The Fruitful Years

RETIRE *to* something, say the experts. And that's what several noted Georgists have done. They invested many years of effort in the movement *before* retirement however, so younger students should not procrastinate on the pretext that they have to wait until they have more leisure. The time to form the "good Georgist" habit is *now*.

Dr. Geoffrey W. Esty of Princeton, formerly a consultant with the New Jersey Health Department, retired to do the work he wanted to do. He is busier than ever now as a self employed consultant on a per diem basis to the department of education. Over several years he has developed a school program for New Brunswick which has proved so effective that it has been favored with an operational grant. As mental health consultant he has an influence on the school systems all over the state.

But this is only a part of his "retirement" program. In a talk given in Peru at the 20th annual meeting for Mental Health in 1967 he combined his interest in health with incentive social and tax reforms and introduced the philosophy of Henry George which has led to a wide correspondence. He is president of the board of the Henry George School in New Jersey and a trustee of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, and keeps abreast of many current interests.

Dr. Harry Gunnison Brown retired from the University of Missouri in Columbia 18 years ago at the age of 70. Since then he has taught at the New School for Social Research in New York, the University of Mississippi, and Franklin and Marshall College at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Three years ago he moved back to Columbia, Missouri, where he and his wife pursue an active interest in land value taxation. Recently Dr. and Mrs. Brown were interviewed at length in the Columbia (Missouri) Tribune. That interview led to an article in a later issue on Creative Taxation in Southfield, Michigan.

A booklet by Professor Brown, "The Economic Basis of Tax Reform," was reviewed in The Christian Century which later, in the October 23 issue, carried an article on "Aid to Housing for the Poor" by Elizabeth Read Brown (Mrs. H. G.). "Land-value taxation has proved efficacious elsewhere but it is seldom considered in our search for panaceas," she pointed out. New slums are growing faster than old ones are removed, and no one considers the basic cause and effect relations which have sparked the evils they seek to cure. The demands they present necessitate ever higher federal taxes, on the poor as well as the rich.

The problems might be solved by free enterprise if it were not hobbled by our traditional local tax policy which destroys incentive to improve buildings, said Mrs. Brown. She cited cities in Australia, New Zealand, Africa and Canada where LVT operates, and she proposed two initial steps that could be taken if such benefits were desired for the U.S.: first, if there must be subsidies to provide low-income housing quickly, Congress could make subsidies conditional on reform of the local tax policy to hasten the time when subsidization could be discontinued. Secondly, Congress could put this tax reform into effect in the District of Columbia to demonstrate on a limited basis what incentive taxation could do.

Perry Prentice, in New York, has served his profession well as editor of House and Home, and he is still a consultant for the Time-Life publications. But he too has been caught up in an extended program of writing and conducting round table discussions on various phases of housing, city planning and tax reform.

Mitchell S. Lurio, director of the Boston extension, formerly president of Walter E. Heller and Company, looked forward to devoting more time to the HGS. He has expanded the school's outreach and now keeps busy giving classes and writing. He also serves as a trustee on the board of the HGS in New York.

Noah D. Alper, former director at St. Louis, moved from that office to presidency of the Public Revenue Education Council which has recently circularized 1600 daily newspapers with material by Perry Prentice and Ted Gwartney, the Southfield assessor.

There must be many readers who have redirected their careers after 65. On the West Coast Joseph S. Thompson, honorary president of the Northern California HGS, maintains an active interest. Letters by Fred W. Workman on current issues appear frequently in the Monterey Peninsula Herald, and Henry D. Cramer of San Diego, a member of the HGS board, is carrying out a sacred trust left by Sidney Evans.

Everyone who knows her is glad that Strethel Walton, former Montreal director, did not withdraw on retirement. Instead her home is the HGS center and the meeting place for old and new students of Henry George.

In Toronto Malcolm G. McCarthy retired *to* directorship of the School of Economic Science. Ernest J. Farmer, also retired, is president of the board and editor of The Square Deal. In the October issue he presented part one of an excellent feature on inflation in Canada, a foretaste of what may be expected following devaluation abroad.

"For the last twenty years," he states, "the Canadian Government has been controlling the volume of money to such effect that the worth of money has declined by an average of slightly over three percent per year. This decline was quite rapid between the beginning of 1960 and the middle of 1962; at present it is at the rate of slightly over four percent. At this rate money loses one-half of its value in a little over eighteen years.

"It is easy enough to say: 'Very well, people are now used to a depreciation rate of four percent: innumerable contracts, including many for terms of 25 and 30 years, have been made on that basis. So let the government continue to inflate the currency at the four percent rate, but not more.'

"There has arisen a whole school of economists, including a considerable proportion of professors of economics in Canadian universities, who claim that 'controlled' inflation is necessary to keep the economy functioning and to avoid large-scale unemployment... But they pay little if any attention to the way in which pressures tending towards making inflation uncontrollable keep building up.

"It evidently took a great deal of misgovernment on all levels to get such a country as Canada, with its great natural advantages and its vigorous population into the state in which it is, with serious and increasing inflation and increasing unemployment. It is as plain as anything can be that the Keynes theory is of no value whatever as a guide towards restoring more wholesome conditions. Indeed, it was in some part at least reliance upon the Keynes theory which prompted the policies from the results of which Canada suffers."

The Square Deal is a Georgist publication and Mr. Farmer believes readers will make some shrewd guesses as to how Canada can avoid a financial disaster such as befell Germany in 1921. His conclusions will be in the next issue of The Square Deal.