LAND TAX

I refer to Syd Gilchrist's letter ("Progress", Feb. 1992) that rent, when collected as public revenue, is a tax, which could be introduced gradually.

Fifty to sixty years ago this matter was the subject of a bitter quarrel between the 'step-by-steppers' (Allan Hutchinson) and the 'whole-hoggers' (Fred Hodgkiss), with the latter coming out the victors.

Early this century, a British government passed a step-by-step bill, beginning by *taxing* land values at one halfpenny in the pound, but it was thrown out by the following government. This revealed the weakness in the step-by-step argument. Unless the instituting government was in power until the reform was complete, a change in government could mean that it would never be completed.

According to the whole-hoggers, to be successful, you had to accomplish the action in one bold stroke. As Henry George said: 'The first thing on Monday morning'. The step-by-step method would create violent fluctuations in rents which would be almost impossible for valuers to follow. But, either way (step-by-step or whole-hog), we would be up against the time factor, and the shorter we made it, the more likely we should be to complete the reform. And whole-hog is shorter than step-by-step.

Even so, the establishment would try every ruse possible to thwart it, as they have always done.

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