

Election Reflections

RUSSEL CONKLIN, an attorney, former Mayor of Great Falls, Montana, the principal of a business school and director of the Henry George School in Great Falls, was elected a member of the House of Representatives in the Montana State Legislature. A number of his articles have appeared in HGN, and interested Georgists who heard the enthusiastic address by Mr. Conklin at the annual conference in Detroit, in July, happily contributed money to his campaign.

Mr. Conklin will do his best to represent the Georgist point of view in Montana legislative action. He addressed the Kiwanis Club during the campaign and made a passing reference to "sensible" taxation, whereupon he was invited back to tell them what he was referring to, and on the next occasion he made "a single tax speech." The club's program chairman and two of its members are graduates of Fundamental Economics, and were under instructor Conklin's tutelage.

He will continue to live in Great Falls and retain his business connections, but will live in Helena during the legislature which meets the first of January, for 60 days. The other representative from that county is also sympathetic to land value taxation and together they plan to "do something about it."

James Mills, a spring graduate of the Henry George School in San Diego, was elected to the California State Assembly. Dr. Andelson, the extension director, said "he may be considered a Georgist for all practical purposes."

In the ebb and flow of politics, there is sometimes gain and some-

times loss. Naturally we are jubilant over the gains and disappointed over the losses. But underneath, a continuing educational job goes on. The Georgist ideas are sound. No matter how many times they are submerged they always come back! By one of those close margins which typified the recent election, S. James Clarkson lost in Michigan, although the Tax Study Committee organized by him will presumably go on. It has aroused interest in land value taxation through initial studies that have already been reported. The new governor of Michigan will be John Swainson, a Democrat, who is said to be interested in land value taxation.

A proposition which won in California will arise again, presaging conflicts elsewhere. The high courts in both Maryland and Minnesota have also found it necessary to rule that the assessed valuations of farm land in suburban areas must reflect its market value regardless of classification or use. The opposition to this proposition was well financed by contributions by golf clubs, and from headquarters in the Senator Hotel in Sacramento they filled newspapers with their plea.

They were willing to be taxed as before, all they wanted special consideration for was the windfall of increased land value enjoyed by the clubs through no effort of their own.

Robert Tideman, of the Henry George School in San Francisco, speaking over stations KGO and KGO-TV alerted listeners during the campaign as follows:

"What these clubs are really complaining about is that they are getting too rich. As the community grows—as police and fire protection and schools and good water become avail-

able, all at public expense—their land rises in value. This windfall is not earned by the club. It comes from the enterprise of the whole community. As the value of the club's landholdings grow, the memberships, which are bought and sold all the time, reflect this gain and trade at fancier prices. In three clubs memberships bought ten years ago for about \$700 now sell for \$2,000, \$3,500 and \$5,000—three to seven times as much. And they call that nonprofit!

"But instead of saying 'thank you' to the communities that hand them these 'unearned increments,' the clubs complain that their assets have increased so handsomely that they can't

pay the cost of holding them anymore. They ask that other taxpayers make up the difference and pay their taxes for them. . . . They pay from two to twenty thousand dollars for a club membership—and they need our help?

"If a few wealthy people want to get together and keep a private playground, put up fences and no-trespassing signs, that's their own business. Let them do it. But for them to say that the land they monopolize for this has been made so valuable by the community that the little man, with only a backyard to play in, must now help them pay the cost of fencing him out, is shameless and brazen impudence."



House & Home Interest Grows and Grows . . .

THE second large printing of the August House & Home special issue on land was exhausted almost as rapidly as the first, but fortunately another supply has been made available and while they last these are being offered at 50¢ a copy, 12 copies for \$5, or 25 for \$10.

Russel Conklin mentioned this special issue when writing to a newspaper in Livingston, Montana, and other readers brought it to the attention of newspapers and public officials in similar ways.

Enthusiastic subscribers to House & Home sent a flood of congratulatory letters, a number of which were printed in the October and November issues. These came from city planners, building designers, zoning consultants, professors, engineers, etc. Many ordered additional copies in quantity, and the publisher supplied more than 7000 reprints on requests from readers.

It was referred to as "one of the finest reporting jobs on the major problem facing our industry," as an "up-to-date report on the body of information on land," and "a realistic objective approach to a national problem."

A Connecticut architect said of this issue, "Since land development patterns are at the bottom of modern traffic problems, traffic engineers should be acquainted with its arguments and conclusions. It should be of great interest to sociologists and economists in universities where urban problems are receiving more and more attention."

B. M. Rodman, president of Claymore Homes, Inc., wrote: "This issue has done America one of the greatest services any publisher has attempted in our era. . . . Thank you for your efforts in behalf of free enterprise and not monopolistic capitalism."