

The Password

I AM very pleased to represent the class of Central YMCA here this evening (Toronto graduation), and I am very happy to receive this diploma which I believe was really more for bravery than for scholarship. Let me explain this. You are sitting among friends discussing the economic facts of life and you are talking maybe about natural resources. Somebody says for example, "where does water come into the picture? How do you classify that?"

And you say, "well, according to my terminology and what I have learned, water is land."

Now to withstand the pitying glances you have to be brave. But water is land! *Isn't it?*

I feel I am among friends here tonight, and I say to you, watch what you say in public. There is a hostile world out there. So if we co-religionists meet, as we shall, on lonely street corners and in quiet attics, remember the password—"water is land." (laughter) I figure the Hebrews used it thousands of years ago crossing the Red Sea, so why can't we?

Here is something that actually happened to me. A very good friend of mine left for the United States and we corresponded frequently. Then he dropped back to Toronto around Christmas time for a visit. We were discussing various economic facts and talking

about land reform when he said something like, "well, if I owned my own land and my own house..."

"Wait a minute," I said, "under the Georgian theory, you don't really own your own land—the community owns the land."

Well he hasn't written to me since, and all the letters I had written up to that point came back in a plain unmarked brown envelope. So I have suffered for Henry George and his ideas. I have been losing friends—I lost this devoted pen pal—and to top it all off, I came here this evening and got gravy on a new suit.

Let me tell you a little bit about our class. It was mixed—12 regulars, half believers and half—you know. We have an excellent teacher in Jim Ramsay, who, I believe, has taught in the finest sense of the word: that is he encouraged us to discuss and debate until we finally arrived at his conclusions.

For instance we disagreed as to what alimony was. We figured it couldn't be rent for the use of land, and it couldn't be interest for the use of capital, and it wasn't wages, and then Jim finally settled it. He said alimony was the high cost of leaving.

I would like at this time on behalf of the Central YMCA class to express my sincere and warm thanks and praise to Jim Ramsay. —Lionel Sharp

This talk by a graduate of the Toronto extension at its graduation in May, was taped and played at the conference. It was enjoyed so much that at subsequent meetings the "password" was referred to frequently. Esther Wayman, secretary of the Institute for Economic Inquiry, Chicago, made this transcript for HGN.

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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