

HENRY GEORGE GROUPS CONSULTATION

Pittsburgh, Pa., June 14-16, 1974

Over 60 friends from all parts of the U.S.A. and from Canada gathered at Chatham College in Pittsburgh for the Fourth Consultation of the Henry George Groups. This pleasant campus was also the scene of a joint Conference of the Henry George Foundation and the Henry George Schools in 1962.

These consultations were initiated by John Tetley, recently retired Director of the New Jersey Henry George School. The first consultation was held in East Orange, N.J. in May 1972. The second was in Arden and Wilmington, Del. in September of the same year. And the third was in Fairhope, Ala., April 1973. Each consultation has brought an increasing attendance.

At the opening session on Friday, June 14, Lucier and Ruth Rockwell gave a presentation of their work on determining ground rent by computerized techniques, concentrating on finding relative frontage value. Advancing beyond the traditional Somers method which depended a great deal on consensus of opinion, the Rockwells applied objective tests such as the number of people and the number of cars passing the site under consideration. Other factors will need to be noted but they can fit easily into the system. This effort is a notable contribution toward a scientific calculation of rent. It was done in Fairhope.

Perry Prentice also spoke and emphasized the importance of knowing the situation when we want to work in a specific area. Wylie Young spoke on the Georgist task as something more than getting a law passed - the philosophy behind it must be accepted.

A Full Day

The Saturday sessions were "the heart of the Consultation" and a full day it was. At the morning meeting Steven Cord said that we need a strong example of land value taxation as a demonstration. The New City movement offers an opportunity to achieve this. He suggested that a public agency buy land and rent it to developers; as a test case this would offer a greater chance for collecting all ground rent than land value taxation.

Mina Olson reported on various Georgist educational activities. She gave a report for Chicago, then called on persons present to tell of their organization's work. This included Noah D. Alper for the Public Revenue Education Council, Michael Curtis for the educational work in Arden, Claude Arnold for Fairhope, Robert Clancy for the Henry George Institute, John Tetley for the New Jersey Henry George School, M.S. Lurio for the School in Boston and Strethel Walton for the one in Montreal; and Mario E. Cordero reported on the Institute of Christian Economics. Messages were read from various Henry George School Directors: George Collins, Philadelphia; Harry Pollard, Los Angeles; Stan Rubenstein, New York; Mal McCarthy, Toronto; also Ms. V.G. Peterson of the Schalkenbach Foundation.

Gaston Haxo presented his message, a plea for national political action based not so much on land value taxation as on "land for the people." (He also spoke for the Henry George Institute and his remarks appear on page 8.)

At the Saturday afternoon session, William Newcomb asked, what do we have to show? He reviewed the history of the movement and pointed out that after many years of effort the Georgists have no strong activist organization. We have much to learn from organizations like Common Cause which in a short time has gained

At the final Consultation session on Sunday morning, Russel Conklin, former Mayor of Great Falls, Mont. told of an opportunity that has opened in Montana. This state has adopted a new constitution that provides for uniform assessments throughout the state; it also provides for local option for land value taxation. It is the only one of the 50 states that has these provisions and it thereby offers a unique opportunity for the Georgist philosophy.

A good story on the Consultation appeared in The Pittsburgh Press of June 15 under the heading "Unity, Action Theme of Tax Parley Here."

The Consultation ended with a consensus that many vital things were happening and that the Georgist movement is "alive and well." No date and location were set for the next Consultation, but whenever and wherever it will be, it is looked forward to with anticipation.