

SUCCESSFUL BOOK LAUNCH

Fifty people attended the book launch of George Charles' "Elementary Economics" at East Melbourne on July 9. Here is his reply of thanks to Keith Thomas for launching his book.

Many thanks to Keith Thomas who came from Canberra to give the address on this occasion, to the Henry George Foundation for printing the book, to Loma Sutton for her weeks of painstaking work on the word processor, to my son Barry for the cover design and Bryan Kavanagh for a number of graphs, my wife and family who have suffered for many years my interest in the subject, and to the many others to whom I am indebted.

Thanks to the University of the Third Age, who made it possible to produce the book for use as a text in the economic discussion groups. Thanks must go to Dick Croke who did the first editing and encouraged me to pursue the project. Gordon Wilson also gave me encouragement to go on. Keith Thomas' contribution was considerable and invaluable: his expertise, suggestions and encouragement gave the text a meaning and life above a mere statement of fact. Keith also did the index.

U3A members themselves, although they did not realize it, contributed much. Questions were raised which drew out points and these were subsequently incorporated into the text.

Thanks to those people who, over the years, encouraged me to go on, and to those who said I was wasting my time these latter spurred me on to greater effort. They issued a challenge which I was bound to take up.

I have always felt that there was a need to take a closer look at economics and why the development of the subject had not kept pace with the technology in other disciplines. It seemed a lost subject and I felt there had to be a good reason for this. Economics was an underdog which cried out for empirical fundamental research. The dire poverty, hardship and wars of people at the present time and throughout history make such an investigation essential.

Peoples and civilizations have pursued science separately from ethics and other humanities. Early in my life I came to the realization that economics was a union of these two branches of knowledge. Science and ethics were never separate and man in his wisdom or otherwise has seen fit to make them seem separate.

It became my hope that I could put together a short simple economic primer that was politically neutral in easily understood language. I have tried

to give an account of the natural laws and forces of economics by the same method that other sciences have used and which led to their successful applications. I sought principles which when applied would do something to dilute the enormous privileges and advantages that some enjoy to the disadvantage of others.

Education seems the ideal vehicle to pursue this end. The University of the Third Age presented the opportunity where this could be tested out, and I am grateful that this opportunity arose.

Some of those who supported me may be disappointed that I did not give any particular thinker of the past sufficient emphasis. I make no apology for this because it is all too common to use the enthusiasm for a personality to detract from the principles he or she propounds. If we are not careful we can emphasise the individual and overlook the principle.

I would suggest that the fundamental science of economics is a simple study and it can act as a guide to stimulate interest in a subject which is so much in need of ideas and understanding.

I thank everyone for showing interest here this evening. I feel it is support not only for the endeavours of the Henry George Foundation but also for those of the University of the Third Age. I thank both organizations and the people in them from the bottom of my heart.

"Elementary Economics" is a clearly written outline of such topics as wealth, value, production and distribution of material wealth, public revenue, money, monopoly and profit, tariffs and free trade, inflation, "the establishment" and practical applications. There are some informative appendices, including the Danish experience of the late 1950s, and some very illuminating charts. \$7.00 is marvellous value for this 95 page book.

SOCIAL GATHERING

Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Brennan are having an "At Home" - 46 Elmhurst Road, Blackburn (phone 878 9630) - on January 4th, 1992, at 12 noon to welcome Cecil and Helen Stowasser from Western Australia. Cecil promotes the Australian Rights Movement which staunchly advocates the use of revenue from site values in lieu of taxation.