

# goal is self-help justice

Mike Clark, Director of the Highlander Tax-Research Centre says: "This is one more example of the people in the region seeing a need and doing something about it. They were the ones who recognised that every problem – mine safety, black lung, stripmining, pollution, the decline of farming, floods, sub-standard housing, welfare, – every single problem can ultimately be traced back to the question of who owns the land."

**T**HE 1,800 pages of raw data and analysis is a powerful tool for groups throughout this historically rich and unique area of America.

The people of Appalachia now know they are an economic colony. Undeterred by taxation, money flows quickly out of the coal counties of Appalachia. Because of the failure to tax the mineral companies, local investment by coal companies takes the form of temporary or moveable facilities and equipment.

This colonial pattern was borne out in one community which boasted a sign: "Welcome to Williamson Heart of the Billion Dollar Coal field". Yet the children of Dingess, a few miles away, go to school in a trailer. Where have the billion dollars gone?

The results of the six state survey have now been distilled in *Who Owns*



**ASSETS GALORE – BUT FEW NOW BETTER OFF...**

● **LANDOWNERS** strip the countryside of its coal but the property tax is so low that local communities barely benefit from the rich resources of their countryside. Photo reprinted with permission from *The Courier Journal and The Louisville Times*.

Appalachia. Its evidence is being heard in the legislative halls of the state capitals.

Nowhere is this truer than in

Kentucky, where the citizens have recognised the need for tax justice between the mineral and surface owners, in order to cure many of the ills exposed by the study (see table).

The Kentucky Fair Tax Coalition is seeking an unmined mineral tax in the legislature to address the problem of unequal taxation. After a setback in 1982 the group is seeking a series of bills to reform the tax system, and protect water supplies for the future.

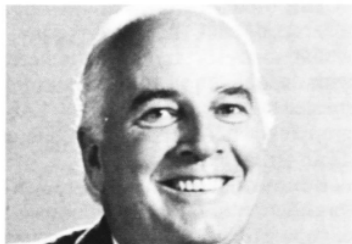
A commission to study the problem has been appointed, and other taxes (such as an increased sales tax) have been proposed.

In a legislature often dominated by the mineral industry, increasing public pressure is making it more difficult for the legislators to ignore the people's appeal for justice.

This time the search for justice is not being sought in Washington and in federal tax dollars. People now want to control their destiny and their land through a tax system which recognises their right to share in the value of their natural resources.

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## EXPO '86 set for Vancouver



A former Minister of Resources of British Columbia, Canada, is one of the keynote speakers at the international conference in Vancouver on May 18-24, 1986.

Robert Williams (above), who is a Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, will speak about Resource Rents.

The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade has lined up an impressive panel of speakers. Among them is Rae Else-Mitchell, Chairman of the Commonwealth Grants Commission in Canberra, Australia.

And Mr. O. St. Clare Ridsen, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Mines, Jamaica, will discuss his country's experience with land value taxation.

Full details of speakers and booking arrangements are obtainable from Mary Rawson, 1406 Woodland Drive, Vancouver, B.C., Canada V5L 3S6. Tel: (604) 251-2908.