

Summer 1976

Trustees and officers elected

At a regular meeting of the board of trustees last April, several changes of officers were voted. Glenn E. Weeks was elected president; R. Dean Meridith, vice-president; Thomas A. Larkin, treasurer; William P. Davidson, secretary. Subsequent trustee action elected R. Dean Meridith a member of the School and, in turn, the members appointed the following new trustees: Jerome S. Medowar, Paul S. Nix, Jr., George L. Collins, Oscar B. Johannsen. David C. Lincoln has resigned from membership and the board of trustees. The board of Trustees currently consists of the following fourteen members,

with one vacancy: George L. Collins, William P. Davidson, Lancaster M. Greene, Edward C. Harwood, Oscar B. Johannsen, Thomas A. Larkin, Jerome S. Medowar, R. Dean Meridith, Paul S. Nix, Jr., William S. O'Connor, Agnes DeMille Prude, Leonard T. Recker, Glenn E. Weeks, and Arnold A. Weinstein. The Board of Members currently consists of the following eight members, with one vacancy: William P. Davidson, Lancaster M. Greene, Edward C. Harwood, R. Dean Meridith, William S. O'Connor, Agnes DeMille Prude, Leonard T. Recker, and Arnold A. Weinstein.

Center continues to get publicity

The Center for Local Tax Research, the School's research arm, continued to disseminate information on effective property tax rates in the New York metropolitan area with a widely-publicized report on New York City released by Henry J. Stern, Councilman-at-large for Manhattan.

Citing the Center's data, based on 23,219 sales in the past year, the city legislator's report showed rates ranging from a high of more than \$12 per hundred of real value on commercial property in Manhattan to a low of \$1.15 per hundred on vacant land in Staten Island.

Recently, the Center's director, Philip Finkelstein appeared on the weekly Cable TV program, "Manhattan at large," conducted by Stern and his fellow councilman, Robert F. Wagner, Jr. After a discussion of the City's problems, many telephone inquiries from the listening audience were answered on the air by Finkelstein and the councilmen. Finkelstein also testified at a City Council hearing on taxation.

A task force on payments in lieu of taxes, set up by Mayor Gibson of Newark, has asked the Center to join its panel of experts on proposed tax reforms in the largest city of New Jersey.

Also in New Jersey, a complete analysis of the full value of land in Bergen County is being performed by

the Center, based on data compiled by Leon Saddler, a Bergen resident and graduate researcher.

Further west, in Wayne Township, Passaic County, the Center is studying the relation of assessments and other factors to actual and potential land use in a developing area.

Meanwhile, the Center continues its update on metropolitan area effective rates, with new data on New York and New Jersey. A special analysis of school district finance is also being prepared while testimony is heard in a major lawsuit on that subject. Another lawsuit in Nassau County resulted in a decision calling for full value assessments there, prompting a meeting of the Center with the County Assessor and a proposal for a special demonstration project for Long Island.

During a conference of the National Tax Association in Washington, the Director spoke at a meeting of the League for Urban Land Conservation, the group headed by Walter Rybeck seeking land value taxation in the capital district. Local finance and urban officials from many states expressed interest in the work of the Center for Local Tax Research, as it gains national attention.

Conference

The Henry George School Conference 1976 was held in San Francisco on Friday and Saturday, July 2 and 3. A Friday morning meeting was devoted to the perennial question, "What Do We Teach?" The afternoon was devoted to discussion of the School's research activities (see story at left). The Saturday morning session dealt with a review of the organizational structure of the various organizations devoted to the teachings of George's concepts. In the evening, a banquet held, in conjunction with LEAF (Land, Equality and Freedom), heard an address by Ted Gwartney, Director of Assessments in Vancouver, British Columbia. Records of the working sessions are being transcribed and a more detailed report of the proceedings is slated for a subsequent issue of the NEWS.

The following is a condensation of Mr. Finkelstein's remarks at the School's Convention in San Francisco, July 1976.

HABITAT, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver resolved that land, unlike any other factor of production, should belong to all mankind, and may not be acquired and privately owned.

In calling for the socialization of land values, HABITAT struck not so much new ground as an echo of a truth once universally held: that the land, no less than the air above us and the sea around us, the sun and moon and stars that guide us, is free not subject to individual ownership, but merely entrusted to our care for as long as we are on earth.

Someplace all of us instinctively
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