

The Spirit of Henry George

—PRISCILLA DUNWIDDY—

Paramount issues are forever engaging the attention of the public. These issues may stem from real problems that should evoke serious attention. Sometimes, however, they arise from well calculated emphasis by self-interest seeking groups.

The major problems call for solutions, but the constant impact of these issues is like a wearing-down attack. Conscientious people who try to keep up with the issues presented in the news are likely to be under tension and unconsciously oppressed by unsolved problems.

But the moment we begin to screen these issues according to certain tested principles we find that many of them can be turned aside as meriting no consideration.

This leaves more freedom for meeting the normal problems of each day as well as the pleasant surprises and adventures. But the world has a way of swamping conscientious observers unless careful guiding disciplines are brought into judgment. The basic query should always be—what is the effect on the human beings involved?

If the proposed action is a palliative, it should receive only cursory thought. When, however, future generations are involved or implicated, the values become universal and one may feel assured that an issue has arisen which deserves one's best effort. It is within this seemingly narrow circle, then, that one chooses the objective and the extent of his support.

Once the decision has been made, there will be wiser and more effective action in the direction of a remedy. In the long run discerning persons learn to select more intelligently the issues to which they give their attention, thus avoiding much dissipation of energy.

A Georgist who trains himself to screen quickly the issues that are constantly being presented, retaining those which not only meet a present but a future need, will do three things: (a) he will save himself concern or worry that does not belong to him, (b) he will recognize directions in which to center fruitful interest, and (c) he will have more vitality and consequently more influence wherever Georgist principles are expressed.

Such a Georgist joins the ranks of those who do not simply take the world as it is, but who seek with intelligence to raise the world to a more meaningful plane of thought and purpose.