

“THE BEGINNING OF THE WINNING”

Fifteenth Annual Henry George Congress

WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE Nation's Capital was the scene this year of the Annual Conference of Georgeists, sponsored by the Henry George Foundation of America. It is the fifteenth consecutive year that followers of Henry George from all parts of the country have gathered together to discuss the principles, policies and problems of their Movement. The slogan adopted for the 1940 Washington Conference was "The Beginning of the Winning."

The Conference was held in the Mural Room of the famous Hotel Washington, overlooking the U. S. Treasury and the White House. The congenial hostesses of the convening delegates were the members of the Women's Single Tax Club of Washington. About 100 registered delegates attended, besides many unregistered visitors. Beautiful early fall weather helped to make their sojourn a pleasant one.

The three-day meeting, ending with a banquet, was as interesting as it was successful. The Washington press gave the event ample publicity. Accounts of the sessions appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Star*, and *News*. The latter paper, in a feature article, said of the Conference: "Not even barring arguments about Roosevelt-Willkie or the draft act, Washington's most earnest conversation this week was billed on the program of a little convention of Single Taxers at the Washington Hotel."

Among the highlights of the Conference were: a reception at the White House, where Mrs. Roosevelt greeted the delegates; the unexpected and welcome appearance of former Congressman Charles R. Eckert, Benjamin C. Marsh, and Alice Thacher Post; and the banquet, at which Congressman Robert Crosser of Ohio, Mayor Cornelius D. Scully of Pittsburgh, and Mrs. Anna George de Mille were among the speakers.

Following is an account of the events of the Conference:

First Day—Wednesday, September 25

MORNING SESSION—Delegates from all parts of the country—notably Illinois, Pennsylvania and New York—gathered together at the Hotel. The morning was spent in an informal get-together, in which the various delegates became acquainted with one another.

AFTERNOON SESSION—The first formal meeting of the Conference was held at 2:00 P. M. Mrs. Ernest Humphrey Daniels, President of the District Federation of Women's

Clubs (of which the Women's Single Tax Club is a member), extended a warm welcome to the delegates. Percy R. Williams, of the Henry George Foundation, responded to Mrs. Daniels' welcome. Zenobiah Campbell then took the gavel as temporary Chairman, doing a splendid job in making the members feel at ease. She then relinquished the chair to Dr. Mark Millikin of Ohio. In his remarks as presiding Chairman, Dr. Millikin stressed the importance of free trade, and proposed a resolution extending to Cordell Hull a vote of confidence from Georgeists for his fine work in promoting trade relations. The resolution was unanimously carried.

Dr. Millikin then introduced the speakers. The first was Robert Clancy, Associate Editor of *LAND AND FREEDOM*. Mr. Clancy spoke of the journal as "the voice of the movement," in which all sides are offered a chance to present their views. The delegates were invited to become "special correspondents" for *LAND AND FREEDOM*.

The next speaker was Charles H. Ingersoll, President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, who spoke on "Simplifying Economics for Teaching." Mr. Ingersoll stressed the need for presenting the basic principles of economics in a form that would be understandable and acceptable to the average man. Axiomatic statements are needed, he said. "Argument creates antagonism. Truth backed by proof persuades."

The last speaker of the afternoon session was Harry J. Haase, author of the new book, "Economic Democracy." Mr. Haase related his efforts and aims in writing the book and expressed the belief that the single tax could be put across within five years if the proper kind of effort were extended. Mr. Haase proposes to use his work as a textbook, and is starting a new school with that purpose, in collaboration with Mr. Ingersoll.

EVENING SESSION—Mrs. Gertrude MacKenzie acted a temporary Chairman, and then yielded the chair to Carl D. Smith of Pittsburgh. Mr. Smith delivered a short and pithy speech on the position of Georgeists in the present crisis.

The first scheduled speaker of the evening was Hon. George E. Evans of Pittsburgh, who told about that city's housing problem, and the efforts of the present administration to relieve the situation. He outlined a form of public housing now being carried out in Pittsburgh, with model homes replacing the slums. The reaction of the audience

was that public housing is not the solution—to which Mr. Evans agreed, but explained that something had to be done presently to alleviate the living conditions of the poorer classes.

Henry H. Hardinge of Chicago was the next speaker. He presented a vivid picture of world conditions—war, dictatorship, depression—and explained that under our distorted economy, war makes business good and peace makes it bad.

Much lively discussion punctuated the evening session throughout.

Second Day—Thursday, September 26

MORNING SESSION—Mrs. Jennie Knight was the temporary Chairman, and George M. Strachan of Chicago presided. Mr. Strachan delivered a short talk on the Georgeist philosophy.

Unfortunately, none of the scheduled speakers were able to attend the meeting. Instead, Benjamin C. Marsh, Executive Secretary of the People's Lobby, presented a talk on world conditions. Mr. Marsh is well-informed on world affairs. His expose of imperialism was most enlightening. The address stimulated much discussion by the audience. Clayton J. Ewing was also present, and spoke to the group.

FOUNDATION LUNCHEON—A luncheon for the Trustees and Advisory Commission of the Henry George Foundation was given, at which the annual meeting of the Foundation was conducted. Among other business proceedings, elections were held to fill vacancies. John S. Codman of Boston was elected to replace George J. Shaffer of Chicago, deceased; Gilbert M. Tucker, to replace A. Laurence Smith, who resigned; and Charles Jos. Smith of LAND AND FREEDOM was named as second Vice-President, to succeed the late Joseph Dana Miller. All other officers and directors were re-elected.

AFTERNOON SESSION—The temporary Chairman was Mrs. Dora Ogle, who spoke on the need for correct thought. Mrs. Ogle contended that special attention should be paid to our public school system, which at present does not teach students to think correctly.

Mrs. Anna George de Mille presided over the meeting. She introduced Lancaster M. Greene, Trustee of the Henry George School of Social Science. Mr. Greene spoke highly of the Danish Folk Schools, and pointed out the relation between the tradition of these Schools and the teaching method of the Henry George School. The Danes discovered the Henry George School in 1936, and from it they received a new inspiration, and the Folk Schools were given a new stimulus.

Mr. Greene also made an earnest plea to Georgeists to keep a level head in the present world crisis. "Our only foe is ignorance," he said. "When we realize this fact, we can

resist the tendency to hate, for we will know that hate cannot change ideas—in fact, hate may obscure our perception that human nature is essentially sound, that freedom is natural and healthy, and that natural rights are not idle prattle but the very breath and spirit of America." Mr. Greene went on to show how the Henry George School is remaining true to this ideal by spreading correct thought. He urged Georgeists to do all they could to aid in the great work.

WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION—Through the courtesy of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, a reception at the White House was arranged for the convening Georgeists, at 4:00 P. M. The First Lady greeted the delegates cordially. After refreshments had been served, Mrs. Roosevelt listened attentively to the Georgeists who spoke to her. In her daily column, "My Day," which appears in a great number of newspapers throughout the country, Mrs. Roosevelt referred to our visit.

EVENING SESSION—This was termed the Women's Session. Mrs. Lloyd Biddle presided. Dr. Florence Armstrong, District President of the Business and Professional Women's Club (member of the Federation of Women's Clubs), was present and addressed the meeting. Other leaders of Women's Clubs also spoke, and there was much interesting discussion on the subject of economics. This was followed by a social hour, where refreshments were served, and a lighter atmosphere prevailed over the seriousness of the other meetings.

Third Day—Friday, September 27

MORNING SESSION—Miss Alice I. Siddall was temporary Chairman, and Mr. Carroll V. Hill of Pittsburgh presided.

The first speaker was V. G. Peterson, Secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. Miss Peterson gave a very interesting account of the influence of Henry George upon modern writers. She emphasized her point by quoting from new books, published within the last few years, in which the authors acknowledged and evaluated Henry George's position as a great social philosopher. Miss Peterson made a survey of 188 important books on economics published in 1938 and 1939, and found that one-third of them made favorable mention of Henry George and commented at length upon his theories. Many of the authors accepted Henry George's ideas and used them as a basis for their own conclusions. Among the books and authors that Miss Peterson mentioned were the following:

Harry Scherman, president of the Book of the Month Club, who in "The Promises Men Live By," gives Henry George complete credit for exploding the wage-fund theory; Gaetano Mosca, author of "The Ruling Class," which makes constant reference to Henry George, crediting him with originating many ideas which are accepted facts today;

Harry Elmer Barnes, who in his book, "Society in Transition," speaks of "Progress and Poverty" as the "most famous work ever written on the subject of poverty"; Charles and Mary Beard, authors of the important "Rise of American Civilization," who acknowledge the far-reaching effect of Henry George on American thought; Broadus Mitchell, well-known economist, who in "Wealth—Its Use and Abuse," says, "If America were invited to contribute one name to an international economic Hall of Fame, the rest of the world would scarcely understand it if we did not nominate Henry George"; and Dan Beard, who recently wrote an autobiography, in which he says, "I knew Henry George intimately. We would discuss things, principles and people, as friends may, but all the time I was talking or listening to him, I felt that I should be standing—hat in hand—because I realized that back of this little man was an invisible something, big and great, bigger and greater than the generation in which he lived understood, or even George himself realized. It was the soul of the man himself."

Wallace McCauley of Chicago was the next speaker. He concentrated his talk on conditions in Chicago, and the good work Georgeists are carrying on there. Economic conditions are very bad in Chicago, said Mr. McCauley, and the city is a hot-bed of land speculation. But he expressed a belief that this would be counteracted by the work of the Chicago Henry George School, the "We, The Citizens" group, the journal *Cause and Effect*, and many valiant individuals who are carrying on the work of economic enlightenment.

Spencer Heath dropped in on the gathering and delivered a scholarly talk on the metaphysical aspects of the Georgeist philosophy.

AFTERNOON SESSION—Mrs. Barbara Crosser Sweeny served as temporary Chairman, and in the absence of Mr. Erwin Kauffmann, Harry Haase presided.

Hon. Charles R. Eckert spoke, stressing the need of having Georgeists in strategic positions for the purpose of influencing legislatures. Good men, sound in economic principles, are needed in politics, he said. Mr. Eckert also made a plea for the internal reform of the Democratic Party.

After Mr. Eckert's talk, business proceedings were conducted. Resolutions were read and voted upon, and invitations were extended for the 1941 Henry George Congress. Chicago is to be the scene of the Conference next year. Georgeists are urged to keep that in mind, and to strive to be on hand.

The Banquet

The banquet, held on the evening of the third day, closed the nine sessions Conference. After an enjoyable repast, the ceremonies got under way, and were admirably con-

ducted throughout by double Chairmen Helena Mitchell McEvoy and Gertrude Metcalf Mackenzie.

The first speaker was Mr. Walter Swanton, who delivered a brief talk on "Organization for Victory—A Five-Year Plan." This address is printed in this issue.

Hon. Cornelius D. Scully, Mayor of Pittsburgh, delivered an *ex tempore* speech. He attested his belief in the Georgeist philosophy, and defended himself against charges of not "living up to" the cause. Mr. Scully is active in several Georgeist organizations. During his remarks, he presented a plan for spreading the Georgeist philosophy. He believes that Georgeists should feature propaganda advertisements in leading newspapers; and that the legislators in Washington should constantly be "plugged." "If we get things started right," said Mayor Scully, "we need not concern ourselves too greatly over the outcome. We know that results will come in time. But we have to get started right away—there isn't any too much time."

Mrs. Anna George de Mille, beloved daughter of Henry George, spoke to the group on the efforts of British Georgeists. There are fifty Members of Parliament, she said, who comprise the "Parliamentary Land Values Group." They are looking forward to a time when the war ends, and peacetime problems will have to be faced. Mrs. de Mille read part of the plan that this bloc proposes "when the war ends." The plan is set out in seven articles, which show the effect of the taxation of site values on housing, unemployment, the use of land, and revenue to the Government. Mr. R. R. Stokes, M. P., is Secretary of this British Group. In a session of the House of Commons on August 20, when the war situation was being discussed, Mr. Stokes spoke of the problems ahead. In his remarks, he said, "We should show that we are resolved to build a better world than that on which we turned our backs last September. It is surely in the hearts and minds of all right-thinking people that all men have an equal right to live. If they have an equal right to live, they have an equal right to the gifts which the Creator gave them wherewith to maintain that life; namely air, sunshine, land and water. If we could only put forward our declaration built upon that Christian basis, we would have some chance of obtaining three things which we badly need—secure a diplomatic victory, regain the moral leadership of the world, and earn the blessings rather than possibly incur the hatred of all mankind by failing to do so."

After Mrs. de Mille's talk, Mr. George A. Warren spoke to the group on how to avoid being a bore when explaining the Georgeist philosophy. Somewhat humorous, his speech nevertheless contained important suggestions. He urged Georgeists to be timely in their discussions, to be tolerant of other ideas, and to be friendly to other reform groups whose thoughts are harmonious with the Georgeist philosophy.

Hon. Robert Crosser, Congressman from the State of

Ohio, was the next speaker. He is Representative for the same district that Tom L. Johnson once represented in Congress. Mr. Crosser delivered an eloquent and brilliant talk on "Standards of Absolute Justice." He took contemporary statesmen to task for ignoring fundamental principles, and for considering only the expediency of the moment—the standard of justice is in the long run more satisfactory and more expedient than the "expedient" policy of taking from some to give to others. Mr. Crosser made a plea that human beings emulate the example of the Creator, Whose intent is absolute, and Who does not vary His principles. He added that unfortunately for the truth, people are governed more by fuzzy emotions than by correct thought; but that we must learn to get down to categorical statements. "Let principle prevail," said Mr. Crosser, in concluding, "and freedom will come."

Mrs. Elizabeth M. Phillips, in an interlude between the heavier speeches, amused the group with dramatic recitations of humorous poetry. The applause she received was so sustained that she was obliged to render an encore.

Hon. George E. Evans, President of the Henry George Foundation, was unable to stay long enough to speak at length. He yielded to Percy R. Williams, who presented an explanation of Pittsburgh's graded tax plan. There is now a 4% tax on land values and a 3% tax on improvements. The community is being educated to accept the idea, and when there appears to be sufficient popular approval, the tax on lands will be extended and the tax on improvements further reduced.

Francis I. Mooney was then called upon to say a few words, which he did in an enjoyable, spicy style. He showed that the Georgeist philosophy is true religion. After Mr. Mooney's talk, Miss Charlotte Schetter proposed a rising vote of thanks for the fine work of the Women's Single Tax Club in making the Congress a success.

Thus concluded the Fifteenth Annual Henry George Congress. The delegates, departing, carried with them a resolve that this year would mark "the beginning of the winning."

Organization for Victory

A Five-Year Plan

ADDRESS BY WALTER I. SWANTON
AT THE RECENT HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS

WE have received a challenge at this Conference from Mr. H. J. Haase, who suggested that the single tax plan can be adopted within five years, if only all of us will get to work for it in every possible way that we can.

The time has come in the Georgeist Movement—with the large number of new younger members drawn in by the

Henry George School of Social Science—to give thought to organizing in a nation-wide way, not in any political or partisan sense, but in the interest of fundamental economics, for putting over the principles of taxation of land values as promulgated by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty."

I would not for a moment think of trying to limit in any way individual initiative or rugged individualism in the many cities and states where good work is going forward; but we should coordinate this work, and organize with a center, or headquarters, where we can learn what is going on, who is doing it, and where the work is most successful in accomplishing the best results.

At the present time we have a large number of active organizations throughout the country. In New York City we have the Henry George School of Social Science, the publication LAND AND FREEDOM, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, the Graded Tax Committee and the Manhattan Single Tax Club. In Chicago we have a number of organizations, among which are the Chicago Single Tax Club, "We, The Citizens," and the Tax Relief Association. Among other organizations are: the Henry George Foundation of America, in Pittsburgh; the Henry George Society of Canada, in Toronto; and here in Washington, the Women's Single Tax Club, the People's Lobby and the National Popular Government League.

Besides these organizations—and the many others that exist—we have a great number of individuals doing active work. Among them are: J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco; John C. Rose of Pittsburgh; Charles H. Ingersoll and Harry J. Haase of New York City; George J. Knapp of Denver, who is campaigning for Governor of Colorado, and many others.

All these efforts should in some way be coordinated. A central headquarters for the Movement is the answer. While I have no special interest in any city or organization, it would seem that the logical place for such a headquarters, at least for the present, would be in the largest city, New York. And the logical place in New York would be the present permanent building owned by the Movement, at 30 East 29 Street, now the offices and headquarters of the Henry George School of Social Science. At the central headquarters should be maintained a master index of all active Georgeists and representatives in all the 48 States and the District of Columbia, and agents in the 3,000 counties throughout the United States, located at the county seats.

With this central headquarters in our largest city, and with the influx of many new and younger persons in the Movement, we can go forward with the assurance that we are all working together for Victory in fundamental tax reform.