

the Henry George News

PUBLISHED BY HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE • MARCH, 1971

Financial Paper Pinpoints Single-Tax Success Story

IN the Commercial and Financial Chronicle of January 14th Harlan Trott, editor of The Analyst, monthly publication of the Northern California HGS, has explained in a long article the Economic Benefits of the "Single Tax" Statute Enacted by Californians. It recalls the irrigation districts where the taxes are used to promote development of idle land under the Wright Statute (1887)—taxes that fall on the value of the land and not at all on the orchards, ditches, buildings, machinery and other farm-city improvements. Adoption of this plan turned large areas of idle land into highly productive farm communities, because it was "economically prohibitive for owners of land to maintain it unproductively." This important article is drawing special attention because of the Housing and Urban Development Administration's "rising interest in the use of property tax incentives to promote the renewal of blighted areas" and its intention to begin a cross-country study of local property taxes.

Under the Wright Act if a water transfer project was too big for a single district, two or more would form a coalition. In this way the mighty Don Pedro dam was built and when it was dedicated in 1922 it was the largest dam in the world. People who came to stare at it not infrequently asked how much it cost the American taxpayers. The astonishing facts are that the multi-purpose reclamation project was built and financed despite organized hostility of absentee landlords, private utility companies and investment bankers, without calling on Washington or Sacramento for fiscal or credit aid. The vast irrigation flood control and hydro-power project is now all paid for and owned by the district citizens who have always received their water free of charge and their electrical power at a very low rate.

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Henry B. Cramer

SAN DIEGO has long been known for its Georgist leaders and initiators. Henry Cramer belonged in that company and he remained to support the movement with loyal devotion until February 9th when he suffered a sudden heart attack. Only a week earlier he had addressed the local Georgists at an annual meeting, and his message will be treasured for it was his last word to his fellow workers.

Mr. Cramer was born in San Diego in 1891. He served in the first World War and on his return he joined his father in the management of the Cramer Baking Company. He retired from business in 1942. Shortly before that he had become a member of the State Board of Prison Directors and for eight years he worked toward improving prison conditions. He was a Shriner and a Scottish Rite Mason and a member of other distinguished orders, but we will always remember him as a tireless advocate of the principles of Henry George.

In 1960 he became chairman of the Incentive Taxation Committee of California and toured several states to survey land speculation practices. It was his encouragement that gave Irene Hickman of Sacramento the needed impetus to run for public office in order to expose an unfair assessment system. As a result attention was focused widely on under-assessed land. His kindly influence was expressed in many ways. He headed the editorial board of the California Homeowner Magazine and helped it grow—its purpose is to instruct homeowners regarding property taxes. Acting as administrator of the estate of Sidney Evans who had instituted important Henry George ventures, Mr. Cramer judiciously carried out the wishes of his friend.

Mr. and Mrs. Cramer made many trips across the country to be present at conferences of the Henry George School. At such meetings Henry's reports on the activities of the San Diego group were modestly brief, but every word counted. He was a man of unflinching good humor which seemed to emphasize his belief in the dignity and rights of men as individuals. This beloved couple was sadly missed at the last conference in Calgary because of his illness. The HGS fellowship worldwide extends sympathy and affection to Mrs. Cramer and the family in their loss.

Vol. 34, No. 2

March, 1971

The Henry George News is published monthly as an alumni activity of the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021.

Publication Committee: Dorothy Sara, Oscar B. Johannsen, Sydney A. Mayers and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$1 a year; single copies 10¢. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Henry George School.

For the puzzled query as to why, if the Wright Act is so good, it isn't in wider use, Mr. Trott marshals impressive documentary evidence. He shows how the prime beneficiaries of federal irrigation and flood control projects are rich landholders many of whom already hook the public for millions in farm subsidies, so it pays them to drum for federal aid. Public works compete with the giant private power companies. "If you can convince public officials to improve your land by giving you free water or installing flood control while you sit on your hands, then your income is almost all your own," in the words of Professor Mason Gaffney. Wherever the act has been at work in California it has thwarted the farmer's role as a potential land speculator. But as a farmer it has made him much better off.

The contrast between this and surrounding areas is so marked that you can "see a law at work with the naked eye" especially from the air. So marked is the cultivation of these districts that engineers from abroad have made pilgrimages to inspect its irrigation works. What was once sterile wheatland now comprises thousands of family size farms. Stanislaus County raises twice as many registered pure-bred dairy cattle as any other two counties in the U.S., and in peach canning it ranks first.

Variations have taken place in the 120 districts in California since the original amendment was passed, but all buildings and other improvements are still exempt from the district ad valorem tax. This method has been called "the catalyst that wrings the subsidy out of public reclamation works," for there are no windfalls adding up to millions of dollars such as accrue to private corporations holding extensive idle lands in reclamation areas. The Wright Act "has had the effect of taxing land into its highest and best use. It has taxed people into business, not out of business," and has been termed "a powerful engine for the creation of wealth."

One of the districts, Oakdale, was organized as a single tax unit in 1909. Farmers were easily convinced of the advantages of not being penalized for their industry. Their taxes would not be increased if they improved their lands, planted crops, set out trees and vines and built houses and barns. Local newspapers at that time were strong allies in creating a favorable political climate because a number of country editors had read *Progress and Poverty* and understood the principles of land value taxation. Their editorials helped to educate farmers and city people alike.

Later on, the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco conducted a thorough survey of this experiment. Their report is glowing and ex-

tensive. The claims made for the single tax were found to have been fulfilled beyond the fondest dream. Large areas of poorly-used lands had become dairy farms affording a comfortable living and much needed food for a growing population. Speculators no longer came to buy land—sales were made to actual settlers who brought their families and were prepared to build homes and go to work. A farm that was kept idle paid the same proportion of tax as the productive farm.

Community spokesmen said in effect, the single tax is the best system of taxation we could have. We know that it is making our community grow. All of our farmers favor it because of the exemption of improvements. No one would want to go back to the old system.

Mr. Trott became aware of the dramatic goings-on in the irrigation districts through his friend J. Rupert Mason, an investment banker specializing in California irrigation district bonds. He has brought the story strikingly up to date for present day readers. In the Fresno region inquiries half a century after the Wright Act was passed affirmed that they were prospering as a result of land value taxation and that the claims made by the Commonwealth Club were by no means abrogated.

Mr. Trott, for many years a noted feature writer on *The Christian Science Monitor*, aware that the "single tax" is widely misunderstood, reduces Henry George's philosophy for the uninitiated to three goals:

1. The social appropriation of the socially created value of land.
2. The complete freedom of both domestic and foreign trade.
3. The preservation of our private property, free enterprise system, with no governmental ownership or regulation of other than natural monopolies and public utilities."

Surely the HUD researchers will want to take a closer look at this method for reclaiming unused and under-used land. Even in its present attenuated form, incentive taxation stands out wherever it is given a valid test. A statement by Senator L. L. Dinnett made when the dam was completed provides an amiable flourish for summing up this report of an Act that deserves to be much better known.

Said Senator Dinnett: "I doubt if any law ever enacted by our Legislature has even approached the beneficial results of this law (Wright Act). It puts a premium upon development and improvement and a penalty on slothfulness and selfishness. It has perpetuated to the people and their children a great heritage . . . The people's greatest birthright has been preserved not to be administered by a remote national or even state organization, but by the very people whose birthright it is. This is the logical solution of the water question, the control by the people themselves of the water which they use, and to this solution must in time all systems come."

We Need Henry George Today

by DAVID SKLAR

PERHAPS one of the most interesting items in the history of thought is the antagonism between Henry George and the academic world.

When *Progress and Poverty* was first published there were a number of favorable reviews by academicians, but as the book began to create a sensation about six months after its publication, many attempted to refute George's ideas. The refutations merely fanned the flames of controversy and caused a wider discussion. Within ten years of the book's publication George's ideas were being so widely discussed that he himself believed it was only a matter of time before his proposals would be put into practice.

Instead of continuing to argue with George, the academic world, becoming alarmed, met him with icy silence. Thus an effective means of dealing with him was discovered, and for the most part the academic world has treated the subject with silence to the present day. As George Geiger said in *The Philosophy of Henry George*: "In the academic world of political economy the work of George has been received with little favor. Too often there has been a rather pronounced neglect of the implications of his thought, but even when they have been appreciated it has been seldom with sympathy."

What is there about George that so antagonizes most of the academic world?

First, it is the revolutionary position contained in his ideas. George attacks the very basis of the power of those who endow and direct universities by attacking land ownership and suggesting an effective means of doing away with the profit contained in these institutions. Such ideas certainly cannot be allowed.

Second, oddly enough it is the clarity and completeness of his argument that most frightens the professors. To place George's writings side by side with those of the popular academic economists is to reveal the poverty of the academicians' thoughts. Compare, for example, Book III of *Progress and Poverty*, "The Laws of Distribution," with Chapter 4 of Samuelson's *Economics*, "Individual and Family Income." George presents a scholarly and penetrating analysis of rent, wages and interest. Samuelson's chapter is a superficial and puerile bit of writing on the distribution of income in the United States, with such subchapter titles as "Wage Income From Work," a most sloppy and unscientific use of terminology.

In the last 80 years much has been written in the field of economics that could not stand up if George's ideas were acknowledged. For in-

stance, the whole idea of deficit financing as a means of stimulating the economy and reducing unemployment would become unnecessary if the tax on land values was instituted instead. The whole welfare program, which is in the main supported by the academicians, would lose its function if the present cause of the maldistribution of wealth were eliminated. Economics has actually become a study designed to cover the truth that George tried to reveal. In these circumstances it would be naive to expect the academic economists to reverse themselves by teaching George.

Let us make no bones about it. The academicians form the most effective shield between the interests of what Franz Oppenheimer called "the State" and the clearer thinking of the 19th century, of which George is one example. It is important that this be understood because unless the authority of the academicians is challenged in the field of economics, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible to again make George's ideas the subject of such wide discussion as they enjoyed shortly after the publication of *Progress and Poverty*. The most popular argument against George at that time was that he was not an educated man. Today the popular argument is that his ideas are outdated. The statement is generally accepted because it has been made by respected authorities, but no detailed supporting evidence has yet appeared.

The opposite, in fact, is true. George in 1879 anticipated the very social problems that plague our society today. The basic cause of poverty that George outlined has intensified. The proposed remedies of today are the proposed remedies that George analyzed in Book VI of *Progress and Poverty* and showed to be wanting. The most remarkable feature of *Progress and Poverty* is its relevance for 1971.

If we wish to stimulate a wider interest in George, our first line of attack should be against the silence of the academicians. If Henry George's ideas were again discussed they would again cause a sensation.

The "Best Known" Plan

In the Birmingham (Alabama) News an editorial research report from Washington states, "probably the best known and certainly the most radical plan for reforming the property tax was put forward by Henry George almost a century ago." Then followed an explanation of George's "single-tax idea" with mention of several places where it has made progress, though "seldom in its pure form."

The picturesque buffoonery in Punch during George's life is now forgotten, and the silence that followed his death is at last being broken by the public media as a new generation writes of him with the zest of discovery. A faithful and convinced few have waited a long time for this emergence of the truth that he tried to make clear. That truth is finding friends, as he predicted it would, though admittedly in a limited context.

Escape From Affluence

by OSCAR B. JOHANNSEN

IN the final chapter of *Progress and Poverty* Henry George looked behind the problem of social life to the individual life, and to the meaning of life itself. To him life here "was intelligible only as the avenue and vestibule to another life." He had a sense of mission and did not spare himself but threw all his strength and energy into a plea for human progress and a more ideal republic.

Now that America has become in many respects the envy of the world, our young people take the affluence for granted and spurn its material advantages. They seek more "fulfilling work" than that of well paid office employees. Many of them are willing to work with their hands and to endure discomfort in order to achieve creativity.

Overwhelming too is the lure of the land which draws many away from the stultifying routine of commuting to the city. Whether they realize it or not, the commune dwellers are trying to escape from the demoralizing effect of an unjust system of land tenure which reduces the less privileged to grinding poverty.

Too few philosophers have revealed any clear understanding of the psychological distresses which arise when men are separated from the land. Man comes from the land and returns to it. It is part of him and he is part of it. When he is forced into the cities he may be politically and socially free but he does not always feel free. More often he leads the life of "quiet desperation" of which Thoreau wrote.

Urban life has become too complex, too sophisticated, too pointless. Young people tend to gravitate to the opposite—to simplicity. They feel if they could return to the simple life of their forefathers they would gain some elusive thing that has been lost. For them the growth of civilization seems to have caused more problems than it is worth. They do not see that it was only as civilization grew that imperishable literature, divinely inspired music and ever more beautiful forms of art were created to deepen the spiritual nature of men.

A reversion to the simple life may bring contentment for a time since it affords release from responsibility. But sooner or later people must turn their talents in directions that are more challenging and ennobling. Instead of looking for an escape, one should seek out the causes for the disappointment, frustrations, evils and emptiness of the present. That search will necessarily lead to a study of man's relationship with the land. Only when this relationship is understood and corrected will our national life reflect the harmony in which individuals may hope to achieve such creativity as they desire.

Guaranteed Income

by JOSEPH CARLO

THE edict of nature is clear and unmistakable—nature rewards man only when he exerts his mental and physical powers in the pursuit of his objectives. Individuals, by current and past economic arrangements, have circumvented this edict, but the vast majority of men must exert themselves in the production of wealth or mankind will “go under.”

When human exertion ceases production ceases, and nature provides for no other result. Feudalism collapsed when the peasants left the manors, thus showing the cause and effect relationship of human exertion and the production of wealth.

Now other forms of land ownership have allowed the “lords of the soil” to exist in the past and in our own day, so that a minority of mankind can still circumvent the decree of nature. Public assistance allows others to exist without toil. But the majority must continue to produce or the whole system will cease to function.

Various nostrums are offered or used to distribute wealth more equitably; negative income taxes, low income housing (production taken by force from producers in the form of taxes), family assistance plans and the concomitant “guaranteed income,” among others. All of these are clearly give-aways with no exertion expected in return, except for work incentives proposed in some family assistance proposals, and thus, for the most part, nature’s clear precept is ignored.

It is only necessary to become aware that such palliatives as guaranteed incomes are feeble attempts to remove the superficial effects of an underlying cause, to recognize that a search for this cause should be the first step towards a solution to the problem of the unequal distribution of wealth.

This will lead to an investigation of the classical triad of the recipients of wealth, namely, land, labor, and capital. Rewards for human exertion will be clearly seen to be applicable to the efforts of labor and the use of capital, but since land sites were not brought into being by human exertion, no income from this source to landowners will be deemed justifiable. Land policy will thus become the central field of inquiry in the examination of the unequal distribution of wealth and, as all Georgists know, when thought is corrected, and the remedy, land value taxation, is understood, right action will follow.

When the cause of poverty has been made manifest, no recourse to guaranteed incomes will be necessary, and the edict of nature will be universally recognized.

The Laws of Ecology

by HARRY POLLARD

THE first law of ecology is that if a thing is profitable, it will be done; if it is not profitable it won't be done. For example, if it is profitable to clear the slums they'll be cleared; if it is not profitable all the laws that can be passed will fail to clean up these environmental disasters.

The next law is simply that we are unlikely ever to run out of food, fuel, or anything else. The problem is not one of world overpopulation; indeed, the whole population of the world could fit handily into the State of Texas. It works out at about six families an acre. As for California we find that there is sufficient room—including residential, commercial, industrial and recreational needs—for the entire projected 1990 population of our state—in the Bay area. No one need go to San Francisco for a cultural weekend, because they'd already live there.

As all the cities, towns and villages of the United States occupy something like one-half of one percent of the space of the United States and in them some eighty percent of the population live, the conclusion one is faced with is that we have an empty America.

The problem with large cities, then, is emptiness, which leads to economic inefficiency and, as in New York, to the incredible triple income tax, federal, state and city—and the exodus from the city into the even emptier suburbs. So the third ecological law might well be an empty city is an inefficient city, and the cause of air pollution is not too many people but too few.

Space for the increasing population is no problem, but how are you going to feed them? This is the second part of the equation: food, clothing and shelter for homo sapiens, the biggest consumer of them all, but also the biggest provider.

Let's put it into perspective. Karl Brandt said it well: "Agriculture is the universal and eternal chemical industry which utilizes solar energy directly to mine carbon by photosynthesis from the air. The gigantic agricultural output of carbohydrates including cellulose, of fats and proteins is derived from the air and water except for a few percent of ash content that happen to come from the soil and can be replaced at any time. This basic fact seems often to be ignored in discussions about the 'resources' which agriculture utilizes."

All you need is air, water and a little ash. Let's examine that contention. Based on dry weight, upwards of 90 percent of plant life consists of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen for the proteins. The ash consists essentially of the potash salts and phosphates, and

known reserves, as of now, will last us for several centuries and we'll probably find some more tomorrow, or next week, or next month.

In the United States our oil will last us another 15 or 20 years if we don't count all kinds of possibilities. In any event we can turn to coal, which might run out in about 4,000 years. Meantime, we can drink the water which, assuming no more rain will fall, will still last us for over 7,000 years.

How about the tricky little things like the magnesium so essential to photosynthesis reactions because it is vital to chlorophyll? Well, cosmically as well as terrestrially it's the eighth most common element. The other important trace elements are equally obtainable and if they ever do run out we'll make them.

All we need to make anything at all is some know-how and some energy. If we really wanted coal we could use energy to make some out of its ashes, but that would be ridiculous. More sensible would be for us to consider the fact that we can't use up our earth. All we can do is to change it around a little.

At the end of each day we have changed the form of some materials and used some energy. And there we have it. What we use up on this old earth of ours is energy. So we should look to our energy sources. Less than two percent of our energy needs is provided by water power, yet the possibilities seem tremendous. The largest hydro-electric plant in the world outside Russia is being constructed in British Columbia near the southern end of the Alaskan highway. It uses some five percent of the potential power in this area alone!

Tidal energy is another possibility. France for example is experimenting on this hardly touched power source. The Bay of St. Michel has a high tide peak of 43 feet. Using the entire bay would provide one third of the energy requirement of East and West Germany.

Nuclear power could supply a good percentage of our needs, and the world supply of uranium, thorium and a few other appropriate materials would last about 2,000 years. But before they ran out might we not be using sand, or garbage, or something else?

What about the serious and widespread use of this enormous energy that arrives each day with the sun? Well try this on for environmental size. Rope off an area of New Mexico desert 65 miles wide and 100 miles long. Cover it with solar mirrors operating at ten percent efficiency—and remember the theoretical efficiency of solar batteries is 22 percent. Assume we've just managed a ten percent efficiency. This area of desert would supply the entire power requirements for the whole of the United States. We could close down every other power station in the country.

The final law of ecology is that man, too, is part of our ecology and a unique part. For man has reasoning ability which gives him freedom of choice. He is not *required* to do things, as are the other inhabitants of this planet. His ability to adapt himself or his environment is the reason why he has survived and multiplied to cover the earth until now, there is no place unexplored except the deepest oceanic trenches, and they too are yielding to man's advance.

The good things of life we can afford only when the basics have been economically produced—so our first ecological step is to find how most efficiently we can act.

Perhaps a necessary prelude to removing ecological threats is to remove the ecologists. At least that would force us to use our best means of ecological defense—common sense.

A portion of an address before the First Unitarian Society of Sacramento.

Chaos of Fallacies

THE ERROR of treating land as personal property has destroyed the peace of the world and brought on violence, poverty and the suppression of liberty. The application of land value taxation would be an important first step in establishing individual freedom and opportunity.

The farm situation is typical of the loss of initiative. The expressed aim of the government was to help the family farmer, to limit production, and to sustain prices. But while production was cut off in the best farm land, we paid for huge dams and irrigation projects to create agricultural lands out of deserts, thus increasing our taxes and enriching large landowners. The net result has been to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

In our country where we supposedly oppose communism, we still accept its premise that capital exploits labor, so we have built up a powerful labor monopoly which can exploit the rest of us by constantly raising wages and prices, making it necessary for the government either to accept increasing unemployment or to inflate our money supply. This, too, is perpetual coercion—not liberty.

We are lost in a chaos of fallacies that pass as facts. This insanity is contagious and it has permeated our schools and churches. The apathetic approach in the classroom seems to be to discuss all shades of opinion with great tolerance and arrive at no conclusions. The accumulated knowledge of the past and the lessons of history get short shrift.

What we need most is to recover our traditional philosophy of freedom with honor.

J. P. HAIR

Noah D. Alper's Brief Cases

ALBERTA GOVERNMENT MAY CHANGE TAX ASSESSMENTS

The provincial government is considering changing over from assessment of land and buildings to land alone. This announcement was made by Fred Colburne, Minister of Public Affairs, who recently visited Southfield, Michigan, with other government officials, to study the results of the former assessment policy there. Mr. Colburne, quoted in The (Edmonton) Journal, said in the U.S. "they assess at 100 percent of land and 100 percent of buildings, which discourages people from maintaining and improving their properties." Alberta presently assesses for municipal tax purposes at 100 percent of land and 60 percent of buildings. This marginal difference, he believes, accounts for the fact that Canadian cities have fewer slums than U.S. cities.

PRINCE OF GIVE-AWAYS

When the U.S. Department of Justice called plans of the Federal Communication Commission burdensome and too restrictive of CATV (Cable television), a St. Louis Globe-Democrat editorial stated justice urges that if the question of unfair competition is considered the FCC should also take into consideration the fact that the FCC turns over the publicly owned spectrum at no charge to broadcasters and allows its use at nominal charges.

This points up one of the most flagrant give-aways of natural public revenue. Literally billions could be collected publicly for use of airways communication. Yet this is as a matchstick to a large tree, if we consider the total natural public revenue that can be ours by the proper competitive marketing of access to all such resources of nature. Combined with the added spending and investing power this would leave in the hands of the people by untaxing man-created products and services, and the reward to labor and providers of capital, the true wonder of free private enterprise would be revealed.

MAKING IT BIG

A young tycoon in Kansas City, Morgan Maxfield, recently paid \$35,000 to charter a 747 to take civic and business leaders to see the Apollo moon blast-off. He could afford this festive airlift because he set out ten years ago to make more money in a decade than most men make in four, and he did it by learning the real estate business.

On an early investment of \$500 he netted a profit of \$211,000, and he was on his way. Having noticed that the U.S. would spend \$41 billion criss-crossing the continent with highways, he reasoned this meant land values would change and he decided to get in the way of progress.

HOPE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

The St. Louis assessor has announced a plan to spur development in the city by freezing existing real estate assessments (on land and improvements) and reducing by half the assessments on new construction. Present assessments on new construction are 30 to 40 percent of market value. This would be halved and there would be no increase in assessments for additions to homes, businesses and industries valued at up to half the present assessment. As reported in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat the proposal would assure a homeowner that he could add a family room or bedroom to his house without having his property tax bill hiked.

To tax the community for the advantage of a class is not protection; it is plunder.
Benjamin Disraeli

The Importance of One

THE Public Interest Research Group in Washington, D.C. (Nader), a barometer reflecting rising awareness, lists an ever-increasing number of tax action groups. Their fourth Property Tax Newsletter gives detailed information on "basic principles of the assessment process" in three steps: first determine fair market value of property, next determine the assessed or taxable value, and finally apply the tax rate and determine the amount of tax. Methods for determining value are explained, and sample work sheets are included.

Long before this group was organized in Washington, various Henry George enthusiasts were doing what came naturally. One of these was David Bell of Monticello, New York. Having read *Progress and Poverty* "over and over" he began an individual tax reform campaign a year ago which demonstrates again the power of one person. He started by writing articles for the Republican Watchman, a newspaper which circulates in Sullivan County and four surrounding counties. The subject was the familiar single tax theory followed by an extended statement on what is wrong with present tax policies. He made the emphatic assertion that property taxes could be reduced without levying any new taxes and that property could be improved without fear of paying higher real estate taxes.

In each of these articles Mr. Bell is featured as a real estate broker and motel owner who is "a student of Henry George, the eloquent exponent of the single tax theory whose writing in the last quarter of the 19th century led people to wonder if our tax system wasn't as irrational as painful." Mr. Bell pointed out how the present tax system abets poor housing and urban decay, and how a three-times-as-heavy tax on land in Southfield, Michigan, actually benefited the homeowners when the tax was taken off improvements.

Early last year, because of the interest aroused locally, he was requested to give lectures at the Monticello High School. By a natural progression of events, and encouraged by responses from his efforts, Mr. Bell became chairman of a newly formed committee to Abolish Property Taxes Unfair to Real Estate (CAPTURE). In a booklet which he distributes to rural and urban homeowners he invites volunteers to join him in pushing for this land reform.

Starting with no other impetus than an intensive exposure to *Progress and Poverty*, the classic exposition by Henry George, David Bell has become "a light and a power" in his community in the one year during which he has spoken out. Others should and do take heart knowing that with right thinking and right expression there is no rea-

son to withhold the patriotic service each can lend to his country once he has become well grounded in principles .

Startling figures this month show that as the taxes on vacant land were reduced in Southfield by the present city administration, the building figures dropped 50 percent and land "grows scarce and scarcer." This is swift and dramatic vindication of the plan instituted by Mayor Clarkson and Assessor Gwartney which made Southfield rich and famous. S. James Clarkson, now a county judge, stands out as one who boldly taught and fought for an application of George's principles at a time when it was believed by older proponents that any mention of George meant political death.

Canberra In Crisis

A book by Frank Brennan has been published in Australia and will soon be available here through the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. The author is a lawyer in the Attorney General's department, and *Canberra in Crisis* gives a history of the planned capital city of Australia and its unique land tenure system. Mr. Brennan, according to a critical review in the Canberra Times, is a "disciple" who wants to revive Henry George.

Originally the reappraisements were set at 20-year intervals and it was at the close of the second of these long periods that officials made the discovery that some owners of residences, now old age pensioners, could be faced with land rentals as high as \$7 a week. Did this blow the leasehold system? Readers who have been searching for the total story on Australia's far-out capital will welcome this book when it reaches the U.S.

A "tomorrow obsessed" architect, Moshe Safdie, in a book entitled *Beyond Habitat*, repeatedly stresses the tax structure as the culprit impeding the environment. He says, "an environmental bill of rights" should include increased taxes to discourage vacant land and open parking lots.

Gifts For New York Headquarters

Phyllis Post, noted artist and writer, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Johnson Post and grand-daughter of Louis F. Post, has honored the Henry George School with significant gifts. A study in profile of Louis F. Post gives an indication of the strength and character for which he is remembered. Even more prized is a portrait of Henry George by Charles Johnson Post, whose celebrated paintings are now in the U.S. Library of Congress. This portrait will adorn the trustees' room in the HGS in New York. The school library gratefully acknowledges the gift of three bound sets of *The Standard* for 1891 and 1892, and a rare edition of Louis F. Post's syllabus of *Progress and Poverty*.

The Los Angeles HGS last year began making a direct appeal to high school students and about 300 completed the basic program. Many are continuing with advanced work this year and some 250 are pursuing the study. A history course of special interest is being given in Hollywood by John Wiggins and Harry Polard. It emphasizes the effect of economic pressures on the country.

Boston HGS Moves to Brookline

LAURENCE KOBAK, New York HGS faculty member, spoke to some 35 friends and graduates of the Henry George School at a meeting in Wellesley Hills, Boston, in January. They were welcomed by the president, Mitchell S. Lurio and French Brandon, the director; and announcement was made of the removal of the school's headquarters from Boylston Street to 1318 Beacon Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146. Six classes began early in February in Boston and environs—each will continue for ten weeks and is free to the public.

The single tax may yet gain wide approval and become the law of the land, notwithstanding the prevailing climate of opinion, Mr. Kobak said, although it is easy to draw pessimistic conclusions from the current direction of social development. Rising taxes, increasing government restriction of business and the preponderance of socialist thinking among educators, could all be taken as indications that the United States is heading toward the social suicide George Orwell depicted in "1984." But social development is rarely charted in straight lines. Merely because the country has moved more and more toward socialism in recent years is not proof that such leftward drift will continue.

As an example of faulty extrapolation, the speaker cited the analogy George used in *Progress and Poverty* in which Adam and Eve made a projection of the size their first child will attain. The projection is based on his growth from birth to six months. If the child continues to grow at that rate Adam and Eve calculate that he will weigh as much as an elephant by the time he is eight years old. When he is 21 he will weight as much as the entire planet.

Georgists should take heart from the renewed interest in land value taxation which has become evident in recent years among government officials. Even more encouraging is the resurgence of libertarian thought. Mr. Kobak queried, "isn't it exciting to note that there are elements of the New Left which are turning away from Marxism and demanding an end to big government?"

In spite of the libertarian movement's strides, its adherents are but a small fraction of the intellectual community. However, in relative terms, this growth is important and may well be the first sign of a new national consensus, he said.

Earlier in his talk Mr. Kobak discussed the failure of the single tax to win support. He dealt with the "hostility of economic vested interests," and dismissing it as an insignificant factor suggested that "after all, if the very rich wielded inordinate political power, measures such as the progressive income tax could never have been enacted."

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But there is another vested interest—the vested interest of “established knowledge.” He observed that this was the force which was responsible for the persecution of Copernicus the astronomer, and Semmelweis the Hungarian obstetrician. “These men were working in the physical sciences. Can you imagine how much more powerful the vested interest of established knowledge must be in squelching economic heresies?”

Mr. Kobak went on to say, “there is little hope in trying to influence economics professors—the most zealous guardians of established knowledge. They may seek objectivity but they are emotionally incapable of it. In asking them to take George’s analysis as valid we are asking them to acknowledge that they have wasted their lives in espousing fallacies. How many men have the moral strength to make such an admission, even to themselves?”

The program opened with the film “One Way to Better Cities,” introduced by Robert Zwicker.



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