

## The Book—A Truth and a Light

**A** TWENTIETH Century Look at a nineteenth century book drew more than 200 visitors to the conference of the Henry George School at the Sheraton-Chicago Hotel in Chicago. It opened with friendly greetings the evening of July 9th when the president of the school, Arnold A. Weinstein, was presented with a key that would "open any door in the city," by a representative from Mayor Daly's office, Osborne Hugh.

Among Chicago hostesses were Mrs. Carlton (Mina) Olson, Executive Secretary of the Chicago HGS extension; Mrs. Otto (Edith) Siebenmann, former president and founder of the Woman's Club; and Mrs. Selim (Electra) Tideman, pianist, who delighted everyone with her music. Mrs. Siebenmann introduced an amusing skit with a land-tax point of view, acted by Clyde Bassler (assessor) and Robert King (storekeeper). Miss Oveda Orvis entertained with impersonations.

Lancaster M. Greene, Vice President of the HGS and member of the University Glee Club of New York, sang a few of the familiar songs that are always welcome, as did George Collins, HGS Director from Philadelphia. The Bianco sisters, Roma and Neva, were borrowed from New York to sign in the visitors, many of whom were old friends.

A bus tour made visitors aware of the breath-taking architecture, some of it rising on air rights or "made land." A number of the high rise buildings provide such multiple accommodations as a marina, garage, apartments, offices and shops. There was a great deal of striking low cost housing stretching at one place for eight miles on one side while on the other side was a slum.

At an afternoon reception the Henry George Woman's Club president, Mrs. Gonzalo (Ellen) Chavez, Dr. Edith

McBrady, Mrs. Clyde (Rev. Ruth Ann) Bassler, Mrs. Siebenmann and other well known members received the guests. The Henry George Woman's Club is thirty years old this year — it is the oldest and only Georgist organization in Chicago.



Arnold A. Weinstein

*Progress and Poverty*, a compelling book which, like any classic, is never out of date, was discussed at several sessions of the conference. Some of the teachers whose students had criticized the style or the length of this classic, have divided it into nine pamphlets, partly for convenience and partly to prevent eager readers from looking ahead to find George's solution. Many would welcome a condensed book, and James Murphy of New York found the London version acceptable. Robert D. Benton, Michigan HGS Director, probably spoke for all when he said he has never found an abridgement that came up to the inspirational level of *Progress and Poverty*.

This look at the book was followed by revealing discussions of teaching methods which apparently were as interesting to students and visitors as to the teaching staff.

George C. Collins, Philadelphia Director, who "read *Progress and Poverty* when he was under thirty and never found it out of date or dull," said he finds however that college students object to the long reading assignments. To offset the lengthy dissertations he, like several others, advised the use of local and national news items in class "to prove that it is not just theory but is going on all the time."

### The Art of Teaching

Under the heading "Our Message Loud and Clear," Josephine Hansen of New York, Dr. Irene Hickman of Sacramento, and Dr. William J. Filante of San Francisco, all teachers, joined in a panel moderated by Calgary Director James W. Ramsay.

Mrs. Hansen took issue with the moderate approach now in use. She would prefer to reveal a part of the solution in the first lesson and send the students home with a new and thought-provoking piece of logic. From the outset she stresses the brotherhood of man as the main concern. Justice and association in equality are the great moral persuaders which bring students back. She believes that unless they absorb a firm conception of justice and brotherhood they will not pursue the subject, or if they do, they will never accept the remedy.

She finds that for many students the reading assignments are voluminous. Furthermore they tell the student what is false before stating the positive view. The result is sometimes a long spun-out discussion of the negative.

Dr. Filante believed however that these refutations must be retained and that the wrong idea is adequately destroyed as lessons proceed. His students are usually young and he encourages them to reach forward to something in the future.

Dr. Hickman, the much publicized assessor of Sacramento County, concurred with an earlier speaker that the first three lessons deal with unlearning. One of the biggest shockers, she said, is the statement that money isn't wealth. People must find out that what they have been taught is wrong before they can be open to other ideas. They don't like this painful process.

She too has young students and they have no conception of a depression. She meets this by announcing that she

owns an island. Students are offered an absolute monopoly of any business they want. Each member chooses one and consents to give up 5 percent of the gross, that being all the traffic will bear. However the "lord of the island" has unlimited desires, and soon the gross take is raised to 10 percent, then to 30. The students begin to wince. There isn't much left. When does the depression hit?

Dr. Hickman will give a course on the Economics of Taxation at State College in Sacramento starting in September. She will use texts by Henry George.

Dorothy Sara, noted handwriting expert and author, another New York teacher, agreed that for present-day students "depression" is a foreign word. She would like to have a faculty expert visit her class as a guest teacher when they study depressions.

Dr. Hickman agreed with Mrs. Hansen that students need to be stirred and stirred again. She tries to get an argument started in the first lesson, and finds "activists" by introducing competition in her class. For instance she draws a plot of land on the blackboard and gives some of this to each student as he or she arrives — the last one doesn't get any. Soon they begin reacting "at gut level."

Dr. Filante suggested that activists may come along slowly. He believed the teacher has to excite and challenge the student but must keep a balance while sizing up the individuals, some of whom have to be challenged at a higher level.

Emanuel Choper, Albany Director, himself a quick reactor, allowed that some students might be "sleepers" who would remain dormant "waiting for the signal to march."

A "Better Teaching" panel moderated by John T. Tetley, New Jersey Director, included Dr. Robert V. Andelson, professor of philosophy at Au-

burn College, Auburn, Alabama and a member of the HGS Academic Advisory Council, Robert Tideman, Executive Vice President of the Northern California HGS and Stan Rubenstein, Long Island HGS Director.

Robert Tideman reported mainly on group discussion techniques used by Morgan Harris and distributed copies of these appropriate suggestions. Chiefly the leader should be open minded and friendly, with each session prepared in advance. Participants should be introduced to each other and should sit in a circle or around a table, where each can see the others. Participation is thereby encouraged and differences of opinion can be handled adroitly. The leader should speak for the group, fairly and courteously, and need not be afraid of silence. Mr. Tideman reported success also with a co-leader arrangement. This divides the responsibility and increases group interest.

Stan Rubenstein made a contribution at this point by stepping out into the audience and asking several persons whether they believed one could be a good teacher of our subject without understanding *Progress and Poverty*.

Mrs. Hansen answered that teaching must be a cooperative venture between student and teacher, but thought those teachers who knew their subject were most effective.

Harry Payne, Toronto Director, thought that a good inherent grasp of logic might be adequate in the absence of a knowledge of the book.

Mr. Rubenstein continued calling on others to get different opinions. He himself did not comment. This demonstration was given to support his view that teachers must suit their teaching to their personality. Since there are only two approaches — lectures and conversations — he uses the second because it fits his personality. But he admits that in this inductive approach you take a calculated risk. The true

Socratic method says, "I don't know what the truth is, I want to find out from you."

This teacher liked Mrs. Hansen's emphasis on a theme running throughout the course, such as justice and ethics, but thought that as the book contains many ideas and implications it may be better to concentrate on one segment at the expense of the others.

#### The Logic of P & P

As for logic, Mr. Rubenstein believes that is not our answer for there is no logical approach to ethics. People who think logically *are* the best students, but some who do not may also learn.

There have been famous Georgists of the past who have found that the study of *Progress and Poverty*, more than any other book or encounter, contributed to their ability to think logically. It was interesting therefore to find that James Ramsay is now emphasizing this in class announcements, urging people to join the group in order to improve their reasoning. He says that in the very first lesson they often do find the means to improve themselves and to test their logical thought processes.

Mr. Ramsay announced a new publication *The Quest for Good Government*, published by The School for Economic Science and Social Philosophy, at 702 — 15th Avenue S. W., Calgary 3, Alberta, Canada. The Articles treat important Canadian tax issues without particular reference to the school. *The Quest* is \$2 a year or 25 cents a copy, and may be ordered from the above address.

Dr. Andelson, formerly the HGS director at San Diego, said he once thought it would be an advantage to have a captive student audience. Now that he has large college classes he is thinking how nice it would be to have students who come voluntarily by pure

choice. When asked from the audience to recommend a book for the study of logic, as previously recommended, he said he couldn't think of any that would be more effective than *Progress and Poverty*.

The teacher's role as a salesman was developed by Malcolm McCarthy, Toronto Director, who presided over a "World Campus" session. He described *Progress and Poverty* as an amazing book which, even though it was written 100 years ago, still has the best explanation of how land should be taxed. Many people see items in the newspapers suggesting the introduction of LVT but they don't know what it is and don't know where to find out. Since we have the answer we should make it known through a wider circulation of the book, by using modern merchandising methods. He recommended a new book jacket with the words "land value taxation explained," and insertion in each book of a leaflet offering a free course in economics, to be taken by correspondence or at one of the schools listed. He says in Toronto, when they began to follow up this idea, they sold nearly 30 books in a short time.

So it became increasingly clear that the nineteenth century book has a scope which extends far beyond the classroom, and the activities of various groups reflected these unlimited possibilities.

During Henry George's lifetime, when there were no schools, the excitement was in the wide public arena because of articles and books which aroused controversy. Eloquent speakers espousing George's views were eagerly listened to.

By the time the school was organized in 1932 some of these brilliant early speakers and teachers had left the scene. Through the succeeding years thousands of students have studied the short 10-lesson courses

offered by the school and its extensions in the U. S. and abroad. During much of that time Henry George's views were largely disregarded in the press.

### The Modern Solution

At our present juncture, when there is growing concern over poverty, pollution and decaying cities, land value taxation is being hailed as a newly discovered approach to unemployment and elimination of slums. Thus *Progress and Poverty*, written a century ago, proves to have been really a prophetic book.

So it is not surprising that many experienced teachers find their interest caught up in the ever-present necessity for tax reform and the manifold injustices that are inherent in the increasing burdens on the taxpayer.

Harry Payne is one of several directors whose students have shown an enthusiastic preference for research and the preparation of briefs for use in the Canadian legislature. In this important endeavor they have the help and inspiration of Canada's senior senator, Arthur Roebuck. They are also grateful for the assistance of Mary Rawson, the well-known city planner from Vancouver. In these briefs they avoid implicating the school but they admit that for the contents they draw largely on *Progress and Poverty*, adding today's figures and data.

George's message is also finding increasing acceptance on radio programs. Stan Rubenstein explained how simply and naturally it had become possible for him to prepare a radio series, "Conversations with Georgists," for use by FM stations, usually on college campuses (see Jan. 1969 HGN).

Harry Pollard, Los Angeles Director, also reported radio activity in Southern California where 30 or 40 people have been trained for partici-

pation in panel discussions on the air.

Robert Tideman of Northern California has appeared extensively on radio, but he called attention also to the possibilities of engaging people's attention through material distributed at county fairs. Each year volunteers manage such a booth at the Marin County Fair and it usually results in a class being started for the study of economics.

Noah Alper, Director Emeritus of the St. Louis extension, and President of the Public Revenue Education Council, reaches out to people in public office and in schools of higher learning. Recently he sent 7,000 pieces of literature to such a list and received 1,600 requests for more material, showing that he is becoming a recognized spokesman in his field.

Claude W. Arnold, Fairhope Director, represented the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation in Alabama and offered factual material on Fairhope, where a practical application of the single tax has been in effect since 1894. He will answer by mail any questions addressed to him regarding this historic enclave. Address 340 Fairhope Ave., Fairhope, Ala. 36532.

Benjamin F. Smith, a professional engineer in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has devoted himself to intensive statistics which assessors find eminently useful. He paid a high compliment to a booklet by Julian Hickok of Philadelphia on *The Significance of Land Value Taxation*, which contains formulae and charts to show the influence of rates and assessments on prices and public revenue. It may be ordered from Mr. Hickok at 413 South 10th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. 19147 at \$1 a copy.

Wilbur Johnson has been writing his column, *The Needle*, for the *Chicago Gazette* for 15 years. He taught himself logic in order to attack the aca-

demicians, and says he ended by discovering that 90 percent of the teachers don't know the technique of logic or its implication.

Robert King in Chicago, inspired by Mr. Johnson's success and popularity, has contributed numerous letters to local papers. He has been responsible for having successive Chicago mayors issue proclamations celebrating Henry George Day on September 2nd.

Romeo Nave, also of Chicago, is trying to reach young people in the black community, who are very confused about "capital." He hopes to find a way to teach some of them the facts which will come as a surprise to them but should be helpful in clearing up some understandable misconceptions.

Not listed on the program but highly regarded for the extensive letter writing he has carried on, was Wilbur E. Pereira, a Los Angeles faculty member and airline executive.

Henry B. Cramer is another West Coast correspondent who has directed helpful messages to newspapers when troublesome issues were in need of elucidation.

Percy Williams of Pittsburgh, Executive Secretary of the Henry George Foundation, has been a public official there for more than 50 years and knows the background of this movement very well. He paid a tribute to Chicago as the first single tax capital of America because of all the activity there in the years immediately following Henry George's lifetime. He seemed to regard New York as the single tax capital now, but this was later questioned by West Coast visitors who can point to activity on several legislative levels and to tangible assessment reforms which have attracted wide attention.

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**The conference roundup moves west to Calgary next year when it will coincide with the colorful Annual Stampede.**