

Demise Greatly Exaggerated

by PHILIPP KNAB

Benjamin F. Smith announces the death of the single tax in the April HGN, yet expresses his belief in land value taxation. His contention is that not all social economic values are reflected in land values, but that there are some which are not. However those he quotes, such as personal police protection, library facilities, education, etc., do in fact influence land values, even if they may not be traced in every individual property.

For who would not prefer to live in a country where these amenities exist rather than in one where they are lacking? Would he not therefore be prepared to pay more for a site within its boundaries than for one outside of them? When our late Chancellor Raab (Austria) travelled to Moscow and secured for his country a state treaty and the withdrawal of the Russian troops from our Eastern provinces, land values in Vienna rose by leaps and bounds owing to increased security of life and investment.

If a country creates facilities for all its citizens, it certainly renders its territory as a whole preferable to that of countries which do not. But this preference is not equally bestowed upon all its properties, as some of them, for instance, may be closer to the schools and libraries than others. Lvt would therefore be more just as a means of covering the costs of such institutions than any other method of taxation, whereas the use of these could be

charged to those who avail themselves of them.

Finally all opportunities, all benefits, and of course all shortcomings of society and civilization, do affect land values, and all expenses of the community incurred to create them should therefore be met by lvt. As to the possibility of paying all government budgets by it—let us reconsider the following:

There are, after all, only two sources of wealth and production, viz. nature (land) and man's work. Accordingly there are only two ways of levying imposts from what they produce. If you tax the latter you are bound to discourage and thus reduce production, if you tax the former according to its possibilities (or value) you encourage production by securing equal chance of competition, perhaps also by improving the less favorable *properties* with the help of the proceeds of taxation from the better spots. Thus the maximum of production, and therefore of public revenue, can only be secured by lvt, which, in its essence, is single tax.

Lvt in normal times should therefore not only be sufficient to cover all public expenses, but it is the only way to reach a maximum height of them without infringing individual liberty. Such public revenue, wisely spent, will secure the maximum of public welfare. Therefore: long live the single tax as the ideal and utmost goal of land value taxation!

From the Henry George birthplace in Philadelphia comes this wistful note: Frank and Elizabeth Stirlith have lived all the 65 years of their married life in Wilmington and have championed the Georgist cause there for almost as long. Mr. Stirlith is in convalescence, so Mrs. Stirlith, a remarkably spry 89, took charge recently when they donated their lifelong collection of books, papers, clippings, etc. to the birthplace. Among these treasures is a silver teapot that belonged to Henry George — a prized addition to the birthplace collection.