# Report of the Eighth International Conference for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, Odense, Denmark, July 28 -- August 3, 1952 By ROBERT CLANCY

 ${f T}$  HOSE of us who came to the Conference with the party traveling from England sensed that it was going to be a great affair the moment we stepped off the train at Odense on Monday, July 28. There greeting us was a sizeable contingent of Danish Georgist leaders, and the railway station was decked out with a large banner reading "Welcome Georgists." A photo of the group was taken on the spot, and this was spread on the front page of the leading newspaper, Fyns Venstreblad, the next day, with a leading story about the Conference. Nor did our reception end there. We were hustled out of the city to the Fyns Stifts Husmandsskole the Folk School which was to be the locale of the Conference — a beautiful set of modern buildings on spacious well-kept grounds. There beneath a colorful assemblage of flags of the nations represented was another delegation to greet us, and we paused as two young Danish girls in costume played the weird and stirrring lurer, huge war horns of prehistoric Denmark.

The Odense Folk School was originally founded by Jakob B. Lange, the man who introduced Henry George to Denmark. The School's former buildings were used during the war by the Nazis and were bombed by the Allies at the instigation of the Danes themselves. The new and impressive buildings emerged from the ashes after the war. Over the front entrance is carved the famous bull from Chapter I of Henry George's Protection or Free Trade, and in the garden stands a bronze bust of George. The present principal, Harald Gronborg, is an avowed Georgist himself. He and his family served us with rare generosity in the School where we were to live for one week very inexpensively and yet with excellent food.

A conference of the Danish Justice party had been held at the School just before our arrival, and many members stayed on for the International Conference. The Danes were, of course, the most numerous. Great Britain had the second largest delegation. Others attending included about half a dozen from Sweden, with Johan Hansson, leader of the new Rattsforbund; Ole Wang and his daughter from Norway; Dr. M. Pfannschmidt from Germany; P. Prins, Georgist leader in the Netherlands; Max Toubeau and his family, and Pavlos Giannelias from France; Judge F. A. W. Lucas who did so much for the Georgist cause in his country, South Africa; J. A. Sampson and W. A. Dowe who came from far-away Australia; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Boschi from Canada, who were also seen at the recent School Conference in Montreal. The United States was represented with the third largest delegation, which included Miss V. G. Peterson, Mrs. Amy Powell, Robert Clancy and Leon Caminez of New York; Mrs. Ann Ross of Arden, Delaware; John Gray and daughter of Boston; Mrs. Jessie Matteson, Judge and Mrs. Max Korshak and Selim Tideman of Chicago; Noah D. Alper of St. Louis; Mr. and Mrs. Paul Gaston of Fairhope, Alabama; Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Thompson, Professor and Mrs. Glenn Hoover and J. Rupert Mason of the San Francisco Bay Area; and Dr. W. M. Cameron and Captain Jesse B. Gay of San Diego. All in all, about 250 persons were registered for the Conference.

#### The Conference Opens

After a preliminary meeting on Monday evening, the Conference officially opened on Tuesday morning with a welcome from Vice Burgo-master Scheibel of Odense. There followed messages of welcome from the leaders of the two organizations sponsoring the Conference-Arnold Poulsen, secretary of the Danish Henry George Union, who explained the current Georgist position in Denmark as one of moving toward the goal; and J. Rupert Mason, president of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, who gave an address on "Human Rights and State Duties" which is reported elsewhere in this issue. Messages were read from those who could not attend, including J. L. and Signe Bjorner, the "elder statesmen" of Danish Georgists; H. G. Huie, H. Hollison and E. J. Craigie of Australia; Mrs. John Paul, widow of the former trains of Table 8 Tills to Love History Could be stated as a superscript of the state editor of Land & Liberty; Louis Hirschfeld of Tangiers; and a moving message from Santiago Serra of Spain, who asked the Conference not to forget Spain where the Georgists are struggling against great odds. It would help greatly, wrote Sr. Serra, if Georgist visitors from the western world could come to Spain to help him convince his fellow countrymen that Georgism is the way of freedom.

The Conference moved at a rapid pace, usually with *four* meetings a day, from morning till night, packed with informative talks and stimulating discussions.

The first day was marred with a tragedy—the sudden death due to a heart attack of one of the delegates, Magne Nohr, a leader in the Justice party, and chairman of the Land Values Commission. The Conference paused to mourn, and then carried on.

The afternoon session was devoted to Dan Bjorner's paper on "The Henry George Movement in Denmark Through Half a Century." Reviewing the historical background, Mr. Bjorner showed how the reforms of 19th century Denmark and the philosophy of Grundtvig paved the way for the favorable reception of Henry George's ideas. The year 1902 was marked by two important events—the founding

of the Henry George Union and the Koge Resolution of the small holders, declaring themselves for land value taxation and the repeal of other taxes. Progress has been steady since then, and today the principles we embrace are in daily discussion all over Denmark.

At the late afternoon session, Professor Glenn Hoover precipitated a lively discussion with his paper on "Justice and Monetary Policy." Few were in agreement with his proposal for a supernational currency, though a monetary theory on which Georgists can unite has not yet been offered.

At the evening session, Ashley Mitchell gave a spontaneous and stirring talk on free trade supplemental to his paper "International Trade (Without Statistics!)" which will appear in an early issue of The Henry George News. Viggo Starcke commented on Mr. Mitchell's talk, "I will criticize that there is nothing to criticize," and he added, "tariffs are the beginning of war, free trade the beginning of peace."

At an early morning session on Wednesday, delegates heard Dr. Viggo Starcke deliver his moving talk "Our Daily Bread," which was so enthusiastically received at the 1949 International Conference in England.

At a late morning session, Max Toubeau read his paper on "France Faced with the Need for Radical Fiscal Reform." M. Toubeau spoke of the French Physiocratic background and their near-success before the Revolution, then reviewed the history of the French Georgist movement in which M. Toubeau's father played a leading part. At present, the movement in France is hoping for a more assured future through its paper, Terre et Liberte. Legislative prospects are not bright, since indirect taxation is increasing, but a new land valuation has been undertaken which offers the possibility of tax reform. M. Toubeau expressed appreciation to the Danes for inspiring the French Georgists.

The afternoon was given over to an excursion to the Nislevgaard small holdings where the delegates observed a degree of application of Georgist principles. From land acquired from former oversize estates, the Danish government leases small farms of a few acres each to farm families on an annual ground rent basis. Cultivation is very intensive, as Harald Gronborg demonstrated at the evening session following the excursion. On most agricultural items, the small farms show a much greater yield per acre than the large estates. In the discussion following, it was brought out by Mr. Dowe that while the showings were impressive we need not limit



the size of farms, but allow users of land to decide the size they want, providing they pay ground rent to government.

The Compensation Question

The Thursday morning session featured a paper by K. J. Kristensen on "Some Problems Connected with the Collection of the Full Economic Rent." Mr. Kristensen, who has had long and practical experience as an assessor, told of the Parliamentary Commission that had been appointed in 1948 to look into the possibility of adopting fuld grundskyld-collection of the full economic rent and corresponding abolition of other taxes. (It was this Commission of which the lamented Mr. Nohr was chairman.) Though not free to comment on the incompleted work of the Commission, Mr. Kristensen touched on some of the problems involved in fuld grundskyld, including the complex problem of tax base. Full collection means that the capital or selling value of land (on which the tax rate is now levied) will disappear, and so the tax would then have to be shifted to the annual rental value. This, said Mr. Kristensen, would be a disruption of existing practices and some adjustments will have to be made. Furthermore, if immediate fuld grundskyld is sought, the question of compensating landlords will have to be met, and this is now being studied by the Danish Justice party.

The compensation question gave rise to a lively discussion that filled the rest of the morning. Several speakers expressed themselves as opposed to compensating landlords. J. R. Mason pointed to the abolition of slavery in the U.S.A. without a penny of compensation. V. H. Blundell declared that if there is to be any compensation, it is the people who ought to be compensated for all the years of private appropriation of rent. Members of the Justice party explained their position. Viggo Starcke said that the Georgist goal is agreed upon, it is only a question of the practical way to accomplish it. K. J. Kristensen, Dan Bjorner and others also reaffirmed the Georgist principles but averred that when political situations arise they must be met in ways that will advance the practical work — and that this need not affect our con-

tinued support of the principles.

After this long and serious discussion, the whole afternoon was spent more lightly with a pleasant excursion throughout the beautiful countryside of Fyn, the island on which Odense is situated, including a visit to the manor estate of Brahe Trolleborg. This and other big estates seen appeared to bear out Mr. Gronborg's ob-

servations, for land use on these estates did not compare with the marvelous intensive cultivation seen on the small holdings.

In the evening, a meeting of members of the International Union was held. At this session, J. Rupert Mason was unanimously re-elected as president of the Union. Members also voted to raise the minimum annual membership fee to \$2, or 10 shillings. At this meeting the Declaration of Principle and Policy of the International Conference held in Swanwick, England in 1949, was reaffirmed.

Henry George School Day

The Friday morning program was shared by Noah D. Alper and Arthur W. Madson, who spoke respectively on the tax stituations in the U.S.A. and Great Britain. Mr. Alper, speaking on "The Great American Tax Shift," told of the deliberate efforts of landowners, especially during the last fifty years, to shift taxes away from their unearned income and onto earned income. Mr. Alper presented figures to demonstrate how successful this shift has been, since indirect taxes have increased in much greater proportion than direct property taxes.

proportion than direct property taxes.

Mr. Madsen reviewed "Land Value Taxation in Great Britain, 1906 to 1951." The highwater mark was reached in 1909, with the Lloyd George budget which called for a valuation of all land within the nation. World War I prevented further progress, and the land values movement thenceforth declined politically. The matter was revived briefly in the Snowden budget of 1931, but this was quickly lost in the shuffle. Today the unspeakable Town and Country Planning Act dominates, preventing real land reform. Meanwhile the Georgist teachings are carried on and the educational work moves forward.

The early afternoon session was also shared—by Mrs. Jessie Matteson who reviewed the Commerce and Industry program of the Henry George School in Chicago; and Miss V. G. Peterson, who told of the progress made by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation within the last three years, since the Swanwick Conference.

Mrs. Matteson pointed out that producers of wealth have most to gain from a just society and our teachings ought to be carried to the producers. A suitable method for teaching classes in industry has taken years to develop, and is still being developed, but progress is being made. Increasing interest and support is being shown by leaders in commerce and industry.

In Miss Peterson's review of Schalkenbach progress, the notable features were: the recent





Folk School at Odense, scene of the Conference.

grants-in-aid to college students to report on selected subjects of value to the Georgist movement; the coming publication of a new edition of *Progress and Poverty*; and the preparation of a handbook on the history and practice of land value taxation.

The late afternoon session was again shared, this time by leaders of the Henry George School in New York and London—Robert Clancy and V. H. Blundell.

Mr. Clancy's paper also reported the School's progress since the Swanwick Conference, but since many of the delegates were not familiar with the School in the U.S.A., in his talk he briefly reviewed the background — the experiences of Oscar Geiger, his founding of the School in 1932, and the considerable progress made in the twenty years since then. Mr. Clancy showed how student enrollment over the years has increased in hard times and diminished in "prosperous" times. Nevertheless, the steady work has produced 65,000 graduates to date. He reaffirmed the need for continued education.

Mr. Blundell dwelt upon "Teaching Economies, Methods and Experiences at the Henry George School in Great Britain." An informal round-table and non-dogmatic approach, he said, was being developed in the London classes, resulting in a much more favorable reception by students, and less dropping off. Mr. Blundell also announced that as an outcome of difficulties encountered using the unabridged version of *Progress and Poverty*, a new abridged version

is now in preparation.

An animated, though unscheduled, discussion took place at this session on the question as to whether there ought to be a Georgist political party in the U.S.A. and Great Britain, similar to the Danish Justice party. Harry Pollard (editor of The Radical) and Roy Douglas, young London Georgists, explained that Georgists were infiltrating the Liberal party in Great Britain and in some place were dominating it, and that a new party was not needed. Mr. Clancy explained that, as in Great Britain, political conditions in the U.S.A. do not favor the formation of a Georgist party. A Single Tax party had already been tried in which Oscar Geiger took part; and as a result of its failure, Geiger recognized the need for education, which has, indeed, proved successful.

A special meeting was called after dinner to approve a declaration of principles prepared by the Resolutions Committee, for release to the Sunday press. This Declaration, unanimously carried, appears elsewhere in this issue.

After a full and serious day, Friday evening was turned over to festivities. The feature of the evening was a vaudeville revue on the stage of the Folk School, with Mr. Blundell as master of ceremonies, and with various talented members of the Conference in the cast (including your reporter!) A burlesque of the Conference itself was part of the show. The acclaim with which the revue was received suggested to this writer that the light touch should be made an integral part of every conference. "It was the best show I've ever seen," President Mason declared.

The show was followed by ballroom dancing (Continued on Page Six, Column One)

## International Conference

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with an orchestra from Odense, finishing off a very good conference day.

#### Australia Featured

At the early Saturday morning session Dr. Sven Rydenfelt, a Swedish economist, presented his paper on "The Way out of the Dollar Shortage." The real blame for not only the dollar shortage but shortage of other currencies, said Dr. Rydenfelt, lies with the countries suffering the shortage. Their own currency restrictions, self-inflicted, make it difficult for dollar countries to do business wih them. As a remedy for this situation, Dr. Rydenfelt proposed a free market in currency.

The late morning session featured a talk by Stephen Martin on "The Welfare State." Mr. Martin inveighed against the philosophy of "cradle to grave" coddling by the state, and demanded that people instead should be free to decide their own lives, given a just economic

order and equal opportunities.

The afternoon session featured Australia. A paper of Frank Dupuis, "When Australia Was Colonized," was read by J. A. Sampson of South Australia. Mr. Dupuis' paper explained in detail the Swan River Colony experience, which was mentioned by Karl Marx in Das Kapital, evidently unaware that it upset most of his theories. A boatload of laborers was sent to Swan River in western Australia to form a colony under a Mr. Peel's supervision. But no sooner had they landed than they deserted the colony to take up for themselves land which was still free beyond the colony.

Another Australian, W. A. Dowe, secretary of the School of Social Science in Sydney, presented his own paper on "The Dispossessed Are Overpopulated." Mr. Dowe said he deliberately selected a title that was not lucid in order to induce people to read to find out what was meant. The explanation was forthcoming—the dispossessed are those who have been deprived of their natural rights to the earth. It is their condition of poverty and starvation that leads superficial observers to conclude that the world is overpopulated. Restoration of their natural rights is the solution, Mr. Dowe declared, though he said he feared the overpopulation theory would not die easily.

Following Mr. Dowe's talk, much was said on the population question, with a few people not quite persuaded that overpopulation is not a danger. Knud Tholstrup said that his people, the Danes, are not afraid of overpopulation; the small holdings show that there need be no fear of depletion of resources with a proper land

system applied.

In the evening, the delegates convened to hear further resolutions prepared by the Resolutions Committee. Miss V. G. Peterson presented a resolution on free trade, prepared by Johan Hansson, which carried unanimously. Two other resolutions also carried; one introduced by Noah D. Alper calling on economists to recognize that taxes can only be taken either from rent or wages, and to determine a sound policy based on this fact; and one introduced by Selim Tideman asking nations giving aid to underdeveloped countries to encourage a tax on land values in the aided countries. Judge Lucas of South Africa was chairman of the Resolution

Following is the text of the two official documents which were widely publicized in the Danish press.

## Resolution Adopted at a Special Meeting of the International Conference for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade

WE the members of the Eighth International Conference to promote Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, assembled at Odense, Den-mark, 28th July - 4th August, 1952, Declare: The fear of war is with us but if we can find and remove the causes there will be no war. If we do not destroy the causes of war, war will destroy us. Military preparedness alone will not present war.

The causes of war between nations are not difficult to detect. Through centuries of human history they have been written in the terms imposed by the victors on the vanquished which have always involved the transfer of land and the surrender of trading rights.

Popular discontent is founded on group op-pression or mass poverty and the hunger of children and leads to civil wars.

Land monopoly creates poverty and the hunger of children. Tariff barriers and restrictions create friction, hatred, and war between na-

Everyone has an equal right to life and it necessarily follows that everyone has an equal right to land on which alone life can be sustained. To restore the equal rights of man to the riches of the earth is to restore the basis of prosperity of the people in each and every country. To remove the great dangers between the nations it is necessary to end the great injustices within the nations.

In every country the value of land is created by the people and is rightfully theirs. Every man should be the owner of the full product of his labor and have the right to develop and use his ability so long as he does not infringe the equal rights of others.

By abolishing all taxes that rob the producer, by collecting the economic rent of land, and by removing the restrictions on the freedom to consume, the freedom to buy and the freedom to sell, we can secure for every man the power to own and to retain what is rightfully his.

For confidence in ownership and enterprise in any country there must be confidence in its money and therefore each country should maintain a stable monetary system. Inflation has disastrous effects.

The freedom of men is at stake now. Unless justice is established freedom will be lost.

### Free Trade Resolution

The members of this Eighth International Conference for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade composed of people from 22 nations assembled at Odense on the 2nd of August 1952 DECLARE THAT

Whereas prominent statesmen and political leaders have declared recently and on many previous occasions their support of a great crusade for Freedom in the world and for sound prosperity and peace, and

WHEREAS history shows that for a hundred years Great Britain then the leading industrial and financial nation of the world, did lead such a crusade through Free Trade by the abolition of its own protective tariffs and by that policy brought a long period of peace by providing a great free clearing house for world commerce.

WE, therefore unanimously petition all political leaders of every country great or small to lead their peoples in a crusade for the freedom of trade by the abolition of their own tariffs that would not only be a blessing to their own people but would lead the way towards world peace and prosperity,

AND be it known, that those of us from countries in Europe while expressing our appreciation of the assistance provided by the Marshall Plan at the cost of the American taxpayer believe that more lasting results would be se-cured if America would lead by the abolition of protective tariffs and allow trade to develop freely.

FREE TRADE is a pre-requisite of the universal peace and universal prosperity.

Later in the evening, Paul Gaston told about the single tax colony in Fairhope, Alabama, where the Single Tax Corporation owns land in the heart of the city and rents it to users, using the rent to provide public services. All the land is occupied, and the colony, though small, is an outstanding example.

#### The Sunday Climax

The "day of rest" began restfully with a sightseeing tour of Odense, including a visit to the birthplace of Hans Christian Andersen, and to Den Fynske Landsby, a charming reconstruction of an old Danish village-something like our Williamsburg, Virginia.

On Sunday afternoon a general meeting was held at the Folk School. The public was invited and there were several hundred in attendance. Dr. Viggo Starcke spoke on "Henry George in World Politics" a shortened version of which appears on page one of this issue. The other speaker was Aage Fogh, a member of Parliament in the Radikal Venstre party, who discussed "The Danish Small Holders' Position on Land Value Taxation and Free Trade," explaining that they favored these reforms. Both talks were broadcast over the Danish radio.

The final event of this hugely successful conference was a banquet on Sunday evening, with Leon Caminez of New York as toastmaster. The star performance of the evening was by Agnes de Mille who, though absent, sent a beautiful message which was read by Mr. Mason. Miss de Mille recalled accompanying her mother and sister to the International Conference in Copenhagen in 1926, and built up a vivid picture of her recollections. She closed with a plea to speed the Georgist work so much needed in the world today. This climax was capped by a contribution of \$500 from Miss de Mille to the Danish Henry George Union, presented by Mr.

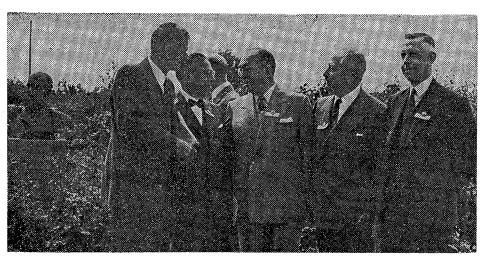
### Conferences Within the Conference

The above report gives only a sketchy idea of what went on at the regularly scheduled sessions. Mention must also be made of all the chairmen and deputy chairmen of the sessions, who were a great factor in keeping things running. And the translators - especially Mr. H. Munkholm-all Danes, who with their amazing linguistic ability, made the verbal translations from English to Danish and vice versa in a manner that enabled the discussions to flow smoothly. Group singing at the beginning of each session - Danish, English and American songs — helped put the delegates in a cheerful mood.

Above all, credit must be bestowed on all who planned the Conference, chiefly Mrs. Caroline Bjorner (widow of Bue Bjorner, whose memory was honored at the Conference) in charge of arrangements at the Danish end, and Arthur W. Madsen, secretary of the International Union, who handled the English end. The magnificent press publicity was the work of Leo Tonti of Copenhagen. Hundreds of press clippings kept pouring in until one whole wall at the School was covered with them. J. Schmidt Hansen, editor of Vejen Frem, reported the Conference thoroughly in his paper, which is the weekly organ of the Justice party.

Mention must be made, too, of the many unscheduled meetings that took place. Chief among these was a series of meetings called by Mr. Clancy to discuss the educational work of Henry George Schools in various countries. The gratifying number of delegates who participated in these informal meetings revealed a serious

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Left to right: J. A. Sampson, Arnold Poulsen, Leon Caminez, J. R. Mason, and W. A. Dowe, in the garden of the Folk School, with bust of Henry George on extreme left.

## International Conference

(Continued from Page Six) and intense interest. Then there were meetings between the young English Georgists of the Liberal party and members of the Danish Georgist Youth, whose collaboration resulted in a statement asking for an international exchange of correspondence among the Georgist youth of the world. Interested parties were asked to write to Erik Harremoes, Lundely 9, Hellerup, Copen-

hagen, Denmark.

After the Conference

The Conference was over officially on Monday, August 4, but most visitors proceeded to Copenhagen for another week. With Mrs. Bjorner as hostess and manager, luncheons, discussions and meetings continued. Miss V. G. Peterson addressed the women of the Justice party on women's part in social reform and the work being done in America to advance Georgism. Ashley Mitchell addressed another large group on the subject of world-wide free trade.

With Englishmen and many foreign visitors returning to England after a memorable two weeks in Denmark, there were still Conference overtones. A dinner meeting with over 50 attending was held at the St. Ermins Hotel in London with Leon Caminez as host. A large luncheon meeting took place next day at the Liberal Club at the invitation of Ashley Mitchell. And this writer must mention a forensic evening in Hyde Park with Georgist speakers holding forth on an elegant soap box.

There was surely enough information, inspiration, meeting of friendly companions, and rich experiences out of this wonderful Conference to sustain us all in our work in our respective countries, for a long time to come.

#### Think!

Mather Smith, who was for 13 years editor of The Free People in Johannesburg, wrote:

With many others throughout the world, we have been pointing out that a choice must now be made by those outside the iron curtain between the retention of our present system of landlordism with its perpetual friction and wars; communism and suppression of freedom; or the ideas of Henry George, which being based on natural law, will bring peace and prosperity to all. We have made progress notably in Denmark, but our progress is too slow to save the world from another cataclysmic war unless the people will study causes and think.

## Names and Faces

No single report of such a gathering as the recent International Conference in Denmark could possibly be complete. The impressions, the people met, the incidents, the conversations, all form an inexhaustible storehouse.

There were friends old and new, many whose names are so familiar to us through the various Georgist periodicals — it is impossible to name them all.

There was the dignified but very human Judge Lucas of South Africa. And W. A. Dowe, fellow school man from Australia — so far away, but in discussing school matters we were close neighbors. Pavlos Giannelias, the colorful international personality who has lived in so many countries and knows so many languages.

The Danes, who were most numerous, made a deep impression on me. It was a pleasure to meet such civilized people. Viggo Starcke, leader of the Justice party, who is said to be the finest oral master of the Danish tongue; and his wife Lis with her charming simplicity. The Bjorner family - Caroline, of whom her late husband Bue would be proud at this Conference, and her glowing children, Birgitte, Morten and Mette. And the other Bjorners - Dan and the two Gudruns. And that other Dan, surnamed Folke, who treated me to a ride in his yacht from Fyn to Sjaelland. And young Erik Harremoes who is becoming a leader of the young Danish Georgists. And the Gronborg family, our hosts at the Folk School, who breathed cordiality. And Knud Tholstrup, whose Ford car was always at our service. And J. Schmidt Hansen, the genial editor of Vejen Frem, and many other good people.

What a pleasure it was, too, to see again the English friends I had met in Swanwick in 1949. The peppery and ubiquitous Arthur Madsen; Ashley Mitchell, like a sage, whose every word should be pondered; merry-eyed Austin Peake who always looks as though he's going to tell a joke. And the Batty family and Rev. Mervyn Stewart and so many more. I must mention, too, the youngsters, led by Vic Blundell who has just the right combination of seriousness and humor — and his pleasant wife and son. Len Stevenson, Reg Smith, Teddy Bausch, Grace Levy and the others I met in 1949, still loyal. And the new additions to this growing Georgist family — Vic Saldji, Pete Stubbings, the Baker sisters, Keith Baynes, Harry Pollard, Roy Douglas and Ted Miller. R. C.