

HENRY GEORGE NEWS

VOL. 15—No. 1

NOVEMBER, 1951

10¢ A COPY—\$1.00 A YEAR

Looking Ahead By GILBERT M. TUCKER

THE ENACTMENT of legislation permitting each third class city of Pennsylvania to assess land and buildings separately, and to tax these two classes of values at whatever different rates they may establish, can easily bring far-reaching reforms which will set the pace for all the country. However, such legislation only opens the door. The task now is to help city councils to take advantage of their opportunity.

The first thing to do, therefore, is to encourage wise action—and intensive work may be concentrated in two or three cities where the best spirit of cooperation seems to prevail. The aim should be a progressive reduction of taxes on buildings and a simultaneous reduction of the percentage of assessed values subject to taxation. We might tax only 90 per cent of the assessments the first year, 80 per cent the next, and so on; at the same time increasing proportionally the tax rate on site values. This should be continued until practically all the tax is eliminated on improvement values leaving only a small amount of the ground rent in the hands of title-holders, to compensate for administering holdings and collecting ground rent. It would look as if the best policy would be to spread this change say, over ten years, to give holders of vacant land, slums and obsolete buildings a chance to improve their property, especially in these days when building is expensive and hampered by restrictions.

One difficulty that arises in this proposal is the question of assessing land values. As the proportion of ground rent taken for public use increases, what we call the value of land will fall, and if all of it is taken it will drop, theoretically, to zero. However, what we call "land value" is not true value for what we assess is only the share of value lodged in the title-holder, and we ignore that which is lodged in the government. To get the true value of land we should base assessment not upon just what the title-holder gets but upon what both city and title-holder get, for title is held jointly by the two. This is not a figure of speech but an actual condition definitely declared in the constitutions of many states: the constitution of New York State declares that "The people of the state, in their right of sovereignty, possesses the original and ultimate property in and to all lands within the jurisdiction of the state" and certainly it is fair to include this ownership in computing the land tax.

As a practical program, we might capitalize the tax on each piece of land at the current rate—this would give the value lodged in the city—then capitalizing the net return received by the title-holder at the prevailing rate of interest, and adding these two, would give true value.

Exemption of improvements would increase true value of the land, giving the city an ever-expanding income from ground rents, as is borne out by experience in Australia. The true value of land depends upon the use to which it can profitably be put and the income which it will earn, and, as this would be increased by exemption of buildings, true value will go up



proportionately. Although the sales price of land may ultimately fall substantially, the landowner will gain, for freedom to put his holding to untaxed and profitable use will far more than compensate for the increased levy on site.

It is well to consider a possible change in the law, permitting a more sensible assessment of land values. There might be opposition, but assessments mean little, except in conjunction with tax rates, and it would be desirable to increase site assessments as much as is consistent with justice, to permit more rapid reduction in taxation of improvements. Experience in Western Canada shows that failure to agree on assessment methods may wreck the entire program.

In Pennsylvania there are many boroughs larger than some cities, and it would be desirable to extend the law to the boroughs. In this there should be little difficulty if the cities lead the way, and the overwhelming vote by which the recent law was enacted would indicate that a similar law for the boroughs could easily be passed.

This new law [local option] applies only to cities, and does not cover the county tax or the school tax. Sooner or later these taxes must share in the same reform. At first glance it seems that farmers may oppose a program of this sort, but city land is so much more valuable than rural land that such a change would reduce rural taxation, putting a greater relative burden on cities. In many rural communities we have something approaching the Georgist sys-

Gilbert M. Tucker of Albany, New York, is president of the Association for Economic Justice, which was formed two years ago, and which is closely associated with the Henry George Foundation. His latest book, "The Self-Supporting City," has found its way to the desks of many public officials. Other books by the same author are "For the Good of All" and "The Path to Prosperity."

tem already in force. One property, within a couple of miles of a great city, was assessed forty years ago as worth \$100 per acre—a fair valuation, with no consideration given the value of buildings. The assessors were satisfied to assess the land alone, and saw no reason for penalizing improvements. Taxes have not been raised, though the land has increased in value and many substantial improvements have been made. The tax can still be said to be solely on land values. There should be little opposition from rural residents in having the whole county included in this program, when cities and boroughs are willingly committed to it. I recall conversations with the late Walter Demmler, who expressed the opinion that with cities and boroughs, won, counties and school districts would present little difficulty.

It may be well to go to city officials and seek their cooperation but it is unwise to press them until sentiment favors the proposal. We should seek their support and leadership, but my experience is that officials take little initiative unless popular sentiment backs them up—they are leaders only in the sense that they lead those who are ready to follow. It is, therefore, most important to engage in an effective program of adult education. Newspapers, literature and speakers should explain the program, and the Association for Economic Justice has already had good success with educational letters. We should reach more chambers of commerce, service clubs, civic leagues, trade groups and women's clubs. Every effort should be made to enlist support of a local group letting them take the initiative and receive the credit. A half dozen residents in each city can sponsor the new program and engage speakers, developing larger organization as the activities proceed.

Such an undertaking should be conducted entirely by the people of the community and it should be largely financed by them, although national organizations must cooperate. Calls have come from other states, but, for the present, it seems wise to concentrate in Pennsylvania. It makes little difference where we work: the point is to make a real demonstration of the validity of our case in some community which will open the way for others. Australia and Denmark, may be inspirational guides, but they do not carry as much weight as an example nearer home. Pittsburgh and Scranton have set such an example but the question always pops up—if the plan works, are Pittsburgh and Scranton content to stop at what practically goes only a quarter of the way?

It is of course desirable for as many agencies as possible to unite in a concerted effort, although there need not be any legal tie-up. It is hoped that none of the Georgist groups will oppose this program and that they will avoid putting obstacles in the path. The writer has in mind a number of people who thought it unwise to introduce a program in some cities that would put others at a disadvantage. As far as possible, let's make this a proving ground for the taxation method we have so long proposed.

A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

A "counter-revolution" has begun in earnest—or should we call it a "counter-counter-revolution"? I am referring to "conservatism" striking back at "welfare-statism."

The semantic aspect of it alone is quite involved. There are those (including the worthy American Institute for Economic Research) who hold that the real "revolution" was that of 1776—our own and Adam Smith's—when a society of independent equals was proclaimed as against the age-old ruler-serf hierarchy; that the "counter-revolution" was that of 1848 and 1917—when Marx and Lenin dressed up the old order in the jargon which is now creeping up on our 1776 revolution.

Our old friend, the word "radical," is also being transformed again. The "new radical" is he who harks back to before 1933—even before 1913. But it's not all harking back. Fortune Magazine, which stands as the interpreter of this *visorgimento*, has announced in double-page billboard-headline spreads, "The tycoon is dead!" Meaning that the new protagonist of the 1776 revolution is no longer the storming, speculating people-be-damned type (though he is accorded a historical hat-tip). He is now armed with welfare philosophy and stands ready with education, pensions, security, cooperation and culture. He will do battle with the welfare state using its own weapons. He is even attracting social welfare intellectuals like Sidney Hook and Stuart Chase.

It is surely exhilarating to be on the offensive once more. I wouldn't be surprised to hear the term "conservative" used by the new radical to disparage old-fashioned die-hard New Dealers.

So the lines of demarcation are becoming a bit fuzzy—which might not be bad, except that the thinking on both sides is also fuzzy.

It is good that the liberty of the individual is once more thought worthy of a crusade. It is good to think of free enterprise as a bold knight on a charger instead of a fat sleepy dragon guarding his loot. It's not so good to see our knight being so impressed by the welfare state as to want to imitate it.

Years ago when protests rose against the "capitalism" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Henry George and his followers sought to introduce some fundamental thinking into that milieu. But short-sighted emotionalism won out. Now a new atmosphere, congenial to the Georgian philosophy, has arisen. Let us hope...

Gems for Georgists

By NOAH D. ALPER

You Buy the Title—Not the Land

"When You Buy Real Estate . . . It's Title You Purchase—Not Land." So reads an advertisement of the Title Insurance Company of St. Louis. In explanation it states: "You buy the right to use the property and many property buyers have learned—much to their dismay—that a Certificate of Title did not give them the protection they thought they had."

—And the Title Holder Gets the Dividends

"There will be no corporate city taxes on real or personal property in Madison, Ill. this year," according to a report in the St. Louis Globe Democrat of September 13, the City Council having passed an ordinance declaring the city free of such taxes. "The reason is that Madison owns the Chain of Rocks Bridge across the Mississippi River."

This, we judge, makes Madison a better city in which to live. Madison is limited in land area. When title holders of land get the news, tenants can sing the blues—for it is title holders not voters who receive such dividends.

Rolling With the Punches

"Developments in income tax law have reversed one of the basic miles of American business," says Commerce Clearing House. Now, in many operations, it is more advantageous dollar-wise to lease rather than to own land on which a business is located.

"Two main reasons for this are cited in a report compiled for CCH for its magazine, Taxes. They are: (1) The full amount of rent paid for a leased site is deductible, while the cost of land, if it is owned, may not be depreciated for income tax purposes, and (2) Amortization for improvements on rented land is fully deductible, while the depreciation on improvements on land owned is often subject to opinion differences with the Bureau of Internal Revenue and may lead to litigation."

—August 1951 issue, The Arkansas Banker

Illinois Tops Iowa

In this column in September a sale of farm land at \$412.50 an acre was reported. An AP dispatch from Mendota, Illinois, reports a sale of 157½ acres for \$401.50 an acre—"one of the highest in LaSalle County in many years . . . Some farm buildings were involved in the sale."

Taxes Out Cigarette Sales

Arthur F. Schultz, treasurer National Association of Tobacco Distributors, pointed out that "the per capita consumption of cigarettes is lower than the national average in those states that levy taxes of more than 3 cents a pack, and that declines in sales have invariably followed each rise in state tax rates."

A Symbolic Ninety Pages

More and more politicians want to ride the "help small business" vote-gathering gravy train. Trouble is they don't know just what "a small business man" is. Not satisfied with a definition cooked up in 1948 in the Selective Service Act, the Commerce Department says: "Any business concern operating an establishment with less than 50 employees is small in an industry in which one-half of all of the manufacturing is done in establishments of this size." Then, says Roessner (St. Louis Globe Democrat, September 17) "it goes on for 90 pages."

All this about a definition—one of many. And why is this definition so important? Why be concerned about size of business? Just more fruit of planning, planning which does so much harm to people and which, in turn, makes it necessary to try to do so much good for them by more planning.

Old Rumors Never Fade Away or Die

"The world's food supply could be increased enormously with the knowledge now on hand. No new discoveries are needed. If we could apply what we now know we could produce food enough for four billion. The world's present population is nearly two-and-a-half billion," wrote Arturi Virtanen, Finnish agricultural bio-chemist as quoted in an AP dispatch on September 14.

More Landlords by Land Reform

In a special radio dispatch from Taipei, Formosa to the Chicago Daily News (September 15) and The St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Albert Ravenholt wrote: "United States action to insure that land reform is carried out in Asia would be worth more than 100 divisions in halting Communist expansion. This is the judgment of Gen. Chen Cheng, Chinese Nationalist premier."

So more, not fewer, landlords are being made in Formosa. What a pity, when honest land reform in England, Italy and the United States would be worth 100 times 100 divisions.

Is There Then a Road to Survival?

Thomas B. Hill of Seattle, a reader interested in the views of William Vogt, author of *The Road to Survival*, heard him speak at a conservation conference in September at Denver College, and sent J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco the following excerpts:

"I cannot escape the conclusion that the world today faces a crisis. Well over half the people of the world do not have the means of such a standard of living (as North America and Western Europe), and current trends are reducing the possibility of achieving it."

Indicating a possible change of attitude since the publication of his recent book, the author affirmed, "A living standard of this sort cannot be separated from ownership of and access to the natural resources (land) that are the foundation of all wealth. The most advanced technology must have raw materials to work on, and materials come out of our soils, our forests, our artesian wells and our mines."

The world grows daily more complex, with demand for raw materials accelerating and the innate productivity of those resources diminishing at an accelerated rate. "The most frightful potential danger lies ahead," warned Mr. Vogt, "and not very far ahead."

The speaker believed that neither the international organizations nor the various national governments were facing up to either aspect of this twin problem: "the growing demand and the means of supplying it."

While "all too effective measures" are being taken to increase demand, the parallel measures are actually being developed to destroy the possibility of meeting it. The forestry program of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations was, according to Mr. Vogt, "geared to exploitation rather than to conservation and reforestation. The Point Four program," he added, "emphasizes 'development' by which is meant exploitation, with only a nod towards preservation or restoration, if indeed there has been even a nod."

On October 24 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York, William Vogt, who is National Director of the Planned Parenthood Federation, received an award from the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation. "Over population," Mr. Vogt said on that occasion, "has destroyed more people since the end of the war than died in the atomic explosions in Japan."

The long arm of Malthus!

John C. Lincoln Says—

MOST of the readers of these letters will agree that government is taking more in taxation from a substantial number of citizens than it has the moral right to take. No one questions the power of government to enforce the tax laws now on the statute books, but the moral aspect of such action is another matter. To many it will be clear that when the laws make legally right what is morally wrong, the country is in danger.

The legalizing of enslavement of whites by the later Roman Empire was one of the major contributing causes to the fall of Rome. In America the legalized enslavement of colored people prior to the Civil War did more harm to the slaveholders, it is now generally agreed, than to the slaves themselves.

It is proposed to make taxation more reasonable by limiting government exaction to 25 per cent of individual incomes. Such a move would be a step in the right direction, but it would be merely a palliative; it would not correct the moral wrong inherent in the taxation of the products of labor and capital.

There is a fund from which revenue for the public expense may be drawn, a fund which should be adequate for the purpose and which could be taken without depriving any man of what he produces. That fund is ground rent. Ground rent is a value which comes into being and grows automatically with the presence and activity of population. Since land value is not the product of individual effort but is clearly and distinctly the creation of the community as a whole, it should be taken in the form of annual rent by the government, as agent for the community and used to defray the expenses of the community as a whole.

Such public collection of ground rent would make possible an immediate cut of billions in taxes now falling on labor and capital, and in time those taxes could probably be dispensed with entirely. That, of course, would be an achievement of the utmost desirability since the government has no right to wealth produced by individuals.

In his great book *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George set forth certain canons of taxation which are clear and comprehensive. He held that the best tax by which public funds could be raised was one which would conform closely to the following conditions:

1. That it bear as lightly as possible upon production—so as least to check the increase of the general fund from which taxes must be paid and the community maintained.
2. That it be easily and cheaply collected and fall as directly as may be upon the ultimate payers—so as to take from the people as little as possible in addition to what it yields to the government.
3. That it be certain—so as to give the least opportunity for tyranny or corruption on the part of officials, and the least temptation to law-breaking and evasion on the part of the taxpayers.
4. That it bear equally—so as to give no citizen an advantage or put any at a disadvantage, as compared with others.

Land-value taxation alone meets the above requirements in the maximum degree. We live in a moral world, yet the initiative and self-reliance of the people is dangerously threatened by taxes which curb incentive and take much of what individuals produce.

—From the October Lincoln Letter

PLAIN TALK by Jerome Joachim

The notion that "human rights" can be increased by destroying "property rights" has gathered great momentum during recent years. The belief that wealth, in the form of goods and services, created by the effort and intelligence of our population, is "common property" available to all who are in need has become so common that millions of workers accept the theory as valid and workable. If houses exist, politicians now feel they can take and use them to help get votes—regardless of the wishes of the owners. If a community becomes desirable for a group that may decide to live there, politicians now feel they can force the members of that community to make it available—regardless of what the majority in that community want. If the individuals in a nation produce billions of dollars worth of wealth, few people now question the right of our political leaders to appropriate as much of it as they please, despite the fact that a "democratic" vote of the people would be contrary.

King George III had such concepts with respect to the American colonies in 1775. At his whim and caprice he made arrangements with respect to the property created by the colonists that suited his purposes. Where this necessitated eliminating the right of trial by jury, or representative government, he proceeded without them. Though he never was able to "appropriate" as large a percentage as our government now takes, not even interfere as seriously in the lives of his subjects as our government now does, this interference caused the American revolution. A similar attitude in France caused the French Revolution.



Always the monarch interfered with so-called "human rights" only because this was necessary to appropriate the property he wanted for himself and for those he needed to keep himself in power. Today, in the name of national emergency, our political leaders appropriate a far larger percentage of our property than King George ever dreamed of taking and whenever so-called "human rights" interfere with the exercise of this process, the "human rights" are eliminated.

There can be little "freedom of speech" where men's livelihood depends upon the whim of the ruling classes as in socialistic or semi-socialistic nations! What avails it a man to have "freedom of religion" in a nation where the rulers direct all men as to what they shall do and how much of what they produce they may keep? And in every nation where this concept of the "state owns all" has been continued, even "freedom of religion" has ultimately been denied. As for "freedom from fear" men can only fear that their future will not be dependent upon their own efforts and "freedom from want" has no appeal to men who cannot keep that which they produce but must eventually look to the benevolent state for their sustenance.

The establishment of all absolute government has always been effected through promises of "human rights" gained at the expense of "property rights" and in the end the people had neither. When both rights have vanished then the incentives which make for production also vanish and eventually the government which brought about such conditions vanishes too. Thus do civilizations come and go.

William Penn and the Land Tax By MABELL REES

THERE is very good precedent for the recent legislation in Pennsylvania granting permission to all third class cities within the state to increase their collection of economic rent for public revenue.

As far back as 1861, no less a personage than its famous founding father, William Penn, as revealed in his writings, believed in the policy of securing government income by the taxation of land. A measure in line with the idea was passed in Philadelphia in 1683 without a dissenting vote.

Furthermore, Penn provided that in his colony landowners must make use of their holdings within three years or permit others to acquire the title. He denounced absentee landlordism, and declared that such owners were "great debtors to the country" in that while their lots had increased from four to forty times in value, they themselves had "served no office, run no hazard, nor as yet delayed any public charge."

Becoming more than ever convinced that he had discovered a plan calculated to insure within his settlement not only freedom from political and religious persecution but from poverty as well, he wrote in 1693:

"If all owners were so far tenants to the public that the superfluities of gain and expense were applied to the exigencies thereof, it would

put an end to taxes, leave not a beggar, and make the greatest bank for national trade in Europe."

Although William Penn was an extensive landowner, his ideas more nearly approached the natural law of social progress than any others of which we have any record, until the year 1879 when Henry George formulated them into scientific axioms.

Also, proving that through friendliness and fair division of the land, both Indians and colonists could live peaceably together, it was in Pennsylvania, under Penn's treaty, that during the seventy years of Quaker rule, there were no acts of violence on either side.

Both Penn and George were Philadelphians, and Pennsylvania's position in the annals of freedom would be enviable indeed, if, in addition to being the birthplace of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, it should also lead in its campaign for equality of economic opportunity through just use of the earth and its natural resources.

John Clark Ridpath's *History of the United States*, Academic Edition, revised 1911 by the *Review of Reviews*, Vol. II, Ch. 5, pp. 241-247; *Land Title Origins* by Alfred Chandler, published by Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, N. Y., 1945, pp. 404-408; and *Philosophy of Henry George* by George R. Geiger, footnote p. 188, published by Macmillan Co., N. Y.

Henry George Foundation Holds Victory Conference

By STANLEY SINCLAIR

HAILING the recent legislative victory in Pennsylvania as a first step forward, President Charles R. Eckert, told the Henry George Foundation Conference, early last month that we must come down from our ivory tower and meet the current issues of our day.

Eckert, a former Congressman from Beaver, Pennsylvania, heads the Foundation and was chairman of its conference held at the Hotel Park Sheraton in New York on the 5th and 6th of October.

The conference not only commemorated the Foundation's 25th anniversary, but also celebrated the organization's achievement in having guided graded tax legislation to enactment in Pennsylvania.

In welcoming Georgists from all over the country to the conference, Eckert urged participation in the formulation of U. S. policies. The field of foreign affairs, he said, offers an opportunity for the presentation of the land question. He cited the cases of landlordism in the Near and Far East. In this regard, he said, there is ample scope for the application of the philosophy and remedy of Henry George.

The opening session of the conference was presided over by Clayton J. Ewing, of Mobile, Alabama. Its topic, "What of the Future," was discussed by John S. Codman, president of the Henry George School of Boston, and Will Lissner, editor of the American Journal of Economics and Sociology, in addition to Chairman Eckert.

Codman expressed his belief that Georgists had failed to place the land problem before the American people.

He focused attention on his point of view that collection of ground rent by the community is not a tax. Taxation is a misnomer, he said. Since rent is the result of people's activities in community, he declared, the community can collect it as a part of the equitable distribution of wealth, and not by the imposition of taxation. This semantic differentiation, he submitted as being important to the public's understanding of the land problem and its remedy.

By teaching the sound principles of public finance, Lissner told his audience, the Henry George movement is making progress. That 47 cities in Pennsylvania can now have a graded tax program, he said, is a "wonderful step forward."

Urges Gradual Approach

Lissner pleaded for acceptance of the gradual application of land value taxation principles. We should not insist, he said, on 100 per cent collection of economic rent or nothing.

The first afternoon was given to a discussion of "Land Value Taxation in Practice." With Lancaster Greene of New York, wielding the gavel, the meeting was treated to a series of informative summations of growing success stories in various parts of the world.

The rise of the justice party in Denmark was traced by Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. Overcoming initial skepticism among their fellow Danes, she reported, these Georgists have steadily increased their proportion of the popular vote and consequently their seats in Parliament. Recently, in local elections, the total vote cast for the justice party ran well into six figures, she reminded her listeners.

Robert C. Bowers of Pittsburgh, an architect and former assessor of that city, characterized the graded tax plan of Pittsburgh as the first public recognition of the citizens' work as a community, creating location value.

Tangible results were quickly seen from the enactment of the law, he stated. The city soon experienced (in 1913-14) a stimulation of its building industry. Taxation on improvements, he explained, have been one-half that on the land since 1925.

Though the majority of Pittsburgh residents know nothing about the economic principles involved, he said, graded tax has gained popularity there. It would be political suicide, he intimated, for anyone to sponsor its repeal.

An analysis of land value taxation based on his survey of Australian municipal action was given by H. Bronson Cowan of Ottawa, Canada.

'Sell' the Realtor

Cowan urged that we get the facts before landowners who have large plants and structures. Show them the difference between land taxes and those on their improvements, he said. Show them what they will save in shifting from levies imposed on their buildings, and in some cases machinery, to the collection of ground rent.

To bolster his argument, Cowan submitted statistics based on his studies in Australia, showing that the municipal collection of ground rent permits the substantial reduction of taxes on improvements, and in most cases their elimination.

Here in this country, he pointed out, we are spending billions to bonus the owners of undesirably improved and unimproved properties while taking billions from the owners of our best plants and buildings.

Land values, he described as being like streams and rivers flowing into the oceans. Rising in distant hucolic areas, he asserted, they grow larger as they reach populous areas and swell to gigantic concentrations of value in our large metropolitan centers. In these centers today, he stressed, owners of vacant land pay only one tax, while those who have improved land pay two. And the owners of the best improvements bear the brunt of tax increases. This system, he reminded his audience, is constantly accelerating the depreciation of capital.

The evening session, with J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco in the chair, was devoted to the "Winning Campaign in Pennsylvania."

The campaign and its successful culmination was outlined by Percy R. Williams of Pittsburgh, executive secretary of the Foundation and a former chief assessor of that city.

Williams presented a summary of the new legislation permitting 47 cities in Pennsylvania to assess land and improvements separately and to tax them separately. To achieve this, he said, we "conducted one of the most quiet campaigns ever undertaken."

Having decided to seek legislation, extending the graded tax plan from second class cities (Pittsburgh and Scranton) to third class cities, Williams and several other trustees of the Foundation attended the convention of the League of Third Class Cities in Yorktown. Here they merely weighed the temper of officials from the state's 47 third class cities.

Toured the State

The campaign got under way last November. The late Walter R. Demmler, Councilman of Pittsburgh, and the secretary, traveled through several cities in western Pennsylvania. They found no advance interest in graded tax. They presented their proposal, however, as one which would increase the power of local governments, permitting them to lower taxes, stimulate building, etc. To this, they got passive acceptance and some support.

A bill, drafted by Williams, was submitted in the upper House of the Pennsylvania Legislature by Senator Bernard B. McGinnis, S-121, as it was labelled, passed the Senate with a vote of 50-0 and the lower House by 184-1. Governor Fine signed it into law on August 17.

Williams said he and others working for the third class city bill were agreeably surprised to discover so little serious opposition. He ascribed this situation largely to the significant precedents set by the Pennsylvania legislature's previous recognition of both graded tax and home rule in taxation. The graded tax law for second class cities had been enacted in 1913 and a partial home rule tax measure had been put on the books under Governor James Duff in 1947.

It is not to be expected that the actual shifting of taxes from improvements to land values will be accomplished without opposition from large and influential taxpayers, Williams pointed out. Nonetheless, he added, the majority of property owners, particularly home owners, would benefit directly in lower taxes as well as sharing in the community likely to follow introduction of a tax system offering inducement to those who improve their land, and tending to discourage speculation and the holding of valuable land out of use.

The 70-Plus Club

With quiet dignity, an erect, white-haired gentleman moved toward the center of the Park Sheraton's Cocoanut Grove and in clear resonant tones recounted his first meeting with Henry George in the printing shop on Union Square. Knowing George and following his work, he told the Henry George Foundation dinner guests, changed the course of his life and had made it fuller and happier. These were the moving remarks of Lawson Parry, the dean of Georgists. He heads the list of that clear-eyed, forceful group which we may proudly call the "70-Plus Club."

Another outstanding nomination for this select group is Foundation president Charles R. Eckert. A partial list of others past their 70th birthday, who were active at the conference, would include treasurer William E. Schoyer, George Dana Lion and Mrs. Helena Mitchell McEvoy. No list is complete without Clayton J. Ewing, who was the nomination of many of his listeners as a "second Will Rogers." And, of course, there is also that master of Oriental tongues, Joseph S. Thompson.

There is a profound social lesson to be drawn from this 70-Plus Club. When our world has gone overboard in its mad flight to escape, when everyone is working himself to death so that he can retire, we may well give heed to this lesson.

These Georgists have retained their vigor, their interest in the world and their intellectual capacities despite their years because they have never relinquished their faith in a social philosophy which they will never cease to promote.

Foundation Officers at Banquet



Left to right: President of the Henry George Foundation, Charles R. Eckert of Pittsburgh; Trustees—Joseph W. Thompson of San Francisco, Sidney J. Abelson of New York, J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco, and Dr. Henry George III of Wilmington, Delaware.

Williams expressed his agreement with chairman of the evening Rupert Mason who had remarked earlier that S-121 was only the first step. Now, he said, we can go forward with education and application.

Emphasizing the job ahead, Williams pointed out that the recent legislation was merely permissive. The 47 cities involved are merely permitted to adopt graded tax plans, they are not obliged to do so.

Charles Johnson Post spoke of three outstanding eras since Henry George. In the 90's there were 5 Congressmen in Washington who had based their campaigns on the single-tax issue (Johnson, Baker, Bailey, Bigelow, and Croser—the sole survivor).

By 1920 Lawson Purdy, whom Post termed "a politician in the highest sense," was president of the tax board in New York and secured the passage of the home tax exemption law which successfully met the local wartime housing shortage. He defined a politician as "a man in public life who progressively relates himself to the issues of the day."

The third era, he said, began with the graded tax legislation in Pennsylvania. The speaker praised the Foundation leaders because they too had related themselves to present-day issues.

Problems to Solve

The Saturday morning session was opened by chairman R. M. Dreyfuss of New York to discuss "Lessons Learned—Problems to Solve."

That we are facing the battle of the termination of our civilization and have a chance to perfect the American revolution was the theme of the morning's first speaker, Noah D. Alper, director of the St. Louis Henry George School.

Education is slow, Alper said, and asked the question, "What is faster?" Our task is to speed education, and, he remarked, we now have a sound base for teaching people.

A spark of curiosity must be aroused in people, he said. In Pennsylvania's S-121 there is an opportunity, a reason why people should study economics, and he said he was going to use it in St. Louis.

Alper explained the function of his Public Revenue Education Council in teaching business executives and labor leaders, getting them to open their plants and their membership to

his classes. Results, he reported, are beginning to show.

We need to improve our manner of public relations, he asserted and characterized S-121 as a public relations opportunity.

Teaching *Progress and Poverty* is still our main job, Robert Clancy, director of the New York Henry George School, told the conference, and our problem is how best to present it. This day to day problem is always with us.

Urging the correlation of Henry George's truths with the whole economic picture, Clancy pointed out that study was necessary in the field of practical application of land value taxation principles. A theory, he said, must be applicable to have validity even as an academic statement.

The 10-week course in *Progress and Poverty* is not a mass appeal. No one has yet solved the problem, he maintained, of presenting the philosophy to millions. And yet, he said, the course still seems to do something unique: It ignites a spark of "human understanding" in the students, impelling them to action.

Julian P. Hickok, former director of the Philadelphia school, submitted a mathematical explanation of his interpretation of George's remedy.

"Rent for Public Uses"

"As the tax rate approaches infinity as a limit," he stated, "the land value approaches zero as a limit and the tax revenue approaches the full economic rent as a limit. This is evidently what Henry George implied when he wrote: 'By leaving to landowners a percentage of rent . . . we may assert the common right to land by taking rent for public uses.'"

A "Program for Action" was the subject of the afternoon session led by Robert Bowers.

Although the Pennsylvania victory is a significant one, it is still limited, Sidney J. Abelson of New York, chairman of the conference committee, said as the first speaker of the session. Only one battle has been won, he said, and the job now was planning for the next battle and putting those plans into action.

Citing the ambitious program of the Foundation to make Pennsylvania a state wide laboratory for graded tax experimentation, Abelson suggested setting up separate executive committees in each state to push such programs locally.

Acting in cooperation with the policy committee of the Foundation and drawing on the experience gained in their recent campaign, he said, local committees might well take at least preliminary steps toward the launching of "Pennsylvania campaigns" in other states.

A definition of politics as the art of making major and minor compromises, was offered by Clayton J. Ewing of Mobile, Alabama. Delighting his audience with apt and homely stories, he described "welfare government" as "welfare for the guy on top and misery for everyone else."

Rather than have one rich patron support the organization with \$10,000 a year, Ewing said he would rather have 2,000 members, each giving \$5. Then when asked who he represented, he could answer: "Why, 2,000 of the most intelligent people in the United States."

In discussing further the problems of land assessments, Gilbert M. Tucker of Albany, New York, discoursed on the difficulties in determining the value of land. In offering his program for action, Tucker suggested the emphasis be put on untaxing improvements rather than the poster of where to raise revenue.

He called on the younger followers of George to take an active part in the spreading of his philosophy and the land reform campaign.

Miss Helen Cartier of New York City reported the decision of the Foundation's trustees to aid in the formation of a New York chapter of that organization. She extended an invitation to New Yorkers to join in this work.

In closing the conference sessions, Percy Williams said he was heartened by the good wishes and praise the Foundation had received.

The Task Ahead

"We are returning to Pennsylvania," he said, "well aware of the difficult task before us."

The conference was climaxed by the attendance of more than 100 enthusiasts at a banquet on the evening of the second day.

Chairman Eckert expressed his gratification with the proceedings of the conference and expressed the appreciation of the Foundation for the efforts of the conference committee.

Toastmaster Abelson introduced George's grandson, Dr. Henry George III as the first speaker of the evening. In a moving presentation of anecdotes about his illustrious forbear, Dr. George reiterated the philosopher's remarks that he knew his book, *Progress and Poverty* would survive because it had "withstood the fire and the flood."

The use of publicly produced income for public expenditures was stressed by Joseph S. Thompson, president of the Pacific Electric Manufacturing Company.

Our greatest danger is not from invasion, J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco, president of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, warned. It is a lack of understanding of the fundamental causes of inflation and war. He emphasized we must re-examine some of the ideas that have been fed to us, lest we end up in the collectivist camp in our efforts to save freedom.

Judge Max M. Korshak of Chicago told the conference our struggle against inflation at home and imperialist communism abroad can only be won by freeing our economy from its tremendous burden of debt and taxation.

Pledges of contributions totaling more than \$3,500 during the coming year were made at the dinner by those present. In addition, many new members were enrolled in the Foundation during the two-day conference.

Letters

To the Editor:

I want to congratulate you and your writer, Phelps, for his essay [Laissez Faire in History—Fact and Fiction, September and October issues]. His paragraph on rights and duties states a fact often forgotten by the devout. There has been a hysteria over rights by those who recoil from their natural corollary duties. Also liked the lead story by Noyes [The Sense of Humor, October].

Are they Georgists? I ask this because both have a keen sense of humor—which is nothing but a sensitiveness to disproportion. (I think Noyes will agree with me on that).

—CHARLES JOHNSON POST
Bayside, New York

To the Editor:

With my subscription I am enclosing an item from the Denver Post of August 27, 1951. Is there a hint here that Henry George's influence upon the late Dr. Sun Yat Sen is now somewhat belatedly bearing fruit?

[The news item from Taipei, "Formosa Okays New Tax Policy," follows:]

From next year on, Chinese who own land in urban areas of Formosa are going to find themselves hard hit.

The Chinese Nationalist cabinet has approved what it calls an urban land reform program. It will begin Jan. 1, 1952, and will form the pattern for the mainland if the Nationalists ever recover it. The program means that if the value of city land rises taxes will be increased. Land belonging to absentee landlords or on which there has been no building improvements also will be subject to heavy taxes.

The amount of land any individual may own within urban areas will be limited on a sliding scale, which is adjusted according to the locality in which the land is located. The government may buy at its own terms or requisition any land owned by an individual beyond these limits.

—JOSEPH A. MARINO
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor:

Regarding the remark made by someone at your school to the effect that Danes were voting for the Justice party only because they hoped to get rid of some of their taxes, be assured that this is quite erroneous. We cannot deny that many people do not have a definite idea of the different political philosophies, but the larger a party becomes, the more people will join it. How many of the 800,000 Socialist voters in this country know much about the theories of Marx or Engels?

The real reason why the voters leave the old parties and now vote for the League of Justice is that those other parties—the Conservatives, the Moderate Liberals, the Social Democrats and the Radical Liberals have all been unable to solve the social questions. These can be solved only through justice, not by sophisticated theories of economics like those of Keynes, not by the "Proletarian Dictatorship."

I am an authorized economist now, so I may be allowed to say that these modern theories about spreading the purchasing power, the possibility of decreasing consumption, etc., cannot be the way to a new and happy life. First of all the land question must be solved, and I trust that Henry George really did find the right solution. The more economics I read the more fond I grow of Henry George and the Danish philosophers of moral justice.

—SVEND E. HANSEN
Lyngby, Denmark

To the Editor:

The article "The Town Without Taxes" in your September issue conveys the impression that in Lethbridge (Alberta) no taxes are imposed on buildings. This is incorrect. Land is taxed at 100 per cent of its value, and buildings at 66-23 per cent. But as buildings are assessed at \$13,118,520, and land at \$5,418,520, improvements are paying more taxes than are land values.

—H. BRONSON COWAN
Messines, Quebec

To the Editor:

"Lastly, the Single-taxer must remind himself, now and then, that the socialization of ground rent can do very little good unless the economy in general is comparatively free to react to its influence," wrote Marshall Crane in your October issue (page 5).

Well, if the single tax (public collection of rent in lieu of all taxes) promises no more than Mr. Crane see in it, or seems to see, it is indeed a shoddy commodity and I should have nothing to do with it. If the thing would not completely wipe out the old rotten structure (economy) and give us freedom and opportunity, then it is I who do not understand it.

It is discouraging to see the "Plain Talk" about socialism in the same issue. We have had socialism ever since the adoption of the federal Constitution in 1787, and it has been growing and growing, always accelerated by the state constitutions as the new states were admitted. The public free school back more than 100 years ago was a big dose. It is impossible to have free enterprise—constitutional exploitation of producers to maintain privilege—without a big measure of socialism, in bigger and bigger doses.

Every one of us is a Socialist of one kind or another. The privileged are our most ardent Socialists. Some twenty years ago when free enterprise was tottering over, the big Socialists, who had apparently lost all, went to Washington for help. The constitutions are the cankers. Socialism is but the amelioration of the thing to stave off collapse. The anti-Socialists never repeal any socialism for they see that it feeds and fattens privilege.

The single tax is getting some hard blows on both the East Coast and the West Coast. This is to register my decision as being with Robert Clancy in the letter-discussion with Don L. Thompson.

Wages must fall with progress in a capitalistic or free enterprise economy. This is as true as anything can be. The land has prior and preferred claim and all the powers of the state are here to enforce it. Many of your writers seem to have no idea as to what economy is. It is man's making a living, and by all rules and logic an economy is what a state makes it; the means by which the state sustains itself. Taxation and economy are synonymous in the sense that taxation determines the economy, just as the trees constitute the forest. Economy is truly man's opportunity, lack of opportunity or the terms by which he contacts land, the source of life.

This is not to renew the argument, but merely to register my opinion that Mr. Clancy understands economy.

—GROVER B. FOSTER
Dallas, Texas

To the Editor:

I found two articles in the July issue extremely thought provoking—"Plain Talk" by Jerome Joachim, and the letter by Edwin J. Cooney, who was disturbed by Mr. Joachim's comments in the June issue.

I agree with Mr. Joachim that trade barriers are the one great cause of modern wars, that restrictions on trade freedom will eventually lead to the loss of all other freedoms. However, more than the removal of tariff barriers is needed. Free trade would greatly increase the production and exchange of goods, but like any other improvement it would also increase the land values, and the selling price of land, unless the site or ground rental values were collected for public revenue.

The best policy for Georgists to pursue is to support the reciprocal trade agreements and to advocate the gradual removal of taxes on buildings and labor products, increasing them on land, as in the Pittsburgh Graded Tax Plan. In the meantime, they should support the Social Security Plan until the people are convinced by practical experience that free trade and the public collection of site or ground rents would bring about genuine prosperity and true freedom.

—JOHN T. GIDDINGS
East Providence, R. I.

To the Editor:

I've noticed a lot of talk about a "severance tax" on natural resources (other than land). I cannot see why this is even brought up for discussion in a serious manner. It stands to reason that any mining company which is compelled to pay such a tax will pass it on to the consumer. Don't you think that the land value tax is sufficient?

After all, the only reason that land should be taxed at all is that it is necessary for public works and welfare, especially in the immediate vicinity of the mining operations, where towns will most likely spring up. If the ground rent is insufficient for public purposes, then it most certainly can be reassessed till it is. You will probably find that the severance tax violates the principles of H. George, since it places a price on untouched natural resources. So does our present feudal system.

—R. E. FLEISCHMAN
Montreal

To the Editor:

Along about 1936 a farmer who had paid off his mortgage before the depression and was able to hold on to his Kansas wheat farm, began to realize that under the new program he was beginning to prosper. So he decided it was a good time to expand. He started buying land with his earnings and by 1940 had acquired an additional 640 acres at an average price of \$75 an acre. At that figure he could make a profit on wheat selling for \$1.80 a bushel.

Since then the government policies combined with war scarcities pushed up the price of wheat to \$3. At this figure wheat could profitably be raised on land acquired at \$200 an acre, so the price of land promptly reached \$200.

Now, however, any farmer buying land at this figure must get a high price for his wheat—a vicious circle which will tend to perpetuate the special privilege which permits the landowner to tax us all.

The question is this: What is the difference between this arbitrary inflation and the old fashioned corrupt practice of watering stock, which is now outlawed and which the self-styled fair dealers would be the first to condemn?

To the buyer of farm products who pays an artificially high price there is no difference—he is robbed. But to make matters worse he is also taxed to support this robbery.

—J. P. HARR
Lakewood, Ohio

San Francisco

Enrollments reported at the end of the second week of the fall term were 143, as compared with 132 last spring, and the record of 181 last winter. Two more classes in *The Science of Political Economy* had an additional 13 at the last report.

The "Henry George Free Speech Forum" opened October 26 and is meeting every Friday under the chairmanship of Charles MacSwan. Among the 12 speakers so far scheduled are Rose Papini of the faculty; Earl A. Hanson, J. Rupert Mason, and Edgar Pomeroy of the board of directors; Robert Tideman, executive secretary; and Mr. MacSwan. Each talk is followed by a scheduled period for questions, a scheduled period for members of the audience to take the platform (under an announced time limit) and a scheduled period for the speaker to make his final reply to audience comments. The forum's purpose, as stated in the opening announcement, is "to exercise the inalienable right of free speech; to cultivate, by exercise, those powers of thought and expression which qualify a person to take his part, in public and in private, in building and maintaining institutions of equal freedom."

Among the provocative subjects scheduled are "The San Francisco Sewer Tax Scandal," "Human Rights and Racial Prejudice," "The Only Inflation Antidote," and "War and the Henry George Movement."

Los Angeles

Los Angeles is well into its fall term, with 16 classes, 11 in the basic course, 4 in *The Science of Political Economy*, and one in Free Enterprise vs. Planned Economy (using Max Hirsch's book, *Democracy vs. Socialism*).

New instructors this term are Dr. Irene Giles, formerly of Boston; Jacob Jacobson; and James

Milen. Former instructors Eric Miller, Reginald Staeborough and Sam D. Alrich, rejoined the staff after temporary absences. The Los Angeles school is happy to welcome both its old and new teachers into service.

Graduates of Charles Rodriguez's basic class of last term, finding themselves without an instructor for the advanced class, are conducting their study cooperatively, with the students taking turns as leaders, while enjoying the hospitality of Mrs. Bentley, one of their members.

A valued addition at Los Angeles headquarters is the service of a part-time secretary in the efficient and gracious person of Mrs. Gertrude Winsborough, who has previously given generously of her time in volunteer duties.

The Los Angeles S.A.G.E. held its first session this season at the Rig'n Whistle Cafeteria on October 29. Minerva Quinby reviewed the novel *Blood and God* by Henry George III, and J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco reported on the New York conference of the Henry George Foundation.

Director Trenchard is conducting some concentrated research into statistics and other data on current questions in the public mind, which should enhance interest and make a valuable tie-in between fundamental principles and their application to current problems. One of the basic classes is being used as a "guinea pig" for the experiment.

St. Louis

Ten classes in *Progress and Poverty*, and one in *The Science of Political Economy* have been formed. The advanced course is under the leadership of C. C. Case. Gietner Hibbeler, recent graduate, and a mechanical engineer, is a new leader in one of the fundamental classes.

Dr. Clay Wilcox, an enthusiastic graduate of the spring term, has formed a special *Progress and Poverty* class with 8 of his friends as members.

The Henry George Women's Club is planning a bazaar and entertainment for November 16. Another valued graduate, William C. Hoeft, owner of the Universal Dance Studio at 5671 Delmar Boulevard, will provide the location. The object: money and fun.

New Jersey

The first in a series of "Random Lectures" in the Rusby Auditorium at 1114 Broad Street, Newark, took place on October 31 when John W. Woodford, district sales manager of Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., presented the excellent documentary film made with professional actors, entitled "Credit—Man's Confidence in Man."

Addison K. Barry, assistant vice president of the National Newark and Essex Banking Company, was chairman, and an interesting discussion followed on the function of commercial credit and its role in business.

The faculty meetings at Newark headquarters will concern themselves chiefly for the next few months with a study of the Commerce and Industry methods used in the Chicago Henry George School. Chicago's material will be discussed with a view to adapting it to use by the New Jersey schools.

Detroit

Robert Benton sent a brief note saying that Detroit has 38 students enrolled in 2 classes this fall. The larger class meets on Friday evenings and has an enrollment of 32 students. At present it appears that winter term classes will have the co-sponsorship of at least three high school adult education departments when the season opens.

"TVA Shows the Way"

By WILLIAM O. DOUGLAS

THERE are grumbings in every village I have visited across this broad belt. Revolution is brewing. It's the kind of revolution America once brewed. If we in America knew the facts and appreciated what was at stake, we would be on the side of these miserable tenants. We would help them make their revolutions. We would help them make their revolutions in the pattern of our own American Revolution.

Unfortunately, we do not do that. As a result of a combination of circumstances, we are mostly signed up on the side of the landlords. In Asia change is certain; but it is not necessarily a change to Communism. To Asiatics we appear to be against change. We strive for stability in governments when there can be no stability . . .

—Excerpt from an article in
The Progressive, August 1951

Chicago

Frank Lloyd Wright, America's great architect, opened the fifth season of the Commerce and Industry luncheons of the school on October 4 with the charge that "we've got a system where capitalism has its apex on the ground and its base in the air—and all these artificial props to hold it there."

"Democracy," he said, "can be only one thing: a thing that would enable a man like Henry George to have had some effect in his day. Democracy is, of course—is, inevitably—the gospel of individuality. It is the supreme encouragement and protection of the individual as such, first of all . . . Men like Henry George knew what it meant and fought for a basis for it. It's the highest and finest ideal on earth today or in the mind of man because it is predicated on the basis of freedom."

The twenty-session course on "Fiscal Policy" under Professor Harry Gannison Brown opened October 19 with an overflowing registration of 99 advanced students and conference leaders.

New York

Professor Max Laserson of Columbia University, author of *The American Impact on Russia* which was reviewed in The Henry George News last June, will speak at New York headquarters Friday evening, November 9 on "Henry George's Influence in Russia." Dr. Maurice Leahy who delighted his audience last year, will return on November 30, this time with personal reminiscences of Cheslerston and George Russell, popularly known as A. E. Documentary films engaged by Don Gilmartin will be shown on November 2 and 16 at 8 p. m.

Among addresses which will be given at outside organizations during November is one by Stanley Sinclair entitled "Government in Business" before the Economics Society of the College of the City of New York. Others who will speak before various groups are: Irving Faust, Albert Gants, Bennett Challis and H. H. Butler.

Everyone at headquarters has received a distinct inspiration from an exhibition of finger paintings by Minna Blau. Beautiful as these paintings are, the artist has never seen them, for she is blind. Yet she lives a normal life, living alone and traveling about alone. The exhibit will continue throughout November.

More than 500 students enrolled in basic courses at headquarters, and over 200 are in regional classes. Together with those occupied with advanced subjects, the total number of students in the New York area is 938.

Statement of the ownership, management, and circulation required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (Title 49, United States Code, Section 223).

1. The Henry George News, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1951.

2. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: Publisher, Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.; Editor, Alice Elizabeth Davis, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.; Managing editor, none; Business manager, none; Publishing Committee: Lancaster K. Brown, Chairman; Otto E. Dorn and William B. O'Connor, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

3. The owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual member, must be given.)

Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.; John C. Lincoln, President, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.; Otto E. Dorn, Vice-President and Secretary, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.; Leonard T. Becker, Treasurer, 50 E. 39th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

4. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (None).

5. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also, the statements in the two paragraphs show the extent of the full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner.

6. The average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the 12 months preceding the date shown above was: (This information is required from daily, weekly, semi-weekly, and bi-weekly newspapers only.)

ALICE ELIZABETH DAVIS,

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 12th day of October, 1951.

MURRAY GARS,

Notary Public.

(My commission expires March 30, 1952).

Four or One By MARSHALL CRANE

IN THE hundred and seventy-five years of the political history of the United States very few men in public life have understood mass psychology as did the late Franklin D. Roosevelt. And surely none has shown a keener appreciation of the power of the slogan, the catchy phrase, and the short, simple generalization as a means of influencing public feeling. Opinions as to his stature as a political scientist have always differed widely, but surely no one will deny that Roosevelt was a great political artist.

More than ten years ago he said to Congress and to the world: "In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward for a world founded upon four essential freedoms."

Since then the Four Freedoms have been dignified by capitalization, and with very little question have been generally accepted as part of our heritage of political philosophy. Today we hear them quoted even by people who in 1941 were bitter opponents of their author. They have acquired the status of orthodox dogma in most people's minds, and like all dogma are seldom submitted to examination or question.

Many years ago my father advised me, "Son, never sign or subscribe to anything until you have read it through twice." In this spirit of caution I would like to look at the Four Freedoms again.

I find myself heartily in accord with the first two—freedom of speech, of the press and other media of expression, and freedom of belief and worship. We already enjoy at least a very considerable degree of both of these rights, and any proposal to curtail them must always be carefully disguised to avoid violent protest. To us in this country it is hard to imagine being deprived of them.

The third is freedom from want, certainly a very appealing notion. Anyone who has ever had to pinch pennies knows what financial insecurity can mean. His least pleasant memories are of being forced to forego pleasures, perhaps necessities, because of an empty poke, of being bound by straitened circumstances as by a chain.

But can any human agency, in good faith, guarantee freedom from want? Can a government, let us say, guarantee food in times of famine, when food does not exist? True, it can enact statutes and more or less effective ones too, for regulating the distribution of wealth. But wealth is produced not by governments, but by men, who may be aided or hindered in a thousand ways by natural conditions, "acts of God," and by their economic and political environment. Because of its very nature production is bound to be subject to uncertainties.

It is important here to note that this freedom of opportunity, or freedom to protect oneself from want, is by no means the same thing as freedom from want. The former promises the right to assume responsibility, to work for oneself, and incidentally to increase the wealth of the community. The latter implies a right to shirk responsibility, a right to be done by, to receive support from a hypothetical common pool. There is little difference between this principle and Karl Marx's famous axiom, "To each according to his need; from each according to his ability."

Want is a terrible thing, but the only way to avoid it is through freedom of opportunity, and through justice, an essential condition of all freedom. More than these no government can assure to its citizens. (Fortunately, though, noth-

ing more is needed to provide a more successful and happy economic life.)

Justice to me means simply an even break for everyone, and the assurance to each of the ownership and enjoyment of what is his own. Just this; nothing more. I do not know if men will ever decide to live in a state of justice, so defined, but I have no doubt that they should.

Not without justice no freedom is possible. The Danish Georgists must have realized this when they called themselves the Justice party. Freedom of opportunity means equality of opportunity, and inequality of the opportunity to occupy and use the land on which we live and work is one of the greatest of all injustices.

The fourth item in the Roosevelt formula is freedom from fear, fear of war. The President believed that if nations could be persuaded to reduce their armaments war would be made impossible. Yet even while he was speaking men were fighting in Europe, Asia and Africa, and the principal aggressor and by far the most powerful contender was a nation which had been bankrupt and without arms less than a decade before.

There is no such thing as a new recipe for peace. Since the earliest recorded times men have been trying every political and diplomatic dodge imaginable in their search for a preventive or specific for war. Armaments and disarmaments have been proved futile again and again. Empires, confederations, alliances, balances of power, and leagues of nations have frequently increased the fear of war, but they have only prevented it occasionally and for short periods of time.

As I see it, the reason for this is that we must go deeper than the political level to find the cause of wars. The thoughtful reader of the lamentable political history of modern times must be struck by the fact that it is difficult, if not impossible, to pick out a single war from the many that have wasted man's substance and shed his blood which has not been caused by economic conditions. Even the terrible religious wars which tortured Europe for generations cannot be excepted, nor the political revolutions of the past two centuries. The only possible conclusion seems to be that if we want freedom from war we must seek it in the larger, more basic though more neglected, economic freedom.

And even this is not the final freedom, from which all freedoms are derived. First and last is the essential right to be free which belongs to every man simply because he is a man. Any other, if it deserves the name of freedom, stems from and is part of this—freedom of thought and belief, of speech, of movement, of labor and trade; freedom to use the resources of nature, and to own and enjoy the products of one's effort without let or hindrance, so long as the rights of others are respected. The cause of right and justice is the cause of freedom, in all its aspects.

Still, all that glitters is not gold, and every new or untried "freedom" should be carefully assayed for traces of base metals. Just as when any person, or group of persons, offers, for a consideration, to insure us against something—death, illness, or injury; fire, earthquake, or hurricane; or want; or fear—we are certainly less than prudent if we do not reach for a powerful magnifying glass and subject the fine print on the back of the policy to a thorough and thoughtful examination.

More Sense than Poetry?

Just five years ago The Henry George News published, without a signature, lines which the school's director, Robert Clancy, selected from books by Henry George. Three months later the author's name was divulged, no one having guessed it.

Last year Arthur Madsen of London sent "Seasonal Greetings" at Christmas time using another Henry George quotation in verse form:

Man is the mythic earth-tree
Whose roots are in the ground,
But whose topmost branches may
Blossom in the Heavens!

On the land we are born,
From it we live,
To it we return again—
Children of the soil
As truly as is
The blade of grass
Or the flower of the field.

Another Londoner at the Great Smith Street Georgist headquarters, Victor H. Blundell, selected for his Christmas card these lines from *Social Problems*:

Let no one imagine that he has no influence.
Whoever he may be, and wherever he may be placed,
The man who thinks becomes a light and a power . . .
Whoever becomes imbued with a noble idea
Kindles a flame from which other torches are lit.

Selections published in The Henry George News in 1946-47 were "NatureLaughs at a Miser" from *Progress and Poverty*, "In Hot Spots Vines" from *The Land Question*, "The Oracles" from *The Condition of Labor*, "Thieves and Toilers" from *Protection or Free Trade*, and "There are Worlds and Worlds" and "When Our Time Comes" from *Social Problems*.

Welfare Means Nothing

By H. R. FUCHS

THE PHRASE "Welfare of the people" means nothing. It is the last refuge of every scoundrel who ever sat in a position of power. If those in power know what is basically, economically and ethically right, or the people know it and demand that those in power exercise it and administer government in accordance therewith, then the welfare of the people will take care of itself.

The general welfare clause in the Constitution of the United States grants no power. If it did, we could abolish the rest of the Constitution. We would then have government by men instead of by law. That is exactly what every dictator wants. That is what F. D. R. wanted when he told the Congressmen, "Don't worry about the constitutionality of the act, so long as it is for the general welfare."

Every piece of special privilege legislation from the protective tariff up and down, has been enacted for the "general welfare."

