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“FREEMOLK”

DEVOTED TO: explaining the
social nature of ground-rent and
the injustice of taxation.
ADVOCATING: the complete
abolition of taxation. The public
collection of the freely offered
and automatically adequate
ground-dues.

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A MESSAGE OF HOPE

For generations, would-be reformers have assumed that the social ills which beset us are due to defects in human character. Greed, pride, avarice, have been blamed for the phenomenon of devastating wars, of inordinate wealth alongside brutalising poverty. Consequently many well-meaning people have spent a great deal of time attempting to lead others into the path of virtue. If only we were all unselfish, all kind, all honourable, what a happy world it would be!

Unfortunately the task of the moral reformer is a never-ending one. As fast as converts are made, more sinners are born. The day when all are converted to altruism and kindness will never come, and so, if we believe that social ills originate in defects of character (of other people, naturally) we can never expect to see a just society. There is nothing left but bleak despair.

Those who have studied economics as a science are optimistic. They realise that just as we do not need to convert all construction workers to a high state of morality before we can have good buildings, so we do not have to make all people moral before we can have good social conditions. Building workers know the laws governing actions and reactions between stresses and materials. They proceed in such a way that the natural laws of mechanics, of chemistry, etc. will bring about the desired result. Morality has nothing to do with building construction or any other productive process upon which our safety and convenience depend.

When we realise that our social life is not governed by morality, but by natural law. we shall stop wasting our time trying to reform the character of others. We shall get down to the business of studying the natural laws which govern society. We shall not make ourselves and others unhappy by laying the blame for social evils on our neighbours' characters. By eliminating emotion from the problem, we shall make fast progress. Let's have good social conditions with men as they are.

TAXATION IS EXPORTION, IT PUTS THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SAME
CATEGORY AS THE MAFIA.

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My attention is directed to the fact that the above information is being furnished to you for your information only and is not to be used for any other purpose.

Very truly yours,
[Signature]

Enclosed for you are the following documents:

1. [Document 1]
2. [Document 2]
3. [Document 3]

LOCAL TAXES, VANCOUVER SCENE

While the control and influence taxpayers may have on Personal Income Taxes and Sales Taxes, are very minute indeed, on the local level taxpayers have it in their power to control both the amount and the equity of the assessments. This is because most of the local revenue is derived from "real property" in the form of taxes levied on assessed land and improvement values.

These assessments are very important because they are the key to equitable taxation, and proper realistic assessments should thus be ensured. It is in the matter of assessment that the general taxpayer has the greatest influence because it is in his power to check the yearly assessments and to appeal not only his own but also those of other properties which may be wrongly assessed. A recent appeal of a neighbourhood group succeeded in obtaining an upward revision of a goodly tract of under-developed, under-assessed land of high value by drawing attention to its anomalous position in relation to neighbouring assessments.

An important aspect is the relative assessment between properties. The exact amount is less important, though it must be pointed out that good assessments should be as close to the real market values as possible, otherwise, they may give a wrong idea of values and distort or hide important facts.

Vancouver City seems to be one of the best assessed municipalities in North America, while the suburbs, especially Surrey seem to be badly assessed.

While Vancouver City, West Vancouver, and Burnaby use logic in assessing to 100% of market value for taxes for General Purposes, they are bound by an unlogical and fact-distorting rule imposed by the provincial government, to assess to 50% of market value for school taxes.

All the other municipalities on the Lower Mainland use the same idiotic rule, which means that the taxpayer has to multiply the assessed value by two to determine what the assessor thinks his property is worth on the market. It must be stressed that assessments to one half of market value have no effect on the taxes due provided that the assessments are relatively correct. But it is exactly here that taxpayers become confused because of the under-valuations so that they don't detect grossly misassessed properties.

Even though it is regularly stated that it is the property owners who carry the tax burden, this isn't true. All tenants through their rents are paying the taxes on the buildings. As for the taxes on the land values, the incidence is somewhat different.

VANCOUVER SCENE, Contd.

A reduction of taxes on the land will not reduce the rent demanded from tenants. It would only result in the landlord pocketing some more of the economic rent. The same might be said about the taxes on buildings, only that a reduction of taxes on buildings will encourage more buildings to be constructed and thus bring down the rents demanded of tenants. A reduction of taxes on the land will not bring forward more land, but, on the contrary, will encourage withholding of land and thus aggravate the scarcity of dwellings by checking new construction.

Municipal taxation is more than just a source of revenue, it also determines the whole development of the City and the wellbeing of its citizens. The policies and the practice of City Hall are ~~worth watching~~.

C.K.I.

Next month we hope to publish a study of the Vancouver tax scene by C.K.I.. Since there are few confusing factors in Vancouver, we feel that the study (graphs of total taxes, the split between land and improvements, and the improvement ratio etc.) should be of great interest to those concerned with economic aspects of land tenure. Reprints will be available.

THE DRUG TOPIC

James A. Vander-Weele, District Court Psychologist, Denver, Colorado, says;

- I see drugs as a problem, not the problem.....Many teenagers who turn to drugs are unsuccessful children who are desperately lonely. They haven't found acceptance anywhere. They haven't succeeded academically, athletically, socially.....Continuing lack of success, while there is pressure from every side for them to succeed makes many of these teenagers give up completely.

Good for you, James A.!! You have more insight than the punitive politicians who demand harsher punitive measures as the problem becomes more prevalent. You can see that these people are toying with symptoms and their efforts are serving only to extend addiction and give criminal elements control of our youth. Perhaps it is true in Colorado as it is here, that the teenagers are pushing the drugs to pre-teens in order to get the money for their habit.

We must allow all people free opportunity to feel worthy as they work at whatever job they feel capable of doing. We must restore the limitless demand for labour by unlocking the source of all wealth, the land. Our schools, which are increasingly becoming concentration camps for workless teenagers, are no substitute in the lives of youth for their birthright, equality of opportunity.