

AN ALTERNATIVE OUTLOOK

By Everett W. Gross

Last week, I pointed a finger at our colleges for their failure to tell our society how to solve its economic problems. The problem under discussion was the national budget deficit and debt. I stated that since the economists are not spreading information about how to solve that problem, then you will have to do it.

If the economists want to feel slighted or offended by your taking their job, then so be it. But the same situation can be observed if you will pause to examine how they are discussing the financing of their own department and the rest of our university.

Hardly a day goes by that you cannot pick up a Nebraska newspaper and find an article in which the faculty of our own university expects the outside world to figure out how to finance the university. It would not seem so strange if the teachers of subjects other than the social sciences were bewildered by the problem. But even they could be expected to be in closer coffee-time contact with the economists than the average country bear might be. And surely they commiserate together about those stingy old civilians who don't know how to come through with the solutions which the economists ought to have figured out.

And then we could consider the parade of students who sat in the classroom of some "great" economist and came out without the foggiest idea of how the value imparted to the economy by the university can be recaptured, probably double, by a marvelously simple formula which could not be evaded without being glaringly obvious.

Henry George wrote in 1879: "The mode of taxation is, in fact, quite as important as the amount. As a small burden badly placed may distress a horse that could carry with ease a much larger one properly adjusted, so a people may be impoverished and their power of producing wealth destroyed by taxation, which, if levied in another way, could be borne with ease."

He says that in his book, PROGRESS AND POVERTY, in which he explains which taxes harm the entire economy and which ones benefit it. Our own library has a copy. If you use a different library which does not have a copy, let me know and one will be placed there.