

COPY

20 Lady Musgrave Road  
Kingston 5, Jamaica  
12th. October 1963

Dear Mr. Jensen -

I acknowledge receipt of your kind letter of the 5th. instant. I am no longer Minister of Agriculture and Lands in which office (in the Peoples National Party Government) I introduced the legislation changing the system of land taxation from the improved to the unimproved valuation. Indeed I am not a Minister, as my Party was defeated at the polls last year.

The new government has not been able to make its mind on this subject: five of the fourteen parishes had been re-valued by us and the new system imposed. Another had been valued - but not changed - when we were thrown out of office; and the new Government has done nothing more - except to stop the valuations in other parishes.

I am still a Member of Parliament, winning my seat with the greatest number of votes of the 45 membership. I will endeavour to obtain the publications you request and will forward if I obtain same.

You ask my opinion since its inception: On the whole good, but I am disappointed on one aspect, and disturbed on another. I am afraid that our hopes that the incidence of this tax to force the employment of unused land has not been realized. Personal experience has shown that it is no simple matter to bring unused land into production. I bought 14 acres of land for £1000 and capital expenditure - no house - has been some £1500: so that taxation would have to be real burdensome to induce a man to sell - and sell to whom? Incidentally, this piece of land - not revalued by Govt. for some 50 years - for which I paid £1000, was on the tax roll for £50!!

The other matter, and which has caused a great deal of resentment, from the comparatively small number relatively affected, is with regard to the procedure followed in the valuation of property, by including therein the potential values accruing to it from natural assets which make the property "ripe" for development. This practice has been confined only, I think, to beach lands - I mean land by the sea-side fit for hotel and tourist development. The irony of the thing is that I have been named executor of an estate on the North Coast in which this dispute is involved. A recent case went to the Court of Appeals on the issue; and the Court ruled that Potential Value should (as they do in New Zealand & Australia) be taken into account. My argument is that since the Law says a revaluation should take place every five years, "Potential ripe for development" should be an immediate potential in the present, and not in some nebulous time in the future.

In passing, this British Association of ours, moving from Empire to Commonwealth, is of the strangest forces on Earth, and runs from Religion, Law, Politics to Finance and honours. Strange! But really Grand!!

I am most grateful for your kind invitation to visit you - but as the average Jamaican's wish when he is going abroad is to go to ---England, there is more chance of our meeting when (as you write, you propose) you come to Jamaica. And I on my part return the complement, and promise you a stay in a lovely land which you will love I am sure.

Yours most sincerely,

signed by William Seivright

Oct. 16, 1963

Dear Larry -

In the effort to gain more information on the actual application of LVT for my friend George Basel, I wrote Mr. Seivright. Perhaps, I will again hear from him if he can obtain any publications.

It just so happened that I recently studied the supplement to Lesson IX and his reply was of interest to me. It's unfortunate that progress in LVT has been halted and from his remarks on Potential Value I can easily visualize the raised resentment. It would appear to me that Mr. Seivright is correct. The Courts ruling seems to be in direct violation of LVT principles. A potential value before people (Society) arrive to create economic rent should, in my estimation be branded as "ridiculous" and I'm certainly surprised that Australia and New Zealand have embraced this sleeper. Some "clever" legislator must have put this over into Law to slow down and eventually stifle a more rapid movement to full LVT. When Columbus landed on these beaches, according to this theory there was "potential" value but - unfortunately, there was no one there to appraise the beach. Undoubtedly you know of this - I just thought you might be interested in his letter.

M e m o

From: L. Kobak, Editor

To: ROBERT CLANCY

Date: 10/30/63

YOU SAID THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHOW THIS LETTER  
TO THE COMM ITTEE ON PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

LARRY

-----  
assent and OTHERWISE -- P. O. Box 2752 -- Grand Central Station -- New York 17, New York  
-----