

On the day of the 2010 Budget, we are pleased to introduce our new expert commentator, leading economist Charlotte-Anne Schreiber. She was delighted to be invited to the press box in the House of Commons to hear the budget speech. Although she found it confusing and contradictory, a promise right at the end of the 90-minute dissertation gave her hope that at long last a Chancellor had realised where taxation can be levied that would transform society and establish economic justice for all. Here is her first report for the Land Value Taxation Campaign.

THE PROMISE OF A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

The 90-minute budget speech was a whirlwind of hotpotch promises delivered in monotone. Rarely has economic policy been delivered with so little emotion. Facts and figures were delivered so fast it was hard to keep up with promises, percentages and projections. But, taxpayers of Britain, be assured we are on the road to recovery and a rosy future – in the long-term future. For now all we can look forward to are higher taxes, increased state interference and help for pensioners and first time house buyers.

This is a tug-of-war budget, a budget of push and pull and of give and take. More cash for pensioners – more tax on cider. We will expand here – but tighten there. We will support this – but reduce that. We will encourage, discourage, invest, and spend. We will save money by vacating expensive central London offices – but create mayhem by banishing 15,000 civil servants to Bedford and beyond. We will help first time property buyers climb onto the ladder that leads to repossession, and sign an agreement with three small Caribbean Islands.

This was a merry-go-round performance of fun and games, an opportunity for self-congratulatory black slapping for himself and his captain for keeping the boat afloat while riding the storm and safely navigating to a land of plenty just over the horizon. Surely you can see it too? Or are my eyebrows deceiving me?

And where does the cash for most of the extra expenditure come? Wait for it – a tax on bankers' bonuses and selling the Student Loan Company, the Tote and the Dartford Crossing.

This is a fantasy budget delivered by a fairy godfather with a wand that doesn't work. But there was a heart stopping moment when it seemed he had grasped the nettle.

Heart stopping moment

Almost at the end of his speech, my heart almost stopped. This was when the Chancellor said: "It is often the most vulnerable who are affected most, those in insecure jobs or on modest incomes. While people are suffering hardship, it is all the more unfair that some are escaping their tax obligations. I am determined to continue our successful drive to prevent avoidance and evasion."

What? There are people who escape their tax obligations? Who could he mean? What was he talking about? Could this be the moment we have been waiting for all these years? The moment when the economic principals of Henry George are about to be fulfilled?

We can but wait and see, for no further details were given.

The people who escape their tax obligations are those that benefit from public expenditure on

community infrastructure that increases land value that goes into the pockets of landlords as unearned income.

If Mr Darling has Land Value Taxation in mind – a tax that will return to the community the value in land value created by the community, then this budget will go down in history not as a damp squib but a blazing beacon of common sense and economic justice.