

SHOULD U.S. LAND-TENURE
SYSTEM BE CHANGED?

If the present land-tenure system which is in operation in the United States is the best of any known system then perhaps there ought be no change. However, there are a number of other systems known, and the present system in effect in the U.S. does have many defects.

There is a system of administering title deeds to land whereby the title holder may be required to pay an annual rental for the land to which he holds title. This annual rental, of course, would vary in amount depending upon location and other factors, and would vary from time to time.

The payment would be made to an administrative body which might under present conditions be local, State or Federal Government. This does not imply any of these governmental units would be the "owners" of the land, but merely the administrators of title deeds and collector of annual rent.

The basic assumption here is that the land is owned by, belongs to, the people - all of the people - of the community - the State - the Nation. In theory, those who hold a title deed to land thereby having the exclusive right to a particular parcel of land will pay for such privilege. They will pay to all other persons who surrender their equal right to that particular parcel of land.

By making payment to the administrative unit they are in effect supplying public revenue. They are thus supplying funds which may be used to first cover cost of administration of titles and rent collection, then such services as are determined necessary and desirable for the community, the State and the Nation.

It may well be that the annual rental value of land (including the severance value of other natural resources) will provide sufficient revenue for the necessary services desired and if so it would not be necessary for these governmental units to seek public revenue from any other source. In other words, the annual rental value of land and severance value of natural resources is the natural source of public revenue.

Such a change in the Land Tenure System in the United States would:

- (1) Eliminate buying and selling land, thus there would be no incentive for land speculation.
- (2) Prevent holding of land out of use where there is a demand for using it since the annual rent payment would be too costly.
- (3) Enable persons to obtain land for productive or residential use without having to pay out a large sum for land - they would pay only annual rent.
- (4) Encourage production and home building - not only because not having to pay out large amount for land, can pay more for labor and materials.
- (5) Provide Public Revenue from Natural Source.

When we consider the United States is in the process of changing from the present system of measurement used to the believed to be better metric system; perhaps it is not too much to expect the land-tenure system might also be changed?

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