

Ralph Maurice Dreyfuss

"Maury" Dreyfuss and his wife and friends were a gay and smiling group at the closing banquet of the recent conference. We are glad to recall this, for soon afterward he was seized by a heart attack and died on October 12th. For more than 25 years he has been a loyal teacher, dating back to the school on 79th Street. His Saturday classes had an air. Students knew that he "spoke with authority."

What can we say of these faithful ones who die on the field of battle? We can say he has been a generous contributor all these years, but he gave far more than money. While brooding over his unique contribution we searched out copies of his correspondence over several years.

He had written letters which elicited replies from national magazines, newspapers, colleges, universities, foundations and business firms. But most voluminous were letters to 20 or 30 state and federal senators, congressmen, representatives and committee chairmen. Naturally the subject of housing drew his attention and he kept in close connection with the director of research in the New York State Division of Housing.

Letters were always addressed to an individual and stated objectively but firmly. "If we want to maintain a genuine free enterprise economy within the framework of competitive capitalism we must get at the root of our economic difficulties," he wrote to the vice president of a chemical company. "All taxes on capital and labor products are deterrents to production. We cannot play fast and loose. The communists have a solution, albeit a false one, but we put our heads in the sand and avoid the question."

Since he had a large acquaintance-ship in the movement he wrote to many Georgists. To one in the Midwest he explained: "In many of my

letters I do not mention George or single tax. I merely point out the foolishness of taxing products of labor. Of course any competent economist could see that I am a Georgist."

He was against "rulings or laws contrary to state's rights and local self government as called for in the Constitution of the United States." To a member on the House Rules Committee he voiced strong opposition to a bill which "merely involves the government in additional activities that should be left to private enterprise."

To a liberal Senator he wrote: "The increasing tendency toward socialization makes it incumbent on us to offer suggestions. As you no doubt appreciate, the present free spending approach and the heavy tax burden on labor and capital are adversely affecting our economy and hastening the day of reckoning through inflation and deficit financing."

When the repeal of the income tax was being advocated he concurred, but added: "if we are really to avoid possible bankruptcy we must take first steps first. Our lopsided taxation system is what is choking off our capital accumulations and production. The natural fund, the economic rent of land, is readily available, and its collection should be our first step."

Mr. Dreyfuss must have distributed a volume of Georgist books and pamphlets totalling as much as the sum of his generous contributions to the work of the school. It is astonishing to discover what a vast number of persons received the works of H. G. Brown, H. B. Cowan, John R. Fuchs, Joseph S. Thompson, and occasionally a copy of HGN.

This good man is irreplaceable and unforgettable. Sympathy is extended to his dear family from the HGS staff and from his students far and wide who must number many hundreds.