

ISTA brings attention to property tax problem

by Earl A. Hanson

At Manitou Springs, Colo., a year ago, there was launched an organization for political action dedicated to improving property taxation and reducing and removing the oppressive taxes that are contributing so substantially to a slow economy.



A Private Voice

On Sept. 6, in Cedar City, the second annual conference of the Intermountain Single Tax Association reviewed the year's progress and considered issues that offered opportunities for continuing political action. The highlight of the conference was the lecture by ISTA President James L. Busey on poverty and revolution in Central America.

Two outstanding developments that could not have been predicted a year ago occurred in Arizona and Nevada and were discussed at the conference. Last January, at the State Republican Party Convention in Phoenix, a resolution was passed which called for a decrease or removal of taxes which inhibit production and urged that the lost revenues be replaced by increased site-value tax on urban land. Richard C. Gimmi, a Tuscon State Party committee man and the Arizona chairman for ISTA, was largely responsible for the considerable work that brought much attention to what is so seriously wrong with the present property tax.

Don Pinson of Las Vegas, Nev., candidate for Clark County assessor, gave a most interesting report on his campaign for office and his efforts in the past to have the present assessor bring assessed values for unimproved land up to the level called for by Nevada law.

Pinson has been a real estate bro-

ker in Las Vegas for 17 years and has a good knowledge of land value appraising. He said that a small tolerance in appraising should be permissible, but in Clark County unimproved land gets assessed at values as low as a half to a 20th of market value. This relieves speculators of an enormous tax load that must then be paid by the owners of residential and business property.

Pinson praised the excellent work done by a steering committee for the Clark County Planning Commission in making a study preparing a report on incentive taxation. The committee recommended adoption of incentive taxation, which would call for amendment of their state constitution. This report is available from the Clark County Planning Commission and a number of copies of the 42-page study are being circulated in Cedar City.

ISTA members discussed venue for the third annual conference to be held in '87 and will be considering Phoenix or Las Vegas.

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THE DAILY SPECTRUM



Threat of Communism is subject at luncheon

CEDAR CITY — The growing threat of communism in third-world countries, specifically in Central America, was the topic of concern at Saturday's no-host luncheon of the Intermountain Single Tax Association.

Dr. James L. Busey, a retired University of Colorado professor and noted expert on Latin American politics, led the discussion by describing the events and social history leading up to the current Marxist control in both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

He said such movements are being controlled by youthful idealistic people concerned about their country's economy who are convinced that communism is the answer.

These groups are well organized, he said, and have thousands of supporters because those who believe the propaganda "don't know any other message."

"Poverty is everywhere (in the countries of Central America) and the people are told by the Marxist government that capitalist exploitation is what gave them their condition," Busey said, noting that such statements are easy for the poor to believe because there is such a contrast between the rich and poor.

"Why is this a threat? Who cares? We should care because this is a precipitant movement into the arms of the Soviet Union and it is critical to our security interests. For example, Central America is closer to Chicago than Cedar City is."

Busey said it is difficult to reverse the growing spread of communism in Central America because the U.S. has been heavily supportive of the dictatorships which are being blamed for today's oppressive conditions.

"The U.S. didn't cause the poverty

in Central America, but it didn't help it either," Busey said.

"U.S. aid for education and economic and social welfare is now being given to Central Americans, but the democratic message is not coming through in terms of the big picture," he said. "And attempting to use force is definitely not the answer."

"I try to broadcast my message to let other people know there is a great problem, but it's hard to get a specific program accepted because many people think we should mind our own business. The Soviets, however, don't feel this way."

Busey's lecture was part of a day-long Intermountain Single Tax Association conference which focuses on various reports of tax reform.

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