

ARE ALL GOVERNMENT SERVICES IN THE ROAD OR STREET?

If it is a fact that all the tangible services of government are street services, or elaborations of the common road, then it is of the first importance that the fact be well understood by tax reformers and advocates of government ownership of public utilities. Let anyone name the present tangible services of government with which he is familiar. First, because it is the first act of human association and necessary to the existence of society, is the road.

As population increases roads are multiplied, and in thickly settled sections parallel and intersecting streets are laid out so as to form blocks or areas of land, each containing many building lots of convenient width and depth suitable to the wants of families.

As wells and springs cannot supply a dense population with pure water, that necessity of life is brought from some lake or river and distributed by pipes through the streets to the families living on the blocks. The water in the lake or river costs nothing, and the only expenditure required is for the construction of a dam or stand-pipe and pumping station, and the laying of mains in the streets. Water works are therefore permanent street services and by the very fact of the limitation of width and use of the street are monopolies—as much so as the street itself.

The fire department is simply an annex to the water department, except where chemical engines are used. Where chemical engines or salvage appliances are used the system may be performed in whole or in part by private parties, either voluntarily, as in many towns, or it may be operated by fire insurance companies, as the salvage corps of many cities are at present, and as many engine and hook and ladder companies were organized about the middle of the last century. But where the service is dependent upon street fire plugs for its water supply, and an alarm system of telegraph, it is essentially a street service.

Of course, street lamps and lighting, whether by gas, electricity or oil, is a street service.

Street cleaning and the removal of garbage and ashes are each a street service.

Sewers are sub-surface constructions in the streets and drain the blocks formed by them.

The police force is a street patrol, the "beat" of each officer being on certain streets. It is an arm of the executive power, and can be more properly defined as such than as a public utility. Its function is to keep the peace, and belongs to the department of public safety, but its operations are confined to the highway, and the electric system of police fire alarm and of patrol call-stations with overhead or underground wires occupy the beds of the streets.

The harbor is a system of water ways for the use of vessels, and on the water serves the same purpose to the docks as the street service does to the blocks.

The public parks are an elaborate system of drives and walks enclosing public land.

These comprehend the tangible services of government. Distinguished from these is the government itself in its law making and administrative functions. The offices of Governor, County Commissioners, Mayors of cities, Legislatures and Councils, Tax officers, Inspectors, Boards of Health, Jails, and other houses of detention, are the law making and administrative departments of government itself;—the tangible services of government are what the government does, not what it is.

There are but two tangible services of State and Municipal Government which are not street services; that is, which do not operate through the streets by appropriating a part of the land of the people; they are public education and care of the poor. These are not exclusively public functions and are therefore by many believed to be improperly performed by a government for, and of, and by the people. This view is logically correct, and it conforms to the fact that all the tangible services of government, or public utilities, are visible in the street; that is, the tangible benefits are respectively distributed by paved streets, rails, mains, pipes, wires, tunnels and other subways or conduits.

The public care of the poor and the public schools are both institutions that are necessitated by a condition of social inequality which is itself the outgrowth of a system of taxation that from time immemorial has disregarded the contractual rela-

tions of the members of society. Instead of taxing the value of the land on the blocks formed by the streets and roads in the cities and countries, to pay for the street and road services that occasion it, the landed interests have hitherto controlled the law making power—of republics as well as monarchies—so as to put the burden of government principally on buildings and other forms of personal property, to the great profit of the land speculators, and the greater loss of the landless members of society who are forced by this system of taxation to pay exorbitant prices for land and then to bear heavy annual taxes on the values of their improvements and products, which values are absolutely unrelated to any services of government whatsoever. This breeds a line of aristocratic landlords on the one hand and landless laborers on the other; hence the necessity of public charity and public education.

The importance of a clear reading of the rule, *that all public services are properly road or street services, and conversely, that all road or street services are properly governmental services*, is in the fact that it supplies a visible line, known as the building line, between public and private functions, and also points to the value of land as the direct and only product of government services maintained by taxation.

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THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PROGRESS.

Perhaps the most distinctive work done by the disciples of Henry George, during the last twenty years, has been that of showing the economic difference between wealth in land and wealth in labor products. So thoroughly has this been done that there is no man to-day of any political influence who is ignorant of this distinction. This truth is so self-evident, that once stated, it easily makes its way to every unprejudiced

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mind, and there tends to color or modify every related thought, such as ideas regarding wages and rent. Does not this tend to prove that the Single Tax, as a land question, is pretty thoroughly understood and appreciated? Would it not be well for Single Taxers to recognize the fact that this first and most important step has been taken, and no longer waste effort endeavoring to prove what is already clear to intelligent people?

The next step in the evolution of the Single Tax would seem to be to spread abroad the logical inference from this sound principle, viz: that the value which attaches to land is, in essence, quite different from that value which attaches to labor products. That one is a value of privilege, because it expresses the degree of advantage which each site gives to labor and capital, combined with its general demand for such site. In brief, that land is a labor saving value; while labor saving product value expresses the amount of labor it has taken to produce each product, combined with the general demand for such product.

Nearly every one understands this distinction, in a general way; but how many fail to realize the importance of its consequences; while with others these consequences stand out so boldly that they shrink from their espousal, because they seem too revolutionary.

Mr. Carnegie has lately been reported as declaring that if society is the cause of the increase in the value of land, then such increasing value belongs to the community, and should be used for the support of its social needs. When a steel protected lover of democracy begins to talk Single Tax, however unconsciously, it is time for those who are disheartened at the progress of our cause to be comforted.

The time has now come in the progress of our reform to emphasize the fact that the land question is a question of taxation. Not to hide our principles, but to hasten their establishment. How often do we quote Cobden's threat against the landlords of England. Yet it is quite clear that he was comparing the burden of the bread tax to the light tax upon land, which had not been revalued for assessment since 1692. Well he knew that could the middle and industrious classes be made to realize how