

The Pearl in the Oyster

HOW did you become a Georgist? Noah D. Alper of St. Louis says this is a question he has heard often and would like to explore. Many people have seen small model sailing boats whittled from wood inside small-necked bottles and have wondered how they got there. The answer is that the boats were assembled inside the bottle. Building a philosophy in man's great computer, the mind, he suggests begins with ideas collected mentally by an orderly process into a body of knowledge.

A Japanese scientist learned that an irritant injected into an oyster caused it to produce a pearl and from that idea a great industry developed. There is little doubt that the process of making a Georgist starts with some sort of irritant that commands thoughtful attention. If you are a Georgist he wants you to think back, if you can, to the idea that served most as a stimulus to opening the door.

Mr. Alper recalls saying to his first Georgist friend and teacher, Erwin Kauffmann, that he believed every baby born inherited the earth and should have its heritage—and that the idea of Henry George would bring this to a reality. That commitment later caused him to ask others if they thought their children had the same right to the use of the earth as other children. Few

persons responded negatively.

The desire for a clearing house of ideas that have proved effective recalls helpful comments made by H. Bronson Cowan of Canada in "A New Approach to Taxation Reform." (HGN Feb. 1947). Successful salesmanship, he said, teaches one to get on a friendly relationship, avoid arguments, and not oversell. Georgists have a good product which is sometimes rejected because of a critical approach. He suggested a practice of substituting facts for theories.

In writing articles for the Architectural Journal or the Engineering and Construction Record he kept the special field of the readers in view. As a result of the interest aroused, a group of prominent men in New York, with the help of Harold S. Bутtenheim, editor of American City, engaged him to undertake a survey in Australia and New Zealand. In that capacity he had occasion to speak to many groups such as manufacturers, real estate agents, economists, municipal officials, housing authorities and labor leaders, and he always prepared himself to focus on information that would be of most interest to them.

If you can remember what first turned your attention to Henry George's philosophy, why not write us a letter. It may help someone else.

Vol. 33, No. 5

May, 1970

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

Publication committee: William S. O'Connor, Arnold A. Weinstein and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$1 a year; single copies 10c. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

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