

1 OPEN FORUM

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A NEW IMAGE FROM A NEW NAME?

The Georgist organisation that formally links activists around the world is exploring the prospects of changing its name.

The need to do so is advocated on the basis that a new name would provide a new image — which might, in turn, be converted into political support.

But what should the new name be? The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade's members were canvassed by Mr. Jan Pot of Holland. His report, which includes extracts received from activists, was submitted to the IU's Executive at a meeting in London on April 20.

IU President Godfrey Dunkley of

South Africa analysed the 80 names that had been proposed. These are some of the conclusions:

- There were 11 mentions only of "Henry George" in any form. "Reading through the letters, there is a strong opinion against the use of George in the name," reports Mr. Dunkley. "The principles should be honoured but the man should not be idolized."
- The word "International" was used 34 times and associated words, such as "world", an additional 12 times.
- "Union" appears 30 times and similar words, such as "association" and "movement", a further 32 times. Concludes Mr. Dunkley: "There is thus a recognition that there should be some collective noun to describe the movement."
- "Land Rent" appears seven times, and in associated forms another seven times. Notes the IU President: "There is a strong resistance from others to the use of any form of LVT, Land Rent, Site rent, etc., in the name. It is most unlikely that any variation on the theme would gain general acceptance from our members."
- "Revenue" appears 17 times, but unlike "land rent" does not draw negative reaction from others.
- "Incentive" appears twice, but does not have a negative reaction. "Justice" appears four times.

U.S. tax reformer Dr. Steven Cord strongly believes that "tax" should be retained as a word of communication with politicians. He explained in a letter to Jan Pot:

"My experience leads me to advocate 'land value taxation'. Let me tell you why: my customers are entirely politicians, local politicians. Their bread and butter is — taxes. They don't mind the word. They want more taxers. If I tell them 'abolish taxes on labor and business,' they panic, even if I tell them to tax land rent more."

"I recently sold a school superintendent on the two-rate property tax (the taxpayers would oppose it if they knew about it, on the grounds that nothing good could come out of City Hall); then I gave him a pen on which was written 'Abolish all taxes on labor and business, the government should collect land rent instead,' and when he read that he panicked and gave the pen to a secretary, and I had to try hard to ameliorate him. I almost lost the sale right then and there. I still haven't gotten him to actually adopt the two-rate property tax (higher rate on land assessments, lower on building assessments)."

"We must talk land value taxation to public officials, but when the time comes (and it must come) to talk to taxpayers, then we can talk about GCLR - the government collection of land rent."

MR. DUNKLEY concludes: "It is obvious from the replies received by Mr. Pot that there is a general consensus that both the name and the objectives should be altered. The International Union requires a new image and new window dressing; to be wrapped in an appealing package but without surrendering the core of its values."

"The IU has a good product to sell, a product which is desperately required throughout the world. The time is right to actively market this product by selling its benefits rather than its detailed specifications."

• The results of a *Land & Liberty* survey (see John Loveless: page 2) will be reported to the IU conference in Denmark on July 22.