

The Henry George School Conference

Robert D. Benton, presiding at the first meeting on July 7th, introduced the director of adult education from the University of Michigan and Wayne State University, Dr. Hamilton Stillwell. This "New Dimension" talk was greeted with enthusiasm, especially by instructors in the audience. "The world needs adult education," he said, because of the "explosion of knowledge in the past 25 years," and because, since 1900, every ten years has doubled the number of facts available to us. "There is a commonality between those of us in adult education and the followers of Henry George," he observed, "as we strive to convince our fellows of the value of our ideals."

Outlining the categories of adult education he placed us among the private or voluntary organizations, capable of reaching people who cannot be reached by the more formal educational agencies, and he believed we should capitalize on this.

It was noted that for the adult who has continued to study and learn from age 20 to 40, it is easier to go on after 40. As Henry George teachers meet with these adults it was suggested that their individual differences should be respected; they must be made to

feel welcome; they should be considered in planning the subject matter of the course; teaching techniques must be geared to the heterogeneity of the group; and evaluative techniques should be utilized. The adult education teacher, he noted, should not be the wanderer, the echo, the reader, the comedian, or the machine.

All delegates quickly reassembled for lunch in another room in the hotel after this talk to hear Dr. William A. Paton of the School of Business Administration, University of Michigan, speak somewhat at random with a good deal of non-"equalitarian sentiment." He confessed to being a "genuine free trader" while carefully avoiding any mention of land value taxation. He disagreed with many of the "so-called scientists" who claim that all people have equal abilities. "I suggest," said Dr. Paton, "that we should talk about widening or spreading inequalities rather than the opposite." He made a plea for more freedom while freely admitting that freedom, or competition, requires bravery. Yet competition, while perhaps not welcome at first, may turn out to be fun.

The speaker, having cheerfully worked his way through college, re-

marked that no one ever thought of doing that now. But then many college men now are married. Marriage among college students was not common in his day. In that area, he said, "there are comparatively few curves—free enterprise is still rampant."

The speaker, with pleasing wit, said he was against a handicap system—against the ridiculous quotas in union shops which stifle the willing worker. "Stimulate the laggard without curbing the hustler," he urged. Under pressure of the "equalitarian sentiment" there is no way to show our appreciation of those who do a good job. "I want to see those who have their hearts in their work rewarded, instead of seeing the laggard rewarded just because he has a stomach."

Speaking of business, where he favors honest and ethical competition he noted that a lot of legislation has been aimed at protecting the weak competitor. We're bound to move more and more into government regimentation, he observed, "that's the kind of socialism, we've got." Why? "There are no magic powers in Washington—give us more of the blessed inefficiency of local government."

Concluding that public monopoly is the most inefficient kind, he cited the post office system, confidently claiming that we could have good mail service (instead of one delivery a day) if instead of the government legislating its competitors out of existence there was a private competitive effort.

"I think such a thing as gentle socialism is impossible," he said. "It will become more harsh if it persists. . . . It is impossible to legislate security. It's marvelous what we can do with specialization and exchange," he said with another nod to free trade. Instead of coddling producers let's get busy. We can't guarantee any output with methods which specify "a short work week, plenty of coffee breaks, don't work too hard, and retire early."

It's amazing the hardships that were overcome by people a generation ago, but they've softened up. "I sometimes think," he opined, "the human being can't stand prosperity for any length of time."

Jamaicans Look for Answers To Their Economic Problems

Carl Shaw, a young clarinet player of Detroit, who thumbed a ride to his first Henry George School Conference in Montreal some years ago, was the tall and talented chairman, presiding at two sessions on Thursday. The second was profitably taken up with a report by Urquhart Adams, a Canadian who elected to go and live in Jamaica in the West Indies for 8 months, representing a spirit of pure adventure with a laudable purpose. He enjoyed the experience and unmistakably liked the Jamaicans whom he found to be much interested in education and clearly aware of the disadvantages under which they live and work.

There is, the speaker admitted, a good deal of control by the mother country and the white, land owning population, comprises a class known as "the planters," which is also, and correspondingly, the aristocracy. In line with a recent attempt on the part of the island government to bring in outside capital, there has been an increase of foreign industry moving into Jamaica to take advantage of the cheap labor. Mr. Adams conducted two classes in the fundamental economics of Henry George and said the students compared very favorably with those in his Canadian courses. Despite a noticeable strain of kindly nostalgia, he does not intend to return to Jamaica. He feels that a younger man than he should be the one to take advantage of the wonderful opportunity to carry on instruction in the Georgist philosophy—he came to the Detroit conference he says, hoping to induce

some such a person to take over the work he began.

There is much allurements in Jamaica, a picturesque country where some 20 per cent of the people have good homes and small European cars. Among the rest, 60 per cent get along "after a fashion," and 20 per cent live on the edge of destitution. Although the climate is salubrious and vegetation lush, not more than 15 per cent of the resources are in use, and unemployment is said to be the worst in the world. The people of the island who do the work are kept in subjection. Land value taxation would set them free.

To many readers Jamaica suggests perhaps an enviable place to visit as a tourist. Rates at luxury hotels for a couple are as high as \$2300 for two weeks.

Such visitors of course never come in contact with the natives. Land along the better beach areas now is valued at \$13,000 an acre, more or less, according to location, and speculation is rife. It is among the wealthy white population, where titles to the best land are held, that most objections to the recent land value plan have arisen.

It was reported in HGN that the plan is proceeding on schedule, namely that each year two of the 14 parishes composing the island will be reassessed for the purposes of taxing the land value and untaxing improvements. At this rate the next five years should see the entire island under land value taxation. However, already with two parishes having given indication of the plan's benefits, another act has been passed to afford relief to owners under given circumstances. There are indications that before the change-over is complete more revisions and relief measures will be entertained and granted. Some of these will certainly be merited, but considering the autocratic tendency of the minority race

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it is presumed that there may be far too many exemptions. Thus an excellent reform reflecting the system which has been operating successfully in New Zealand for many years, may, if neglected, become seriously watered down by opposing interests. Here then is the usual blueprint for a country ready to be influenced by Socialist and Communist objectives. Such people do not have much faith in freedom because they have had so little experience with it.

Tariffs on imports to Jamaica are considerable, so the cost of living is as high there as here. Conditions for the ordinary laboring class are deplorable, and any help would be welcomed. If Georgist organizations would attempt to do something along educational lines it would not cost much in money, as Mr. Adams himself proved.

Returning to his home in Alberta the speaker said it looked as if someone had rubbed Aladdin's lamp. Beautiful homes had increased and business development had expanded, largely because directly to the north a vast expanse of marginal land is slowly being brought under cultivation. In this province leases on lands containing minerals, oil and natural gas, pay royalties to the government, and since public ownership of mineral rights is in line with what Henry George advocated, this gives testimony of the efficacy of his philosophy in operation. Alberta also enjoys the remnant of an advantage left over from Georgist legislation enacted in 1911, and the fact that on Alberta farms there is no tax on improvements. "Even though we don't have full land value taxation," Mr. Adams pointed out, "some measure of it makes a tremendous difference."

On Friday evening an expectant group gathered early to hear Elliott Oakwood introduce the Hon. John R.

Fuchs of Texas, author of *Constructive Taxation for Free Enterprise*; and Russel Conklin, former Mayor of Great Falls, Montana, currently a candidate for the state legislature, whose address, unfortunately void of many amusing asides, is on page one of this issue.

Judge Fuchs tackled the conspiracy of silence surrounding the George philosophy and made a case for his view which is that we must "create active and open opposition to our cause." How can we defend it, he asked, if we are not openly attacked? Like other speakers before him he affirmed that he knew of only one way to obtain a public forum and that was to make it a political issue—inducing men to run for office and having them make sound taxation the principal issue.

"I know," he said, "that our schools cannot engage in politics, but with the wonderful work they are doing they will unquestionably turn out men and women who will in the course of human events run for office. When they do, their efforts will produce a following, then the entrenched privileged classes, seeing their citadel in danger, will start to oppose the principles we advocate." He added however, "I am not unmindful of the fact that it will be a hard uphill fight."

"Land—and Space to Grow" New Schalkenbach Film

The Saturday morning session produced an electrifying effect for which visitors were totally unprepared, in the form of a surprise film. Frank Franczak was the chairman, and reports from various Georgist organizations were scheduled. But Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, gave everyone a tremendous inspirational treat by showing, for the first time, a twenty-minute documentary entitled "Land—and Space to Grow."

This work of art touched everyone's emotions.

The film will be listed in library catalogs and will be distributed through the libraries, in the same professional way in which it was produced. On being released it will be accompanied by booklets which will enlarge on the film and give more details about the educational program of the Henry George School. At once there were eager requests from Texas, Montana, Pennsylvania, and other states for prints to be shown at meetings of service clubs.

Sid Evans of San Diego was called up for affectionate applause when it was revealed that he had fathered the idea of a film and helped to make the project possible.

The Schalkenbach Foundation is making progress in the presentation of the George philosophy, altogether disproportionate in its importance to the limited amount of space in which it is being reported. As an outgrowth of the work done among university professors by Weld Carter, the Foundation's "roving ambassador," an attempt will soon be made to bring together mutually interested educators who might wish to form some sort of academic institute or society of land economists on a continuing basis. Of the three recommendations resulting from the study of tax policy in the City of New York, which the Foundation financed and in which some of its directors participated, the one dealing with immediate tax exemption for new dwelling construction for a limited period has captured the interest of some city officials. In 1920 similar legislation broke the housing shortage. The recommendations resulting from the study made for the Lavenburg Foundation in which Albert Pleydell, president of the Schalkenbach Foundation, participated along with other members of its board, has

already been reported. HGN will cheerfully pass on whatever further recognition is accorded this recommendation for immediate tax relief for new housing over a limited period in the City of New York.

The banquet on Saturday evening found everyone in agreement that the conference was characterized by earnestness, a wholesome lack of tension, and a comfortable decorum. It was delightful throughout and pleasantly controlled. As Robert Clancy remarked, it proceeded gracefully and effortlessly, with elimination of all traces of the carefully planned efforts. This occasioned a great out-pouring of generous thanks from all to Robert Benton and his splendid committee of hospitable Detroiters.

Twice the audience rose in appreciation of addresses by the visiting speakers, Ashley Mitchell of England and Erich Zincke of Germany. Both

must be deferred until the next issue of HGN as space is running out.*

Joseph S. Thompson of San Francisco, newly elected president of the Henry George School, entertained the audience with stories which seem to lose nothing in retelling. He said education is a wonderful thing, but too few take the trouble to weed out education from indoctrination.

George R. Averill, editor of the Birmingham (Michigan) Eccentric, saw emerging from this conference, as others did, emphasis on the importance of a better informed citizenry and more public participation between elections. In a word, more thoughtful vigilance from the watchers on the wall.

***This applies also to the final address by Glenn E. Hoover of Oakland at the Sunday luncheon with Martha Kohte as chairman, at which there was an unscheduled address by Robert V. Andelson of San Diego.**

The Year in Review

Robert Clancy, New York director, presided at the ever popular conference round table at which the fraternity of school leaders enjoy each other's reports on the year's work.

San Francisco's activities appeared fresh and varied. A graduate organization, the Economist's Club, holds monthly meetings—The Analyst, excellent joint publication of the San Diego, Los Angeles and Northern California extensions, approaches the end of its first year—a proposed sales tax in Redwood City elicited strenuous community action from school graduates. Robert Tideman, Executive Secretary of the San Francisco school aside from other activities like moving the school headquarters and

teaching, prepared and edited a major symposium on California's water problem for radio station KPFA, and presented an impressive report to The Commonwealth Club on "What Kind of Tax System Should California have?"

William Truehart of Los Angeles was indeed missed. He is busily engaged with bi-weekly commentaries over the Pacifica Foundation listener-sponsored, non-commercial FM radio station in Southern California, KPFK—and the response is most complimentary. Economics classes have been conducted for the second year at a number of small religious colleges in California, using a text prepared by Mr. Truehart entitled, "Principles of

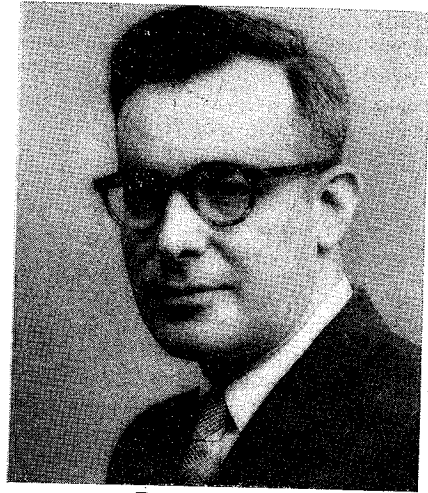
Christian Economics." A speakers' bureau in Los Angeles is filling two or three dates a week on the average, with an enthusiastic reception from its audiences.

Robert V. Andelson of San Diego who, since becoming director of the San Diego extension has earned his Ph.D. and is now the youngest "Dr." among us, spoke of a program inaugurated there which is geared to the environs of San Diego State College where Henry George House is situated. It has a lounge available for outside groups and is being used by interested students many of whom ask questions regarding George's theories.

Dr. Andelson said the largest class in San Diego's history was graduated this year, and a large percentage continued with the trade class. The local group, several of whom were present at the conference, are heartened by strongly Georgist editorials which are appearing in a San Diego newspaper.

Strethel Walton of Montreal had a real work schedule to report this year and it all began with Senator Roebuck of the Canadian legislature. He recommended a committee to study manpower and employment, and invited help in preparing the brief and gathering figures. With this as an incentive, students both in Montreal and Toronto have been able to give evidence that the high price of land has increased the cost of buildings and has caused unemployment. A house once obtainable at \$13,000 now costs \$15,000, a figure which is beyond the average home owner. A chart has been prepared showing the sharp rise of land prices as compared with building and unemployment. With the compelling evidence presented, two small communities have showed interest in changing their form of taxation, if not to land value taxation, at least to something better than they have.

Harry E. Pollard of Toronto, hap-



Robert Clancy

pily irrepresible, described to his incredulous peers, his A-loom-ni Group. That, apparently, is British for Alumni, and it intends to make itself felt as a "new Fabian Society," pressing a jocosely for free enterprise. This is a carefully organized body in which graduates of the Toronto School of Economic Science may continue their work for a Georgist economy. The English Fabian Society, Mr. Pollard said, succeeded in converting England to Socialism by 60 years of educational pressure, although their number did not exceed 1,500 even at the height of their influence.

As there can be no battle without an army, the first job is to recruit. The main task of the Alumni Group is to turn out graduates of the courses offered by the school. A good general, says Pollard, will choose for the battle a time and place most conducive to success. In addition, he will not engage the enemy until his army is adequate for the task. Toronto hopes to provide the army.

Leoane R. Anderson of Denver also regrettably missed this fine conference but sent her greetings and men-

tioned thirty seminars on taxes and related subjects where the leaders were supplied with Henry George School material to which they were receptive. Members of the state legislature were also approached, especially those on tax and revenue committees, as well as municipal officials, architects, engineers and others in professional groups. Many had some knowledge of land value taxation, Mrs. Anderson said, and held a favorable opinion of it.

Russel Conklin of Great Falls, Montana said again that it was "rather lonely work" teaching the course in Fundamental Economics. But in no other respect is he lonely—he merely meant that, understandably enough, for a man who can command a TV or radio audience almost any time, or get himself quoted in newspapers—sitting down with a small, though earnest class is "lonely work." In the following days he was mildly reprimanded for this heresy.

The eleven-year operation of The Commerce and Industry Division in Chicagoland industry, has developed methods and policies that enlist between 20 and 60 per cent of a company's employees to make the basic economics study on their own time, as reported by **John Lawrence Monroe**, Chicago director. Ninety per cent of those who enroll for the basic course complete the ten sessions. Ninety per cent of the graduates, when given the opportunity, go on with advanced courses. The conference leadership coaching system develops from within each company the leadership needed for the program's expansion.

A fund of \$50,000 received by the Henry George School in the past year is being used to organize and service a year's study program of 10 basic groups and 10 advanced groups to start in September in each of 10 com-

panies. The companies for this program are now being selected. They include Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad, Motorola, Olson Rug, United Air Lines, and Bell and Gossett.

The fund is being replenished and augmented by the voluntary contributions of individuals, companies and foundations to make possible setting up the program in other companies and organizations on a widespread basis.

Noah D. Alper told of an interesting feature in St. Louis, where a series of *listening* groups have been meeting in homes. Listeners tune in to a certain radio program and ask their questions by telephone, with, you guessed it—a Henry George angle. Mr. Alper reports a fairly good community improvement program in St. Louis, with every now and then someone commenting, "that's Henry George!" He himself loses no opportunities to acquaint the citizens with the preferred tax revision. He has spoken before a number of local groups and has attracted favorable attention with his carefully thought out Public Revenue Education Council.

Ivan Dailey took a bow for **Verlin Gordon**, the Ohio extension director, who was not present. Had he been present he would have been as immutably modest as the other Ohio leader, **Robert Benton** of Delaware, who, as Detroit director was host to the conference. The latter did not bother to report—why should he? The smooth-running conference, a polished and impeccable performance, spoke volumes for him and his delightful Detroiters.

Joseph A. Stockman of Philadelphia said the publicity about the Henry George birthplace had brought contacts and attention never possible before, and has opened avenues for working with other groups. With a



1) Mrs. Joseph Thompson (San Francisco) and others listen to Professor William Paton at luncheon meeting; 2) At ease: Barry Holmes (Toronto), Russel Conklin (Montana), and Robert Tideman (San Francisco); 3) Professor Glenn Hoover (Oakland), Carl Shaw (Detroit), and Ernest Farmer (Toronto) enjoy the conference tour of the Ford plant and Greenfield Village.

touch of his well loved humor he said that 62 families run Philadelphia—a fact well known, he says—and sadly denied, in response to a question, that any of them were represented on his board.

Mr. Stockman, an enigma among directors, who used to say that one sometimes had to take two steps backward to gain one, seems to have adopted the wisest policy to suit his 62-family environment. He has made friends in *some* of the right places.

Robert C. Bowers of Pittsburgh reported that the Henry George Foundation and alumni members of the school had cooperated almost daily in working up the legislation to be reported next month. John C. Weaver of Pittsburgh is attracting favorable attention with "Allegheny Round Table," a citizens' public events radio feature of which he is coordinator.

John T. Tetley of Newark described the Investors Information Program, a lecture course on securities and investments conducted by members of the New York Stock Exchange, which has appealed to students in Newark. He also invited any who wished to receive *The Gargoyle* to give him their names and addresses. Oscar Johannsen is one of the principal contributors.

Mitchell S. Lurio of Boston spoke

about the Prudential Insurance Company building program which it was estimated would cost \$10 million a year in taxes. The company has threatened to drop its plans unless tax relief of about \$3 million a year is forthcoming. This has brought to the public's attention the high tax rate which makes ownership of real estate almost prohibitive, and suggests an opening for exploring a tax shift. Mr. Lurio described this recently to a special group who listened attentively to his outline of the Pittsburgh plan.

James A. McNally of Hartford reported on a well publicized attempt on the part of his city to buy a nearby area for a public golf club. The citizenry is aroused because the price asked for the property has risen from \$750 thousand twenty years ago, to \$1 million. A number of local people who understand the reasons for this have written letters to newspaper editors, with better than average results. Hopeful progress is indicated by the fact that at the last session of the Connecticut legislature a bill was proposed to increase the assessment on land.

It's Hartford next year folks—for years now they've been inviting delegates to the Connecticut extension and in just twelve months that's where the boys and girls will gather for more of the same.