

Erie Finds the Key

ELTA (Erie Land Tax Association) appears destined to become a popular word among land value taxation enthusiasts. As pointed out in earlier issues of HGN, it grew out of the interest aroused among members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce in Erie, Pennsylvania who saw the logic of the method quickly and endorsed land value taxation following an initial address by Dr. Harry Gunnison Brown. Greatly encouraged by their response, W. Wylie Young, representing the Henry George Foundation and the Economic Education League, gave liberally of his time and effort to instruct them in the fundamentals of this reform.

William E. Walker, a prominent business man in Erie (see August 1962 HGN) in the first issue of the ELTA News, explains how he became convinced that land value taxation provided "about the only positive way of dealing with communism." Although he knew economics well, on reading Dr. Brown's "The Effective Answer to Communism," he saw for the first time how a new law, applicable to city real estate taxes, could be used to restore many of the old freedoms and make unnecessary any further extension of the New Deal type of legislation which is threatening to destroy free institutions. In this first bulletin to the citizens of Erie, there is a most lucid presentation of the need for more knowledge of assessment procedures on a wide front.

Confident of their proposal and what it can do to make Erie a city of which they can be proud, and in which their children can grow up with some hope of a secure livelihood, the officers of this forceful group are "literally out to re-educate the entire

city in the fundamentals of land value taxation." The fact is, states Mr. Walker, "we all suffer from a feeling of chagrin that we should have lived so long without being introduced to these simple fundamentals of economics."

The association's campaign was aided at the start by a gift from the Pennsylvania Graded Tax League of \$1,000 which was used to print bulletins circulated among 5,000 homes. Contributors now embarking upon this educational campaign will receive the ELTA News and will be asked to distribute copies to others. In addition they will be invited to attend Monday noon forum meetings.

After many years of presenting the Henry George tax plan in rather plain prose, we find it refreshing to read ELTA's approach. "Eureka! We have found it," states a headline, "the key to Erie's future." Land value taxation is the key, and they say it is "good for everyone—wonderful for those who like new and shining buildings, and heaven's own answer to those who hate slums." But while "there is no denying that there is a golden pot at the end of this rainbow," it will take a great deal of education. "We will beat all the drums in sight," say the ELTA members, "make talks all over town, put on 'tax seminars,' and even stand on our heads in the public square, if necessary, for Erie must know about land value taxation."

Yes, it will take money—and that is what they are after. If you want to hop on this band wagon you won't be discriminated against if you happen to live outside of Erie. Make your check payable to The Erie Land Tax Association, 2217 Peninsula Drive, Erie, Pennsylvania.