



Donald H. Richman, Joseph A. Stockman and Raymond T. Bye in the new library at Philadelphia headquarters.

## Philadelphia Family Party

VISITORS from seven states gathered last month in the pleasant house where Henry George was born, at 413 South 10th Street, Philadelphia 47, Pennsylvania. Do you have books relating to Henry George, or other relevant works on economics that you would like to dispose of wisely? Please send them to the above address—Director Stockman will be happy to receive them for the new library.

The program in the afternoon began with economics rendered most amusingly on a guitar by Professor Donald H. Richman of Drexel Institute of Technology—"everything that happens, whether happy, sad or comic, when you get down to the solid facts, is basically economic."

Next Dr. Raymond T. Bye from the University of Pennsylvania held everybody's attention for the very good reason that he was critical, though objective, about these single tax zealots.

To be sure he was in agreement

with the principle of land value taxation, believed it ought to have more influence and suspected that it would. But he felt that Henry George was mistaken in saying, in his diagnosis of poverty, that all profits go to landlords, and thinks we tend to exaggerate the influence of land rent. He feels the benefits *do* go to the laborers, and that the percentage of income to landlords is a small percentage and is not getting higher. Professor Bye agrees that land rent is a socially created product, but says there are other unearned profits such as monopoly profits, also patent and labor (organization) profits, predatory and windfall profits, interest on inherited wealth and some kinds of labor wealth..

Henry George reasoned that if we took profits away from landowners we could diffuse this amount around for all the things needed, the speaker said. He didn't reckon with the tremendous cost of federal government

which does not spend as much as it should largely because of the amounts spent on armaments.

The basic statement that the rent of bare land is not earned is absolutely right, he said, and it is unjust that this should go on—the rent of land *should go to the community*. But we have to be careful in determining just what is bare land, and careful not to penalize man for any improvements he has put into it.

This economist agreed with Henry George's taxing method and believes it is a good principle, if you do not expect too much from it. What *can* you reasonably expect from it? Some who are living off land rent may have to go to work, and that would be good, every able bodied person ought to be earning. Also holding land idle for speculative purposes would be stopped. By this reform we would get rid of the tax on improvements and would be able to reduce our taxes. Furthermore putting this land to work would add something to the product.

He would begin putting this into effect, then, by separate assessments of land and improvements, reducing

the rate on land year by year and spreading it over two generations, or fifty years. Gradually the tax on improvements would fall to zero. Sooner or later we may do this, he believes, and it will be one part for improving the economic condition of our people. But it would not be a "single tax."

Robert Major, a Hungarian economist and journalist from New York, was in the audience and was called upon for an impromptu reply. He concurred in the warning against too great expectations, but said there is a basic injustice in social life which will breed other evils, and we must begin with this. For if the trouble were eased even a little, many pressures of the world would be eased proportionately.

As zealots, he said, "we are extreme only in our ideals—in declaring that we believe in a just society—and in the belief that for the state to leave unearned incomes untaxed is unjust." We are, he concluded, "quite practical people."

Julian Hickok of Philadelphia was the chairman. Joseph A. Stockman, Philadelphia director, and Robert Clancy, New York director, spoke briefly.



Newly restored room showing bed in which Henry George was born, also (at upper left) a picture painted by his aunt—both treasures from Agnes de Mille, granddaughter of Henry George.