

California—Latest and Best

IN a wooded coastal acreage on the Monterey Peninsula in California, called Asilomar (view of the sea), where once the Indians met around their campfires, a council of another kind was held on July 14-18. The 21st annual conference of the Henry George School, in essence, is not so incompatible with the thoughts of our Indian forebears as one might suppose. The Indians preserved this country in its natural state. In a few centuries white men have depleted the soil and the forests. Even our cities, the pride of civilization, are afflicted with the seeds of decay.

Georgist chieftains, if they gathered around a council table in the Pacific Grove, might wish to stir in others a sense of love and loyalty for this America and its hard-won freedom. In California some of us saw for the first time a broad and wondrous land with vast stretches of natural beauty and miles of fabulous coastal highways.

The Indians set a wise example for us, but we scorned their counsel—they had reverence for the land and regarded themselves as stewards who would use only what they needed and pass it on to others in good condition—for land, like oxygen, is necessary to man's existence. The white men learned very little from the noble race they ground into the dust.

It seemed very logical to have as the first evening's entertainment at the conference, a pictorial reminder that another great continent, Africa, is coming on with a cry of freedom, as we are forfeiting ours.

Miss V. G. Peterson, executive director of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, who visited Africa last Spring, made it very clear, with color slides and personal experiences, that a continent will rise where now

primitive tribal customs still prevail. And once again a long hard drama will be acted out in history, as freedom is fought for, won, taken for granted, and can be lost when one more empire falls a prey to its own avarice.

Kul B. Sharma is the young Georgist director in Kenya's Henry George extension, known as the Center for Economic Inquiry, who keeps telling us that the time to reach Africa is now, when the natives are so terribly eager to learn. Tell them about the land, he pleads, before they fence it in and slip into the white man's fiscal traps. Miss Peterson visited Mr. Sharma and spoke to his students in the New Era College in Nairobi (See HGN, May, p. 7). Yes, Africa is "a land of contrasts."

The first directors' session Thursday morning was conducted by Raymond Abrams of Miami, and soon the conference was rolling in the serene and familiar style. The longest East Coast report over the three-day period may have been the one by William Camargo of New York's foreign division, who brought at this time, greetings and an encouraging report from Peter Patsakos, now teaching at the new extension in Cali, Colombia. Correspondence courses and classes in Spanish are increasingly popular at New York headquarters, and Latin American students are proving to be serious students who stay with the course and like to end with a flourish and a bit of gaiety.

The afternoon session called by Robert Benton, Detroit director, was a seminar on techniques of discussion leadership. "When do teachers teach? Only when people learn something," said the first speaker, Loral Swofford, St. Louis director. He believes in an exhilarating exchange between teacher and student, but with purpose and direction. Students learn by being involved as part of a team—the teacher is a guide and the

leading learner. He made a fine case for informal teaching instead of the lecture method—he feels this encourages inter-member participation and a “dynamic fellowship.”

The good teacher, the one who will be remembered, makes the presentation simple and uses good illustrations. But even better than remembering our teachers is remembrance of the lessons we learned. Effective teaching makes students grow and develop mental muscles. The pupil learns by being involved in experiences that make him learn, and it is the responsibility of the teacher to capture the student in the first lesson, with a “star opening” that will challenge interest and individual search.

Opinions differed about the importance and manner of using questions in teaching. Some favored answering a student's question *with* a question, and allowing the group to search for the answer. This may consume a great deal of time but it is believed that a lasting and memorable impact is made on students when they reach conclusions which become convictions.

Professor Morgan Harris, a radio commentator and teacher in the Los Angeles extension, also did not subscribe to the lecture method, for with it he sees one becoming more engrossed in theoretical analysis than in people. Education is a process of learning that goes on in the mind of the learner and helps the person achieve what he wants to achieve. Teach the individual, not the subject, he says—help the student learn.

The teacher should try to be an impartial chairman, letting students discover, out of the material presented, what will stretch the mind. This calls for restraint on the part of a teacher who is tempted to give the answers, but the restraint pays off, Professor Harris believes.

Harry Pollard, Los Angeles director, suggested at this point that a leader or teacher is *not* impartial, he can make a

group do anything he wants it to. There was also a question from the audience as to the extent to which information or answers should be withheld, since students naturally expect information from a teacher. Professor Harris concluded that any such “tool” may be given provided it is intended for immediate use. Otherwise, don't tell them the answer, don't take sides, and don't even let them know what your opinion is.

The teacher has a responsibility, says this experienced professor, not to teach, but to make sure each subject is thoroughly explored. Encourage participation, express approval, address participants by name, welcome opposition, never argue with a member even if a discussion seems to be going against your opinion. Let it go on, for if they “thrash it out” among themselves they will come through to the right answer and even if they do not, the process of learning will go on, especially if they are given a couple of pointed questions to think over at home.

Harry Pollard presided over the first evening discussion, which, though it consisted of four presentations not directly related, moved along with a brisk tempo.

William K. Wittausch, manager of housing research for the Stanford Research Institute, South Pasadena, California, proposed new concepts (see page 7), stating that “the housing industry is widely fragmented. Houses themselves are difficult to modernize or even maintain, remaining in use long after they should be replaced by a better product.”

Marion Smith (Mrs. Benjamin F.), a graduate of Michigan State University with a B.S. degree in physical chemistry, brought us a message awesomely entitled “The Scientific Method,” in which she discussed the role of science in economics. Only a fourth of the high school graduates get one semester in this course

and it is far from adequate, certainly not from the viewpoint of land value taxation, she said. The specter of bad teaching is haunting economics.

We saw men first as hunters and food gatherers living only by labor. Then about 10,000 years ago, in the Middle East, a change of living occurred, known as the agricultural revolution. This brought a need for land. By the middle of the 18th Century a second fundamental change in man's way of life occurred. Beginning in England, the industrial revolution soon spread through Europe and America, creating a chasm between science and technology on the one hand and the humanities and arts on the other.

The scientific revolution, starting about 1900, brought the rise of the great chemical and engineering industries, and later the development of electronics, atomic energy and automation. The specialization that has accompanied the scientific revolution has caused a greater gulf than ever between the two cultures. Perhaps we should know more about the methods of science which have carried us along this road parallel with the industrial development.

By the 17th Century Francis Bacon formulated a method with the sequence: observe, measure, explain and verify. The presently accepted scientific method is: observe, measure, make generalizations, deduce consequences, verify and formulate and find hypotheses as theory. Observation, however, must be of a very special kind. Measurement must be precise, changing facts from qualitative to quantitative—thus yielding objective, public, communicable facts.

Deduction reasons out consequences of the generalization, as, if this is so, then this follows. But the tentative theory should be tested back through further experiments to establish validity. If the final theory survives all tests it becomes a scientific law and a new fact—a starting point for new theories.

Because economics is partly descriptive, it is often more a social study than a science.

Parts of the world that have not been reached by the agricultural and industrial revolutions will try to catch up, by war if not peacefully. We need to solve problems more quickly by making economics part of the scientific revolution. We need more economists with more than a nodding acquaintance with the scientific method, and we need to use general systems analysis. Digital computers can accomplish a lifetime of work in 22 seconds. Change the input and find out the results in terms of changed output. We don't need to know individual reactions, only the statistical behavior of people. Finally we need data processing to implement scientific methods of appraising and assessing.

Benjamin Smith is the quiet wolf in sheep's clothing who works at engineering all day but has succeeded in getting himself known all around his home town of Grand Rapids for such annoying habits as insistence on seeing the records of assessments and appraisals on properties. He writes letters to newspapers and public officials that can't be brushed off, and his talks are backed up by statistics and charts that are not lightly dismissed. This practical information is promised next month in HGN.

Russel Conklin of Great Falls wears a wide brimmed hat and a wide smile. His talk was punctuated with humor which unfortunately doesn't come through in the shortened version on page 5.

George Collins, Philadelphia director, introduced Noah D. Alper, president of the Public Revenue Education Council of St. Louis and author of Brief Cases in HGN, at the Friday morning session. Noah is a perennial favorite and everyone listens in august silence as he relates the patient efforts to educate instructors and students properly.

He, too, is a letter writer well known to newspaper editors.

Mr. Alper wants to "divide and conquer," i.e., divide capital-and-labor from "earthlordism," since the interests of capital and labor are identical. PREC is continuing to make an appeal on the campuses and specifically to juniors in economics classes. It also goes after the building trades, welfare, neighborhood and religious groups. Noah is generous with PREC literature and everyone who has sent for his pamphlets and reprints finds them effective (705 Olive Street, St. Louis, Mo. 63101).

The general theme "Involving Graduates" gained momentum as it went along. As a sample, turn to page 2 and read a graduate's talk in Toronto at a recent meeting. This graduate, Lionel Sharp, was snatched up at once for "involvement." James Ramsay, who brought the tape for the amusement of fellow Georgists, is retiring from directorship of the Toronto extension. His successor, Laurie Manell, was also present.

Robert Tideman, executive secretary of the Northern California Extension, who arranged the conference, put the matter of involvement neatly when he said it means becoming vulnerable and admitting that you care. Some try to escape being involved because they don't want to be hurt, but this makes life meaningless. "The world needs a little bit of crusading," he believes. "We are doing people a favor when we ask them to become involved."

Northern California has a number of branches, each functions under a board of directors which reports to a central board—these members number 64 in all, and they are drawn from the graduates who show enthusiasm, interest and ability. Theirs is an important position, and because it is also an honor to be asked to serve, the terms are limited to four years so that new participants can be given a chance to use their abilities. This, says Mr. Tideman, is a

way of spreading around the power to use one's ability, which certainly should be used. Volunteers must contribute the enthusiasm, but the paid staff members have a responsibility to share their experience and be present to encourage creative group effort.

Harry Pollard, sometimes conspicuous for loquacity, was brief and cogent. He contributed two new terms: self rejuvenation and loose organization. How do you analyze a volunteer group? Harry says if they achieve self rejuvenation they succeed, otherwise they drop out. The s-r person gives back more than the school gives him. Sounds crass doesn't it? But the Pollard fans understand him and jump jovially when he flays them with his cockney drawl. He wants a dynamic situation, not a static one—and he achieves this with the consent of all concerned, through shrewd training.

Mr. Pollard's first domicile on this continent was in Toronto, where he tried out the above ideas. He now admits ruefully that when he left there to expose California Georgists to his methods, the Toronto group went right on without a ripple. He rallied from the blow to his ego only by reminding himself that this was as it should be. That was a "loose organization." It achieved a quality of effective and sustained cohesiveness. When there is a specific objective, such as a fund drive, a tight organization is indicated; but it is the former that carries on for the long pull. As the session progressed, various examples of the superiority of loose organization were pointed out. Actually the success of the total conference—its free friendly movement and efficiency without strain—could be attributed to loose but careful organization.

Mrs. Joseph Thompson of San Francisco suggested that women's clubs, hers in particular, would be happy to have a good speaker (not a "rabid" Georgist) to explain the issues with which we are

grappling. It was hoped that John Nagy of San Diego, active in the Statewide Homeowners Association, could take this assignment. He has been singularly successful in the intensive lecture program which keeps him moving through California where he has reached 30,000 people, aside from TV and radio audiences.

Mrs. Mina Olson, executive secretary of the Chicago extension, brought a reminder of the many years of steady underwriting done by the Henry George Women's Club which makes money while involving people socially, and contributes it joyfully to worthwhile Georgist causes.

Miss V. G. Peterson spoke of trial efforts and eventual success by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, involving the hardest group of all—the professors. It was her idea some years ago to bring together five professors acquainted with Henry George's principles. This led to expanded meetings which now occur annually on a university campus. Gradually this Committee on Taxation, Resources and Economic Development (TRED) has attracted attention from formerly disinterested persons, who have asked permission to join. Two graduate students also, who have shown a particular interest in this subject, are being given an opportunity to engage in special work.

Miss Peterson believes this sort of professional participation can be extended and will be welcomed where it has been offered, perhaps as a tool, though as yet on a very restricted scale.

Robert Clancy, New York director, was not necessarily publicizing the *Concordance to Progress and Poverty* by Helen Mitchell McEvoy when he got everybody out for a quiz right after lunch, but anybody who could have sneaked a peek at the concordance could have made a better grade than they did. Since it was oral and cordial, no one was embarrassed over his or her fail-

ures, though the room was full of long-time teachers of this honored book, *Progress and Poverty*.

Here are the questions, perhaps you would like to look up the answers for yourself:

One cat and two squirrels are mentioned in *Progress and Poverty*, where?

How many times is "rent" mentioned? (The closest guess was made by George Collins who won a copy of the Concordance as a prize.)

To how many republics does this book refer by name?

What islands are mentioned by name or location?

What is the only time George uses "magic" in *Progress and Poverty*?

The discussion grew more profound over the meaning of natural rights and on the question of the rights of community B to the land of community A.

Following this intellectual exercise, conferees were invited to take a bus tour of the Monterey Peninsula, along the 17-Mile Drive to Carmel, as the guests of Fred W. Workman, a resident of Pacific Grove and long a devoted Georgist.

Evening entertainment was the choice of a theater party in Carmel or a discussion on money presided over by M. S. Lurio, Boston director, with Robert de Fremery and Frank Bille participating.

John Nagy, president of the Statewide Homeowners Association, remembered by all out-of-state Georgists who have met him in the past, and of course by Californians who love him as a brother. It was disappointing to hear that he was sacrificing his visit with us to carry on in the line of duty at the state capitol. Consequently on Saturday morning when Lancaster M. Greene of New York, a trustee of both the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation and Henry George School, called to order the panel on Property Taxation in California, Mr. Nagy was represented by Tom Sherrard, a San Diego attorney, who made us aware of the serious legal

action that has been waged in California against careless assessment procedures and lack of law enforcement.

Roy Davidson, San Diego director, brought a report from Basic Economics Education, Inc., showing that there's still another way to nettle the office holders; and one very effective irritant is E. Robert Scrofani, chairman of the San Francisco Committee to Reform the Assessment of Private Property (SCRAPP). You were promised a report of the full conference, 'tis true, but it was more interesting to listen to "young man of the year" Scrofani than to take notes. How we would like to present him to you visually and orally—we should have more politicians like this—and more Georgists.

Mr. Scrofani is a teacher—that's how he makes his living. Apparently he sharpens his wits on wicked political opponents with calmly exasperating good humor. He finds that few people realize the property tax is two taxes—on improvements and land. We must educate for a goal, he says, and for a sound tax program. We need the constant impetus of all these "seeds." But we also need legal action and such practical help as Messrs. Sherrard and Davidson can give. Finally our cause needs direct action in the market place. He is, himself, the best proof that politics is not a dirty word. "What if you do get a label? That's the way life is!"

Michele Hamilton, Homeowner editor, has a lot of charts and statistics in her blonde head. She knows better than most, how prone we are to lose ourselves in figures and surveys, and not get enough action. It's hard to see how local Georgists could resist her plea when she says, "we only have until October—so little time. Please come to our offices—help in any way you can."

Stanley Sapiro of Los Angeles brought a fascinating brief history which we hope to give you next month with more of the California story.

Sidney Evans of San Diego is the man

behind this story and he added a final word by popular demand. A lot of kidding has been going on about a picture of him in a recent full page newspaper advertisement, which cost a lot of money and may or may not have had merit. In any event it brought out a brass band for Sid—something he never expected but thoroughly enjoyed. One thing is sure, there is activity and involvement and lots of interest among these California Georgists.

An afternoon session presided over by Ivan Dailey, Ohio director, had to do with motives of those who contributed to the school. The freshness of the west was felt as one after another of the in-state members shared experiences. Robert de Fremery, a valued worker and board member from San Francisco, would improve on money and banking as elements in the courses. From the same city, George Parker was another searcher for truth who was vitally impressed with the Henry George philosophy. Elmer Weden and Duval Jaros, both physicians, confessed that the school is part of their family. Don Hawks of Los Angeles felt life offered him a new vision when he was introduced to the Henry George philosophy. William Truehart, former director at Los Angeles, spoke for the effectiveness of a personal and realistic program.

Len Huckabone of Detroit believed more thoughts on Ricardo's Law of Rent would increase interest in the courses. Martha Kohte of Chicago reported on new developments in the Institute for Economic Inquiry headed by John Lawrence Monroe.

All good things must end, and all Georgist conferences approach the end with the ever popular Saturday night banquet. Our much loved president, Joseph S. Thompson of San Francisco, was in the chair when not tossing off some of the comic gems for which he is famous. He introduced Dr. Elmer Weden, president of the Northern California Extension, and Professor Procter

Thomson of Claremont Men's College (see pages 1 and 3), and the program moved along with such dispatch that folks were out before they wanted to be. So they found other amusing things to do pertaining to song and story.

Sunday morning, and goodbye. John Tetley, New Jersey director, called for a few reports but attention wavered as bags were shuffled about and transportation arranged to points north and south. Nobody was surprised when it turned out that the conference will be in St. Louis next year. The Swofford-Alper team admitted to having it all fixed, with an offer of blandishments and something about an arch.

Robert Tideman who hasn't missed a HG conference in 19 years, got so many compliments as host and arranger of this seaside charmer that it must have been embarrassing. Meighen van

Nieuwstadt was his administrative assistant. Nicel

For the second time Georgists from coast to coast were the delighted guests of the San Francisco Extension—the first time was ten years ago. In the 16 years since its inception the San Francisco Extension has gained in prestige and acceptance, through its branches and splendid officers.

San Francisco today is a very different city from that in which Henry George wrote his classic *Progress and Poverty*. It has, like the rest of the U.S. and the world, borne out the dire prophecies he envisioned.

If only Henry George's wise and just principles had been adopted we might have been spared the serious present crisis of poverty and crime in the midst of progress.

An Ancient Leveling Law

THE Jewish Advocate in its Sermon for the Week on May 20th, considered the land laws of the ancient Israelite economy and noted that every half century a Jubilee year was proclaimed during which land that had been bought and sold reverted to its original owners—the descendants of those who had inherited it as part of their tribal possessions in the time of Joshua. Debts were remitted, slaves were emancipated and everyone who had suffered economic reverses was brought back to the starting line of fresh opportunity.

The Jubilee year affected individuals and, consequently, the entire community. Its purpose in the early agrarian society was to level out the extremes of wealth and poverty, and carry the nation back to its original framework of a single community of small landowners.

There was also an important ethical lesson which "is far from outdated

and whose message we do so well to have in mind. For in addition to its social and economic importance, the Jubilee year depended on the thought that the land does not belong to man but to God."

The sermon continues, "This is a useful reminder to us that when we speak about 'mine' and 'thine' we only speak a half truth. There is a great sovereign 'His' behind both, and the Jubilee year teaches us that the land is God's. So there should be a constant sense of responsibility in the use of all we have. In addition to using it for our own satisfaction and well-being, it should also be used with benefit to others. The idea of the Jubilee year is thus always to use what we have for good purposes; for we do not hold it forever, and what we possess temporarily is ours on trust."

Mr. M. S. Lurio of the Boston extension clipped and sent this appropriate historical lesson.