

Eighth Annual Conference Held July 10 to 13

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL directors and delegates have concluded their first "mountain" experience, having met for the eighth annual conference in Montreal, a city situated, partially at least, on Mount Royal. In spite of Montreal's unique "foreign" features, it was, for Americans, foreign only in those delightful aspects which afford a change of cuisine and architecture. The hospitality could not have been more instantaneous or less critical. Even newspaper reporters had open hearts and allowed a greater amount of news space for conference programs and visitors, than has ever been accorded by an American city.

At a first day luncheon Stretzel Walton, the director of Montreal's Henry George School at 222 Wood Avenue, moved modestly to the speakers' table, taking with her Louis Crepeau of Montreal, a French Canadian, and, as the main speaker, Robert Clancy, director of the Henry George School in New York.

Mr. Crepeau was introduced by Miss Walton as a person who, having inherited a library, found *Progress and Poverty*, read it consecutively in 48 hours, omitting sleep, and on finishing, beheld himself a Georgist—the only one, he thought, in the world.

He has since become known to many as a valuable and generously hospitable friend of George's principles. Having already given careful consideration to the French text of *Progress and Poverty*, he is now at work on a translation of *Economics Simplified*. This latter book, he believes, may be very useful in conducting the French in Montreal, who compose 75 per cent of the population, through the intricacies of the basic principles of land tenure.

"After the first twenty years where are we?" asked Robert Clancy, author of *A Seed Was Sown*, taking as his subject "Our Twentieth Anniversary."

"Are we moving fast enough? Is there time? Will it be too late? Will civilization collapse? Must we not speed it up?" These, he said, are questions often asked.

"Henry George asked a similar question: 'Will it at length prevail? Ultimately, yes. Within our time, who can say?' Perhaps that is so broad a view that it may give scant comfort. Can it be speeded up? I say, no—not yet anyway."

There are already 65,000 graduates and these friends, Mr. Clancy pointed out, are showing up everywhere, on farms and in shops, schools, newspapers, offices, yes, and in government. "Here," he said, "is something building up. Chances of a graduate meeting another are increased. And this is progress—this makes our job easier."

James T. Turner of Montreal acted as chairman for a discussion on the community's response, in which Robert D. Benton of Detroit, David Goldstein of New York, and Joseph A. Stockman of Philadelphia participated.

Robert Benton gave particulars on a Detroit activity which is unusual in the school program, because it places trained teachers in our philosophy under the public adult education system.

He said that adult education leaders in other groups are always looking for more teachers. They will teach anything that people want, provided there is no ulterior motive—for the more students they get the more money they get from the government.

Under this arrangement announcement folders can be sent out by the fostering organization, which also provides the meeting place. No mention is made of the single tax and naturally the term Georgism is not used—the emphasis is simply on economic freedom.

David Goldstein, the regional director from New York, (who commented at one point that this was the first conference he had attended, and the best) told of New York experiments in sending out speakers to club, service, and school groups in and around New York City. The program began in affiliation with the New York Herald Tribune speakers' bureau which has for several years supplied speakers on current events for local club meetings.

At present about ten topics are offered from which the inquiring group makes a selection. Of, if they prefer to specify a topic of their own choice, that is also permitted. Mr. Goldstein admitted that at the start the enthusiastic Georgist instructors were inclined to "sell a viewpoint"—but it was soon discovered that the audiences sensed intellectual dishonesty in this approach. "Now" he said, "we analyze objectively any point of view advanced from the floor. We have found a more fundamental, more basic approach."

Joseph Stockman of Philadelphia rose laconically to his feet when introduced and with droll candor spoke of his "postcard campaign" which he characterized as "peculiar." With sorrowful humor he told auditors that experts in direct mail had considered these postcards so bad that they suffered with him and tried tenderly to point out the defects. When Joe agreed with them but kept right on sending out the "peculiar" post cards (which turned out to be phenomenally successful, despite, in one case even a misspelled word), the long-suffering critics often ended up by preparing their own postcards, at private expense, and sending them to friends.

For a straightforward discussion on teaching, the conference group, which had rather suddenly expanded into an overflow audience, moved to the home of the Montreal school, where Herbert G. Barber, director at Ottawa, opened the meeting.

James A. Palmer of San Diego aroused thoughtful consideration in favor of a visual aid teaching program. He pointed out results of his army experience where rookies were trained

quickly and well with motion pictures, whereas a purely vocal method would have required far too much time.

In an effort to find something comparable for use in Geogist classes, Mr. Palmer examined hundreds of motion pictures. In many of them he found sequences which gave useful examples that could be expanded into a discussion of economics. He says he uses films not made for us, but "there are few pictures that do not have a grain of truth, and you have to know how to use them."

"We need pictures made for our own philosophy," he said. "The most important of all would be one made for the first night—let's don't lose the first nighters! We should be as progressive in our teaching program as the public schools and the armed forces. We have to teach so much truth in such a short time that it behooves us to have the best tools."

Sidney Evans, director of the school at San Diego, but hopeful of passing the honor to someone else, wants to be free to make an amateur movie, financing it himself. He was therefore much interested in Mr. Palmer's preliminary efforts.

Harry Kuck was entertaining and earnest. He gave a graphic and convincing demonstration of his approach with classes, pointing out the things he stresses, and how.

"Let them learn something new the first night," he urged, and give them a sense of accomplishment . . . give them something to play at home." Here he wrote on the blackboard the words:

NATURE MAN PRODUCTS CLAIMS

Under these words students are asked to classify, for instance, a wild duck. He referred to Pinckney Walker of the University of Missouri who two years ago in a St. Louis conference session suggested giving students a choice, as, "if you had a choice of systems, which one would you choose—one affording equality, one according to your need, or one according to your contribution?"

Dorothy Sara, the third member of this panel, was the only speaker who mentioned The Henry George News, for which kind favor we are indeed grateful. She said she had already covered her topic, "Whom Are We Teaching," in an article in the June News, and hence she could take a little less than the allowable time and deal solely with a philosophical angle. "For we do deal with people," said the inimitable Miss Sara, who had that day been interviewed in the Canadian Gazette, primarily as a graphologist and secondarily as a Geogist.

Miss Sara felt the students tended to fall into four general classifications: the intellectually curious, the practical who translate everything into commonsense terms, the very slow who plod along at a pedestrian level, and the antagonists who heckle the teachers at every point and always take the opposite view. Since, in Geogist classes, they cannot be separated, the bright ones limp along with the slower ones, and this instructor therefore sensed that some solution should be found for the lack of challenge afforded the bright students.

However, in closing, Miss Sara announced her "new year's resolution" (each conference is a new year and each year she makes a new resolve). "Everybody in my future classes," she said, "is going to be treated as a top grade intelligence." This clearly met with approval on the part of the audience who was hanging on every word.

Violet Grier of Montreal, in a chic costume of imported beige linen with navy trimming, presided fastidiously over a session devoted to school finance. As important as this subject is we touch upon it only lightly, on the surmise that all readers are already donating happily to this forward-looking educational enterprise, and therefore do not need to be reminded that money *is* needed.

Verlin Gordon of Lima, Ohio, could not be present and Kathy Shoaf represented him. William B. Truehart of Los Angeles and Noah D. Alper of St. Louis, both directors, completed the program.

Miss Shoaf of Columbus issued a cordial welcome to all delegates to attend the second Ohio conference August 22-24 to be held at Lakeside, Ohio, with J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco as the featured speaker.

Noah Alper, considerably summed his talk up in one brief paragraph as follows: "Experience has shown that the personal touch is essential to raising funds for the school. Even those with good intentions put off action, and do not respond. Calls must be made. Such a campaign requires thorough organization."

William Truehart gave a carefully documented report on the Los Angeles campaign which was expertly integrated and interestingly interlarded with social activities. After experience with mailings of one sort and another this group also concluded that the results, both in financial returns and good will, are greatest when the approach is made in person.

At the end of the second day, after delegates had dispersed to enjoy according to their individual tastes, the joys of Montreal's cuisine, all reassembled for what turned out to be the most discussed session of the conference, with John T. Tetley of Newark, Robert Tideman of San Francisco, and James McNally of Hartford participating.

P. J. Blackwell of Montreal, who presided, pointed out that Montreal lacks a French text and also needs suitable quarters. The present school suite is centrally located in a residential district and will soon be redecorated. Even in its present condition the visitors found it pleasing because of the prevailing hospitality of those who represent it. This cordiality was especially noticed by all who were guests the previous evening at an informal supper prepared by the hostesses.

Mr. Blackwell told the audience that owing to the disproportionate expense of mailing announcements, in comparison with the return, a

few of the loyal but hardy Montrealers had volunteered to drop announcements in mail boxes instead of sending them through the post office. This, when one considers that it was done in weather sometimes reaching 15 degrees below zero, in a city where long outside stairways are one of the distinguishing architectural features, shows something of the caliber of Montreal Georgists.

John Tetley of Newark reported on a questionnaire recently sent to students, mention of which was made in *The Henry George News*. This provided valuable evidence regarding a future approach.

As reported in the *News* in July, the faculty and board of trustees have approved a plan whereby a \$5 registration fee will be charged for the fundamental course. This will include a copy of *Economics Simplified* and other lesson material. At the conclusion of the course, a subscription to *The Henry George News* and a copy of *Progress and Poverty* will be added.

James McNally said that among their students, it appears that even those who drift away have had their economic thinking colored for life. This is borne out by the fact that there is in Hartford an alumni group, eager for political action, willing to make personal sacrifices to appear before the legislature, and to make talks at certain sessions in favor of appropriate legislation as they have no connection with the school there can be no involvement.

This topic, always an interesting one, was perhaps most fully developed in the talk by Robert Tideman, director of the San Francisco school, already a known figure in the popular Commonwealth Club in that city, though the extension is less than three years old.

"We often say that we are working only for mental acceptance of the principles of Henry George," said Mr. Tideman, "not for their practical, legal application. We are not backing candidates for office. But is this answer satisfactory? If the school is working for acceptance of the philosophy of Henry George, it is working for acceptance of all facts of the philosophy, including the parts which appear in the political area."

The director mentioned that another way in which we sometimes escape this dilemma is to say "the school is working only for mental acceptance of the *principles* of Henry George," as if *practice* were beyond our concern. In this view, the school favors the philosophy of Henry George in *principle*, but ducks the applications. If this is our view we will advocate the exemption of improvements but will stop short of applauding the recent step of the Pennsylvania Legislature—especially in Pennsylvania.

The speaker then proposed as another alternative that Georgists do not have to say "we are working for acceptance and commit ourselves to chains. There are," he said, "two kinds of acceptance, blind and seeing. We are not working for acceptance of every word in the book *Progress and Poverty*, we are working for wider knowledge of the actual laws of economic science."

Mr. Tideman was another who referred to Pinckney Walker of Columbia, Missouri, who warned that we cannot give our students a ready-made philosophy—we must draw the line, not between mental and physical, nor between theory and action, but between *advocacy and analysis*.

John L. Monroe, director at Chicago, in his report on the progress of the Commerce and Industry program, used a projector to throw on a screen, samples of course materials and photographs of groups illustrating the step-by-step developments of the third year of the study program. In Chicago the teachers are referred to as conference leaders and classes are known as study groups.

Reports in company bulletins, and letters from executives, stated that employers are proud of the employees who take part in this study, and encourage them to continue participation as advanced students and conference leaders.

In a photograph shown of an advanced study group in the Clearing Industrial District, Mr. Monroe pointed out a supervisor of a large air lines company whom he quoted as saying: "This study should not be limited to our management club; the men in overalls should be gotten in on this."

Delco Radio Division of General Motors, as reported in the Delco employees' bulletin, now has a total of 37 employees who have made the inquiry. Most of these were under the conference leadership of Benjamin J. Russell, foreman, who was among Chicago delegates at the Montreal conference.

A tangible interest in this expanding program is indicated by the growing financial support of industrialists. There are now 22 companies and foundations contributing as guarantors, as compared with three a year ago.

Confidence in the Commerce and Industry program during the past year has been greatly enhanced by the series of luncheons and dinners which are usually held in the Marshall Field & Co. Wedgwood Room.

Lidia Alkalay of Boston gave a report on "The Course by Correspondence," stating that permission had been obtained for that extension to grade the local correspondence students, with gratifying results. Among an impressive number of advantages inherent in this method Miss Alkalay touched upon the following:

Only interested students will undertake the course. Further, it is impossible for anyone to proceed to the end without putting some effort into it. It is easy to follow up a student by mail too, so there are fewer "drop-outs."

No student is ever placed in the painful position of having "lost face," nor is there any hindrance from weather, temporary illness, etc. The teaching is simple and there is plenty of time to think out the answers even to complicated questions.

Boston has found the teaching of the correspondence course an enjoyable experience, Miss Alkalay said. The relatively small effort of writing a helpful letter with every lesson and sending a reminder now and then, has been more than rewarded by the result—54 graduates out of 60 enrollments.

At a later meeting it was announced that Boston had been selected as the conference city for 1953. Mr. S. Lurio, the Boston director, and member of the Board of Trustees, shared Miss Alkalay's enthusiasm for the choice, and suggested that it might be possible to engage a summer hotel in Gloucester for the conference. This would provide a resort atmosphere and something of a departure for serious minded Georgists.

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Excerpts of Conference Addresses, Continued

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Geoffrey W. Esty

"The principal interest in general semantics," said Dr. Geoffrey W. Esty, of Princeton, New Jersey, "is in the field of human behavior—in relationships with other human beings." General semantics, though hard to define, was shown to be concerned with human attitudes and feelings. The scientific meanings that words and communications have may increase human agreement, he said, and also human *dis*agreement.

No two people are identical and there we sense a unique point. Objects, animate and inanimate, are unique—that is obvious, except that we often talk and act as if human beings were alike, said the celebrated pediatrician. Since even the most permanent surroundings are changing at various speeds we aren't able ever "to say all about any one thing"—and because we are unique we say different things about it.

Referring to any important principle, we always tell our particular version of it, and that's why all people can never see and interpret anything in the same way. Each is interpreting according to environmental influence. Therefore, as teachers, "you will not be disappointed," he said, "when students fail to understand because of blocks."

If we agree that we can't say everything about any given thing, Dr. Esty postulated, then we tend to think in either/or terms. In nature things are actually in degrees of difference, and if we think in that direction we tend to be less dogmatic.

Dr. Esty, who is a trustee both of the New Jersey and New York Henry George Schools, suggested that we should teach *some* fundamental of economics, rather than *all* the fundamentals—since we can't teach them all anyway. We have a tendency to think in terms of single causes, he said, rather than in a multiplicity of causes. That is, in utilizing a word such as wealth we can relate it to some recognizable form of nature. Wealth can be used in millions of ways, we can give a concept of the word (not a definition), and we can define the concept, or symbol.

As might be expected, an interesting discussion developed from this valuable induction into deeper communication. Here was perhaps the most vital case for the defense of *analysis* as against *advocacy*, and the ringing challenge not to be dogmatic was gratefully accepted by those present.

Stuart Goodrick introduced Dr. Esty and indicated that he and others in Montreal were such earnest students of general semantics that on evenings when both semantics and economics were being discussed concurrently, a difficult choice had to be made.

Alexander M. Goldfinger

Alexander M. Goldfinger of Newark took over the luncheon address assigned to Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Schalkenbach Foundation in New York, who could not be present. Mr. Goldfinger, dean of the New Jersey Henry George School, is also a trustee of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, and was therefore familiar with its publishing and educational program.

He gave a short history of the foundation and spoke of the new edition of *Progress and Poverty* which will be ready this fall. The quarterly *Journal of American Sociology and Eco-*

nomics, published by the foundation, was cited as gaining steadily in prestige among educators in the universities and colleges.

As a further step in acting as "a servant" of the school to influence education in economics, Mr. Goldfinger explained the purpose behind the essay contest recently conducted on the college level, the results of which were noted in the May Henry George News.

Mr. Goldfinger was introduced by Leonard C. Huckabone, who, with Mrs. Huckabone, a smiling, gracious authority on dining-out, were among the Montrealers we shall long remember.

John D. Gilmour

The conference closed with a Sunday morning breakfast presided over by Herbert T. Owens of Montreal. It ended reluctantly, but with repeated expressions of delight and appreciation—and the groups of friendly Georgists were slow to disperse.

John D. Gilmour, a forester and Montreal resident, whose letters to the News have attracted attention this past year, spoke in masterly fashion of "Taxation of Natural Resources." It is regrettable that since the four days were packed with so many good speeches, this, like the others, must be radically shortened.

Mr. Gilmour said, "Natural resources fall into two different classes—self perpetuating and non-perpetuating. If managed properly the former can be increased—under bad use these resources, which should be permanent, may be wasted." The taxation of forest resources is difficult and intricate, but, as pointed out, if anyone has a grasp of this particular phase of taxation he finds it relatively easy to assess any resource.

Land which carries a stand of virgin timber is a complex biological entity, which, as Mr. Gilmour stated, Nature has taken aeons of time to produce. Foresters can evaluate such forests, for the value of stumpage is determinable. At present, clear-cutting of all merchantable timber at one operation is being used widely over Canada's extensive timber area, but this is a wasteful method. After clear cutting there is no chance of another cut for a very long period.

Yield taxes are applied in 14 states in the United States on timber cut from freehold lands—these as a rule are substituted for annual property taxes on timber and are a "bad tax." Until agricultural crops are taxed the speaker felt there could be no justice in taxing growing trees.

"What is," he asked, "the 1952 crop of a stand of timber? It is growing now, and when completed will consist of one ring just beneath the bark, on every living tree on the area. Suppose that the crop must wait until 1980 before it can be harvested. Some of the trees probably will die and decay, but so far as it survives, a property tax will have been paid 28 times over on the same crop. With interest the taxes may amount to more than the final stumpage value. The owner has been robbed more or less of the whole value of the crop which he has carried through risk of fire loss—an un-insurable risk—all those years."

Transient resources such as mines, quarries, oil wells, natural gas reserves, etc., present a new set of problems, since most of these resources are harder to discover than forests, and expensive underground studies are involved. Exploration expenses should be recovered out of profits before any taxes are exacted, the for-

ester said, so that new discoveries will be encouraged.

In the Province of Alberta where, except for certain old titles, freehold titles cover only the surface (the government retains petroleum and gas rights), but the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Hudson's Bay Company have land under old titles whereby they do own them.

Here the company pays a comparatively small amount to obtain the rights to explore a certain area. If they discover oil or gas they have the right to choose a certain percentage of the area for themselves, the rest reverts to the government. The remainder, being more or less proven ground, is auctioned by the government to the highest bidder. There is a further tax on oil production on a sliding scale, levied monthly on the basis of monthly production. This method was said to be working satisfactorily for all concerned.

"The assessment of natural resources on an annual rental basis seems quite simple in the case of renewable resources," Mr. Gilmour summarized, "very difficult in the case of all the others."

Hiram B. Loomis

Hiram B. Loomis of Chicago the second "breakfast speaker," endeared himself to the Georgist audience by his clear and forthright way of presenting principles which he understands so well (he was formerly a principal himself—in one of Chicago's high schools).

Suggesting that Henry George represents government as the agency by which common property is administered for the common benefit, Mr. Loomis proposed to consider the voice government should have in the administration of land in cases in which water is involved, such as the water supply of cities, and the handling of oil fields along the coast.

Speaking somewhat in parable, Mr. Loomis told of a river which as a boy in Hartford, he used to love. Recently on a visit to Hartford he looked for the river and was told that it was in a pipe. Why? To save the citizenry from the effects of flooding. "But," said Mr. Loomis, "I lived here the first thirty years of my life and I never saw Bushnell Park seriously flooded." He was told that it happened only once, but that was enough to cause sufficient agreement in the community to have the bend cut off so that the river now flows underground on its journey to the sea, and Hartford boys and girls can no longer cross on the old stepping stones, nor will men and women ever again sit under the shade trees by the bank.

Another nostalgic episode from the speaker's youth concerned a picnic among the Connecticut oyster beds, staked out by surveyors quite a distance from the shore. He spoke of freedom to dig clams anywhere along the coast but questioned whether one would have the same freedom to bore for oil along the coast of Texas.

"Those oil lands are too valuable," he said, "and the community should step in to administer the common property for the common benefit. But how large is the community that is concerned?"

"Then I think of the English in Hong Kong, of the Dutch in the East Indies, and of the French in Southeast Asia," Mr. Loomis continued. "I think of the enormous cost of armament; and I ask myself if there is any possibility seriously to attack the income tax problem without, at the same time, giving at least an approximate answer to the land question. So

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Conference Addresses, Concluded

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long as we have war, and we have war today, men will have to pay in taxes a large part of the income that would ethically be their private property in time of peace. The fundamental question today is the land question."

Referring to the St. Lawrence River project the speaker indicated how two large groups were involved, and one would win while the other would fail. "The decision," he insisted, "rests squarely on the community in its organized form of government, and it is the function and the duty of government to make the decision."

J. Rupert Mason

Patrick Haddon of Montreal opened the most *splendide* session of the conference—the banquet at The Queen's Hotel—with about 130 in attendance. Addresses by Colonel E. C. Harwood of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and Senator Arthur W. Roebuck of Toronto, are being treated elsewhere in this issue. The third speaker, J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco is president of the International Union which will convene in Denmark this month. The September Henry George News will carry as complete a report of that important congress as we can gather from this side of the ocean.

Mr. Mason said that those political structures which had ignored Henry George's principles had collapsed. On the other hand, in certain parts of the world, namely, California, Denmark, New Zealand, Israel and Australia, he believed these principles were in evidence.

The recent unanimous decision in Pennsylvania in favor of a bill drafted by Henry George men, is of course very encouraging. The speaker also mentioned that in Spain certain religious publications had published articles about Henry George. The London Times, it was pointed out, recently gave two full pages to a review of the book *Henry George: Citizen of the World* and had summed up the review with the statement, "Marx and Henry George are the opposite poles of their era."

California's Ailen Land Law was cited as showing the influence of Henry George. But the most romantic example is perhaps that of Denmark, where the Justice party has made striking gains. There the people have been told: "The Communists offer you land, the Western democracies offer you liberty—support the Justice party if you desire liberty *and* land."

"Let's keep our eye on Denmark," said Mr. Mason, "where people can escape tyranny whether from the extreme right or extreme left."