

The Long Tax Trail

CALVERT County in Maryland, which has been visualized as a retirement center and a recreation area for nearby Washington, has been asked to endorse county auto license tags. Robert E. Allen, Jr., former extension director at the Washington, D. C., extension, now a salesman for a drug firm, lives in Hunting Hills, in that county, and devotes much time writing and speaking on such local issues.

In a brief talk before the Negro Council of the PTA he said he objected to the tax on cars, not because of the \$20, but because it is an economic fact that all taxes on things of unfixed quantity increase prices all along the line and multiply as they increase. He predicted that if this tax went through and if taxes on homes and everything else continued, the county would never be either a retirement center or playground, nor would they be able to provide employment for their children.

"I have two cars at my disposal," he said. "One is company owned and you can tax it four ways from Sunday and such taxes will be passed on to the backs of the consumer in higher prices for drugs—drugs more dear to our low income groups than to anyone else. Now, tax that other car of mine and I may very well rebel. I am already unhappy with the cost of insurance, tires, gasoline and repairs due largely to the compounded interests on money involved in thousands of hidden taxes as well as the taxes themselves.

"Indeed, I may very well sell my second car because the public is paying and will continue to pay for 99 per cent of the taxes and expenses on the operation of the company car. If I do, the dealer will be shy of one

more prompt-paying customer and his employees will be that much shorter of the capital that provides security we all seek. By the same token other firms in the county will be denied the business of hundreds who could spare less than \$20 a year for the accessories that keep them proudly driving the dangerous wrecks on our highways.

"This tax will fall especially hard on those seeking employment who are unable to own a decent automobile to get them back and forth to work that pays enough to provide the incentive to get off the welfare and unemployment compensation payrolls. Any way you look at it, the thrifty and industrious will have to pay either through increased taxes for the welfare department or in higher prices or both.

"Whenever we impose a tax on manufacturers or imported goods, the manufacturer or importer charges it in higher prices to the jobber, the jobber to the retailer, and the retailer to the consumer. The interest on the monies involved is compounded over and over and constantly limits the supply of goods of which we need more and more if we are to have a rising standard of living. This is why 30 million of our citizens are still ill housed and poorly clothed after 30 years of political promises."

Mr. Allen's talk was very well received, and several persons asked him to speak to other groups. The county and state officers however, "walked out with sour faces." He distributed PREC literature published by Noah Alper in St. Louis, and closed by referring to land value taxation, especially to the Reader's Digest article of July, 1962 on Land Speculation and "Proper Taxation and Urban Development" a monograph by Mary Rawson.