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## A BICENTENNIAL TO CELEBRATE

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.

Publishers of  
ONE-SENTENCE ECONOMICS  
AND WORLD LEPROSY

- Howard W. L'Hammedieu

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

The Honorable Charles McC. Mathias, Jr.  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator:

Your interview this morning, on the TODAY show, indicates that you, as co-sponsor, feel that there is little inspiration in this country to warrant a celebration of our bicentennial in 1976. You said that each state might create a park for the purpose, but that the parks would remain empty. President Nixon proposes to invite representatives from many nations to attend, but inasmuch as most of the world is completely disgusted with our unspeakable behavior in Indo China, as are millions of Americans, it might be the party to which no one came.

I suggest that the government concentrate on creating a better society, and leave it to the beneficiaries to show their appreciation in whatever ways they consider appropriate. With about 10 % of our people who want work unable to find it, the percentage running higher among minority groups, up to 45 % among Indians; with millions suffering from malnutrition and diseases of malnutrition; with the death rate in some charity hospitals twice the hospital average; with many working people unable to pay for needed medical attention; with an estimated 800 million unfilled dental cavities; with large numbers of persons kidnapped, without legal authority, by the police; with large numbers illegally beaten, and quite a few killed by both police and prison guards; with slum dwellers and nursing home inmates periodically being burned alive in unsafe facilities; with the insane mostly held in mere custodial institutions, without treatment, other than being tied down, drugged or beaten, and quite likely deprived of proper nourishment and therapeutic training—sometimes detained for years, though normal; with our empire of savage puppet governments throughout most of Latin America, the Philippines, parts of Africa, Taiwan, sundry smaller islands, and all southeast Asia, where, in large areas, we are adding vandalism, mutilation, genocide and ecocide to our other atrocities of robbery, starvation, torture and prostitution, it is obvious that we have a callous, sadistic and corrupt government, with inadequate checks upon its power. We need independent, scientific checks on everything.

We require an equitable legal system, cancelling as "criminals" the 45 % who commit "crimes without victims"—"criminals" only in the eyes of unphilosophic ignoramuses, however well intentioned, who feel a "call" to play God with the lives of others. We need to replace our penal system with fines, and detention only for the helpless and those requiring psychiatric or other rehabilitative treatment. The fines must not exceed the ability of the guilty to pay, without serious injury to himself (all in accordance with the recommendations of experts). As there would be no death penalty, physical punishment or more than brief detention, under civilized conditions, for quick hearings or trials, enforcement could be only seizure of property, garnishment of wages, or boycott and ostracism, through public records and other publicity. (Fines, in fact, rare and small, are customarily the only punishments imposed upon the rich—public officials losing no more than their jobs, if that—although both commit the most serious crimes, including war, the creation of monopolies and poverty, which cause most war crimes, domestic thievery and prostitution.) Polygraph tests or the new charts of

inaudible voice changes--and to be able to be accepted as evidence of innocence, degree of guilt, or various abuses, warranting restitution (although not evidence of individual guilt), if requested by suspects or prisoners. All institutions should be open to complete inspection and investigation by civil rights and other qualified independent groups until permanent humane reforms are established.

In order to function as human beings we must be able to exercise our faculties, by doing any work we wish, at any age, irrespective of race, religion, past history or sex. Unlimited opportunities for such exercise of faculties would be opened up through the equalization of the annual charge for all business and residential sites of the same value. This involves ending the hoarding of land, for a speculative rise, or making it available only at a high speculative rental; and requires the assessment of the full rental value of all privately held land, used or idle, forcing it into its best use, in order to pay the assessment, or causing its release for the use of others. There would then be a great surplus of opportunities, to work for others, for one's self, or in cooperatives, the ample choice enabling everyone to obtain the equivalent of his production--his true economic wage--with no government or trade union coercion. Charity would be reduced to helping these actually incapable of helping themselves, and the government bureaucracy could greatly be reduced, as would the chief incentive to thievery and excessive dissipation. Slums would be replaced with decent housing, as everyone could afford to live better.

The current unearned income of the landholder--the difference between the true rental value, created by nature and community growth (which is included in the price of goods produced, or the rent charged to others), and the local assessment--would be reduced to a nominal amount, as would, therefore, the sale price, which is the capitalization of this unearned value. Land could thus be purchased for little more than the value of improvements, if any, and national parks, historical sites, city playgrounds, parks and parking lots, archaeological finds could always be set aside as needed. In the absence of large scale war, graft and bureaucracy, all government units would be solvent, with access to this full rental value--our present failure to collect which is our greatest and most unethical tax loophole.

The incentive to engage in countless projects, destroying our forests and hills, paving or building over our fertile lands, strip mining, scooping up, channelizing or diverting river beds, damming and flooding river basins, destroying property values, wild life and flood protection, resulting in ecological and aesthetic disasters, simply to make work, or boondoggling profits would be reduced, and the ability to oppose these projects would be increased. The same would apply to wars and to superfluous and overpriced armaments, impractical, unworkable, or unneeded, to destroy the world several times over. No one would have to do unnecessarily dangerous or unhealthful work until conditions were made satisfactory. Employee support for polluting operations, for fear that other jobs would not be available if these operations were curtailed, would cease. Fusion power or solar power could be made available very soon--the only clean, unlimited sources--making highly dangerous and poisonous nuclear power unnecessary, even as a stop-gap. The plants now in operation should be phased out as soon as the best available replacements can be built, ignoring the power companies' readily disoroved propaganda, with the help of planted articles and public announcements, about impending fuel shortages.

Organically grown, unpoisoned food, with vitamins and minerals no longer processed out of them, would rapidly become more available, greatly increasing mental and physical health, and eliminating much unnecessary torture in the raising, slaughter-- of animals and laboratory experimentation--often unchecked and exotic. Starting with the freeing of our colonial empire, and applying democratic checks to everything, we should have the most heartfelt celebration in history.

Sincerely,

Howard W. L'Hemmedieu