

## Serious Thinking in a Summer Setting at Lakeside

**T**HE Third Annual Conference of the Ohio Henry George School got off to a brisk start on Friday, August 14th, and came to a flying finish on Sunday, August 16th. Held, as last year, at Lakeside, a Lake Erie resort, the conference attracted about 35 Ohioans, plus visitors from New York, Philadelphia and Chicago.

The program opened on Friday evening with a talk by Joseph A. Stockman, director of the Philadelphia Henry George School, on "The Sense and Nonsense of the Chinese." He delineated the many-sided meanings of the "ideographs" which the Chinese use in writing. Some of the gems of Oriental philosophy expressed were: "The way to master Nature is to serve Nature"; "When a thing reaches its limit, it turns around"; "A great man never loses the heart of a child."

### Buzz Session

Saturday morning was devoted to a "buzz session" conducted by Robert Clancy, New York director, on "Some Problems in Applying the Single Tax." After presenting the problems, Mr. Clancy asked the meeting to break up into groups of five or six people, each group to take up one question and "buzz" it among themselves for about a half-hour. After the buzz, the volunteer chairman of each group reported to the entire meeting a summary of his group's discussion. An outline of this buzz session follows:

1. (Chairman, James Weis): "Is there any method for rent collection besides taxation that can be applied generally?" The consensus was that the method of taxation was the most practical for general application.

2. (Chairman, Joseph A. Stockman): "How would you, as an assessor, go about determining land values?" The market, this group agreed, was the thing to watch. What people will competitively pay for the purchase or rental of land should be the basic factor in assessment. Block studies have revealed an average of \$2,000 in land values per person.

3. (Chairman, Harry Kuck): "How would you determine the tax rate so as to collect full ground rent?" Discussion brought out that since selling price would fall with the increasing tax rate, the tax should be imposed on the annual rental value, and should be nearly 100%, leaving a percentage to the owner for his services as a collecting agent for the state.

4. (Chairman, John W. Weir): How should rent be allocated, as between local, state and federal government?" This group came up with the idea that all land taxation be done locally; that the state collect its share from the local governments; and that the federal government collect its share from the states.

5. (Chairman, Leonard Garver): "Should semi-public organizations like churches and colleges be exempt from the rent tax?" The chairman expressed the sentiment of this group on exemption as the preacher did on sin — "I'm agin' it." It was felt that no exemptions from the rent tax should be granted.

6. (Chairman, George Menninger): "Should people who have purchased land just before the single tax is applied be compensated?" Like the exemption group, the compensation group was "agin' it." It was felt that the relief from other taxes and the general improvement would be ample compensation. Also, it was suggested that notice of the new system would surely be given long enough in advance to protect investors.

### "Land of No Tax"

On Saturday afternoon, John W. Weir of Cleveland gave a report of the annual national School conference held in Boston in July. (See August Henry George News.) "While at Boston," he said, "I was given a much wider view of the scope the School through its various extensions, has developed." He closed with an admonition that we still have much to do yet in education and that we ought to explore all possible avenues.

Following Mr. Weir's report, Walt Rybeck of Dayton gave his report on a remote corner of the globe — the Galapagos Islands in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Ecuador—"land of no tax." Illustrating his talk with colored slides, Mr. Rybeck explained that the Galapagos represent an "escape from civilization" for the few hundred who inhabit the islands. They are highly individualistic, do not usually welcome newcomers or visitors, and give one another a wide berth—but they are surprisingly high in culture and education. The slides also revealed a wealth of natural beauty on the islands and friendly wild animals and birds.

A dinner was held Saturday evening at the Lakeside Hotel, with Salom Rizk as the featured speaker. Mr. Rizk, author of "Syrian Yankee," spoke of the Old World and the New World. Intimately associated with both, he said that the hatreds and oppressions rampant in the Old World have kept it down, and America has developed and become great because it broke away from all this; but he warned that the current wave of fear and suspicion does not belong in America and that it must

not follow the ways of the Old World, but remain great and free. Mr. Rizk emphasized his message by telling of a trip he made recently to the Near East and of the seething discontent and poverty there. He closed with an appreciation of the high-mindedness and understanding of Georgist audiences.

### "Wild Ideas" Prove Sensible

The Conference wound up with a meeting on Sunday morning called a "Wild Ideas Session." Nothing had been scheduled in advance for this session, but an amazing burst of fruitful ideas and solid discussions developed, far from "wild."

Joe Stockman broached the idea of getting other groups interested in the George philosophy. Curiosity is aroused, he said, by holding back. He said he often goes to meetings and never says a word — then people come to him.

Edwin Esten of Lima presented an interesting chart he had developed, showing a mathematical correlation between productivity, exchange value, and rent, wages and interest.

Robert Clancy put forward the idea of gradually increasing the School effort so that there would be an increasing number of graduates year by year; and he proposed that a goal be set so that by the School's fiftieth year a maximum number of graduates will have been gained throughout the country.

Lloyd Stapleton of Toledo, a newcomer who has made a study of group work, offered his proposal for extending Georgist influence. Work through individuals who may become "centers of influence." Pay a personal call on a prospect. After pleasant discussion, perhaps leave "Progress and Poverty" with him. Call back some time later, and without pressure, take up the thread. Through this personal development, new leaders can be made. Mr. Stapleton concluded with quotations from "Progress and Poverty", and this led to a meditative discussion on George's moral and spiritual values.

Alice Schweibert of Columbus, another newcomer, who leads an adult education program for the Farm Bureau, raised the question of continuing participation by students who have completed the course. We cannot assume that his Henry George study will tie him to us, she averred. We must know social behavior.

After this remarkable session, the Conference adjourned. The weather had been fine and the press publicity good. (There was a feature story of the Conference in the Toledo Blade.) Planning had been well done under the direction of Verlin D. Gordon, modest Ohio School director. Harry Kuck, Honorary Dean in Ohio, served ably as sergeant-at-arms throughout. There was every reason to turn from this rich conference stimulated, and as advised at the end of the printed program, "go home and go to work."