

FOUNDATION NEWS

DECEMBER, 1951

VICTORY CONFERENCE A GREAT SUCCESS

One of the most successful conferences in the twenty-five year history of the Henry George Foundation of America was held last October at the Hotel Sheraton in New York City. For the first time in many years Single Taxers had specific legislative progress to celebrate and they made the most of it. A well-organized program, informative and forceful speakers and an appreciative audience all contributed to the spirit of enthusiasm and optimism.

Speaker after speaker emphasized the significance of the legislative victory recently gained in Pennsylvania through the sponsorship of the Henry George Foundation. This legislation makes it possible for any or all of 47 Pennsylvania cities to adopt either the Graded Tax Plan now in operation in Pittsburgh or to go farther toward the complete untaxing of improvements and the adoption of land value taxation as the sole source of municipal revenue. The Conference pointed up the potentialities of this situation and gave to all who attended inspiration to renew their efforts in the cause.

The feeling that here at last is a specific objective toward which all Georgists could work in harmony and with prospect of success was the keynote of the program.

The Conference closed with a banquet attended by one hundred Georgists who pledged nearly \$4,000.00 to the fund being raised for carrying on further activities in Pennsylvania during the rest of 1951 and in 1952. Other details of the Victory Conference including the complete program, will be found on the following pages of this issue.

HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION

CONFERENCE HAILS NEW POLITICAL ACTION PROGRAM

The recent Victory Conference, by a virtually unanimous voice, has given the Henry George Foundation a mandate to proceed with one of the greatest undertakings in the history of the Single Tax movement.

Some, including experienced campaigners, had felt that our leaders were undertaking the impossible in launching the Pennsylvania Campaign just a year ago. But the quick and decisive victory achieved in the Legislature of that State has produced a new spirit of hope and confidence. But what has been accomplished this year does not signify that there is any easy road to the achievement of the ends we seek. What we now face is the need to revitalize a movement that has been too long neglected and all but overlooked by the average citizen, especially in these years of great national and international tension since the first World War.

The actual experience of Australian and New Zealand cities over a long period of time and their recent advances, together with notable political victories in Denmark, as reported at the Conference, tended to produce a realization on the part of American Georgists that it is high time for a revival of active campaigning in the United States if we are to maintain our traditional position of leadership.

It Can be Done—with Members and Money

But the Henry George Foundation can only discharge its responsibilities as campaign sponsor through the active and generous support of its members and friends. All must seriously recognize the nature and extent of the undertaking that we now face. This being a political democracy, a popular demand that does not now exist must be created. The land value tax can be popularized in the United States, just as it has been in Australia and New Zealand and elsewhere, but it will require a great deal of advertising and publicity and the citizens who are interested must be organized to make their voice effective. There is no time to be lost!

The first great step just achieved in Pennsylvania may be described as a "pilot" project, intended to quickly demonstrate that a political advance toward the Georgist goal is possible. Fortunately the initial phase of the campaign did not require any large expenditure of money or manpower. But the work that lies ahead will require a much greater mobilization of all available resources.

A splendid start was made at New York. Many of those present gladly enrolled as contributing members of the Foundation and the total of subscriptions received at the banquet encourages the conviction that a substantial budget can be obtained to insure another fruitful year of expanding organized activity in Pennsylvania and in other states.

Charles R. Eckert, President
Percy R. Williams, Executive Secretary

Henry George Foundation of America
417 Grant Street, Pittsburgh 19, Pa.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

**October 5—"PROGRESS OF THE SINGLE TAX
MOVEMENT"**

10 a.m.—"What of the Future?"

Hon. Charles R. Eckert, President, Henry George
Foundation

John S. Codman, President, Henry George School
of Boston

Will Lissner, Editor, American Journal of Eco-
nomics and Sociology

2 p.m.—"Land Value Taxation in Practice"

Miss Violetta G. Peterson, Executive Secretary,
Schalkenbach Foundation

Robert C. Bowers, Architect, Pittsburgh, Pa.

H. Bronson Cowan, Ottawa, Director of Surveys
in Australian Cities

8 p.m.—"The Winning Campaign in Pennsylvania"

Percy R. Williams, Executive Secretary, Henry
George Foundation

"How the First Victory Was Won"

Charles Johnson Post, President, American Asso-
ciation for Scientific Taxation

"What Private Enterprise Can Do"

**October 6—"THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDA-
TION LOOKS AHEAD"**

10 a.m.—"Lessons Learned—Problems to Solve"

Robert Clancy, Director, Henry George School,
New York

Noah D. Alper, Director, Henry George School,
St. Louis

Julian P. Hickok, Former Director, Henry George
School, Philadelphia

3 p.m.—"A Program for Action"

Sidney J. Abelson, New York, N. Y.

Clayton J. Ewing, Mobile, Alabama

Gilbert M. Tucker, Albany, N. Y.

Percy R. Williams, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Miss Helen Cartier, New York, N. Y.

8 p.m.—Annual Banquet

Sidney J. Abelson, Toastmaster

Dr. Henry George III, Wilmington, Delaware

"Henry George and Political Action"

J. Rupert Mason, President, International Union,
San Francisco

"A Report of Sound Advance in Many Nations"

Hon. Max M. Korshak, Chicago, Illinois

"Great Causes Neither Die nor Fade Away"

Joseph S. Thompson, President, Pacific Electric
Mfg. Co., San Francisco

"Earned Income—Public and Private"

In Memoriam

HERBERT S. BIGELOW

Measured by the eternal sweep of time the Georgist movement is in its infancy, but in the short span of three score years and ten, there has come into being a roster of distinguished men and women from all parts of the world, and all walks of life, who in their day and generation battled valiantly for the triumph of the cause that Franz Oppenheimer characterized as "The Freeman's Citizenship." Herbert S. Bigelow of Cincinnati, Ohio, recently joined this immortal group, having departed this life on the 11th day of November, 1951.

Herbert S. Bigelow was born in Indiana, January 4, 1870. He received his academic and professional training at Oberlin College, Western Reserve University and Lane Seminary. In 1896 he became Pastor of the Vine Street Congregational Church of anti-slavery fame, of Cincinnati. There his first pulpit utterances indicated that he was not a run-of-mine preacher but an evangelist of magnetism and power with a message that the common people heard gladly. His voice was the voice of the religion of democracy, based on the teachings of the Old Testament Prophets and the Sermon on the Mount.

After the passing of Tom L. Johnson in 1911, Mr. Bigelow was the best known Single Taxer in the State of Ohio and became the leader of the liberal movement in that great State. The people of Ohio became dissatisfied with an obsolete and outmoded constitution and turned to the liberal movement for relief. Under the leadership of Bigelow and his associates, delegates were elected to a Convention for the purpose of adopting a new State Constitution. The delegates met at Columbus, Ohio, in 1912 and organized by electing Mr. Bigelow President. This office he filled with dignity, tact, ability and far-sighted statesmanship. A new Constitution was adopted which is universally recognized as a monumental achievement in the art of true statesmanship.

Mr. Bigelow also served several terms as a member of the City Council of Cincinnati, and in 1936 was elected to Congress. Aside from his official duties in these various positions, he carried on a constant and militant crusade against the forces of injustice and wrong that prevail in our political and economic life.

Burdened by many personal tragedies, he pressed on heroically in the great cause of freedom and justice to the very end. He died as he wished to die, with face turned toward the rising sun.

Williams Addresses Convention of City Officials on Behalf of Graded Tax

Seeks to Induce Pennsylvania Cities to Adopt Land Value Taxation Plan

Proceeding at once to open the second phase of the Pennsylvania Campaign, Executive Secretary Percy R. Williams responded to an invitation to address the Convention of the League of Cities of the Third Class held in Reading, October 18, 19 and 20.

The subject assigned to him was "The Separate Assessment and Taxation of Land and Buildings" and his speech was directed to the specific purpose of calling the attention of all city officials to the provisions of the McGinnis Bill, Act No. 299, which had just been enacted into law at the current session of the State Legislature. He recalled the fact that the League of Cities had gone on record a number of years ago as favoring the extension of the Graded Tax Plan to all third class cities, and pointed out that now, with this significant extension of home rule powers, any city could immediately avail itself of the opportunity which had been given them by a virtually unanimous vote of the Legislature.

It was explained that the first essential step is to set up a separate classification of land and buildings for assessment purposes and that it would be very desirable for all cities to separately assess land and improvements, a practice that already prevails widely in cities throughout America, including most of the larger cities. He indicated that purely as a matter of vital information, every city should at least ascertain the total value of its land and its buildings.

But, he emphasized, the primary purpose of the new legislation is to make it possible for the cities to reduce taxes on homes and on all other buildings by increasing the tax rate on valuable land. This, he said, is no new idea in the great state of Pennsylvania for this is just what the second class cities, Pittsburgh and Scranton, have been doing by authority of the Legislature, since 1914. As indicating the popular acceptance of the Graded Tax Plan in Pittsburgh, he quoted strong endorsements by Mayor David L. Lawrence and by former Mayor William A. Magee, who originally sponsored the Graded Tax law. He also cited a recent letter from the Scranton Chamber of Commerce indicating that the Graded Tax has proven an important factor in attracting new industries.

The provisions of Act No. 299 being very flexible, it was suggested that the council of any city could exercise its own judgment as to just how the new tax system might be best introduced and that the new plan has real possibilities of becoming a popular political issue when its purposes and its benefits come to be understood by the average citizen, because it will encourage both the development and redevelopment of our cities and will mean lower taxes for the great majority of the people without any loss of public revenue.

New York Georgists Founding Local Chapter of the Henry George Foundation

Plan to Launch a "Pennsylvania Campaign" in
Empire State

The first step in the expansion of the Pennsylvania Campaign to other states is being taken in New York where a local chapter of the Henry George Foundation is now in process of organization. This activity is an outgrowth of a proposal made at the recent Victory Conference held by the Foundation in New York.

An organizing committee consisting of members of the Henry George Foundation and other Georgists interested in speeding up the movement, is holding a series of preliminary meetings. At the opening meeting Sidney J. Abelson, trustee of the Henry George Foundation, was elected temporary chairman of the group; Helen Cartier, who was secretary of the committee which supervised arrangements for the Victory Conference, was named secretary; and Stanley Sinclair, instructor at the Henry George School, was appointed head of a sub-committee to develop an agenda for the organizing activities. Other members of the organizing committee include R. M. Dreyfuss, Mary Dougherty, Herman B. Schell and Julius Mayer, all of whom are active Georgists.

The main objective of the New York Chapter of the Henry George Foundation will be to inaugurate a "New York Campaign" along the lines of the Pennsylvania Campaign which succeeded in getting a Graded Tax Law enacted in the Keystone State. The committee is faced with a difficult obstacle in the fact that the New York State constitution limits the rate of taxation on real estate to two percentum of its assessed value but is encouraged by recalling that nevertheless significant legislation has been won in past years, particularly in the separate assessment of land and improvements and in the form of special legislation for the exemption from taxation of certain private housing for considerable periods, thus giving recognition to the economic value of untaxing improvements.

Details of further steps taken in the formation of the New York Chapter will be reported in forthcoming issues of Foundation News. Meanwhile all New York Georgists who wish to participate in this activity are invited to write to Miss Helen Cartier, 252 East 61st Street, New York 21, N. Y.

**HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION
OF AMERICA**

**580 N. SIXTH ST.
INDIANA, PA. 15701**