

Noah D. Alper's Brief Cases

DESTROYING FOR PROFIT

"So long as it is profitable to tear a building down and pave the site for parking, that is no doubt what will be done. Instead of acquiescing in the process as an immutable law of life, however, it might be well to consider what could be done to alleviate it. If the taxing power can work to produce acres of dead storage for automobiles it might also be made to work for something else—fine buildings, for example. This brings us back to Henry George who advocated high taxes on land and low taxes or none on the improvements; and it is very hard to argue with that principle."

—From an editorial in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

HOW IT'S DONE

A Washington service, in a special letter, called attention to the extension of the interstate highway program, pointing out that because of its inadequacy the old program will have to be readjusted and another program added. "There is money to be made . . . and lost . . . on them, depending on where the roads go. Billions of dollars will be poured into them, part to be paid by the federal government and part by the states as now."

The letter continues, "your state highway officials know about this, or they should. Check with them. The trick is to know where the roads are going in advance. Then do your planning around them. It isn't as hard as it may sound."

(When you close your first deal remember it was your friend, The "Henry George News, who told you!)

PUBLIC HOUSING—PEOPLE OR SHEEP?

"Masses of people were uprooted when landowners replaced tenants by sheep, as in England since the Tudors—or by deer parks, as in Scotland in the nineteenth century—or when famine drove families from the land, as in Ireland in the 1840's, or in China during much of the eighteenth century—or when slave raiders seized and transplanted populations bodily," writes Karl W. Deutsch in *"Nationalism and Social Communication."*

And in recent years urban redevelopment and public housing projects have done the same. The pity is that there was a much better way in which the slums and deteriorating cities and rural areas could have been upgraded along with gains in employment, production and wages. Simply collect more of the publicly earned rental value of land and untax more of the values in wealth and capital created by labor and capital providers.

MAYOR ENDS REALTY TAX IN MANILA

Mayor Antonio J. Villegas, of Manila "has abolished for all practical purposes, all real estate taxes on residential lands and buildings.

"In an unprecedented move he directed the city treasurer to stop collecting such taxes on the grounds that taxes on such buildings and lands—and all prime essentials of life such as food, clothing and shelter—are unconstitutional," and to tax them is to tax life itself. The Mayor also points to a constitutional provision peculiar to the Philippines which makes sacred the "liberty of abode."

He declares, "if after a government employee is forced to retire at 65 he still has to pay realty taxes on his home, that would be tantamount to compelling a man to work until he dies—if only to pay taxes to the government, and that is not freedom, that is slavery."

The Mayor proposed adjusting the taxes on industrial and business realty, and imposing taxes on liquor, cigarettes, jewelry, perfume, etc. "Anyone who cannot raise money through taxation without interfering with the basic liberties of the people is not fit to be in government," said Mayor Villegas.