Letters from Our Readers

Don't Knock "Professionalism"

Although a Georgist in principle for as long as I could think for myself, I have never been a recorded member of any organization. However, I have seen occasional periodicals, and a colleague passed on a copy of your #88. Lindy Davies's lead article raises some extremely important issues based on the observation that the principles of the movement are still light-years away from acceptance by the governments of the world.

Davies writes that "with regard to the perceived need for 'professionals', it ought to be noted that our movement is unlike any other..." Every organization can claim to be unique, but the principles of professionalism work for every successful movement, because they meet the needs of our modern society, and human psychology. The introduction of a co-ordinating Secretariat won't necessarily lead to success — but the implication that it is not needed is far from true. Without a professional structure, modelled on the concepts of the major business and voluntary-sector organizations, failure is inevitable.

For many years, I have been struggling with the Esperanto movement to change the same attitudes which have led to failure of both the Esperanto and Georgist movements. Georgists and Esperantists have much in common. Many are idealists, with a belief that a cause that is just and rational will inevitably win through. In the real world, few care about rational argument and, contrary to Lindy's implication, comparing the potential of an amateurish enthusiast with the effectiveness of a less knowledgeable professional, the latter will win through almost every time because he/she knows that the vast majority of human beings are driven by emotion and short-term self interest.

Georgists and Esperantists both have right on their side, but they will continue to fail in their efforts to make the world a better place for all until they recognize that "professionalism" is not a dirty word. It is just a fact of life, based on the most fundamental human drives. A poor professional is as useless as a poor amateur, but a good professional will show the way to success. *Brian W. Burnett, Coordinator, Esperanto for Education, Wrexham, England*

Lindy Davies replies: Mr. Burnett makes some telling points. And I must admit that it would be silly to argue against "professionalism" — which is, of course, the necessary and *(continued on page 28)*

Letters...

(continued from page 4)

proper attitude which must be brought to advocacy and educational work of all sorts. I didn't mean to condemn professionalism, but rather the attitude that only "professionals" (those with certain formal credentials) can work effectively for our movement. Certain "amateurs" display a great deal of competence and professionalism; others have less. I maintain that in our case, a "good professional" must be someone who thoroughly understands and deeply cares about the Georgist philosophy; if not, then no amount of credentials or professional experience will avail.