

JOSEPH FELS FUND BULLETIN

BLYMYER BUILDING

Monthly Information for Contributors to THE FELS FUND and Single Taxers Generally

PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH FELS FUND COMMISSION

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[PRICE 10C PER YEAR]

Entered as second class matter March 14, 1913, at the Post Office at Cincinnati, Ohio, under the act of March 3, 1879.

Volume 2

Cincinnati, Ohio, August, 1914

Number 8

RECEIPTS FOR THE CURRENT YEAR TO JULY 31, 1914.

Could you have done more than you did to help make a better showing? If so, then you know why it is not better.

	No. Contributors	Amount Jan. 1 to July 31
California	439	\$3,194 11
New York	219	2,559 62
Illinois	199	1,459 27
Ohio	146	1,196 77
Colorado	484	849 30
Pennsylvania	117	843 94
Massachusetts	141	723 21
New Jersey	47	564 50
District of Columbia	37	366 95
Missouri	91	326 70
Rhode Island	35	309 56
Foreign	11	264 30
Texas	30	231 25
Michigan	25	227 00
Indiana	17	153 00
Minnesota	37	139 30
Delaware	14	157 44
Wisconsin	30	119 30
Washington	32	91 40
Maryland	15	90 00
Louisiana	13	81 30
Oregon	17	73 50
South Dakota	10	65 50
Nebraska	13	58 66
Iowa	26	57 00
Montana	12	55 50
Connecticut	10	53 00
Maine	9	51 00
Alabama	18	48 30
Tennessee	3	40 00
Kentucky	7	30 00
Virginia	7	29 00
Kansas	10	24 50
Arkansas	6	22 10
Vermont	3	19 00
Arizona	4	14 00
New Hampshire	5	12 60
Oklahoma	4	8 15
North Dakota	3	8 00
Florida	3	6 60
New Mexico	3	6 00
Mississippi	2	5 00
Nevada	2	3 00
West Virginia	3	2 30
Georgia	2	1 90
North Carolina	2	1 25
South Carolina	1	1 00
Wyoming	1	1 00
Total	2,365	\$14,627 48.

THOUGHTS ON HENRY GEORGE DAY.

The suggestion has been offered by Mrs. Lane, one of Washington's active Single Tax workers, that Henry George's birthday be made the occasion for special contributions to the Fels Fund. Single Taxers in many cities are in the habit of holding banquets or some other form of entertainment on that day. These cost money as a rule, and while they have propaganda value, it is an open question whether it would not be a more effective means of propaganda to devote the money spent on such affairs to helping such campaigns as are carried on in California and Colorado. It is furthermore a question whether spending money in the way indicated is not a better way of honoring the memory of Henry George.

It is not the purpose of the Bulletin to urge this view on readers. But the idea seems one worthy of consideration, and is presented that those to whom it may appeal may have the opportunity to act upon it.

Of course there are other things than Henry George banquets that offer opportunities to Single Taxers to economize for the benefit of the movement. In many cases enthusiastic Single Taxers would rather economize on the other thing than on the banquet. So Henry George day might easily be made to include in its useful functions consideration of what every Single Taxer would prefer to do with- out in order to have the opportunity of helping to bring on the time when such small personal economies will not be necessary.

CONCERNING THE NEXT CONFERENCE.

At the conference in Washington a pressing invitation to those attending was extended by the California representatives to hold the next meeting in San Francisco during the Panama Exposition. No action was taken, but the fact that the matter had been discussed, brought a communication from Mr. James A. Barr, of San Francisco, the exposition's Director of Congresses, giving the following information:

The railroad rates will be approximately one-half of the round trip, with 90 days to make the sojourn and stop-over privileges at any points that are desired via direct line. The hotel rates are arranged by a Hotel Bureau organized under the auspices of the Exposition, with a view to keeping seventy or eighty thousand rooms at reasonable rates for the visitors in 1915. The rate in this hotel arrangement, for which reservations are made now, are from \$1 to \$3 per day according to accommodations, and a guarantee of sufficient rooms in case reservations are made during this period.

For a continuous trip from New York to San Francisco,

RENEWALS.

If a blue "RENEWAL" subscription blank is enclosed, it means your subscription has expired. Send at once 10 cents, and get your friends to subscribe also.

\$15 for a single trip, or \$36 for a round trip, with a lower berth and a Pullman car and \$14 for each way, or \$28 for a round trip, will engage an upper berth on a Pullman sleeper. It is presumed that these rates will be amended somewhat when full rates are fixed for the exposition. We are not in a position to quote exact rates for the time being, but the cost of the trip is so much a matter of individual preference, it is difficult to form an estimate of cost. Two hundred dollars, however, should be sufficient to move a person to San Francisco and back, with good accommodations during their stay.

Trusting that you will find it more convenient to make the trip to San Francisco to hold your conference than elsewhere, and that you will get added returns by reason of the exposition and California, I am,

Yours very truly,

JAS. A. BARR,

Director of Congresses.

It would help much to reach a proper decision in this matter if all who consider it probable that they would attend, should the conference be held in San Francisco, communicate with the Commission at once, addressing the chairman at this office, Cincinnati, O.

MEAT DEALERS AND RISING MEAT PRICES.

The butchers and meat dealers of the United States should have some practical knowledge of how the ever-rising cost of meat might be checked. It is consequently interesting to note the demand made in a conference at Chicago, on August 6, of the United Master Butchers' Association of the United States, and the National Retail Butchers' and Meat Dealers' Protective Association. The demand was "That Congress set aside 10 per cent of the national income tax to be used for improving cut-over and other undeveloped lands, on condition said lands be used for live-stock raising purposes, that the government have the right to condemn any lands for this purpose."

It is clear that the butchers see that the root of the trouble is in dearth of land open to use for stock raising purposes. There they are right. But the remedy suggested is more open to criticism. The butchers failed to take into consideration why the lands that they want used for stock raising are not so used now. They seem to think that existing high prices do not constitute sufficient inducement and so suggest government aid.

Twenty and thirty years ago when prices were much lower, there was no scarcity of men willing to go into the business of stock raising on a large scale without help from the government. That was because they could get use of the land needed without paying a prohibitive price. But now, though there is as much land in the country as there ever was, land prices have been pushed so high that even with market quotations on live stock as high as they are, stock raising is being checked.

To use public funds to improve these lands will not solve the problem if the land owners are to be left free to inflate land prices with impunity. The very fact that public funds are to be so used will assuredly cause land values to go up proportionately. The stock raisers will

find themselves compelled to pay in increased prices for land whatever they may save through government aid. The final result will be the same. The suggestion to condemn land (presumably to be sold to stock raisers), is also open to objection. Conditions would remain which now make it more profitable to hold land out of use than to let it be used for stock raising.

What the butchers should have asked is that the evil be attacked at its root. The withholding from use of land fitted for stock raising should be made an expensive luxury. They should have asked instead of government aid for stock raising untaxing of the stock raisers' industry and enterprise. They should have asked abolition of all taxes on live stock, on fences, barns, and other improvements needed in stock raising. Then they should not have forgotten that other industries might be entitled to similar exemptions and so made a general demand for abolition of all taxes on labor and its products. They should then have asked that all taxes taken off of labor be put on land values, so that those holding land out of use needed for stock raising, would find it to their advantage to either start to raise stock on it, or to get out of the road and let some one else do so. That would solve the problem in short order. Still the butchers have made a good beginning as it is in calling attention to the holding of undeveloped lands as the fundamental cause.

MISSOURI SINGLE TAXERS SACRIFICE AN OPPORTUNITY.

"You can't fool all of the people all of the time." A certain Judge William H. Wallace of Kansas City, had to learn that truism through sad experience. He helped to fool the farmers of Missouri in 1912 concerning the then pending Single Tax amendment. This year he hoped that the same methods would secure the votes of the same farmers to put him into the United States Senate. He became a candidate at the Democratic primary. But there is a limit to credulity and so the farmers snowed him under.

But for local pride and a sense of fairness to opponents, Missouri Single Taxers would regret this result. The best help to any cause, next to an earnest, intelligent advocate, is a bigoted and unfair opponent, especially if his methods are somewhat more than—well, injudicious. Judge Wallace is such an opponent of the Single Tax. Had he gone to the Senate his course would have been so disgusting to all intelligent, decent and fair-minded men that opposition to the Single Tax would soon have been thoroughly discredited. In the Senate he would have made clear to the whole nation just what kind of talk it was that was dealt to Missouri voters by the Anti-Single Taxers in 1912. The result can be imagined. The temptation to Missouri Single Taxers was strong to help bring it about.

But Missouri would have been humiliated. Misguided but honest opponents of the Single Tax would have been unfairly misrepresented. It was more than men imbued with State pride and a strong sense of justice could bear. So Mis-

souri Single Taxers did all that they could to defeat him. Possibly they hoped—in spite of themselves—that their efforts would fail, that their opponents would rally to Judge Wallace's support, elect him and be compelled to bear the responsibility and disgrace for the result. However, events turned out otherwise. But Missouri Single Taxers have the satisfaction of a good conscience, the satisfaction that comes to one who deliberately puts aside a great opportunity, lest it bring humiliation on others.

WHAT CALIFORNIA WILL VOTE ON.

The California Home Rule in Taxation amendment will be on the ballot in November in this form:

Local Taxation Exemption. Assembly Constitutional Amendment 7 adding section 8½ to article XIII of Constitution, authorizes any county or municipality to exempt from taxation for local purposes in whole or in part, any one or more of following classes of property: Improvements in, on, or over land; shipping; household furniture; live stock; merchandise; machinery; tools; farming implements; vehicles; other personal property except franchises; provides that ordinance or resolution making such exemptions shall be subject to referendum; and requires that taxes upon property not exempt from taxation shall be uniform.

YES

NO

SULZER'S POSITION ON TAXATION.

Ex-Governor William Sulzer of New York, now a candidate for re-election, made the following statement on July 27 to a committee of Single Taxers and representatives of the Lower Rent Society:

I favor absolute home rule and the rule of the people. Municipalities or counties should be permitted to determine their own policies, and methods of raising, as well as disbursing, public revenue. By the rule of the people, I mean the Initiative and Referendum, and the submission of measures to a referendum.

If elected Governor, I will favor and promote submitting at once to a referendum of the people of New York City, the gradual untaxing of buildings here and the heavier taxation of land values, and will sign such a bill, if passed by the legislature, just as I would sign a bill submitting to a referendum a change in the tax system for an agricultural county of the State permitting the farmers to tax their sheep, crops and cattle, buildings and machinery more heavily if they want to.

Personally I favor untaxing labor and products of labor, but shall not assume, myself, to decide matters which the voters should determine for themselves.

I recognize, however, that the privileged classes of monopoly have manipulated State legislatures through their tools, the bosses. I, therefore, favor referring all questions of public policy to the electorate directly, in order to exterminate privilege and boss rule.

Mr. Sulzer further asked that his opponents be challenged to debate with him.

JOHNSTOWN WANTS SINGLE TAX.

Johnston, Pa. is a fortunate community. It has not only the advantage of being the home of so good a paper as the Johnstown Democrat, but it also has a Chamber of Commerce which knows a good thing and knows how to get it. If more business organizations were like that it would be an easier job to eliminate the cause of business depressions and to make hard times a thing of the past. The following letter is being sent by the Johnstown body to all legislative candidates:

JOHNSTOWN, PA., July 27th, 1914.

DEAR SIR—An act of the Pennsylvania Legislature, passed in 1911, exempts all machinery from taxation in second class cities. Another act, passed in 1913, reduces the assessed value of buildings and other improvements five per cent each year for ten years. Thereafter improvements will be assessed at but fifty per cent of their value.

Pittsburg and Scranton are the second class cities in this State. This special legislation gives them a decided advantage over third class cities. The partial exemption on buildings and full exemption on machinery will lower rents and the cost of production. These exemptions will necessitate a higher rate of taxation on land values, which will tend to reduce the selling price of land, making it easier to secure sites for homes and factories.

The Johnstown Chamber of Commerce is going to invite trade organizations in other third class cities to join in asking the State legislature for an act giving to third class cities the benefit of the tax exemptions now enjoyed by second class cities.

We have been authorized by the Committee on Taxation and Home Rule to ask all legislative and other State candidates whether, if elected, they will aid us in securing this legislation.

Accordingly, I will appreciate a statement from you as to your position on this question.

WASHINGTON NEWS.

The students of one hundred high schools in the State of Washington will debate at the approaching term the following question: "Resolved: That all revenue for local purposes in the State of Washington should be raised by a tax levied on land values only."

A public debate on the same question is now being arranged between C. H. Shields, of Toppenish, representative of the organizations opposed to Single Tax, and W. H. Kaufman of Bellingham, well known as a Single Tax propagandist.

* * *

"Immediate survey and taxation of the millions of acres of unsurveyed lands in the State held by great corporations" was demanded by the Democratic State Convention of Washington. It furthermore denounced the existing tax system and demanded one "that will be in harmony with changed economic conditions."

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS.

Thirty city councils in California have so far endorsed the pending Home Rule in Taxation amendment.

* * *

Hugh Craig, who as Mayor of Piedmont, California, caused assessments to be made very much according to the Houston plan, is a candidate for assessor. His campaign statement calls attention to the manner in which assessors as a rule disregard the law.

At the Texas Democratic primary James E. Ferguson defeated Thomas H. Ball for the gubernatorial nomination, which is equivalent to an election. Ferguson advocated in his campaign a law to arbitrarily restrict rent charges. In itself the suggestion is not worth much. But the fact is none the less significant that public sentiment in Texas regarding land monopoly should be such as to compel candidates to offer some kind of a remedy, even though it be an ineffective one. With public opinion once aroused something effective must finally be done. Governor-to-be-Ferguson would do well to investigate the method prevailing in Houston and urge its application to the whole State. He should also consider that the tenant farmers, who have a strong organization in Texas, demand that the taxing power be used to break the hold of land monopoly in the State.

* * *

The election of members of the Manitoba legislation on July 10 resulted in cutting down of the former overwhelming Tory majority to about 4 in a membership of 50. F. J. Dixon the most active Single Tax worker in the province, was elected as an independent candidate from Winnipeg, by the largest majority ever secured in the history of Manitoba. This result was in spite of a gerrymander designed to make the district safely Tory. There was a popular majority favorable to the Liberals throughout the province, although the Tories elected a majority of members.

BEST METHODS OF WORK.

That splendid Single Tax worker, C. B. Fillebrown, writing in the *Christian Science Monitor*, finds considerable fault with the political activity of American Single Taxers and Single Tax organizations. Mr. Fillebrown appears to hold political activity to be a mistake and that efforts should be devoted along propaganda lines alone.

Propaganda is necessary of course, but it is a mistake to assume that active political work interferes with it. On the contrary it stimulates it as nothing else can. It is one thing to propagandize, but another to interest persons sufficiently to get them to discuss. People will discuss a campaign issue who will not think any other public question worth discussion.

Mr. Fillebrown speaks of minds being closed through such misrepresentation as the opposition indulged in in Missouri. That is assuming that the minds of men are generally open to new ideas, and that those Missourians who have only heard of the Single Tax through misrepresentation of its opponents, would have open minds had they never heard of it at all. Whatever Mr. Fillebrown's experience may be, that of most propagandists is to the effect that the minds of most men are closed to new ideas. Present a new idea to the average man, and if he knows it to be new, he will assume at once that it is not

worthy of consideration. The propagandist must always go against the closed mind. Opening of such minds is the principal function of propaganda work. The Missouri campaign closed no minds that were not already closed but it did open quite a number. There certainly were not previous to 1912, 87,000 voters in the State in favor of Single Tax or anything like that number who had ever even heard of it.

Mr. Fillebrown seems impractical in finding fault with the work of Single Taxers for such measures as direct legislation, proportional representation, home rule and similar democratic reforms. The criticism is impractical because, aside from any other consideration, people interested in a cause will insist on working for it in the way that seems best to them. Single Taxers who look upon these other reforms as a help to the movement will work for them regardless of the fact that these measures are not Single Tax. It is no more practical to call off these Single Taxers from such work than it would be to call Mr. Fillebrown on to it. Mr. Fillebrown could not have done as good work as he has if he had not been able to do it in the way that seemed to him to promise best results. The same applies to others working in ways that do not meet his approval.

In different places different methods must often prevail. Mr. Fillebrown refers to progress in Great Britain and in Western Canada as examples of what might have been accomplished in the United States had the methods of workers there been duplicated. As far as Great Britain is concerned political work seems to have had a very important place in their program, including even support of Liberal candidates for Parliament by no means committed to the Single Tax program. The Western Canadian provinces were fortunate enough to be organized at a time when some progress in economic knowledge had been made and so had fewer obstacles to overcome than probably any other part of the world. There has probably been as good or better propaganda work done in Massachusetts, for instance, than in Western Canada. But Massachusetts has obstacles not existing in Western Canada, which have prevented this propaganda from showing the same concrete results.

While mistakes have been made, the fact is that the Single Tax movement in the United States is today in a position more favorable than would have been thought possible ten years ago. The very fact that a great daily devoted considerable space to publishing Mr. Fillebrown's article shows that. Since what Mr. Fillebrown had to say was more for the consumption of Single Tax workers than for any outside of the movement, the editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* must have considered it of interest to a large number if not most of the readers of that widely circulated paper. This is alone an indication of the great number that must be interested not merely in the principle of the Single Tax, but in discussion of the best means of working to get it. That bears its own comment.