

SUPPORTERS of Henry George's philosophy should address themselves to politically active groups, thinks David Hapgood, the best-selling author of *The Screwing of the Average Man*.

In his speech to delegates at the conference held in August to celebrate the centenary of *Progress & Poverty*, Mr. Hapgood declared:

"We are preaching an antiquated sermon. We don't seem to be interested in reaching our audience."

Henry George himself tailored his message in terms to suit particular audiences, pointed out Mr. Hapgood, who is editor of the American Geographical Society's magazine *Focus*.

He urged delegates at San Francisco to support his proposal for a series of key studies which would be aimed at politically active people.

"Most people are politically inert, and there is no point in converting them if they are not going to do anything about it - whereas groups are already active," he said.

He had two assumptions. One was that Henry George's message was more pertinent today than ever. The second was that the message would not "sell" unless it was modernised and tailored to a series of specific audiences who had different concerns - none of whom had read *Progress & Poverty*.

Mr. Hapgood listed six issues which needed attention.

Transportation: people were anxious about our over-dependence on cars. "We have a better answer: collect the unearned income and let the public transit system pay for itself."

Land conservation: many organisations want to save the landscape and nature from the bulldozer. "Land value taxation would save the

The Selling of Henry George



● DAVID HAPGOOD

land, but we haven't told them that." The same was true of *energy conservation*.

Appropriate technology: the philosophy that "small is beautiful" and the desire for self-determination were related to land value taxation through the practical conservation of resources.

Radio and TV fees. "The airwaves are a form of land, and the purest form of community-created value, because without the demand those airwaves would not even have any physical existence. The government sets licence fees below the rent. By auctioning the licences off to the highest bidder, higher revenue would be received." This would also "get the government out of the arena" - at present

it decided who had access to our eyes and ears.

Under-sea resources: for the first time in history the ocean floor had economic value. "This is an area with its own constituency, and in which we have something to say. These are the last great commons of humanity, and they will be taken and carved up by the nation states. We have a clear, coherent answer which is better than any other, and we are not telling anyone."

Political activists knew the techniques which would "make it possible to reach where there's a pay-off," insisted Mr. Hapgood. But to reach those activists, we needed to produce a series of pamphlets.

"The whole programme would not cost more than \$50,000 to \$100,000. Some Georgist organisations have more than ample resources. The kind of programme which I am advocating would only take a tiny fraction of those resources."

But there was a "roadblock" in the way. "The roadblock is that the resources are locked up in the vaults of the Georgist organisations, resembling land hoarded by a speculator."

"The first thing to do is to free the resources and put them to use. Who is going to do that? It's the people in this room. If you don't do it, it's not going to happen."

"If you *do* do it, we will put Henry George where he belongs - in the marketplace of ideas."