

CHAPTER XIV AS TO THE FUTURE

Suppose that improvements, personal property and business are relieved from all taxation, and no State and local tax be collected save upon land values, what will be accomplished?

If this method which we advocate is consistent with justice—as we believe it is—we need not be troubled about the consequences. Yet, as such a statement may seem insufficient, let us consider, first, what will not be done.

1. The value of land for use will not decrease, for every well-designed act of government in behalf of public welfare adds to land values more than it costs. Present purely speculative values of land will tend to vanish, greatly to the benefit of all forms of industry.

2. It will not dispossess any man of his land so long as his taxes are paid.

3. Real poverty will not be abolished entirely, though it will be greatly lessened. Poverty will remain a personal problem, in some respects even a psychological problem. It is often merely a state of mind. Pauperism will largely disappear.

4. It will not act as a cure-all for the ills due to inefficiency of government.

What are the probable or certain gains of our plan? We may expect:

1. Reduced cost of assessment and collection of taxes.

2. A greater and more regular employment of labor, since production and products will be relieved from taxation.

3. Lower cost of living as the result of exempting industry from taxation.

4. Greater rewards for labor, since land-value taxation will open desirable land to industry.

5. Mankind will live in better and more sanitary houses, for improvement in them will no longer be punished by annual taxes.

6. Regular and more general employment of capital for all business and industrial purposes through the abolition of financial crises and business depressions due to boosting the prices of city lots and country lands.

7. The opening up of natural opportunities now withheld from the public.

8. A wide extension of home ownership, with all of its social and political advantages.

9. The end of land speculation with its attendant evils.

10. The avoidance of dangers to our social structure now becoming apparent.

Are not these aims worthy of our best endeavors?