

Philadelphia Memories

by RHODA HELLMAN

SEPTEMBER 2nd, the 125th anniversary of George's birth, was a sparkling day. In the early afternoon visitors to the international conference in New York forsook the lecture room and found themselves in three conversation-packed busloads, speeding over the New Jersey Turnpike, past marshes, factories and woodlands, into Philadelphia. There two birthday shrines awaited them. First they toured Independence Hall and the adjacent historic buildings. Then they visited the old house on Tenth Street, serving both as school and museum, where Henry George was born. It was cheerful and satisfying to climb the narrow stairways and look into the little rooms with their mementos redolent of a great but simple life. And Joseph Stockman was not forgotten as people paused in front of the shelves holding a collection of his books on China.

The next stop was at Temple University for a dinner meeting. After remarks by Director George Collins; by Paul Hartenstein, who presented Mayor Tate's proclamation of Henry George Day; and by Julian Hickok accepting this document; there were two main speeches.

Professor Raymond T. Bye, an emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania, said he was really a "has-been," who had also been called a crackpot, and that looking around the room he saw some of both. He charmed his audience by addressing them as "fellow has-beens and fellow crackpots." This eminent economist—one of the few modern textbook writers to accord

George any real approval—explained his position on the land-tax theory. If he were dictator, he said, he would make the 100 per cent taxation of rent part, but not all of his program. He cautioned against claiming too much for the formula because on most large fortunes the unearned incomes were not solely from land. Outlining three main objections of economists to the theory he said the first was the oversimplification of complex problems. The second was that it is hard to separate the value of the soil from certain improvements that are part of it, but Dr. Bye thought this difficulty not insuperable. The third was the old question of injustice to landowners who have put their savings into land. Here the speaker offered as a special solution giving owners a life annuity in the amount of the land value to be confiscated (this data is developed in *Applied Economics* by Bye and Hewitt, third edition).

Professor Clyde E. Reeves, in his address on "The Paradoxes of George" (see page one) also captivated his audience, who greeted his points with laughter and applause, though the latter was decibels louder when George was called an individualist than when he was called a collectivist.

The program closed appropriately when Mrs. Otto Siebenmann of the Henry George Women's Club of Chicago presented Lucia Cipolloni of the Philadelphia Henry George School, with the gift of \$100 to be used for further restoration of the birthplace.

George Collins, in his first term as Philadelphia director, has opened five classes with a total enrollment of 89 students. One class is being held in the famed Junto, an educational organization founded by Benjamin Franklin.