

THE TIME FRAME

By ROBERT D. BENTON (Royal Oak, Michigan)

We in the Georgist movement can agree that "economic justice through taxation of economic rent" involves some changing of concepts long established and that to change those concepts, there is often required an amount of time to think through definitions, comparisons, morality of ownership. This amount of time may be longer or shorter for different persons, and some never do change their previous concepts. Time for this change is allowed for in the ten-lesson course based on Progress and Poverty. I think this concept-changing is an important means to our goal, just as the taxation of economic rent is an important means to the goal of economic justice. There should be no argument as to the relative importance of education and political action. Both are means to the goal.

Most of our current workers in the field of political action were brought up through the educational method and went through an agonizing reappraisal of their concepts. Such study seems to form a basis for dedication to our cause. The ten-lesson course has provided the cadre for action and also for answers to serious economic questions. This should not be denied or forgotten.

I have heard it said in our movement that we don't have time for the study, and that we must get the message to the people before something awful happens. That may create a messiah, but will it create disciples? Can't we see that both the time frame of concept examination, and political action are necessary to reach our goal? Some are better at education and some are better at political action.

I consider myself more adept at the educational work. I worked with S. James Clarkson who was more adept at political work. He became Mayor of Southfield, Michigan and accomplished a great deal through the upgrading of assessments on land, resulting in a building boom and attracting national attention. We both gave the work our best effort and our best shot, each in his own way.

I applaud all efforts toward economic justice. Perhaps there should be some competition among us. I applaud the work of Steven Cord in Pennsylvania, of Walt Rybeck in Washington - and also the correspondence course work of the Henry George Institute. I first learned about the Georgist philosophy through the correspondence course (then being offered by the Henry George School). I couldn't get rid of it. I absorbed it and it absorbed me. That was forty years ago - and I am still with it.