

# Taxation Is Not Robbery

by H. T. A. McGAHAN

WE should never forget that Henry George wrote *Progress and Poverty* to explain why, in spite of increasing productive power, wages tend to a minimum which will give but a bare living. The problem today is basically the same. Too many of our citizens are too close to the breadline for economic health.

The staggering achievements of modern society are demonstrating that the geopoliticians are right when they say this world is too small for anything but one supreme government. A world government could bring untold benefits but unless it had a scientific taxation system coupled with a more responsible administration, it could be the greatest tyranny ever inflicted on mankind. Who can supply that scientific taxation better than we single taxers?

We have done our cause great harm by making it a "land question" when in truth it is a taxation or government revenue one. What we are concerned with is community services. We must teach government its business. Government is but the agent of the community. What would happen to an agent in the commercial or business world who failed to collect his principal earnings?

Men organize themselves into political groups for common safety and to secure the advantages of combination. Only by such union is the development of human powers possible or progress in civilization attainable. All organization implies administration, and this involves expenditure which must be met by public income.

Salmond, in his work on jurisprudence, tells us that "among the multitudinous operations of government two are set apart as primary and essential

—war and the administration. . . . This is the irreducible minimum of governmental action. It is not difficult to show that war and the administration of justice, however diverse in appearance, are merely two different species of a single genus. The essential purpose of each is the same, though the methods are different. Each consists in the exercise of the organized physical force of the community and its members." The function, in other words, is protection from aggression by other nations, and from robbery by other members of the community.

It should not be hard to show that our governments fail to discharge one of these important functions—protection from robbery within the country. Surely protection against robbers implies that the individual citizen is entitled to the full exchange value of his production. Surely that's justice. And to establish this protection the government needs money. By common acceptance that money is known by the general term, taxation.

Those single-taxers who denounce taxation as robbery do the cause great harm. Much of Henry George's language may be quite useless in this age, but we must proclaim the truth widely and in language the common man can understand. Throughout the world people are troubled by many social problems for which we claim we alone have the answer. Never was the time more opportune for us, never has the ordinary man had more need of our remedy, but the benefits must be stated concretely and be capable of comprehension by all.

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\* The author lives in Matamata, New Zealand.

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Truth can never be told so as to be understood and not be believed.—Blake