An so ended the Fourteenth Annual Conference of the Henry George School of Social Science—and the third to be held in California. With renewed inspiration we face the coming year and look forward to the fifteenth annual conference in New Jersey.

POST-CONFERENCE VISITS

ROBERT CLANCY

After the highly successful San Diego conference, I took the occasion to visit our western extensions.

First, of course, was the San Diego extension: many of the conferees assembled at the trim little white building which serves as school headquarters, and were guests for Sunday lunch, with Eva Maxwell a hospitable hostess. After this some returned home, some went for a visit to Mexico, and some, including me, went on to Los Angeles.

On Monday there was a meeting at the Los Angeles school, in the attractive building acquired by that extension two years ago, with director Bill Truehart and others.

By Wednesday evening I was in San Francisco to attend the H. G. School's annual meeting. The occasion was the beginning of the tenth year of classes in San Francisco, under Bob Tideman, director. The meeting was well attended—there were at least 100 present. Speakers included J. Rupert Mason, Glenn E. Hoover, Noah D. Alper and myself. Wallace Kibbee was chairman.

Thursday I attended a Commonwealth Club luncheon and heard reports by the Education Committee on how public schools should be financed. There was a good "land values bloc" in this committee, including Rupert Mason, Bob Tideman and Bob de Fremery — this last also a monetary economist whose ideas have taken root in the San Francisco extension.

Across the San Francisco Bay is the East Bay extension which I also visited.

Present director is Arleigh Chute, and I met with a small but earnest group at his house and was heartened to see how the ideas are taking hold. I also visited the Glenn Hoovers and the Hugh Changs, and was regaled with Chinese as well as California hospitality. (I did not go to Sacramento, where we have the fifth of our California extensions, but I did get acquainted with the director there, A. E. Hartmann, who was, in fact, my roommate in San Diego.)

Then I was off for a visit to Denver, and was treated to Colorado hospitality by Leoane Anderson, our director in that three and a half year-old extension, which was founded by Dixie Wood. A meeting at Leoane's house with a fine group of people showed that the Denver extension is making good progress. I was also able to get in a visit to Boulder and to Professor James L. Busey who teaches at the university there and is the author of the super-condensed *Progress and Poverty* pamphlet. (I didn't visit St. Louis this trip, as our St. Louis director, Noah Alper, was visiting Seattle to report on possibilities of opening an extension there. Nor did I stop off at Great Falls, Montana, but I was pleased that M. S. Lurio of Boston did go there to see Russel Conklin).

My mind crowded with memories, faces old and new, and all sorts of ideas and experiences, I flew back to New York stopping at the Chicago airport long enough to have a nice phone chat with John Monroe, Chicago director.

(L. to r.) Mrs. Mina Olson, Arleigh Chute and Glenn Hoover under the flag of freedom enjoying the boat ride; Joseph A. Stockman, Louise McLean and James A. McNally in front of the school's headquarters at 1536 7th Avenue, San Diego; a conference group at the entrance of the Lafayette Hotel where the conference was held.

STOP BEING COZY

P. I. Prentice, editor of House & Home, an authoritative magazine in the field of home building, again made a plea in the June, 1958 issue, to price the product (building) "back into the market."

"Let's not pocket all our savings from smaller discounts," he wrote, and "Let's really get after our building costs." His third main point is what interests us especially, and we quote it in full:

LET'S STOP BEING SO COZY WITH LAND SPECULATORS

Let's not pay 1968 prices for 1958 lots. Let's listen to Frank Cortright's warning: "It gets harder and harder to make a building profit on top of the profit the land-seller takes." Let's recognize the land price speculator as our public enemy No. 1, the enemy who sits and takes his big profit first while the developer, the builder, and the realtor do all the work; th enemy who did more than anyone else to price our product out of the market last year.

It just plain is not true that land for home building is getting scarce. What is true is that land speculators are making land scarce by holding millions of acres off the market to get higher prices (or pricing those acres out of today's market, which is the same thing in different words).

Census says there were 12,688,900 vacant building lots on the assessment rolls in 1956. Now the $50 billion highway program is opening up millions of acres more that should be cheap (even if they aren't), and new earth-moving giants are making it easier and cheaper to build better on hundreds of close-in hills we bypassed in our first rush to cover the flat potato fields and fruit orchards with little houses.

The one best way to stop land price inflation and perhaps squeeze out some of the past inflation is to get together and fight to put more of the tax load on land and less of the tax load on improvements. The shift might make it too costly for speculators to hold good home sites idle hoping to squeeze us for still higher prices later on.

Higher taxes on land would hurt no one but the land speculators. Higher taxes on land would permit lower taxes on houses and other improvements. Higher taxes on land are the only taxes that would help bring prices down instead of pushing prices up. Higher taxes on land are the only taxes that would stimulate production instead of discouraging it.

Our industry has to live closer to the land speculator than any other industry. We have a closer view of the harm land speculation is doing our economy, so we should be first to tell the tax planners and the tax collectors that higher land taxes are the one way to raise more revenue without hurting anyone except our public enemy No. 1.