

Our Readers Write

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What, we should all live in tents?

"Land Value Tax" – the only tax with effects opposite to all the other taxes. It promotes non-inflationary full employment of all factors of production and leads to lower prices and higher living standards." (Ed.: Only limited space prevents us from printing Ted's entire letter.)

Ted Morris also writes:

"Natural law applies to everything, not just tangible physical things. If ethics is to be a science, it must be grounded in natural law.

"Better than the two-rate local option, what Florida needs is a state law requiring taxing jurisdictions to gradually, each year, increase the tax rate on the value of land and concurrently decrease the tax rate on the value of the improvements. (Ed.: Isn't that two-rate?) That is essentially the resolution I will be submitting to the Silver-Haired Legislature next week in Tallahassee. Keep your fingers crossed." (Ed.: Yes, Ted's proposal is better, but is it saleable? We surely will keep our fingers crossed.)

IV. Equitable Rent Necessary

by Georgist W.H. Pitt, who writes us from Australia.

"Really, there is no 'marginal' land. However, everyone except the hermits requires protection against vandals, etc. and should pay accordingly. Some graze cattle on huge semi-arid areas. Others needing lesser space to gain similar incomes likewise need communal protection for their activities.

"It seems to me that each owes a similar amount as a natural site rent so that the cost of that protection can be met.

"Trouble arises only when land is monopolized and governments are forced to levy taxes while a monopoly rent is exacted by the landholders."

V. Getting Three in Return for One

by HGFA Board Member and Nebraskan Everett Gross

"If the tax on buildings is reduced by one dollar, that dollar generates four dollars throughout the economy. Most of it redounds to the value of land, simply as all improvements do that. If the tax on land is upped by only that dollar, the landowners can pocket the other three....

"Now for the other topic. Georgists are asked by Equal Rights to respond to the woman who thinks she does not pay the taxes on her apartment house. 'In a pig's eye, like fun she doesn't. Whenever she buys most anything she can think of, very nearly a third of her price is paid for taxes and almost precisely another third is paid for no service whatsoever except permission to use the earth. This applies to every stick of wood and every brick and every drop of paint on her apartment house.'" (Ed.: Do you think the downtax on buildings is better for the economy than the uptax on land? Write us.)

VI. Oppose the Sales Tax

by Jack Kelly of Peoria, IL.

"The January 2002 issue of *Equal Rights* contained an article sanctioning a tax on mineral-land value (essentially a lease) plus a certain percentage tax on what is produced on that mineral land. I object to considering a percentage of the minerals extracted from a particular parcel of land as land rent, therefore justifiably subject to taxation. That's a sales tax, not a justifiable land value tax. We should oppose sales taxes. The only justifiable land value tax for mineral-land parcels is what is paid for the lease of that parcel." (Ed.: Readers, what do you think? Replies are invited.)

From the Editor

☆ Henry George would have a tough time convincing people today of the efficacy of the Single Tax. They have a different social philosophy than the more equal-rights oriented people of his day.

☆ It is said, "Reading maketh a well-rounded person." So doth watching TV with potato chips and a six-pack of beer.

☆ To agree with Humpty Dumpty's claim in *Alice in Wonderland* that words mean what he chooses them to mean is to make a mess of attempts to communicate.

☆ From 1947 to 1973, the inflation-adjusted hourly wages of the average American worker grew by 75%, although they have stagnated since 1973, so that in 1998 the average inflation-adjusted hourly wage was about the same as in 1967" (Levy Economics Institute newsletter, Spring 2001, p. 4, sent to us by IT reader Wm. Kells).

☆ Those American making \$30,000 or less get \$1 trillion in federal spending, yet pay only \$95 billion in federal taxes (Investor's Business Daily, 5/25/01, A26, citing Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation).

☆ I have no difficulty getting pro-LVT endorsements from the previous generation; why so much difficulty today? Reason: increasing ethical relativism.

☆ If a government regulation is a "taking," as 'from landowners disadvantaged by a re-routing of a highway, isn't the highway itself a "giving"?

☆ We are looking into alternative ways to deliver your issues. Consider receiving your issue of *Equal Rights* via e-mail or fax. What do you think? Write (1422 Chestnut St, Ste 413, Philadelphia, PA 19102-2510) (\$.37), call (215.988.9998) (\$.? per minute), or email (equalrights@urbantools.net) (free).