

to blow it off him, but the stronger it blew, the tighter he wrapped his coat about him. The sun on the other hand, simply came out from behind the clouds, and smiled gently on the old man who obligingly took his coat off to escape the heat. The moral is that self-interest is a stronger motive for good than force.

Instead of a Commission with a battery of paid officers and inquisitorial powers to compel development satisfactory to bureaucrats — or face acquisition, (another heavy drain on the already-overburdened taxpayers), why not simply assess the land at its current market-value and tax all land at its full economic rental value — whether used or not, while exempting all improvements. Self-interest would compel land holders to develop their lands in order to pay the tax, as no one would keep paying for idle land, when by using it he could make enough to pay the tax and show a profit. Its use would then be up to him, but since he'd have to put it to its best use to earn enough to meet the taxes, we could safely leave him to his own devices in deciding its highest and best use without annoyance and interference from Government Officials. Thus, Land Value Taxation acts as an automatic-zoning regulator, by making it uneconomical to put valuable lands to inferior uses. Added benefits include the destruction

of land speculation — holding land out of use for a speculative rise in price, and a substantial increase in new and renovated buildings as there's no longer the fear of being taxed for making improvements or erecting new buildings, thus tremendously increasing employment opportunities. In Brunswick, Greater Melbourne, Australia, there was a 42 per cent increase in buildings after tax was shifted from improvements to land.

The case for taxing away the full rental-value of land is: Land is free gift of God to all men, the supply is fixed and being indispensable to life demand constantly increases. This gives land a unique locational value, as the presence and activity of the community gives an enormous and ever-increasing value to it by the provision of communal services; roads, lights, water, fire, police protection, bridges and sewage. To name a few like Rip Van Winkle, landholders can go to sleep or live abroad, but they'll reap the benefits in increased rents. Why should they reap what they've not sown?

Even the effects are drastically different when lands and not products are taxed. Tax products and their price is increased, demand lessened, and supply reduced. Tax land up to its full economic rental value and the only result will be lowering of the price by forcing more land into the market. Land, being a gift of God to all men has no cost of production — its already here.

Henry George, in his economic classic "Progress and Poverty," showed that poverty deepens as wealth increases because land, the indispensable element to all life and labour, is monopolized by a few, thus compelling labour and capital to give up most of what they produce for the mere opportunity to produce. His remedy was simple yet radical: Collect what economists call the "unearned increment," increased land-values caused by the presence and activities of the community, abolish all other taxes and restrictions on trade, and restrict Government to merely protecting the rights and liberties of its citizens. This would achieve both prosperity and freedom, as men strive to improve themselves ethically, morally, materially and culturally. He predicted a gradual reversion to barbarism if the equal rights of all to land was not secured, as the individual becomes increasingly dependent on State paternalism for his very existence. Is this where we are heading — maybe unconsciously?

I am, etc.

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Kingston 16, Nov. 29, 1966.

Land-Use Commission

THE EDITOR, Sir:— The Government's recently appointed Commission on Land — Use reminds me of the story of the sun and wind who tried to get an old man to take off his coat the wind used force, by trying

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