

the Henry George News

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Land... **AND SPACE TO GROW**

AN ingratiating celluloid salesman with the name "Land—and Space to Grow," is exhibiting his wares over the country today for the Georgist cause. This, as you may have guessed, is the long awaited black-and-white, fourteen-minute sound motion picture, produced for the Robert Schälkenbach Foundation.

Released in October, after a successful preview in Detroit last July, "Land—and Space to Grow" is the story of a typical young American couple as they pursue the great adventure of buying land and building the home of their dreams. To reveal more of the plot would dilute the pleasure of our many friends who will have an opportunity to see the picture within the next few months. May it suffice, therefore, to say that within the framework of a warmly human story, some challenging questions are raised. One of these is: "Why, in a land where everyone

V. G. Peterson



agrees upon the need for adequate housing, every step taken to provide it is taxed so heavily?"

To understand why the Foundation decided to employ this medium, one has only to look into the recent history of the 16 mm. sponsored film—a fast-growing channel of mass communication. In 1959, for instance, 5,400 such pictures were produced. Sponsored shorts are used for reporting on long-term projects, for demonstrating, for teaching, and for selling. Some of the longer and more elaborate ones are now replacing the cartoon and other forms of "fill-in" entertainment on television and in motion-picture theatres.

Through the sponsored film, hun-
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Land—and Space to Grow

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dreds of thousands of people are being taught to do things, to like things and even to change their minds on important matters of health, society and politics. One reason for the medium's effectiveness, according to *The Wall Street Journal* (February 6, 1960) is that the sponsor gains the undivided attention of his audience for a considerable period. The viewer is usually in a darkened room, free of distractions, and better able to assimilate and retain the message. What the sponsor wants to get across encounters less opposition because it is carefully integrated in the plot or theme used as an entertainment medium.

Thus Coca-Cola emphasizes that "everybody does it" by means of a travelogue showing people in thirty-one different countries sipping cokes. An oil company promotes good global relations through a series of color pictures with special language soundtracks including, believe it or not, two in English—one for our British cousins. A washing machine manufacturer demonstrates "gentleness" in a five-minute short showing a paper napkin being washed without tearing.

The public for the sponsored film is vast. Clubs, churches, schools and other community groups, alone, produce 181,000 film-viewing audiences. In industry, thousands more see educational films regularly, and in the armed forces, where the 16 mm. documentary got its big boost in World War II, they are widely used as a teaching medium.

It was to reach as many film-viewers as possible that "Land—and Space to Grow" was fashioned into a persuasive "soft-sell" story, rather

than a hard-hitting and didactic one. The picture was shot near Nashville, Tennessee, with an amateur cast, under the direction of Samuel Daltlowe of Sun Dial Films.

The Foundation launched this venture in the spring of 1957 by announcing a Motion Picture Ideas Contest. Many good plots were submitted, and three prizes were awarded with top money going to Leslie Hubbard of London for his "An Acre of Ground."

However, when it came to converting these plots into a movie, we discovered what corporation movie men had known for a long time: namely, that it requires a highly specialized technique to produce an entertaining film with an unobtrusive plug. Short of that, the picture is likely to stay on the shelf. It was then that we turned to Sun Dial Films, and later approved a script with the working title, "The Penalty." This was finally changed to "Land—and Space to Grow."

A hundred and ten prints have been made by the Foundation and turned over to Modern Talking Picture Service for national distribution through their twenty-eight film lending libraries and seven television film centers. Prints will be loaned without charge to organized groups applying to the nearest office of Modern. Whenever possible, a speaker will be provided.

A foreword to "Land—and Space to Grow" dedicates the picture to "Henry George, a great American, whose book *Progress and Poverty* has been translated into a dozen languages and read by millions of people all over the world." We hope, and we confidently believe, that our celluloid salesman will do a good job by making new friends for George and bringing new students to the schools.