

His lecture work has been supplemented by speaking tours of William N. McNair, who has done much effective work, and by a number of other volunteer speakers.

We deeply appreciate the fine spirit of cooperation that has been displayed on every hand. We believe in co-operation and have endeavored to foster this spirit by ourselves cooperating with other organizations and individuals to the best of our ability. We are naturally gratified by the many expressions of approval and confidence that we have received. We shall strive to merit this confidence and serve you and your cause unceasingly. But your officers can accomplish but little without real team work. Let's rally our forces everywhere, enroll every man and woman who stands for the great principles of Henry George, and build up a powerful national organization to restore the earth to the people as their common and rightful inheritance.

Address of Percy R. Williams Secretary Henry George Foundation of America

IT is a real joy to participate in such a conference of loyal disciples of the great philosopher and I fully appreciate the honor of being invited to address this third annual Henry George Congress assembled here today in the great city of Chicago, which has for so many years been a leading center of propaganda activities. We are gratified that so many have come to Chicago from all parts of this nation to participate in this Congress. It is a demonstration of their zeal for the great cause of economic freedom. Chicago has given us a royal welcome and we deeply appreciate her hospitality.

As Secretary I have been working for some months with the convention committee on the plans and programme for this Congress and I wish to take this opportunity to express appreciation of the splendid cooperation given by the Chicago committee, headed by our able chairman, Clayton J. Ewing. The thorough planning and aggressive work that have been done by this committee serve to further demonstrate the great value of having a live club such as this one in every city. While this Congress is held under the auspices of the Henry George Foundation, it is not merely a Foundation meeting, but a general conference to which all Single Taxers are invited and in which many organized groups are participating.

The Henry George Congress is intended to serve as an open forum where everyone with an idea to present may come and convey his message, where we can exchange both ideas and experiences, and derive inspiration for new and better work. The programme has been arranged in a broad spirit of tolerance and we trust that this spirit will characterize the Congress throughout its sessions, and that we may have perfect freedom of expression and

yet maintain that cordial fellowship that should exist between all who proclaim the great name of Henry George.

Two years have passed since, under the impetus of a rekindled zeal, the first Henry George Congress assembled at Philadelphia at the call of a group of prominent Single Taxers who felt that the time had come to revive the spirit of Henry George as a motivating force and to launch an aggressive forward movement to advance the cause of economic freedom. It was my good fortune to have a part in the inauguration of the Henry George Foundation which sprang out of that Philadelphia Congress and it fell to my lot to serve as Executive Secretary of the new organization. I assure you that I appreciate the responsibility, as well as the honor attached to this office, and mindful of that responsibility, I come before you this morning to make a brief statement with reference to our ambitions, our activities and the real problems that confront us, as I see them.

Our worthy President has outlined in a general way in his report the nature and extent of the activities which have been conducted through this Foundation and it is therefore unnecessary for me to dwell upon these. I feel that it is a very creditable report and much of the credit must be accorded to our able President, for he has given most generously of his time, energy and money, and thus has given evidence that the philosophy of Henry George is to him a real religion.

We have not, of course, measured up to the high standard that we have set for ourselves. What has been achieved represents merely a beginning. The Foundation has not yet been provided with resources adequate to take advantage of the great opportunities for service that lie before us, and what we have been able to do has been accomplished with a very modest budget which has had to be very economically administered. The burden of financial support has been borne by a comparatively few persons. With the more general support, however, that seems now to be forthcoming, I feel confident that our activities will be greatly extended during the coming year.

That "the great work of the present is education" is still true today as it was when Henry George said it. The people are still ignorant of the great economic truths and ours is the task of educating them. But education must be reinforced with organization. Much of the value of the educational work that has been done and is now going on will be lost unless we develop a practical programme, unless those whose interest is aroused by lectures or literature are harnessed to some plan of organized action looking to the goal of appropriate political or legislative achievement.

It will be observed that much of the work that we have done is along conventional lines, both in the field of propaganda and legislative undertakings, yet our campaigns, particularly in Pennsylvania and Delaware, have attracted an unusual degree of support in influential official circles.

We might congratulate ourselves upon the signs of progress. But we have no illusion that we are yet on the royal road to the Single Tax. While taking advantage of such opportunities as are afforded us, we frankly admit that our biggest problems are yet unsolved.

In the present state of public opinion, the only kind of legislative work that can be undertaken with an actual prospect of early achievement, is, of course, along the line of minor tax reforms, such as the Pittsburgh tax plan represents. For work such as this there appears to be no more promising field than the state of Pennsylvania. At least, this is the judgment of most of those interested along these lines, and it was felt that if the graded tax system in effect in Pittsburgh and Scranton could be extended to all cities of the state, or even to a few more of such cities, the achievement would be of great encouragement to those who are eager to see advances made in legislation. Hence, we have given our aid and encouragement to the promotion, through state and local organizations fostered by the Henry George Foundation, of the movement for the extension of the Pittsburgh plan. We have also sought to pave the way for the further exemption of improvements from taxation in Pittsburgh so that a larger share of the economic rent may be collected for public purposes, and there are indications of substantial support for such a measure.

But the Pittsburgh plan is a mere gesture in the direction of the Single Tax. Though perhaps the most significant advance for land value taxation that has been made in the United States, it is at best a very timid approach toward our economic goal. Many are coming to feel that there is need for a more courageous policy in the field of education and perhaps in the field of politics.

During the lifetime of our great leader, Georgism spread rapidly to all parts of the so-called "civilized" world and a host of zealous and whole-hearted converts were made who have kept the torch burning and carried on the work in this and many other lands with a persistence born of strong conviction. This work has resulted in many achievements worthy of note in the direction of raising more public revenue from land values and exempting more of labor products from taxation.

It is fortunate that the Single Tax is so readily adaptable to a step-by-step procedure because it makes it possible to obtain some legislative progress while we are prosecuting the great campaign of education which is needed to develop the popular support essential for a far-reaching change in our economic system. But there is at the same time a real danger to the Single Tax movement in the fact that the Single Tax programme is capable of being divided into a great number of small "steps." For while these "steps" sometimes could hardly be identified as having much relation to the ultimate goal of Henry George, it appears that many have attached so much importance to them that they have virtually abandoned the preach-

ing of the full gospel of Henry George on the ground that "practical" work is the only thing that counts, no matter how small or even insignificant the steps may be. If the great work of education in fundamental economics is to be sacrificed, the price we must pay is too great.

Just a few days ago my attention was attracted to a motto displayed on the walls of one of our Pittsburgh department stores, which conveys an idea that is worthy of some serious thought. It read: "The line of least resistance is a broad highway to failure. The easy way to do a thing is the best way only when it is the right way." I wonder if there is not a truth in this statement that we Georgists might well consider. Are we not in these days too much obsessed with the "line of least resistance?" Is it not rather the line of *greatest assistance* that we should seek? It is hardly possible to develop the line of greatest assistance, or in other words, of strongest support, if we allow fear of opposition to be the controlling factor. For that which is so "harmless" as not to arouse opposition must be too petty to attract great support. In raising this question for your consideration, may I quote these impressive words from Henry George which have perhaps not received the attention which they deserve: "Even those who oppose help forward as well as those who toil to advance. Truth grows clearer by opposition. All we need fear is to be ignored."

I think it is unnecessary for me to reiterate at this time that the Henry George Foundation, true to its name and great ideal, stands for the collection by government for the benefit of the whole people, of the entire economic rent as advocated by George. We who proclaim the obvious truth that the earth is the common inheritance of all mankind are all moved by a common desire to see the early realization of the dream of equal rights for all and special privileges for none. We deplore the great injustice and the cruel hardships that characterize the present economic order, and we know that Henry George has discovered the true remedy. But sometimes we seem to be of little faith. We appear to lack the courage of our convictions, that courage that characterized the life and work of our great leader.

Many have doubtless reached the conclusion that nothing more than a very slow and very gradual advance is possible and, having adjusted their minds accordingly feel that the only practical thing to do is to work along conservative lines. Some, on the other hand, taking what might be termed an ultra-radical position, would repudiate the entire ideal of any gradual adjustment and contend that we should sanction nothing but a demand for the immediate collection of every penny of economic rent. And yet, on the whole, I believe that the differences as to policy and method that seem to divide us are off times magnified out of all proportion to their importance. Such honest differences of opinion as persist after free and full discussion as between friends, are not of such a nature as

to break the tie that binds Georgests throughout America and the world in devotion to a great common cause. Firm in this belief, in view of many expressions of approval for the undertaking, the Henry George Foundation has sought to develop one great brotherhood that shall strive manfully for the abolition of poverty and the attainment of true freedom.

But ours is a great social reform, a far-reaching economic programme. How can we expect it to be regarded seriously as such unless we offer the people large enough "doses" to reach close to the root of our economic ills, unless we can go far enough toward the Single Tax to have some real effect on the production and distribution of wealth. Otherwise, the people can hardly be blamed for turning to other social "remedies", for they could not regard the Single Tax as much more than an academic question, something that might be of interest to some future generation in a rather distant day, but of no avail for those who would help their fellow men today.

I think it is safe to say that all of us would welcome a "half a loaf" but we cannot be content with mere crumbs while the great evils of poverty and injustice persist and inequalities in the distribution of wealth are, if anything, more pronounced than ever before. How can we make the Single Tax of Henry George mean something to the present generation—to ourselves and our children?

The Vision

ADDRESS OF JOSEPH DANA MILLER
HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS, SEPT. 10

IN the great imaginative literature of the ancient Hebrews which we call the Holy Scriptures it is said: "Where there is no vision the people perish." Is the American nation so lacking? Are we so busy running after the things we call wealth, are we so engrossed in the pursuit of self-indulgences that we have left the vision behind us? It would seem so. Our age is the apotheosis of material achievement. In the chorus of ephemeral overtones the still small voice of the spirit is unheard. There does not seem in all the volume of sound from press and pulpit and politics a single authentic voice. No wonder Chesterton is provoked into saying that it is unfortunate that the invention of the radio enabling us to talk to millions with enormously increased facility comes at a time when nobody has anything to say!

I think this audience would be puzzled to name a single writer of popular eminence, a single man in public life, a single group movement outside our own, that glimpses any real vision even in broken lights. We are to remember that even in our own life time it was not always so. The vision was with us in fitful gleams. The Populist movement, the Non-Partisan League, the Committee of 48, we all remember. But every vestige of these movements embodying some vague aspiration has departed. Most people seem content to drift along with the two old time-

serving parties, Republican and Democratic, both now wedded to the economic Bedlamite policy of protection. It is a time when the self-respecting citizen may serve best the cause of the Republic by staying away from the polls, or voting the Socialist ticket, a refuge always open to us. There never was a time when in politics the citizen's vote was less important.

A few years ago I sat in a great hall in this city as a delegate to the convention of the Committee of 48. It was an inspiring spectacle, those 1500 delegates from nearly every state in the Union, with banners flying and a great hush of expectancy over all. Here was not a gathering of office seekers—not a man or woman among them but was animated by a hope of something better for the nation. It was good to be here—for a few hours at least one could feel the exaltation and share the hopes that throbbed in the breasts of so many. But how soon it was to melt away.

Perhaps it needed no political prophet to foretell its failure. In the absence of a harmony of purpose this great convention broke up into confused and bewildered groups and drifted apart. Only for a few minutes when our friend Oscar Geiger held the Convention in the spell of his eloquent appeal—and never had he spoken so well—did it seem that this great Convention might declare for the Georgian principle, find something that would hold it together and start a real movement for its accomplishment. But it was not to be.

A part of the Convention melted away and marched to another hall where the Labor Party was formed. The band played as they marched along and this led the late Mr. William Wallace to remark that it was the only instance on record of a funeral procession where the corpse provided its own music.

Such vision as this convention had failed because it lacked the necessary apprehension of how to attain it. And it was but a partial vision after all. Henry George gave us a practical vision, for he linked it with the natural processes; he showed us how it could be attained; he accommodated it to methods approved by custom, in ways grown familiar to civilization and communities. He seized upon the machinery of taxation to effect this great change in the social order.

It is easy perhaps because of this to make two great mistakes. We may magnify these fiscal changes we propose as something important in themselves. We have indeed talked of natural or scientific taxation; there is no such thing. This is to concern ourselves with the body rather than with the soul of our movement.

One of the greatest misfortunes that can happen to a Henry George man is for him to become a student of taxation; the next is for him to become a tax expert. He is then in danger of becoming atrophied, impervious to principle. He may even become like our good friend, Prof. Seligman, and there are worse than Seligman, I can tell you. I do not need to tell you; you know.