is an important reason why we don't get further with our reform. The average man, who is more intelligent than some give him credit for, knows that the Government must have income to run the country. Whatever we call it, sooner or later and mostly sooner, they realise they are being asked to pay out some money, and they react accordingly when hit in the pocket here. So I prefer to say we are urging the right kind of tax rather than say, as some do, we are against all taxation.

May I relate a personal experience? I was once asked to speak on our ideas, and I talked for a whole afternoon without mentioning the word "tax" once, deliberately. At the end some one came up to me and said, "But it is a tax, isn't it?"

Some are actually blaming Henry George for our poor progress, saying his use of the term "tax" has been a stumbling block. I can't help saying "Rubbish." Don't they know we are engaged in a war? It is not only ignorance that stops us getting our reform, it is often deliberate opposition. I don't need to tell you, we all know that we can make money out of land. Every one knows it. There is our stumbling block!

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THE DANES have a word for it: Grundskyld = ground dues. It is different from the Danish word for tax (skat) - but it is imbedded in the language from pre-Georgist times. English usage is not so favored; "tax" appears to be the omnibus word understood by all. - Ed.