

Pittsburgh

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OPENS

THE Pittsburgh extension of the Henry George School of Social Science had an auspicious opening on Friday evening, January 4, with an enrollment of sixty students. The University of Pittsburgh has donated one of its classrooms in the downtown branch on the tenth floor of the Chamber of Commerce Building, where all facilities and conveniences are afforded.

Richard E. Howe, formerly of Chicago but now an active leader among the younger group of the Henry George Club of Pittsburgh, is Secretary of the School and the principal instructor, and as a volunteer teacher is giving a great deal of time and attention to the School with a view to making it one of the most successful in the country.

A keen interest is being displayed and another class is in process of formation, to be taught by George E. Evans, President of the Henry George Foundation. The officers of the Henry George Club and Henry George Foundation are actively cooperating as members of the committee in charge of the School.

The present course will run for a period of ten weeks and follows closely the official manual of the Henry George School of Social Science. "Progress and Poverty" is the text book and the classes are being offered free of all charge, except that students when registering pay \$1.00 for the text book. Sessions are held every Friday evening between 8:00 and 10:00 p. m.

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PITTSBURGH ORGANIZING TO EXTEND GRADED TAX PLAN

An intensive campaign for the further application of land value taxation is under way in connection with the opening in January of the regular session of the Pennsylvania State Legislature and at a meeting held in Pittsburgh on January 3, a campaign committee was organized to sponsor and actively promote bills for the extension of the present graded tax plan in Pittsburgh and also for Allegheny County, with Chief City Assessor P. R. Williams acting as Chairman.

City Solicitor Ward Bonsall has prepared revised drafts of bills which will be promptly introduced when the legislature convenes following the inauguration of Governor George H. Earle on January 15. State Senator Bernard B. McGinnis and Representative John L. Powers of Pittsburgh are among those who are actively interested in promoting this legislation and in view of the fact that two similar bills passed the lower house by large majorities at the special session in December, 1933, the sponsors of the measures are optimistic as to the prospects of securing some important advance at this session, especially in view of the fact that the movement has the whole-hearted support of Mayor McNair's city adminis-

tration, as well as of large numbers of influential citizens.

Prior to the November election, most of the legislators from the City of Pittsburgh had pledged their support as candidates to the extension of the graded tax plan.

The new illustrated booklet, entitled "The McNair Five-to-One Tax Plan," of which John C. Rose, now Secretary of the Department of Assessors, is author, is being widely circulated.

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Mayor McNair is constantly addressing groups of citizens in clubs, churches and civic and commercial organizations, and these addresses are largely devoted to the exposition of his economic principles, thus contributing greatly to the spread of popular knowledge with reference to more scientific methods of taxation.

The Mayor is also speaking this month in Chicago, Ill., and York, Pa., and may accept some invitations from the South in the near future.

JAPANESE statesmen claim that their country is overcrowded. And yet fifty per cent of Japanese farmers are tenants who support themselves and their families from the produce of their tiny two acre farms and give the landlords from fifty to sixty per cent of their produce in rent besides. In addition they support the statesmen who uphold landlordism. Such "overcrowding" should be relieved by getting rid of landlords and landlord-controlled statesmen.

THE law forbids one unable to pass an examination in medicine to make a business of practicing it. It does the same way with the law and some other professions. But however ignorant one may be of economic laws no statute laws prevents him or her from passing as a "professional economist" and teaching economic science—or what he in his ignorance may think to be economic science—in schools or universities. Some such are drawing big salaries for disservices of that kind. Worse than that such incompetents may be elected to legislative bodies or to the presidency where they deal with the economic situation and pass on measures relating to it. No wonder that the economic situation is a muddle.

A RACKETEER is a thickhead who has not learned that certain predatory privileges are reserved for land speculators only.

BOOK REVIEWS

NOTES FROM THE MOVEMENT IN DENMARK

En Verdenstankes Vækst I Vort Folk (Growth of a World-Idea in our Nation) by Signe Bjørner. Nyt Nordisk Forlag, Kobenhavn 1934.

In her recent book, entitled "Growth of a World-Idea in Our Nation" Signe Bjørner gives, in interesting animated form, the story of "Georgism," as the Danish Single Taxers call it, in Denmark. The book is not a history of the movement in the usual sense. It is a compilation, in more permanent form, of articles that have appeared

in *Grundskyld*, the Danish quarterly; of addresses given at the International Conference in Copenhagen in 1926, and at other important meetings. The material has been knit together in more or less chronological order, interspersed with notes on personalities, those who are still working for the cause, those who have passed on; with reminiscences of particularly important gatherings and lines of effort that have influenced political action. And through it all pulses the rich personality of the woman who is one of the leading figures of the movement in Denmark, and who yet belongs to our country as well, by her early life and family connections here.

Denmark's importance in the furtherance of the ideal of social justice preached by Henry George, cannot be overlooked. In this energetic modern-minded little country, the purest form of the doctrine is understood, and put into practical action, as nowhere else in Europe. There has never been, in Denmark, any stepping aside towards land-nationalization or communalization, as in England or Germany, for instance. The backbone of the Danish nation now is the free farmer on his own land, and just these "small-holders," as they are called, are the backbone of the Danish land-value taxation movement as well. A movement which they never forget is more than a mere fiscal policy. They understand it as the first and all-important step towards true liberty and justice for the people of any country.

As Mrs. Björner shows us, the Danish Single Tax movement has lived through three distinct periods of growth, separated by intervals of dormancy, due in one case to the World War, in the other, to the world economic depression. It is just now entering on the third period, and promise of new life is given by passage of laws that have written a certain measure of land value taxation into the Danish political edifice.

Touching lightly herself on the first period, Mrs. Björner has given the word there to an article by Dr. Villads Christensen, historian. Dr. Christensen was a sterling fighter for the cause, whose death in 1922, in his best maturity, was a great loss to the movement. His position as curator of the city's archives gave him authority which he used to high advantage in expounding the doctrines of Henry George. His article on the first period of the movement, given in full in Mrs. Björner's book, is a record of importance.

It is interesting to know that the Danish movement, based so largely as it is on that typical Danish class, the "small-holders," had its start and its early roots in another typically Danish institution, the so-called "People's High School," that admirable system of adult education for which Denmark is deservedly famed. Dr. Jacob Lange, still a tower of strength to the movement, gave the first impetus in an article of his in the organ of the People's High Schools. It will be remembered that it was Dr. Lange who first rendered Henry George's most important writings into Danish. Dr. Christensen gives a graphic description of the controversy called forth by Prof. Lange's writings and the first meetings that grew out of it. Even today, the Danish comrades hold their most important conferences and conventions in these High Schools for adult education, a most valuable and fertile field for propaganda. Out of these beginnings grew the first Henry George Club, in 1899. It was not a very husky infant and passed out gently two years later. But its successor, started in 1902, grew lustily and was able to endure although quiescent, even through the war years.

Then (Mrs. Björner herself takes up the tale) came the period of second blooming, culminating in the Parliamentary measures of land value taxation for State and Communal purposes. In this the Danish Georgists had the assistance of the Radical Left Party, of which many of the comrades were members. Their success in bringing about some measure of governmental achievement led to the holding of the Third International Conference for Land Value Taxation in Copenhagen.

Then came the period of world economic doldrums and, as everywhere, the work in Denmark languished. For even Denmark, with its interesting and valuable economic innovations, could not but feel

the grip of the universal calamity. And amid frantic governmental efforts to improve the situation came protectionist measures which discouraged and angered the Danish Single Taxers. But the tide seems turning now, and the various organizations are going ahead with renewed energy, finding a public once again ready to listen to some more fundamental remedy.

Mrs. Björner does not attempt to hide or palliate the disagreements among the Danish comrades, the same there as with us or anywhere where there is an alive and vital progress in the movement. In Denmark, as with us, the main discussions as to ways and means hinge on the two divergent paths of political action or educative work. The Danish League of Justice, a political party of Single Taxers, was formed against much opposition, even from the leading workers. But it accomplished its purpose of electing several members to the Parliament (four, at the moment), and does seem to have been useful. So much so, that even those who first protested are now helping. The work of education is going on actively. And as a number of the leading Danish comrades are principals or instructors in the group of People's High Schools, the study of fundamental economics and just taxation has become a part of the curriculum of many such establishments.

The charming personal note Mrs. Björner gives her book, introducing many of her fellow-workers to us, with photographs and the story of their labors, makes it delightful reading. Even in its easy informal manner, it is a document of lasting value. And it bears a message of encouragement to us all, in its story of what one little country has accomplished, and what it is still planning to do.

GRACE ISABEL COLBRON.

A SPARKLING WORK

Sociocratic Escapades, by Francis Neilson, 12mo., clo., 319 pp. Price \$2. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London.

Who was it said political economy was a dull subject? He must have been blind to the screaming fun that is hidden away in what is taught as political economy. Is there anything really quite as funny as Malthus and the Malthusian theory, a curious caricature of the Creator at the hands of a preacher of Christianity? Or anything quite as subtly humorous as the Wage Fund theory in which it is assumed that labor, which produces all wealth and therefore its own wages, is dependent upon a mythical sum which nobody has ever seen set aside in some mysterious way to keep the workers employed. Due to its obvious absurdity this theory has not the strength it once had, though it bobs up every now and then.

Is there anything quite as amusingly ridiculous as the economic doctors at Washington busy with their fantastic devices. Some day a new Gilbert and Sullivan will embody them in some comic opera and the people of 1950 will laugh their heads off, but will say that of course it is grossly exaggerated. It seems unkind and perhaps a little disrespectful to picture the Chief Executive who gave away billions of other people's money as the Lord Bountiful of a spending campaign in which dollars are made to figure as pennies.

Man is an "amoozin' cuss," as Artemus Ward called him, and he is never quite as amusing as when he is reconstructing the economic edifice and piecing together the sorry patchwork of his substitute planning for the plan of nature. Marx, Tugwell, Richberg, Harry Hopkins, and the late General Johnson in his character of Coney Island barker for the administration—all are supremely amusing playboys amid the eternal verities they do not understand.

Because Francis Neilson is keenly alive to all this he has made a sparkling book. He sees all the funny spectacles provided and he just canters through them in a spirit of positive enjoyment in the havoc he is wreaking. He is having a good time and he shares it with his readers. If there is any stupid pretender who escapes his sharpened spear it is because he is too insignificant to be noted.

There are keen thrusts at Richberg, Lippman, Norman Thomas, all in surpassingly good humor. There is a whimsical defense of