

INTRODUCTION

Welcome Speech by Dr. Y.S. Tsiang, Seminar Chairman:

Dr. Lincoln, Dr. Woodruff, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This seminar in commemorating the Centennial of Henry George's writing of Progress and Poverty, also has a significant meaning, because this is the first year for the Republic of China's implementation of the "Equalization of Land Rights" program, following the earlier land reform program.

Since its founding, the Republic of China has considered land reform policy to be a major national goal. In Dr. Sun Yat-sen's The Three Principles of the People, the programs of "Land-to-the-Tiller" and "Equalization of Land Rights" are the two key programs in the Principle of Livelihood. In Taiwan the "Land-to-the-Tiller" program and the "Equalization of Land Rights" in urban areas has also been completed successfully. It is due to the fact that NT\$15 billion has been collected from the incremental tax of land value for social welfare reconstruction, that the government decided to start an overall equalization of land rights this year. Evidently, Dr. Sun had put two different progressive ideas from the Chinese and the West into a concrete workable political principle. This was also the hope of Henry George.

Introduction by Dr. David C. Lincoln:

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished guests, Members of the Academia Sinica, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is certainly a great pleasure to be here and have a chance to participate in the symposium. This is a symposium celebrating the centennial of Henry George's writing and most appropriate to be held here in Taiwan. Henry George and Sun Yat-sen share many parallel ideas. One of their ideas and one of their parallel concepts had to do with land policy. Land taxation is the control mechanism by which proper use of land is brought about; while at the same time permitting the individual landlord to use the land as best he can as an individual. This policy of the two men preserves the best of the social concept of land policy and individual enterprise of the particular person using each particular piece of land. There was, however, a more abstract value both of the men were seeking, and this is the fundamental of the concept what is fair and what is the right thing to do from the overall human viewpoint.

This aspect of fairness is the necessary foundation for any social program. If the program is fundamentally fair, it will work. If a program is not fair, in the long run it will fail. It is demonstrated all through the world.

The Lincoln Foundation has been working with groups of the Republic of China for about ten years. This association has been beneficiary to the Lincoln Foundation and to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy. It has also been a lot of fun. One of the things we have witnessed in our contact with the Republic of China is the development that has taken place in Taiwan in the last 20 years or so. This development is indeed serving as a model for the rest of the whole world. What has been done here can be copied throughout the world.

I look forward to the papers and discussions to be presented in the symposium by the distinguished participants. The results will be a great exchange of views from scholars from around the world. I would like to thank the Academia Sinica for sponsoring the symposium. Also thanks to the Joint Commission of Rural Reconstruction and Land Reform Training Institute and thanks especially for the participants that will be presenting their papers. Many thanks.

Response by Dr. A.M. Woodruff

On behalf of the American scholars here I would like to express our thanks to our Chinese colleagues and to your Excellency and sponsoring body with deep appreciation. We are honored to be participants in this seminar.

I should tell you just a little about Henry George before beginning the opening session. Henry George was in his late 30's when he sat down to writing Progress and Poverty. He weighed 50 kilos. He had very short legs of which he was a little embarrassed. He had a flaming red beard. He had a big bald spot and a fringe of flaming red hair. He had an immense ego and no sense of humor at all. He was fired with religious zeal. It was religious zeal in the cause of poverty and a possible solution.