

AMERICA REVISITED

BEING engaged in an exporting industry, it was possible for me to secure a passage to a so-called hard currency area again. With my wife and young daughter to bear me company I had the great pleasure of renewing friendships with our fellow workers in Canada and U.S.A. With business, sight-seeing and meeting Single Taxers, we had a busy time.

Approaching Montreal by the St. Lawrence route, so similar to sailing up the Clyde, one is not surprised that Scotsmen are so numerous in Canada. But it is pathetic to be faced on landing with the first manifestations of human folly by the inquisitions of the immigration and Customs officers, who generally act in a kindly manner that proves the job they have to do is incompatible with the decent instincts of mankind.

Coming from Britain nowadays it is hard to judge conditions in North America. People there know of their own bad conditions and inequalities that so much need removing, but to us it looks and tastes like a land flowing with milk and honey compared with our rationed and couponed existence. The volume of trade and traffic and the abundance of food and goods are simply amazing. Many articles are much cheaper than in Britain, in spite of the increases in some food prices that have occurred latterly. Curiosity as to conditions at home was intense. They are completely baffled that the British people, noted for defending liberty, will tolerate controls and restrictions that are inflicted on us.

July and August are vacation months, when people are scattered on holiday, so that at first in Montreal and Toronto we contacted individual Georgeists rather than groups. A day in Ottawa was well spent in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Owens, Mr. and Mrs. Barber, Major Code, and others. In Toronto we found Senator and Mrs. Arthur Roebuck, Arthur Farmer and S. W. Hall as vigorous as ever. In Montreal, Mr. L. P. Boudler gave encouraging news of the *Progress and Poverty* class he conducts in French.

In New York we visited the famous Henry George School. Although it was between terms, we were fortunate to meet Mr. and Mrs. John C. Lincoln. Mr. Lincoln is a vigorous business man although in his 80th year. He has succeeded Anna George de Mille as President of the School. Miss Margaret Bateman, who directed the School so capably during the war years, was also present. She is very keen to see our international work developed and much interest was shown in the possibility of a Conference in Denmark next year. Miss Davis continues to keep the *Henry George News* on a high level.

A visit to the home of Dr. and Mrs. Esty, two young enthusiasts in the cause, was a great pleasure. Miss Peterson, the dynamic Secretary of the Schalkenbach Foundation, took us to visit Francis Neilson, who, as British friends will rejoice to know, is still plying his pen as actively as ever.

September 2nd found us in Chicago, where we rejoiced to see the fine gathering celebrating the birthday of Henry George and using the occasion to get people busy after the meeting sending out circulars for the next term. It is a real treat to witness the activity that John Monroe, with his fine team of co-workers, is able to arouse. It was inspiring to hear the many short speeches of ardent apostles given under the workmanlike chairmanship of Edwin Phelps. In Chicago the movement has been embraced and sustained by many professional men, such as Judge

Korshak. It shows how educated people, if free from prejudice, can readily accept the justice of our policy.

On the eve of our sailing home from Montreal, Miss Walton, kindly and active as ever, had gathered a goodly company to our final dinner party, when, after speeches by the Chairman, Mr. Turner, Mr. Harrison and the writer, a barrage of questions kept things going for another hour. The Henry George cause has many ardent workers in North America. It was our good fortune to meet and renew friendships with some of the most representative among them.

ASHLEY MITCHELL.

LAND-VALUE RATING IN VICTORIA

IN the City of Kew, which is part of Metropolitan Melbourne, a referendum of ratepayers on 28th August decided in favour of levying the local rates on the value of land exempting all buildings and improvements. Kew has a population of 30,000 and there are 7,500 ratepayers on the roll. The voting was 3,202 for the change and 2,996 against. A referendum held in the City of Heidelberg on 4th September resulted in defeat by the narrow margin of 6,109 votes to 6,126.

These two polls are reported to us in air mail letters from Mr. E. F. Halkyard and Mr. A. R. Hutchinson, satisfied with the success in Kew, but gravely concerned about some malpractice in Heidelberg. Kew is one of the cities in which many of the greatest land speculators themselves reside; in the Studley Park Ward, for example, are many large properties with long frontages which will, of course, pay more under the change. On the other hand there is a large number of fine modern houses with the normal 50 ft. frontage which will gain by the change.

As for Heidelberg, Mr. Hutchinson writes: "The result has been declared against us by 17 votes. Even if this proves final it is a great defeat for the Town Council, which actually spent the ratepayers' money to campaign against us, urging everyone to vote the proposition down. The moral defeat is evident by the fact that we had a majority of 367 of the local residents' votes, and it was the majority of 384 absentee postal votes which decided the poll against us. The sitting Mayor identified with the Council election lost his seat. The count was conducted by the three Council officials and without scrutineers, the Act (which we want altered) giving no specific direction that scrutineers are allowed.

"The result must not be accepted as final. We have power to demand a recount before the police magistrate, and we have done so. We also intend, unless the result is reversed, to take action in Court to quash the poll owing to gross irregularities in conducting it. There is a deficiency in votes cast for the poll as compared with those for ward election, in one ward to the extent of 31 votes, which would more than alter the result."

Even without Heidelberg, there are now fourteen Melbourne municipalities rating on site values as compared with fourteen which continue to tax buildings under the old annual rental system; but rating of site values now covers three-fifths of the whole area of Greater Melbourne. Brighton and Malvern are among the places to be tackled next year. A notable development is that the Fitzroy Council, voting £50 towards the cost, has entrusted Mr. Hutchinson's Land Values Research Group with a survey of the territory, similar to that done for Footscray, which entails the "chaining" of all the properties. An enthusiastic band of volunteers is engaged on this work, the Council itself having no such records.