

Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Henry George School

Reported by ROBERT CLANCY

The conference held in San Diego from July 9th to 13th was an outstanding one attended by persons from all over North America, including the following school directors: Arleigh Chute, East Bay, California; William B. Truehart, Los Angeles; A. E. Hartmann, Sacramento; Eva Maxwell, San Diego; Robert Tideman, San Francisco; Leoane R. Anderson, Denver; James A. McNally, Hartford; M. S. Lurio and Mrs. Lurio, Boston; Robert D. Benton and Mrs. Benton, Detroit; Noah D. Alper, St. Louis; John T. Tetley and Mrs. Tetley, New Jersey; Robert Clancy, New York; Joseph A. Stockman, Philadelphia; Strethel Walton, Montreal; and Harry E. Pollard, Toronto.

The program included sessions on school problems, reports from other organizations, discussions on economics and politics, stirring speeches on tax reform, plus special recreational and gastronomic treats. The weather was ideal and our San Diego hosts left nothing to be desired. They planned well and were always on hand to be helpful and hospitable.

On Wednesday evening, July 9th, delegates assembled at the Lafayette Hotel where the conference was held, for an informal buffet supper provided by our hosts. Circulating among the crowd and welcoming the visitors, were Eva L. Maxwell, Louise McLean, Henry Cramer and Sidney G. Evans, leaders of the San Diego Henry George School. During the evening the group heard a tape recording of radio and television talks made by

our delegate from New Zealand, Dr. Rolland O'Regan.

The first formal session opened Thursday morning with a greeting by the Hon. Justin G. Evenson, Vice-Mayor of San Diego, who said, "this group represents the adult section of the community in education for community life."

The morning session, chaired by Gordon Gran of San Diego, was devoted to a round table discussion on promotion. Some of the conferees expressed the view that the school should make more of an effort to reach special groups, such as professional people, with special publicity and special teaching methods. Educational work in churches was another suggestion. Others felt that the standard school program which reaches the general public was the method most worthy to continue and expand.

All school branches are experimenting with various methods of promotion, it was brought out, both with direct mail, advertising and special efforts. Many work with other educational groups, integrating our course into their programs.

The chairman invited each delegate to jot down on a card one idea on promotion. These were read at the end of the session and included the following ideas: Form a speakers bureau to supplement school work—Work on getting our courses introduced in high schools—Teach our students how to influence people—Keep working and you will get results.

The Thursday afternoon session was

another round table discussion, this time on "Teaching the Fundamentals," with Everett J. Seeley of San Diego as chairman. Robert Clancy, director of the New York school, presented the new Teachers Manual for Fundamental Economics (sixth edition), the school's basic course, with Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* as the text. He explained that it was the product of four years of concerted effort by the Manual Committee in New York and teachers and directors throughout the country. It represents the sum of what has been learned so far about teaching the fundamentals and should prove to be an effective teaching tool.

William B. Truehart, Los Angeles director, told of supplementary materials assembled by himself and his colleagues. These are notes about each lesson—facts, discussions, illustrations, etc., designed to aid the teacher in explaining economic fundamentals. Mr. Truehart said he would be glad to send a copy of these notes to teachers in other cities on request.

Harry E. Pollard, Toronto director, told of a public speaking course he has introduced in the Y.M.C.A. in his city. This course actually uses *Progress and Poverty* as its text, and students are asked to prepare speeches and debates based on various assignments in the book. The course has been well received, and a Y.M.C.A. debating club has already grown out of it.

James A. Palmer, a San Diego teacher, told of the use he makes of documentary motion pictures in class, not just for entertainment, but "the right movie at the right time with the right discussion." Mr. Palmer presented a film which he uses, "Ghost Towns of California," which illustrates the "boom and bust" days of the old West.

Mrs. Marian Sapiro of Los Angeles told of plans to present the basic course over the radio, with listeners as students. They will be invited to

send for lessons which they can fill out and mail in for correction.

Reports from Others

Reports on various Georgist organizations were featured at the Thursday evening session, with Robert de Fremery of San Francisco as chairman.

Noah D. Alper (St. Louis) gave a brief history of the Henry George Foundation in Pittsburgh, and told of its present efforts to encourage cities of Pennsylvania to adopt land value taxation. Joseph Craig of Fort Worth, Texas, supplemented this by telling of former Mayor William McNair of Pittsburgh and the graded tax plan which is a partial land value tax measure. "In Pittsburgh it works," said Mr. Craig.

A report was sent by Gilbert Tucker, president of the Economic Education League, and read by Robert D. Benton. (see page 16)

Harry E. Pollard told of the work of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, and he also mentioned that many graduates of the English Henry George School are joining the revived Liberal party, which is once more showing the effects of the Georgist influence as it did in the days of Lloyd George, Campbell-Bannerman, et al.

Robert Clancy reported on the Lincoln Foundation. Started in 1947 by John C. Lincoln with the aim of promoting education in Henry George's ideas, the Foundation has over the years made contributions to the Henry George School. A more recent development has been a program of working with colleges. There are several colleges now operating research and teaching programs on subjects related to the Georgist philosophy, with grants from the Lincoln Foundation. A professor in charge of one of these programs was present at the Conference, Professor William H. Anderson, chairman of the Department of Economics of the University of

Southern California. Mention of Henry George, said Professor Anderson, is gradually dropping out of sight in college textbooks, and there is in process an effort at his university to restore George to his proper place in the history of economic thought, and to spend time on land economics and land value taxation. Courses, both undergraduate and graduate, he said, would devote adequate time to these subjects. It is also planned to have research projects for students, bearing on land and its rent. Much interest was expressed by our conferees in this program.

Miss V. G. Peterson gave a report on the recent work of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, of which she is Executive Secretary. This will appear in the September HGN.

Dr. Rolland O'Regan is president of the New Zealand League for the Taxation of Land Value and he told of the successful work of promoting land value taxation in his country. There is a growing interest in the subject, he said, and once started, the system tends to spread. Dr. O'Regan concluded by reading from a letter written to his father, Judge P. J. O'Regan, by Henry George: "Any advance in one part of the world helps the movement all over."

On Friday morning, attention was again turned to school problems, with a session on finances presided over by

Captain Jesse B. Gay of San Diego. Extension directors were called upon in turn to tell how they were raising contributions to support their courses. Some extensions have fund raising committees of volunteers who call on, or telephone, prospective donors. Others mail out an annual fund appeal. Some have adopted the membership plan whereby the donor receives a membership in the school, based on his contribution. Special fund-raising efforts were mentioned, such as a special appeal to buy the necessary equipment. An interesting innovation reported by Los Angeles was the recent Hollywood Bowl concert from which the extension benefited.

On Friday afternoon, the delegates enjoyed a boat excursion, and Friday evening was devoted to talks on economics and politics. See V. G. Peterson's report on page 6.

On Saturday morning the group turned its attention to the subject of "The School's Graduates," with Tom Sherrard of San Diego as the chairman. The directors were again called upon to report on graduate activities in their extensions and it was found that most of those having had alumni organizations had discontinued them. However, a new effort appears to be in the making, and two groups have recently been formed: the Economists Club in San Francisco which holds meetings and discussions; and the



Mrs. Dixie Wood, James A. Palmer, Noah D. Alper, John T. Tetley, William B. Truehart and Mrs. Eva L. Maxwell.

Henry George School Associates in Los Angeles, which sponsored the benefit concert above mentioned. In other extensions graduate activities are part of the school. Some have alumni committees with definite responsibilities in carrying on the school program. The alumni situation at present appears to be in a state of flux, with a variety of programs and activities going on, and it will be interesting to observe its development.

Special Reports

At the Saturday afternoon session, reports were read from absent school directors, and special reports were heard on organizations closely related to the school. Chairman was Mrs. Bernice de los Rios of San Diego.

A report from Verlin D. Gordon, Ohio director, was by read by Mrs. Robert D. Benton. "The Ohio School is showing slow but steady growth," wrote Mr. Gordon. "The influence of graduates and friends is increasing. Every new student brings that day nearer when the philosophy of freedom, as enunciated by Henry George will win wide recognition and acclaim."

Joseph A. Stockman (Philadelphia) read a letter sent by Dr. Hengste Tu, director of the Henry George School in Formosa, who noted that his school has entered its fifth year. "My school," he wrote, "despite its financial weakness, is running steadily and resolutely. I believe the increasing cognizance and appreciation of the teaching of Henry George on the part of the Chinese people here will eventually be the great force which will help bring this school to a sounder basis."

Mr. Stockman also reported on the birthplace of Henry George which doubles as a museum and Philadelphia school headquarters. The little red brick building at 413 S. 10th St. was acquired by the school last year from the Henry George Foundation which had maintained the property since 1926. The first floor has been reno-

vated and now houses a Henry George exhibition as well as classroom and office space. The back yard is now being put in order, and the first general meeting will be held there on September 2nd of this year. Mr. Stockman extended an invitation for friends of the school everywhere to attend.

Willis Shipley, now of Los Angeles, formerly a trustee of the Chicago Henry George School, gave a brief summary of the aims and accomplishments of the Commerce and Industry program being undertaken in Chicago, which is introducing the study of economic fundamentals in industry.

Mrs. Mina Olson reported on the Chicago Henry George Women's Club which recently celebrated its nineteenth birthday and gave its annual gift of \$300 to the Chicago Henry George School. Though membership has been declining, it is hoped that it will be increased by graduates of the new *Progress and Poverty* classes being conducted by George Menninger at the church of Rev. Ruthann Bassler.

Noah D. Alper told of the good work being done by the St. Louis Henry George Women's Club which publishes the St. Louis Geogist and helps raise funds for the school. Mr. Alper also reported on P.R.E.C. (Public Revenue Education Council) which undertakes a distribution of literature every year. His recent pamphlets, "Let's Abolish Taxes" and "The College Professor Vs. the Manufacturer" have been distributed. A new development is a one-hour talk and demonstration with a flip chart. P.R.E.C.'s emphasis is to show that a tax is not itself a source of revenue but merely a pump which taps a source.

Dr. Morgan Harris of Los Angeles presented a plan for a new organization, the Association for Reduced Taxation, the purpose of which would be to try to get cities to stop the increase of all taxes except the land value tax.

A. E. Hartmann of Sacramento told of his hope to participate in the com-

ing California State Fair to be held in his city, with a special Henry George School booth with an exhibit and literature.

Following these special reports, the directors were called upon to give their evaluation of the conference. There was a hearty consensus that this was a wonderful conference, full of new ideas and inspiration, and providing much evidence that the school and the movement are growing in size, scope, importance and influence. The San Diego group were complimented on their excellent management of the conference and their general hospitality.

Top of the Conference

Saturday evening came the conference banquet, the climax of the planned program and truly the climax in actuality. The Rev. Jack E. Addington of San Diego, acting as toastmaster, read greetings from Ashley Mitchell, Kathleen Norris and Cecil B. deMille [see page two]. A musical interlude was provided by Wesley Goss of Los Angeles.

After an excellent dinner, the first speaker was J. Bracken Lee, former governor of Utah, who has been devoting his time to advocating the abolition of the federal income tax. This was his last public speech before entering a new political contest for United States Senator from Utah. Governor Lee's message fell on sympathetic ears, and good wishes for success in the senatorial race were extended.

Joseph S. Thompson, who spoke on "Taxation for Justice and Sanity," is president of the San Francisco Henry George School, as well as of the Federal Pacific Electric Company. Well known as a spirited public speaker, he seemed to excel himself at the banquet as he spoke eloquently on his subject. Equally eloquent was his appeal to his hearers for financial support for the Henry George School.

The final speaker was the conference's overseas delegate, Dr. Rolland

O'Regan of New Zealand, a prominent physician, man of affairs, leader in the land value taxation movement—and a polished public speaker. His presence added an international flavor to our conference and made it possible for us to make this Fourteenth Annual Conference the school's first international conference.

At a special Sunday morning session, with Robert Clancy as chairman, greetings were read from Professor Harry Gunnison Brown, W. A. Dowe of Australia, and J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco.

Dr. Bernhard Spur was called upon to give an up-to-date report on the Georgist movement in Denmark. The Justice party with nine representatives in Parliament, last year formed a coalition government with the two larger parties. Now, one year later, gains have been made in furthering the cause of economic freedom, and the party is growing in prestige.

Dr. Rolland O'Regan was again called upon to give the conferees further information about New Zealand. He presented beautiful color slides of his country, with commentary, and also discussed practical questions in connection with applying land value taxation. So great was the interest in the matter raised by Dr. O'Regan, that it was proposed that the next annual conference give more time to these questions.

The New Jersey Henry George School will be host to the 1959 annual conference, which will be held at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, in the early part of July. In addition, a message came to the conference just in time to be announced that the next International Conference for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade will be held in the latter part of July, 1959, in West Germany, thus making it possible for those who wish to, to attend both conferences.

An so ended the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Henry George School of Social Science—and the third to be held in California. With

renewed inspiration we face the coming year and look forward to the fifteenth annual conference in New Jersey.

POST-CONFERENCE VISITS

ROBERT CLANCY

After the highly successful San Diego conference, I took the occasion to visit our western extensions.

First, of course, was the San Diego extension: many of the conferees assembled at the trim little white building which serves as school headquarters, and were guests for Sunday lunch, with Eva Maxwell a hospitable hostess. After this some returned home, some went for a visit to Mexico, and some, including me, went on to Los Angeles.

On Monday there was a meeting at the Los Angeles school, in the attractive building acquired by that extension two years ago, with director Bill Truehart and others.

By Wednesday evening I was in San Francisco to attend the H. G. School's annual meeting. The occasion was the beginning of the tenth year of classes in San Francisco, under Bob Tideman, director. The meeting was well attended—there were at least 100 present. Speakers included J. Rupert Mason, Glenn E. Hoover, Noah D. Alper and myself. Wallace Kibbee was chairman.

Thursday I attended a Commonwealth Club luncheon and heard reports by the Education Committee on how public schools should be financed. There was a good "land values bloc" in this committee, including Rupert Mason, Bob Tideman and Bob de Fremery—this last also a monetary economist whose ideas have taken root in the San Francisco extension.

Across the San Francisco Bay is the East Bay extension which I also visited.

Present director is Arleigh Chute, and I met with a small but earnest group at his house and was heartened to see how the ideas are taking hold. I also visited the Glenn Hoovers and the Hugh Changs, and was regaled with Chinese as well as California hospitality. (I did not go to Sacramento, where we have the fifth of our California extensions, but I did get acquainted with the director there, A. E. Hartmann, who was, in fact, my roommate in San Diego.)

Then I was off for a visit to Denver, and was treated to Colorado hospitality by Leoane Anderson, our director in that three and a half year-old extension, which was founded by Dixie Wood. A meeting at Leoane's house with a fine group of people showed that the Denver extension is making good progress. I was also able to get in a visit to Boulder and to Professor James L. Busey who teaches at the university there and is the author of the super-condensed *Progress and Poverty* pamphlet. (I didn't visit St. Louis this trip, as our St. Louis director, Noah Alper, was visiting Seattle to report on possibilities of opening an extension there. Nor did I stop off at Great Falls, Montana, but I was pleased that M. S. Lurio of Boston did go there to see Russel Conklin).

My mind crowded with memories, faces old and new, and all sorts of ideas and experiences, I flew back to New York stopping at the Chicago airport long enough to have a nice phone chat with John Monroe, Chicago director.