

## The Robert Tideman Story

Robert Tideman, who recently retired as executive vice president of the Northern California Henry George School of Social Science, had devoted twenty-four years of service to the School in the San Francisco Bay area. Previously, following his graduation from the University of Illinois in 1941 with a degree in electrical engineering, he had served the School for six years as a volunteer in New Jersey and Illinois, then as education director of the Henry George School in Chicago. It was he who recruited a Board of Directors which included the late Joseph S. Thompson, president of Federal Pacific Electric Company, and J. Rupert Mason, a retired investment broker.

Mr. Tideman came to San Francisco and started the Henry George School there in 1949, first with a small office on Kearny Street, eventually moving to 833 Market, the School's present location. As executive secretary, and later as executive vice president, he led the School through the establishment of five Bay Area branches. He pioneered the concept of giving School volunteers the opportunity for creative leadership, and set up the policy of having as many as ninety individuals serve at one time on the five branch School Boards, plus a thirty-member Central Board of Directors.

Since the inception of the Bay Area School and its branches, Mr. Tideman and a host of volunteers have taught ten-week basic economic courses to some 3500 Californians, the School's aim being to teach as widely as possible the economics a person needs to know to wield influence as an informed citizen in public affairs. The basic courses, as well as such advanced classes as Money, the Science of Political Economy, Free Trade, and Social Problems, are free and are supported by the voluntary subscriptions of the 400 members in the Bay Area. In 1973, through Mr. Tideman's efforts, a number of prominent citizens and legislators joined the Northern California Advisory Board of the School, including Assemblyman Willie Brown and newspaper columnist Charles McCabe.

Mr. Tideman has sought assessment reform research on tax issues and on measures proposed by the State legislature, representing civic groups interested in recouping some of the increased land values cre-

ated by community projects such as BART. He has many times spoken against granting property tax exemptions for land held by private schools, and has opposed every sales tax proposed during his residence on the West Coast. He has consistently urged reform in property tax assessment, pointing out that among the extravagances of the government is the non-collection of community-created ground rents, and that reducing taxes on land is itself inflationary.

Though surrounded by enthusiasts for Henry George's ideas, Mr. Tideman always maintains he speaks not as a Georgist, but only for himself and his own convictions. This is a reflection of his endeavor to develop a spirit of open-mindedness in the School, based on an understanding of Henry George's concepts, and on his belief that through the educational process, people should be enabled to think for themselves.

For fourteen years Mr. Tideman was secretary of the Government Finance Section of the Commonwealth Club, in which he has a lifetime membership. He has written a column on economics for the Pacific Sun; was a commentator on Radio Station KPFA for about ten years, and is the author of numerous articles in the field of taxation, appearing in the Hastings Law Journal and other distinguished publications.

Mr. Tideman and his wife, Meighen, have ten children, aged from four to thirty-two, one of whom (Nicholaus) served on the President's Council of Economic Advisors. Aside from education, Mr. Tideman has other interests and hobbies. Calling himself "a home repair man," he owns a collection of power tools and does everything from laying floors to repairing the roof. He delights in reading his children such "grown-up" works as *The Odyssey* and Plutarch's *Lives*, claiming children will sense it if an adult enjoys the stories read.

Though his interest in Henry George will no doubt continue, Robert Tideman is now the president of Tideman Montessori Schools, Inc., and is developing a chain of Montessori Schools in the Bay Area. Mrs. Tideman is the director of their two existing schools, and their daughter Cynthia Alexander will be head teacher at their third school, to be opened in Fremont in the fall.

## An Approach to Buffalo Blight

An interesting news item in the Buffalo (N.Y.) Courier-Express (received through the courtesy of Extension Director Seymour Rauch) covers the proceedings at a recent public hearing before the Common Council's Special Committee on Community Development. The purpose of the hearing was to discuss remedies for the spread of blight throughout Buffalo's neighborhoods.

"A parade of speakers" offered the Committee a variety of recommendations, most urging strict enforcement of building code regulations or the demolition of vacant, dilapidated houses that are beyond rehabilitation. Others proposed seeking Federal housing funds, a "blight tax" on owners who refuse to repair or raze rundown properties, and pressure on banks to grant more improvement loans.

Reports the Courier-Express: "The most novel approach was advanced by Seymour Rauch, extension director of the Henry George School of New York City, a voluntary group that promotes real estate reform. 'When someone buys a piece of property and improves it, the city rewards him by increasing

his assessment and taxes,' he pointed out.

"Rauch proposed that the city shift its taxing emphasis from buildings to land, possibly tripling taxes on land and halving them on builders, to encourage home construction and maintenance and forcing land speculators to divest themselves of property that could be used for housing. He contended that the procedure would broaden the tax base and produce increased tax revenue."

On reading the news account of his remarks, Mr. Rauch writes: "I thought you might be interested in knowing that after ninety-five years of *Progress and Poverty*, we still have a novel approach to urban improvement. Or should we read this as an indication that we have not yet made site value taxation a household word, and perhaps we are in need of a novel approach."

'Whatever the reaction to the Georgist "approach," it is encouraging to note such concern exhibited by a major city, and its efforts to find a solution. Perhaps through such efforts the true remedy will be recognized.

## Protecting the Netherlands

Most countries of the world are obliged nowadays to contend with ever-growing problems of urban blight, suburban sprawl, and rural decay. Holland's problems are particularly serious because of its unusual population density and its limited land area. Cities must remain habitable, outlying districts must not spread unduly, and farmlands must be protected. Characteristically, through a flexible system of national and regional cooperation, the Dutch have been engaged for some years in a vast land-reform project.

For the most part, Holland's land protection activity stems from a realization that the evils it seeks to eliminate are caused primarily by land speculation, which is made possible only by private land ownership. To curb speculation, many Dutch municipalities have been acquiring as much land as they can, which is then leased for specific usage, rents charged being based on the land's value. Amsterdam is a leader in the move toward publicly-owned land, and has been acquiring acreage (mostly in the suburbs) for over fifty years. If a landowner is reluctant to sell, the city

can seize the property, subject only to adequate compensation.

Amsterdam's belief is that the public, and not individuals, should benefit from increased land values created by community growth. One cannot quarrel with this sentiment, but one may question the efficacy of municipal land ownership or the justice of public payment for what is essentially common property. The city's policies have no doubt alleviated many crushing aspects of its land problems. However, private land holding has not been eliminated, nor has land speculation, especially in the center city, where both still manage to thrive. It is only in the suburban areas that comprehensive public ownership substantially inhibits speculation.

How much more simple and effective it would be to apply the method of land value taxation.

*Source material for the above was provided by Charles G. Muller, of Westport, Connecticut, to whom the editors express their thanks.*

## Tribute to Bob Tideman

On the occasion of his retirement as executive vice president of the Northern California Henry George School, Robert Tideman (whose story appears on the front page of this issue of HGN) was tendered a farewell dinner-party in his honor. The event took place on May 18th in the Banquet Room of John's Restaurant in San Francisco, and was attended by a large group of friends, including associates and students from the Henry George School, members of the School's Board of Directors, and distinguished guests. All joined in expressing appreciation for the splendid work Bob had performed during his twenty-four years of dedicated service at the School, and to wish him and his family well for the future.

The dinner coincided with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the chartering of the San Francisco School as a not-for-profit corporation by the State of California. Robert Scrofani, past president of the Board of Directors of the School, acted as master of ceremonies.

Among the honored guests was Mason Gaffney, whose well-received speech was feelingly devoted to Mr. Tideman's outstanding accomplishments as executive secretary and as executive vice president of the School, to the major contribution he had made toward the dissemination of Henry George's philosophy, and to Bob's congenial personality.

Others who spoke to and about Robert Tideman in glowing terms were Dr. Val Jaros, Bob De Fremery (author of *Money and Freedom*), and Joe Marks, member of the Marin faculty. Other notables present were a representative from the office of San Francisco Assessor Joseph Tinney, and Hon. Dan McCorquodale, Supervisor of Santa Clara County. A number of telegrams and letters from absent friends were read to Mr. Tideman, and a gift was presented to him in behalf of the School by Ann Reeves, president of its Board of Directors.

The program closed with an eloquent and moving talk by the guest of honor, in which Bob Tideman compared the Henry George movement to a struggle much like a war, where the "army" must be prepared to make personal sacrifices for its cause.

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## More Trade or More Taxes?

Nineteen sixty-eight was an excellent year in the annals of trade between the United States and the Soviet Union. Although the amount of goods exchanged by both countries was comparatively modest in size, and the dollar value was not great as compared to that of other nations, there was a fairly even balance at year's end. Imports totaled \$58.5 million, and exports \$57.7 million — which means that the USA was paid for what it sold to the USSR.

However, since that time American exports to the Soviet Union have increased impressively, while imports have declined quite as noticeably. According to U.S. Department of Commerce figures, in 1972 exports totaled \$542.2 million, and imports only \$95.6 million. In 1973 exports similarly far exceeded imports, and it is projected that in 1974 the USA will export goods worth \$1000 million to the Soviet Union and import goods worth \$410 million.

Is this free trade, or does it constitute free gifts of American labor and capital? Contrary to popular belief, an excess of exports over imports is not a "favorable" balance of trade. Obviously, it is not advantageous to give more than one gets in return. While U.S. sellers to the Soviets are understandably enthusiastic, it appears that the U.S. taxpayer will have to pay for the exports, since they are based upon government-granted credits proposed.

By its very nature, trade is necessarily a two-way transaction, a *quid pro quo*. If one of the parties concerned fails to perform his side of the bargain, the other inevitably must suffer. Exporting on credit more goods than are imported results not in More Trade, but in More Taxes. George's *Protection or Free Trade* should be required reading for everyone involved in international marketing and exchange.

—Lancaster M. Greene

## HGN Changes Frequency

Commencing with this issue (May — June, 1974), the Henry George News is changing its publication frequency, and will appear at bi-monthly intervals. Heretofore the News has been published monthly (except July and December). Also, as soon as practicable — hopefully by the next issue (July — August, 1974) — the format will change to a larger page size, reverting to the three-column 8½ x 11-inch page formerly used. This will provide added space for more news, longer articles, and wider coverage of School and other Geogist activities.

## Manitoba's New Mining Policy

From time to time there are welcome signs of a burgeoning awareness that communities have a right to the values they create, just as men are entitled to the products of their labor. Yet private land ownership continues to deny both individuals and communities the economic benefits that are equitably theirs. Despite this inconsistency, it is good to see a tentative step in the right direction.

Appearing recently at a meeting of the provincial legislature, Hon. Sidney Green, Manitoba's Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management, delivered a policy statement opening with these words: "The extent to which the people of Manitoba receive benefits from the development of their mineral resources is a matter to which this government has given most serious attention."

The minister then outlined the intensive investigation and the careful research accomplished by Professor Eric Kierans, who had been assigned the task of studying existing policies and making recommendations. Based on an analysis of such recommendations, Mr. Green set forth the government's policy objectives relative to mineral development. Among them were: (a) The people of Manitoba must receive revenue from existing mineral developments, consistent with a fair return to the owners of the resource. (b) The people are entitled to receive a fair share of any added value or economic rent accruing to their mineral resources. (c) In the future the people will take a more active role in the development of their mineral resources, and must jealously guard such of their re-

sources as have not to date been turned over to private corporations and individuals. (d) The private sector now engaged in the mineral industry must conduct its activities more consistent with overall social and economic objectives of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Green observed at this point that to realize these objectives, it would be necessary to change certain existing legislative and administrative policies, and promised that this would be done in such a manner as not to disturb the smooth continuation of mineral operations in the province.

He then described the course of action the government proposed to pursue with a view to effecting the objectives expressed. Some had to do with development, processing, and management, all basically administrative in nature. The key proposal related to taxation and royalties, though it was indicated there would be little change with respect to current operations. As to new operations, revised royalties are contemplated, and "A new tax will be introduced with the specific intention of providing the people of Manitoba with a fair share of the economic rent accruing to our resources resulting from their scarcity and enhanced value . . . The Government of Manitoba is of the opinion that the real owners of the resources, namely the people of the province, are entitled to a realistic share of the unpredicted enhanced values of their resources."

This is not quite the full answer, but at least Manitoba has a good idea of "What is the Question?"