

AN ALTERNATIVE OUTLOOK  
By Everett W. Gross

Given the condition of the Nebraska treasury, the Legislature had little choice but to cut many appropriations including the University. But University President Roskens is reacting by disbanding the wrong portions of the school's programs.

Nebraska's financial distress, as well as the Nation's, is the result of taxation formulas taught and advocated by the universities themselves. Those very damaging tax formulas are the ones which penalize improvements and allow vacant land speculation to be profitable. The departments which teach those formulas ought to be the ones disbanded.

Most of the economies in the world are limping along at the ragged edge of insolvency for reasons similar to that. Lay people in general have great difficulty in grasping the fact that the improver, no matter how much profit he might make from improvements, is actually serving all other people to an extent even greater than his own profit. Also, few people realize what a drag upon the whole economy is produced by the fact that forty percent of our most valuable locations are held idle for speculation. Very few of the professional economists see it in their hearts to remove these massive errors from the mass belief.

You are probably witnessing the collapse of the public school systems due to teachings coming out of those schools themselves.

Actually, the whole idea of a public University (or any public school) does not make much sense anyway. However much money the public treasury spends to support the public schools could be better spent to subsidize the student directly and let him choose his school. The same amount of educational capacity at all stages would appear on the scene, managed much better by private hands. Nothing I have said here would prevent some level of government from setting minimum standards. Also, nothing I have said here would make the drop-out problem any worse.

History tells us that public schooling was installed because of the problem of poverty. It would be much simpler, and perfectly possible to abolish poverty and let the education be handled by private schools. If you want to argue that attempts to abolish poverty have not worked, then I must reply that the only methods that have been tried are those taught by the schools. You are correct. Those methods have failed.

I really need to retract a part of that last statement. There are some methods being tried in some limited parts of the world—methods that the so-called educators apparently show no interest in. They work.

If the schools insist on advocating a tax system that tends to destroy its own base, and if the result is the collapse of the financial support of the schools themselves, then maybe poetic justice is not dead after all.