

Summary of Remarks by PERRY PRENTICE at HGI Meeting

The property tax has surfaced as a major political issue of the 1970's. Henry George used to be dismissed but important people are now ready to listen when we speak about major property tax reform.

The Temporary Advisory Commission on Housing in Kansas City, Mo. has advised that city to go over to the graded tax. I recently attended a conference in Nassau and tried to persuade the Ohio Constitutional Commission to have differential taxation. The Muskie Committee heard lots of testimony on the subject that was nonsense, but there was also some solid testimony on behalf of land value taxation.

In the forthcoming issue of Fortune there will be an important article on the subject. The Committee for Economic Development (CED) has been talked into a study of the property tax.

There are so many developments going on, one of our problems is to know what is happening. I only learned recently about Andrew Stein's amendment; and he probably does not know that Buffalo wants land value taxation in Erie County.

The property tax problem in every city is different. I gave a talk on the subject in Milwaukee and I thought it would be good for St. Louis. But I learned that the situation is quite different in the two cities - in Milwaukee the property tax is too high, in St. Louis it is too low. I thought my St. Louis talk would be good for Buffalo, but I found out about special problems there that required me to change my talk. I was then supposed to talk in Rochester and even there I found I could not use my Buffalo talk. So we have to be prepared with facts.

There is a marked change in the atmosphere when you talk land value taxation today. People used to say, "Oh, that's Henry George," as though that were the complete refutation of all you have said. Now they are listening. As Arthur Hugh Clough said in his poem, "The main is flooding in."