

Subsidy for Standees?

By J. RUPERT MASON

WHETHER those privileged to occupy, use and hold the land in my community, state or nation can afford to support government is a very timely question. Let us suppose that many of them now holding land could not afford to pay their just share. There is no law compelling them to keep land they cannot find profitable use for. They can always escheat their deed to the state, as countless land holders have done. The annual ad-valorem land tax is seldom if ever, a personal liability. You never heard of a land holder being imprisoned for not paying an ad-valorem tax, as you or I would be imprisoned for not paying an income tax.

Those occupying the seats (sites) in a theater willingly pay more for the best locations. Suppose theaters should plot and scheme to get more revenue from standing room patrons, in order to be able to charge less for seats. If you or I cannot afford a seat in a theater we stand or miss the show. Others can afford to buy the seats and do so. We might organize a lobby to demand our "equal right" to a seat. But if others are willing to pay more, then we seat holders might demand a subsidy, so we could enjoy "parity."

I have seen no proof, or even evidence that the land holders in any city, state, etc., within the U.S.A. have any right in law, or equity, to expect those without land, and whose income is derived from wages and/or interest, to help them (the land holders) escape *their duty* to support their governments, federal, state and local. It seems to me it is up to the land holders to prove they cannot support their government, and not up to the landless to prove they can. Never forget, the Constitution guarantees to all persons the equal right to life and liberty.