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ONE-SENTENCE ECONOMICS  
AND WORLD LEPROSY

- Howard W. L'Hommedieu

An end to monopoly -- in government, banking, land, patents, mergers, trade unions, medicine.

Rational, humane laws. Prisons abolished; replaced by fines, with psychiatric treatment if necessary.

Assess full ground rent, without exception, for ethical revenue source, low improvement taxes, an end to speculation. Choice of sites at true rental value will ensure a surplus of safe employment, at wages equal to one's production.

Government restitution for official or private injuries. Polygraph tests to be accepted as evidence.

## FULL EMPLOYMENT - THE NATURAL ORDER OF THINGS

## ITS POSSIBILITY AND ITS COUNTLESS BENEFITS

Full employment is obviously necessary in order that everyone may exercise his faculties, and so function as a human being. Whatever is necessary must be possible, and is always possible when we recognize equal access to the earth, as well as to fresh air and sunlight, as being the natural inheritance of mankind. Ecologists have recently emphasized the last two, but the first is not generally appreciated. Such access can be obtained through the full assessment of ground rent, exclusive of improvements, if any, forcing all privately held land into its best use, at the earliest possible date, in order to pay the assessment. The hoarding of sites, for either business or residence, awaiting a higher price, from community development or population growth, would be impossible. People will not be denied their heritage.

All land, for any purpose for which it was zoned, would then be available at its true rental, or superiority value, as compared to marginal land. It could not be held for a speculative high rental, or for more than a nominal sale price, as the latter is the capitalization of the unassessed value, which itself would be nominal. The only constant cause of unemployment - unequal annual charges for business sights - would no longer exist. This would create a great demand for employees, and open up vast opportunities for self employment and the formation of producer cooperatives, which should become the business structure of the future. The true economic wage - the equivalent of one's production - can be determined only by offering everyone this choice from a surplus of opportunities. Playgrounds and parks, at nominal cost, would reduce delinquency.

Within a year or less from the passage of a law providing for the progressive assessment of ground rent, to reach the full assessment in five years, unemployment would have dropped to zero, and would stay there. There would be ample opportunities for even the so-called unskilled; many employers would provide on-the-job training, as in fact, many people always have; and many would educate themselves. Relief rolls would soon be limited to the aged, the handicapped and occasional disaster victims, along with those unable to provide adequately for dependents or themselves. Most of the so-called anti-poverty bureaucracy, along with others, could be discontinued, and their members could find useful employment elsewhere. Disputes over wages, hours, working conditions, fringe benefits, participation in management would be settled by mutual agreement or by leaving for other employment. Ample charity for existing needs, in healthful diets, in clothing, housing, medical and dental treatment should be provided by any available means, without questionable restrictions, for a year, or until full employment, at true economic wages, could provide for these needs. Whatever charity continued to be required should be on a permanent basis, and checked for adequacy by local citizens' groups. 800 million unfilled cavities estimated.

No one would have to work under unsafe or unhealthful conditions, as in coal mines, with twice the industrial average of accidents, and a 50 % chance of getting black lung disease. No one would have to risk cancer or accidents in uranium mines or nuclear power plants. To make the latter reasonably safe would cost too much, and in fact no safe structure or safe disposal of waste has yet been discovered. One would not have to work on unethical production, such as nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, torturing, mutilating anti-personnel bombs, in order to find employment. No one would have to join the military, advocate war, or superfluous military production, capable of destroying the world several times over, to minimize unemployment. No SST or space shuttle, no waste or corruption is required to make jobs.

We should not indulge in strip mining, simply because the coal is thus obtained more cheaply. The cost in destroyed cover of trees and vegetation, destruction of lumber, farms and communities, the poisoning of the earth and water from acids released, the increased flooding and destruction of scenery and wildlife is incalculable, and far outweighs any saving in the cost of mining coal alone. No possible restoration would be adequate, and we should use the safer and more efficient methods of underground mining developed in Europe. None of the highly valuable top soil would be lost. To avoid further damage to our already dangerously poisoned oceans and seas, we should limit oil imports and offshore drilling to what we shall need if we develop all our onshore oil and gas reserves to the maximum, and develop solar power at the utmost speed, realizing that this is the only unlimited and non-polluting source of power. We should give priority to the phasing out of nuclear power as fast as any other source can be made available to replace it. Rather than bring more such plants into production, we should reduce our consumption, now twice that of western Europe.

Channelizing rivers, by widening, deepening and straightening them, is another ecological disaster, promoted mainly as make-work projects. It destroys trees on the banks, dredges up life on the river bottom, largely killing it for all time, sends silt downstream, shutting off sunlight in the water and destroying the food chain there. Any saving in local flooding is probably transferred downstream. The beauty of the area is lost, and much of the wildlife. A proposed "channelizing" of up to 150,000 miles of our waterways is now being held up to evaluate the ecological and other costs. 40 % of our waterways have already been altered, some for dams, and some to bring water to barren or grazing land, for irrigation or the development of new communities. This is a great expense to the public and to the already developed areas. Dams produce relatively negligible power, flood large areas of valuable land, damaging the ecology and wildlife, and the lakes behind the dams lose enough water from evaporation to supply all the major cities in the country. The increased salinity from this evaporation and from irrigation projects makes the water less and less usable downstream. When water is brought to a new area, too much water is taken from the developed area, seriously damaging the economy and ecology there, while the new benefits are grossly exaggerated, the public being put to great expense, for a net loss. Unnecessary make-work.

With surplus jobs always available, protests against curtailing or shutting down operations, temporarily or permanently, where pollution is too serious a menace to the immediate health of the community or to the ecology, would be minimized. Neither the business firms nor their employees would feel the pressure not to go to any expense nor risk layoffs in a full employment economy. Our entire attitude, of having to save up as much money as possible for inevitable recessions would change, and there would be a new feeling of security, of tolerance for needed changes, of sympathy for humanitarian viewpoints, because we should feel that we were able to afford it. Students and laboratory technicians would not have to torture hundreds of thousands of animals in exotic, endlessly multiplied, unnecessarily painful, prolonged and to a considerable extent useless experiments, for lack of something better to do. We should not have to engage in extremely cruel trapping, when more humane traps are available, as well as other work. Nor should we feel obliged to cruelly poison large numbers of animals, even endanger a species, to save a few of their prey or collect a bounty. We should not even feel obliged to confine animals in cramped, unhealthful quarters, torture and poison them while fattening and slaughtering them. They could be killed humanely, and the public could be sold wholesome food. Our crops could be grown organically, unpoisoned by sprays, with proper minerals and vitamins grown in and not processed out. Time and distance from producer to consumer could be reduced, and preservatives diminished.

Crime and excessive dissipation, largely caused by unemployment and poverty, would be so reduced that much of our fear and consequent unscientific approach could be changed to one of understanding and humanity. Penology would be changed to monetary restitution, within the capacity of the guilty to pay without serious damage to himself. Detention would be only for the helpless and those temporarily or permanently emotionally unsafe to be at large. Capricious positive law would be replaced by mediation.