

To the Editor:

Professor von Mises is mistaken. It is not true that if the government confiscates the whole rent of land, it does not make any difference to the individual farmer whether the soil he tills is more or less fertile. The same input of capital and labor on the same land yields to every man a different output. Every man is unique, and so is every individual piece of land. There is somewhere a man who is best suited to get the most out of a certain piece of land at that time. The effect of the confiscation of rent would be to bring the right man to the right piece of land *for him*, by eliminating the competition of those less suited to work on that particular land.

This combination of the right man for the right land would not raise the rent of land, as rent attaches to the land and this special advantage to the individuality of the laborer. Since no other man could get as much out of that particular piece of land, no man would bid up the price (rent) to the point of absorbing this special advantage inherent in the special quality of labor that one man has at that one time on that one piece of land.

Dr. von Mises also confuses productivity with fertility of land. If we were all farmers raising the same kind of crops, he would be nearer right, even though such things as climate are not fertility. As it is, productivity of land and rent of land reflect all kinds of uses of land. It is not the high rent of land alone that will keep farmers away from Manhattan; it is also the rocks in the ground. Some of the most fertile land on earth, the upper reaches of the Amazon for instance, is no-rent land.

There is therefore as much economic incentive in moving to better land under a Georgist system as under any; and—under the Georgist system there is more than incentive—there is opportunity.

—LIDIA ALKALAY
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