

A Word To The Wise

By ELIZABETH MAGIE PHILLIPS

WHAT is the value of our philosophy if we do not do our utmost to apply it? To simply know a thing is not enough. To merely speak or write of it occasionally among ourselves is not enough. We must do something about it on a large scale if we are to make headway. These are critical times, and drastic action is needed.

To make any worthwhile impression on the multitude, we must go in droves into the sacred precincts of the men we are after. We must not only *tell* them, but *show* them just how and why and where our claims can be proven in some actual situation.

It is true that commendable attempts are being made now on the part of Georgeists to reach "the people". Perhaps letters to the papers are effective, if followed up systematically. Petitions to busy people in high public places, or in large private organizations, are gracefully acknowledged—sometimes—and that is usually the end of it.

But more decisive action is needed. We must pick our men and our business institutions, and those in high public places, and hammer at them constantly and systematically. If possible, we should even challenge them to open debate. We must show them in every way how the adoption of the public collection of land rent will benefit not only their business, but the whole community.

It would require those of us who are thoroughly grounded in the Georgeist philosophy and its application, to undertake such a task. Unfortunately, there are some among us who attempt it without an adequate knowledge of all the problems involved, who do not know when to speak and when not to speak. This can be corrected if we will train ourselves for the task.

My suggestion is that a Committee on Arrangements be formed; and that this Committee be on the lookout for quarry. Opportunities are teeming all around us. There is the radio, for instance, with its political speakers, with Forums and Round Table Talks (which hit everything but the Bull's Eye). There are periodicals, such as the *Readers' Digest*. There are lecturers, legislative bodies, authors of social commentary best sellers. Some influential writer, speaker, columnist or public figure should be selected—and the Committee get to work on him. Systematically, one letter after another week after week, should be sent by members of the Committee. In our letters, we might ask our correspondent some direct question in such a way that will be likely to get a response of some kind. We will learn by experience what to say and what not to say.

I am sure that actual, personal and continued contact with influential public figures would be effective. Such a course is bound to bag some prizes in time.

Addendum

By WILLIAM W. NEWCOMB

I heartily agree with the view expressed by Mrs. Phillips. Any one who has gone through the copious files of Mrs. Phillips' bibliography on Georgeist action, as I have, would realize that she speaks with a ripe knowledge of the efforts that have been expended within the last fifty years of Georgeist activity. I should like to add a few words, expanding on her suggestion.

At the Henry George School in 1936, the Henry George Fellowship had an active letter-writing Committee under the direction of Edward Bell. It was the time of the Ralston campaign in California, and this Committee relentlessly bombarded editors and prominent men with letters. Among the victims was Raymond Moley, who in his magazine, *Today*, referred to the Georgeist reform as "crackpotism." The Committee refused to let Mr. Moley rest, and after inadequate excuses on the part of Mr. Moley—which refused to pacify the Committee—his secretary finally had to inform the Committee that Mr. Moley had gone to Florida for a vacation.

The workers in this Committee, with rapier thrusts that only a solid grounding in Fundamental Economics provides, demolished the fallacies of editors and columnists to such an extent as to demoralize their swivel-chair pronouncements. If a small, determined group could make their influence felt, it can be done much more effectively on a larger scale. Let our strength be unified in its direction and persistent in its efforts. Let us not only upset the serene placidity of the editorial sanctum; let us select prominent writers whose pronouncements are authoritative with great numbers of people. There are many whose thought comes close to Georgeist thought, and they should be won over to committing themselves more specifically. There are, for instance, Hendrik Willem Van Loon, Walter Lippmann, Dorothy Thompson, Kathleen and Frank Norris, Johannes Steel, and many others.

Who shall it be first? All right, let us select Van Loon. For the month of November let 5000 letters be sent to him, requesting that he write an honest appraisal of the world in the light of the Georgeist philosophy. For the month of December, we might follow the same procedure in urging Walter Lippmann to give generously of the space in his newspaper column to an evaluation of current events according to Georgeism. And so on—each month we would select a prominent personage, and "let 'er go." Sit down now and write that first letter. Mr. Van Loon's address is Red Book Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York.

Such a Committee should certainly be organized. It would go a long way in making the Georgeist influence felt by the public.