

Henry George School of Social Science

AN address to be noted and remembered—252 West 72d Street, New York City.—It is an address that marks an epoch. It is the location of the first permanent headquarters of the Henry George School of Social Science.

At this address, henceforth, classes in fundamental economics and social philosophy, the philosophy of Henry George, will be always in session.

Already plans are being made to reach the twenty-five thousand teachers in the New York City school system, to whom certificates issued by the Henry George School of Social Science will mean certificates of "Alertness" which are recognized by the Board of Education in considering salary increases and positions of advancement for teachers.

College students and senior high school students, as well as the general public, will now also be approached in a manner they could not heretofore be reached without a permanent headquarters that is always open, and where someone to give information is always in attendance. It is now planned to have classes in session every day and every evening, and to provide graded classes for those who mean to pursue their studies until they themselves are qualified as teachers. One of the aims the director of the school has set for himself is the training of teachers who will carry on the work of the School and thus enable it to spread its teaching and its influence everywhere, and thus make an ever increasing audience for the gospel for which the School is established.

In addition to the forums and the classes that have been conducted in the Boroughs of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Bronx, two special classes of thirty-five students each were started since our last report. These two classes were organized in response to a demand for an intensive course in "Progress and Poverty," and it is gratifying to announce the marked progress these two classes are making. The plan is to finish the book in eight weekly sessions of two hours each. Readings are assigned by the director that must be completed before the classes; the class being devoted entirely to a discussion of the lesson.

In addition to these two special classes, one class of about forty that meets every two weeks has been started in North Arlington, N. J. after a lecture there by Mr. Geiger. Another class, also as a result of a talk by Mr. Geiger, is being organized now in Ridgewood, N. J.

Also since our last report, Mr. Geiger addressed six classes in Contemporaneous Civilization, and their instructors, in two sessions at Columbia University. Prof. Harry J. Carman under whose direction these classes are conducted has had Mr. Geiger talk to several groups at Columbia College and intends to have him return there as often as the curriculum of his department permits.

One of the very important functions of the School now

that it has its own place, will be to furnish a library and reading-room accommodations for students and the public, and books on economics and social philosophy will be needed. The funds of the School being limited however, it will have to depend for books and tracts on the generosity of those who have such books and tracts and who, perhaps, will welcome an opportunity of putting them to good and immediate use.

It will be entirely agreeable to the School to have donors insert their names in the books they donate, or if donors prefer, the School will insert its acknowledgments to each donor on the inner front cover or fly leaf of each book. First editions, or other valuable books, will be specially handled and preserved for posterity.

Pictures and busts of Henry George also will be accepted and given suitable location.

Acknowledgment of all gifts, unless otherwise instructed, will be made both directly and through the columns of LAND AND FREEDOM.

In view of the present financial status of the School, and because such funds as it has are required for rent and furnishings, it is requested that, where at all possible, all books, tracts, busts and pictures be sent by mail or express prepaid; also that the name of the donor be distinctly marked on package so that proper acknowledgment may be made.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. Assume that the Henry George idea is the law of the land:

I wish to get for use, for a living but with no special idea of profit, a piece of land such as would be called at present submarginal, in a farming sense, but which might have attractions in the way of climate, scenery, etc.

I wish to get for use, for production, for profit, some first class farming land.

I wish to get a homesite in suburbs, town or city to build a home on.

I wish to get a business site, up to the highest value.

In general just how would I go about it, in each of these cases. Who would determine the rent to be paid the State, and how would the amount be determined? Would there be free competitive bidding? In case there was no competition at all, how would the tax be figured?

If I build to lease, in figuring my investment, I would include the annual site-rent of the land, would I not?

Would the advantage to the tenant be the difference between the rate based on the site-rent and the rate based on the selling price of the land, under present system?

Would rentals be figured by competition, supply and demand, over and above the base, figured on the annual Single Tax and the investment in improvements?

When you explain to a farmer that though the land would bear a heavier tax, his individual tax would be less, he is pleased with the idea of reduction. But he realizes that present taxes, high as they are, barely suffice to give him the public improvements that he feels he must have. With lower actual taxes, he fears that his greatly desired

public improvements would be curtailed. I suppose the answer is that he would get what he could afford, much or nothing as the case might be. But how would you answer him?—P. R. W.

A. Rent would be determined basically exactly as it is now, by the higgling of the market. There is competition now for all the land that is to be had, only that the price is governed largely by the speculative withholding of land from use. This speculative withholding removed, as "the Henry George idea" would remove it, all unused land would be accessible to those who desire to put it to use. Submarginal land would have no value and would pay no rent. If the climatic and scenic attractions mentioned were sufficiently potent to attract people in such numbers as to make some spots more desirable than others, rent would appear, otherwise, regardless of its natural attractiveness, it would be rent free.

"First class farming land" is such as with the same effort produces greater returns than lower class farming lands. Its advantages would be expressed in rent.

Home sites are different from production sites in that (other things being equal) they are lower in value and therefore lower in land rent.

The "highest business site value" will under the Single Tax, pay its full annual rent even though that be a million. No part of the rent will be capitalized into selling value.

Naturally, the site-rent must be paid by the users of the land. If the users happen to be the tenants of an owner of the building they must pay their share of the rent, but if P. R. W. means in saying "in figuring my investment, I would include the annual site-rent of the land" means that, as at present, "profits" may be added to such "investment," he is mistaken. The property of a builder, or owner, is his building, for the use of which, plus such services as he may render, he is entitled to payment.

Supply and demand govern all prices. Remove the incentive to hold land out of use, as the taking of the rent by government in lieu of all taxes will do, and the supply of land will be so great that its individual unit value will fall and thus the advantage to the tenant, and to all users of land, will be the lower cost of housing and of doing business. But this will not be the only advantage. The greater demand for labor will increase wages, therefore consumption, and the greater demand for commodities and services will increase the output of all producers, and all will reap the advantage of good times and prosperity.

The farmer, under the Single Tax, will be, perhaps, the most favored individual in the community. His taxes now fall mainly on buildings and improvements on land, on tools, machinery, live stock, etc., which often exceed by several times the value of his land. He would be relieved of all these taxes. The unprecedented demand for labor and the consequently higher universal wages would

enormously increase the demand for his products, and therefore his income.

While under the Single Tax the individual unit of land may fall, the greater demand for and therefore greater use of, land will cause rent in the aggregate to rise considerably, and government will have much more money than it has now for public improvements and services to the people.

Q. I am not positive that increase in land values, brings on poverty. It seems to me, the counterfeiting of stock, bond values, does. Where every corporation is permitted to print practically unlimited stock certificates, not even land values can compete with such an unlimited swindle. The thieves market where they market their counterfeit values is of immediate importance for solution.

To stop the right of corporations to print counterfeit property tokens, and to market them in gambling places, called the stock market, is where quick solution lies. If farmers and producers would organize they could secure power to apply remedies, but they fritter it away and elect nine-tenths lawyers to transact their business for them.—JOHN EHMANN.

A. Legitimate increase in land values due to increasing population, or to greater productivity, under conditions of freedom with land speculation eliminated, cannot bring on poverty. Increase in land values due to land being speculatively held out of use depresses the margin of production and depressing the margin can do nothing else but lower wages and create poverty.

To prohibit the printing of stocks and bonds and leave untouched the conditions that give usurious qualities to such stocks and bonds, would be akin to leaving valuables lie about with unlocked doors and then by edict making it a crime to steal. It would not do any good. Stocks and bonds merely divide the spoils; without them the robbery of the people will go on just as effectively.

Instead of stopping the right of corporations to print and market "counterfeit property tokens" wouldn't it be a more effective and speedier solution to stop individuals from converting public property into private gain?

Public Works and The Depression

BUSINESS is in a very bad way, with millions of men out of work, and, naturally, there are many different kinds of remedies proposed, to cure it. At this time, one very popular one is that government should start a series of public works, such as new postoffices and roads, and also finance the construction of new bridges, and the electrification of the railroads, and similar projects. Through these public works, men would be given jobs and they would have money to spend, and there would be created an effective demand for the commodities and services of business. If a huge enough amount, such as five billion dollars, be expended, it will cause business men to regain confidence and it should be the turning point to bring back good times again. If this reasoning be sound, no time should be lost in putting such a public works programme into effect. Let us, therefore, test our