

Fiesta Time - New York

THE Spanish Division awaited with great interest the visit of Hernan Sanin-Vermont, director of the Henry George School at Cali, Colombia as its guest speaker at the faculty dinner on July 14th. But delayed by the plane strike, he was unable to get there to report on his extended tour through Central America and his interview with the President of Costa Rica, who is in the process of increasing the tax on land values. In a message read by William Camargo, Head of the Spanish Division, Mr. Sanin said he believed there was no better place in the world than Latin America for teaching the same economic truths of Henry George, with its opportunity of changing the course of history in one of the wealthiest continents of immense potential human resources. Nor should we waste time on petty matters while others introduce erroneous concepts — the obvious fallacies of communism and the subtler errors of so-called capitalism.

After one year of steady effort on the part of Mr. Sanin, there is already a movement for Georgism in Colombia, and there has been definite influence on public opinion through classes, lectures, forums, radio talks and articles. He attributes this acceptance to the fact that in Latin America people are aware that they float on top of great natural resources but do not know the cause of their misery or their lag of 100 years behind developed nations. Such ignorance gives vent to desperation, which in turn becomes violence. It is imperative that North Americans realize the danger that lies south of their border and understand that the two continents are bound to each other politically and economically. Thus we must spread Henry George's ideas among millions who are suffering because they do not know how to free themselves.

On this gayest of evenings at headquarters, the guests were delightfully entertained with a program of Latin American music and the brightly costumed folk dances of Peru, Costa Rica and Colombia. Mr. E. Moya, president of AGLA, the Spanish Alumni group, brought a greeting. Bill Davidson, one of the school's trustees, presided.

In Mr. Sanin's absence, Bill Manning of Texas, a visitor to New York, obligingly showed slides and native handiwork, and set many people to thinking about pulling up stakes and seeking peace, freedom and the simple life in a part of the Caribbean named San Blas.

San Blas refers to a part of the seacoast east of the Canal Zone and the 370 islands nearby, and it is the highly restricted and jealously guarded home of 20,000 independence loving Kuna Indians. The Kunas won the right to govern themselves in 1925 after a bloody conflict with Panama. The presence of a friendly American warship in their waters proved favorable, and to this day the Kuna's term of respect for persons of any race is "American." They have repeatedly been offered modern machinery by communist countries but they wisely understand their freedom would be in jeopardy, so each offer is firmly rejected.

Their economy is therefore largely one of crafts, and only the women are allowed to sew on the intricate panels called "molas." These are in demand in the U.S. for substantial prices by women who appreciate original design. All work must be done by hand, no Kuna woman would be permitted to use a machine — so they do the housework, carry the water, and sew. What few machines have made their appearance are the proud status symbols of

the males. The natives are neat, honest, cheerful, loyal, intelligent and the villages are clean and orderly.

Americans looking for something a little different will find it here, but exploiters are not welcome. Freedom is rare and precious and must be protected, for this choice and fertile land could be drawn into the greedy maw of a military government.

San Blas has an enthusiastic sponsor in Bill Manning, who spent years brooding about a working example of justice and freedom. He feels we have transferred the idea of divine right of kings to divine right of governments, thereby creating the impressions that privileges and plunders in the name of government are right just because they are legal.

The same year that Mr. Manning heard of Henry George for the first time, he also learned of successful methods of growing food of superior quality. He had learned from previous experiments the importance to health of good nutrition and of food raised on rich soil without sprays. This interest led him in his search for a storm-free area with fertile soil and a minimum of government. The possibilities for development in San Blas

are limited only by the lack of capital and effort.

He has therefore encouraged a free association of personal proprietorships as independent agents, and he calls this MAPKA. Because there is a demand for the handiwork where it has been seen, he is fostering this skill particularly, though it is by no means the only commodity the natives have to offer. He welcomes to San Blas persons who would like to go there and work, persons with money to invest who don't want to work, and people willing to contribute both work and money.

As he showed slides of life in San Blas with its wealth of color, he must have convinced many that the ideal retirement home for low income persons was an island among the Kunas. Mr. Manning has arranged for two-week tours to the islands for \$500 from Houston, Texas. These include Panama City and the Canal Zone. On the island of Ailigandi there is hunting, fishing, swimming and mountain climbing as well as the pictorial life of the natives to observe and enjoy. For further travel information write Bill Manning, 1113 Sanger Street, New Braunfels, Texas 78130.

Next month The Henry George News will report on the annual conference held from July 19 to 24 in St. Louis.

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