



It is the season of windfalls. The Treasury has received a £1bn windfall in extra stamp duty. Sir John Major has called for a windfall tax on energy companies. The Treasury is set for a £55bn windfall as GDP rises. The Royal Mail sell off delivered a £1bn windfall to those who bought shares after the original 330p price closed up more than a third at 455p. Home owners have received a potential windfall as "help to buy" has pushed up the value of their properties, whilst the big development companies enjoyed an even bigger windfall as the land in their "land banks" has shot up in value from the same cause.

Windfalls are blessings, a Godsend. Something you get with the minimum of effort but strictly speaking does not belong to anybody. Taxes on production, in other words, most of them, are the precise opposite. They are the wrong way to collect the money needed to run the country.

We have said enough times that our economy could be transformed if only we could see the benefit of cutting back - or better still - abolishing - taxes on wages, production and sales, and instead, simply collecting the windfall of the annual rental value of the land. We have also said enough times that not only would this be a fair method of raising public revenue by returning to the community a value created by the community, but it would bring vacant and under-used land into full production and help create new jobs and investment. What chance that one of our more influential politicians will visit an orchard, have an apple drop on his or her head, and see the light?

WHAT CHANCE INDEED?

One of our readers sent us the following quotation:-

*"... unlike revolutionaries, politicians as a rule do not believe in violence, but they resemble them in seeking power, and to ask them to implement a policy, even though it be logical and just, which diminishes their power, is asking the unreasonable and even the impossible."* - Frank McEachran