

# A CHANGE OF ADMINISTRATION—OR IS IT?

By Lionel M. Gonzalez

THE change of administration in New York State from Democrat Harriman to Republican Rockefeller is in reality one of personality and party label, but not of policy. Basically, nothing has changed, unless one refers to the recent increase in state taxes as a "change." Actually it is no such thing, however, since the tax rise would have been necessitated even if the Governor's name had remained the same.

How could any intelligent person have read the newspapers during the months preceding the election and not become aware of an impending increase in state taxes irrespective of which party was destined to win? On the issue of state levies, the attitude of both the old and the new administrations was (and is) almost identical. The very simple reason is that neither of the two leaders, nor their advisors, know a different or better solution to the state's fiscal problem.

The central question is not whether added governmental expenses should be met with increased tax revenues, or who or what should be taxed to procure the required finances. Any added tax, in whatever form or fashion imposed, is a bad policy to pursue. Both these gentlemen know this, and no amount of double-talk can minimize the discontent and opposition engendered by the perennially growing burden of taxation.

The real issue may be seen by examining two aspects of the problem. First, whether the state government's functions are to be continually enlarged with concomitant

increases in government spending; and second, is there a proper and natural source of revenue for meeting state expenses other than the already depleted pockets of the people? These two questions must be answered if New York's citizens are not to be overtaxed to the point where in effect "the goose that lays the golden eggs" will find itself defunct.

To put it bluntly, granting them both the best of intentions, neither the Governor nor the former Governor represents a step forward in the state's march toward financial solvency because neither has evidenced an awareness of the politico-economic truth that Henry George offered to the world. Were either of them to read and be persuaded by the principles propounded in *Progress and Poverty*, the answer to the state's financial problem would soon be clear—and available. George not only defines the functions of government which are consistent with a free economy, but goes on to point out a natural fount of revenue which is just, practical and ample for all of the needs of the state community, and at the same time encourages and aids production.

The months of Governor Rockefeller's incumbency have shown that any difference in policy as between his party and his predecessor's is more apparent than real. Obviously, it will never be possible to distinguish between political administrations until one of them understands and applies the only logical solution to the fiscal and economic dilemma of New York.