

Land Use Reform Upcoming in California

The following might have been tailor-made for all the new students at the School this fall who want to know "Who was Henry George and why are Ralph Nader and Senator Muskie talking about him?"

It is Senate Resolution No. 74, written by Albert S. Rodda, Sacramento County's State Senator, submitted last July. If you can overlook those distracting "whereas's," you'll find as succinct and complete a statement of the modern position on land use as a radical economist could write.

Over a year and a half ago, Senator Muskie's Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations published a report on property taxation that was more lengthy and detailed, but equally firm on the need for reform in the direction of land value taxation. And Ralph Nader's Tax Reform Research Group has generated several books, reports, and a newspaper called "People and Taxes" with editorial policies favoring land value taxation. Elsewhere, the union of conservationists, civil rights activists, and land value taxation advocates has been philosophically happy and legislatively productive. This resolution is one of the pay-offs.

WHEREAS, It is desirable to reduce urban sprawl and to conserve recreational, scenic, and arable land, the preservation of which is vital to the protection of the quality of life in California; and

WHEREAS, This could be more effectively accomplished if society were to achieve a greater compaction of its urban

areas through a more intensive utilization of undeveloped and underdeveloped urban site land; and

WHEREAS, By its very nature, the property tax, as it operates in urban core area, discriminates in favor of the preservation of old structures and against the erection of new structures and acts as a monetary inducement and encouragement to the residential and commercial development of low-cost, non-urban lands, and, therefore, to the aggravation of urban decentralization and sprawl; and

WHEREAS, Unrestricted expansion of urban population into the suburbs increases the cost of government, since the government is required to provide transportation, fire and police protection, education, sewage, water, drainage, park and recreation services, which are costly to provide and which often experience only partial utilization; and

WHEREAS, The development of low-cost land peripheral to urban areas tends to force assessors to increase non-urban land appraisals in order more accurately to reflect potential patterns of land use; and

WHEREAS, The impact of increased assessments of non-urban land generates financial pressures upon local government to modify or revoke land-use plans and restrictive zoning ordinances, and, as a consequence, to force farm land onto the market for real estate development and out of agricultural production; and

WHEREAS, The economic affluence of many families has created a rising demand for residential and recreational housing in areas normally reserved for

Who Said It?

In the August issue of the *News*, the School offered to give a scholarship to "Money and Banking" to the first person to identify the source of a quotation beginning "The Federal Government must and shall quit this business of relief..." Contestants' suggestions included Winston Churchill and Chairman Bill Buckley, but it was Jennie Mantione of Flushing, N.Y., who got it right first: Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

scenic and recreational purposes or for agricultural production; and

WHEREAS, The economic power of buyer-demand, when exploited by real estate promotion, poses a serious and growing threat to the state's limited and diminishing acreage of arable, recreational, and scenic land; and

WHEREAS, The economic forces of market demand and property taxation, by virtue of their individual and reinforcement effects, are contributing to the rising costs of local government, the decline of the core area of our cities, and the destruction of the quality of the natural environment through their encouragement of inappropriate uses of land, the nation's most valuable resource; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife review the potential advantage to society of the utilization of land value taxation in conjunction with land use planning and zoning to achieve socially and economically desirable land conservation and land use.

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