

Noah D. Alper's Brief Cases

NUCLEAR RESEARCH AND LAND BOOM

According to The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, St. Louis has a made-to-order perfect site for the 200,000,000,000 electron volt National Accelerator Laboratory. It's true, and no need to list the features. "From every angle, Weldon Spring (just west of St. Louis) is the perfect site. Should representatives of the National Academy of Science, which has been appointed to assist the AFC in making the decision, agree, it would be a tremendous boon to the St. Louis area."

This in turn will set off a tremendous land boom, and don't think the St. Louis "earthlords" don't know it.

HOW MUCH RENT-OF-LAND IS THERE?

A bill to wipe out our national debt was introduced by Senators Paul H. Douglas, William Proxmire and Lee Metcalf and reported on by the Labor newspaper. Senator Douglas estimated that the shale lands in Colorado, Utah and Wyoming, mostly government owned, might produce as much as 1,000 barrels of oil at a market value approaching three trillion dollars. Developed by private companies at a royalty of 12½ per cent it would yield approximately \$390 billion—more than enough to pay off the \$320 billion national debt.

Senator Douglas said, "I warn all parties, including the executive branch of the government and lobbyists involved in development of this wealth, that many of us in Congress will be alert to any attempt to deprive the people of their rights to this natural resource."

And what if this principle of the rights of the people were applied to all natural resources?

TROUBLED LOS ANGELES

"As the city pushed outward, land for housing tracts became increasingly hard to find. Today, western San Fernando Valley and the Santa Monica Mountains are among the few underdeveloped areas. Land prices have skyrocketed, thereby adding to housing costs. Land that cost \$2,000 an acre 10 years ago now sells for as high as \$40,000 an acre." (From U.S. News & World Report, August 30, 1965).

"TAXES AND THE DEATH OF CITIES"

What moral justification can there be for giving land speculation more favorable tax treatment than any other income source?" asks Perry Prentice in "Taxes and the Death of Cities" in the Architectural Forum of November 1965. "How can anyone argue that deflating the price of land by making landowners pay all the community costs needed to make their land salable is an attack on our whole system of private property?"

At the time when New Yorkers are facing new taxes in several areas with, as a last resort, an income tax—it is appropriate to ask, as Mr. Prentice does, "is heavy taxation of the community created location value of land morally wrong?"

A series of articles in the New York Herald Tribune, reviewed in the March 1964 HGN (Who Owns Us), pointed out that taxes on profits are driving investments into land which is lightly taxed—whereas a reversal of this situation would spread the benefits equitably.

[The HGS is making reprints of the entire article from Architectural Forum and these will be mailed to members, from the New York headquarters.]

It is often said that "if government did not do so much to hurt the people it would not have to do so much to help them."