

A Word With You

"MY BOY," said the Swedish nobleman as he sent his son on the grand tour of Europe, "you will be amazed when you see *with what little wisdom the world is governed*."

That was in the 18th century—and two centuries later, what else can one say to one's son? Except perhaps to add: when you see all the stupidities with which the world is governed, you will be amazed that the old planet still creaks along.

It is difficult to get used to the profound lack of intelligence in the world's high places. After all, we would like to suppose that the management of weighty affairs is in the capable hands of enlightened persons. A closer look at the worlds of business, government and education reveals that, no matter where you search, creative thinking and clear reasoning are extremely rare commodities. You're not apt to find them in noticeably greater proportion among our top echelons than among the "mudsills of society." What you find instead is a bundle of shibboleths and fads, inertial and emotional reactions.

A Chinese emperor once called in his favorite sage and said, "As you see, I am in fine raiments and you are in rags. Surely you will admit that this proves me superior to you." The sage replied, "There were two cockroaches. A wind came and blew one of them into a house, onto a table laden with

fine food. The other was blown onto a dung heap. Such, O Emperor, is the difference between you and me."

Go into the office of a giant corporation or a governmental bureau or any place where great decisions are supposed to be made. You will find—as anywhere else in the social fabric—personages plodding like dray horses, squatting like great horned toads, squawking like macaws, chattering like monkeys, running around like chickens without heads—but thinking like human beings? *Rara avis*, my boy!

And, speaking of animals, recent studies of dolphins have shown that these sporty sea-mammals have a brain larger than man's and fully as complex. It may be, say scientists, that the human species will have to give up the idea of being the master race.

A closer study of the social life of dolphins would be worthwhile. They communicate with one another and help their fellow dolphins who are in trouble. They do not appear to be having the same perpetual conflicts and problems that humans have. And they seem to be enjoying themselves immensely in their common property, the ocean—the watery Eden which they never had to relinquish!

The dolphins, too, must be amazed at the little wisdom with which the world is governed. Perhaps they'll do a better job after our stupidity has made us extinct.

—Robert Clancy

Vol. 23, No. 9

August 1960

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York 21, N.Y., 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.

Publication committee: Ezra Cohen, William S. O'Connor and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$2 a year; single copies 20¢. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.