

## Conference News in Montreal

**A**MONG the several press stories which appeared in both French and English in Montreal during the Henry George Conference July 26-30 at the College Jean de Brebeuf, there was a long interview with Ted Gwartney in the July 29th Montreal Star.

"Basically," stated the interviewer, Hal Winter, of the 26-year-old assessor of Southfield, Michigan, "his ideas, which are culled from the theories of the 19th century economist, Henry George, are that all building, including housing, should be exempt from any taxation.

"Instead, the land—all land—should be subject to taxation at its real value. This would be an effective curb on speculation, involving the buying of land and its subsequent resale at an inflated price. People wouldn't buy land if they knew they'd have to pay a yearly tax based on the true value as it rises from month to month.

"In addition, since the potential developer of property wouldn't have to make an excessive capital outlay for land purchase, much more could be spent on the actual building. Since the tax exemption would apply to commercial establishments as well, consumer prices would drop and there

would be more employment opportunities."

Initial steps in reassessing properties began in Southfield five years ago. As a result the population doubled and about 500 major U.S. corporations have built new office buildings there.

"But there's still a long way to go," the assessor said. "The state laws must be changed and, finally the central government in Washington will have to accept the plan before it can become really effective throughout the U.S."

Coming as it did at the height of the anxiety about the Detroit riots, emphasis was placed on Mr. Gwartney's belief that his taxation theories, if adopted, would cut income and sales taxes and high prices, and the slums "would disappear of their own accord."

On the following day many newspapers carried excellent reports on the banquet address of the Honorable A. W. Roebuck, long a firm believer in the principles of Henry George. As always, he delighted the audience with his masterful speech, being still keen, eloquent and mirthful at 89.

The September HGN will present his address and a further conference report.