

"Better Cities"



ON every HGS conference program a place of honor is accorded to the Schalkenbach Foundation in the person of its Executive Secretary Miss V. G. Peterson, who always has a significant contribution to make. This year conferees were privileged to see "Better Cities," a 30-minute color film, and the second one sponsored by RSF.

The film was graciously introduced by Miss Peterson who told of the vicissitudes encountered in the development of a suitable theme. Both she and Henry Cramer of San Diego (who acted as chairman) testified that this premiere showing was in a very real sense a memorial to the late Sidney G. Evans, a frequent conference visitor. The Foundation's first film, "Land — and Space to Grow," which is still in demand, was also made at Evans' suggestion and with his financial help.

"Better Cities" starts out with the challenging question why private enterprise, usually so responsive to the public needs, cannot meet the housing shortage. The answer, strongly put forward in the next twenty-eight minutes, is that by taxing improvements too much and land values too little we keep land prices too high and punish the builder or improver for his enterprise. In a word, we harness the profit motive backwards. Appearing in the picture in support of this claim are such well known spokesmen as Mason Gaffney of the University of Wisconsin (Milwaukee) and Dick Netzer of the New York University School of Public Administration, both members of the Academic Advisory Council of the HGS. Also Gene C. Brewer, former president of U.S. Plywood Co., Lowell

C. Harriss of Columbia University, Robert Hutchins, Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions, and Carl Madden of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce.

After the "Better Cities" film has kept some of its immediate appointments, additional prints will be made and it will be available through professional film libraries for public and private showings.

Six years ago the RSF established a Committee on Taxation, Resources and Economic Development, of which Weld S. Carter of Chicago is Executive Secretary. Mr. Carter, who was present, described TRED as a voluntary association of academic economists whose purpose is to stimulate research, writing and discussion in the important but neglected field of natural resource taxation. It sponsors annual conferences and publishes the proceedings.

Three of these volumes are now available through the University of Wisconsin Press, Box 1379, Madison, Wisconsin, 53701. They are *Extractive Resources and Taxation*, Mason Gaffney, Editor, \$8. *The Property Tax and Its Administration*, Arthur D. Lynn, Jr., Editor, \$7.50 and *Property Taxation-U.S.A.*, Richard W. Lindholm, Editor, \$7.95. This has just been reissued in paperback for \$2.95.

The 1969 subject for discussion is "The Assessment of Land Values," with Daniel M. Holland of Massachusetts Institute of Technology as program chairman. Mr. Carter said that while the members of TRED are deeply interested in site value taxation, the aim is to explore the issues in an atmosphere of full inquiry. TRED is a forum for academicians and specifically for economists. It seeks to reach not just teachers but teachers of teachers.