

ECONOMICS IN 10 EASY LESSONS

"Economics Simplified," by E. E. Bowen, M.D., and George L. Rusby. Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, 1942. 286 pp. 50c.

A great many business men have been just as puzzled and disturbed by the causes of poverty and the recurrences of war as the sociologist and economist. Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" offers a solution, but its reading time is prohibitive to many. Furthermore, much that George defended in his time has now become fundamentally accepted.

"Economics Simplified" follows the logic of "Progress and Poverty," except that George's controversial justification for interest and his theory of the causes of interest are absent. The authors also permit the student-reader to draw his own conclusions of what a free society contains, without going into a fulsome description such as George did.

The authors have waived royalty rights, so that the book is available at a cost to permit wider distribution. Its price and comparative brevity make the book a blessing to college students.

Having used "Progress and Poverty" in 10 consecutive classes, I have increasingly admired George's unswerving devotion to truth, and his rare vigor and beauty of expression. But one must accept the mobility of man's life today. He is hurrying to catch a morsel of this knowledge and of that. An insistence that he read a 565-page book does not always attract him. The date of the book frequently is the deciding factor as to whether he will read it or not. 1879 does not seem as practicable to him as something in this decade.

As a teacher in the Henry George School at Boston, I would list the following definite advantages in the Bowen-Rusby treatise:

Brevity, simplicity, and drawings. I can give my class a reading assignment of 20 pages, and be sure the book is read. In the former "Progress and Poverty" classes I seldom ventured to ask how many had actually read the allotted chapters.

Such subjects as the confusing definitions on capital by various economists, the cause and justice of interest, and Malthus, are treated by Dr. Bowen in a total of 13 pages. George required 90.

Diagrams are being increasingly used in the classroom, and many of the teachers in the Henry George Schools draw their own on the blackboard, or on a canvas. Bowen's diagrams in her book can be studied at home by the student.

But perhaps, most important of all, is the fact that "Economics Simplified" employs modern documentation of events. Much class time can be wasted when students attempt to argue with the teacher, or with other students on the standard of wages today, and that of George's time—knowing little about the changes in the rent structure during that 60 odd years.

As an introductory text, I commend "Economics Simplified" as a splendid vehicle for teaching the philosophy of Henry George. Lawson Purdy, former president of the Department of Taxes and Assessments of the City of New York, has written a fitting introduction for the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, the publishers.

I frequently read selections from "Progress and Poverty" to my class, however, so that the full strength of George's righteousness is appreciated; The Problem, the description of man's ever-expanding and unlimited desires, the striking history of the Savannah development, and the inspired Ode to Liberty should all be brought to a student's attention.

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WHY DOES
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