

By HENRY L. T. TIDEMAN

*Question.* (1) Theoretically, our rate of the taxation of the land will be fixed by its value; and (2) as soon as this principle is applied, the selling value declines. (3) It obviously cannot be used as a gauge to fix the land's value and so the land's value will be assessed. (4) What I want to get clear is how will the land's value be determined, independently of sales prices, and separate from any return due to the work of the user of the land?

*Answer.* (1) Correct. We now fix the rate of local taxation by assessing the amount needed against the real estate value as recorded by an assessor. Except to abolish the taxation of improvements and other things, and to assess the needed revenue upon land's value, no other change is advocated.

(2) Of course the selling value of land will decline. But that will mean that when the next assessor's valuation will have been completed, a still higher "rate" will be necessary, and the rate should be kept high enough to bring in the specified revenue.

(3) Why not? Land is daily bought, sold and leased in every community, and all recorded as a guide for the assessing officials. After the abolition of other taxation than on land values, land will still be bought, sold and leased; though generally at much lower prices. Not having to assess buildings and personal property, the work of the local assessors will be simplified.

(4) Even in a community where land sales and leases are quite infrequent, there is no trouble in determining what prices should be had for lands. If the tax took as much as 90 per cent of the land rent (and it cannot take much more than that), land would still have a determinable selling price for the assessing officials to appraise.

Finally, the practical result of such perfection as might follow the abolition of taxation, excepting only land values, would be to limit the revenue of government to its real need.