

# the Henry George News

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## *Land Value Taxation in New Zealand*

by ROLLAND O'REGAN

(Following are summaries of the remarks made at the Henry George Conference banquet in San Diego on July 12th by three principal speakers. Further conference reports in the September HGN will include the California itinerary of Dr. O'Regan and the points he stressed).

THE LAND VALUE tax by itself, and the abolition of the income tax by itself, are not enough. Put them together and you will get somewhere.

There is inequity when buildings and improvements are taxed. The person who improves his property is penalized for doing so. The way to remove this inequity is to shift the burden of taxation onto land values.

We have made progress with land value taxation in New Zealand. It should also be mentioned that progress has been made in Australia, especially in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria; and in South Africa, especially in Johannesburg and the Transvaal.

In New Zealand we have moved away from theory. Land value taxation is now a fact, and it is retained be-

cause it works. This is the way to reward the good citizen and punish the bad citizen. This is the way to get rid of slums. Some New Zealanders wonder what is the good of land value taxation. It is like the salt in the porridge. You don't notice it until it is absent!

In New Zealand the taxing power rests in the hands of the voters. Local authorities have changed over to land value taxation and the system is spreading, not because of Georgist arguments but because people see it is a good thing.

We need more study of what would happen if more land value taxation were applied. Mr. H. Bronson Cowan made a good field survey, and more of such surveys are needed. We must understand the system more thoroughly.

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# Land Value Taxation

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These conferences are good because they bring out information and discussion on these matters.

No reform, no matter how just or ingenious, can make headway without popular support. That is why the work of the Henry George School is so important. But a more activist program is also needed. From my brief sojourn

here, I feel that California is ripe for such an effort.

It has been most interesting for me to revisit California. It is a name to conjure with. It is the state forever associated with the labors of Henry George, whose ideas will work enormous good for the whole human family.

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## Let's Abolish the Income Tax

by J. BRACKEN LEE

The advice of America's founding fathers was good—that we should keep government simple. We make it too complicated. A legislator has to go through hundreds of bills, each one with many pages in difficult legal language. It's a hard enough job for the legislator. What about the people? How many of them understand the bills that are passed?

The founding fathers understood these difficulties and therefore proposed that representatives of the people be elected to run the government within the limits of the Constitution. No one should be given too much power. Even honest people abuse power. That is why our forefathers were so wise; they understood human nature.

The founding fathers limited the power of taxation and they did not permit an income tax. We will not restore freedom until we get rid of the income tax.

The income tax gives too much power to the collector. Nearly all our constitutional liberties are violated. It permits prying into our private

affairs. The income tax says, "You are guilty unless you can prove yourself innocent." It creates a government of men, not of law. The power of the collector can be used in a vindictive way, to ruin individuals who are not liked.

Most people agree with me about the income tax. Many say to me, "I'm for you, but don't mention my name." Isn't this one more proof that the income tax rules by fear?

The only two arguments I've heard in favor of the income tax are: 1, it is a way of taxing the rich; and 2, the government needs the money. As for the first, this is not true any more, as 83 per cent of the income tax comes from incomes of \$6,000 and under. As for the second, how much money does government really need? Fifty cents of every dollar collected by government is wasted money.

We must get back to a higher moral standard. We must find out about the income tax, teach it to the people and arouse them. When the people are aroused, the politicians will give them anything they want.