

# JOSEPH FELS FUND BULLETIN

BLMYER BUILDING

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

PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH FELS FUND COMMISSION

LINCOLN STEFFENS  
GEORGE A. BRIGGS

DANIEL KIEFER, CHAIRMAN  
JACKSON H. RALSTON  
CHARLES H. INGERSOLL

A. B. DUPONT, TREASURER  
FREDERIC C. HOWE  
CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT

S. DANZIGER, EDITOR

[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 3

Cincinnati, Ohio, February, 1915

Number 2

## THE ENDOWMENT FUND.

The Single Tax Endowment Fund has been formed for the purpose of receiving bequests for Single Tax work. If your family will not need all that you leave behind, this gives you an opportunity to continue your help to the cause after you have gone. Bear this in mind when making your will.

## WHERE THE BENEFIT GOES.

The Federal Public Roads Bureau in its report of January 23, gives some figures which show how the land-owner gets the financial benefits of road improvements. The following speaks for itself:

Manatee County, Florida, built 64 miles of macadam and shell road. From 1911 to 1912 land on the road increased in value \$20 an acre, and land a mile away increased \$10.

Spotsylvania, Va., improved 41 miles of road, and land which formerly had sold for \$25 an acre changed hands within three years at \$45.

In Dinwiddie County, Virginia, where 125 miles of road were built, land between five and ten miles from Petersburg advanced on an average from \$24.25 to \$30 an acre in about fifteen instances, while land ten miles away increased an average of \$16.32 an acre.

In Franklin County, New York, where 124 miles of good roads were built, eight pieces of land, selected at random, showed an increase of 27.8 percent.

Why should not the land-owners bear the whole expense of making these improvements?

## ONE MONTH'S PROGRESS.

The past month has been rich in indications showing an unmistakable trend of thought along Single Tax lines.

In South Dakota, Governor Frank M. Byrne, in his message to the Legislature, urged reform in the tax laws, saying:

"A person should not be penalized by extreme tax exactions for improving his town or neighborhood, adding by his thrift and industry to the value of all surrounding property, and especially increasing the value of unsightly, unoccupied ground in the vicinity. The farmer should not be penalized because by intelligent industry and thrift he improves, beautifies and makes habitable and attractive the acres he holds, thereby rendering a real service to the community and adding directly and defin-

itely to the value of all surrounding property, and especially the nearby acres of the absentee owner, as well as to his own. Per contra, we should not offer reward in the way of tax immunity to him who gives nothing of value or advantage to the community, contributes no new wealth by labor or service, but only holds unused land for the increased value which the thrift and industry of the community will surely add to it as time goes on. To pursue such a policy is to punish the thrifty, the useful and the serviceable, and to reward the useless, the unprofitable and the unserviceable."

That is stating the case quite plainly. But the Governor instructed the Legislature in some fundamental truths, which if followed closely will put South Dakota in the front rank of prosperous and progressive States. Says the Governor:

"Land, which was not created by and does not exist because of the labor of any of us, and the value of which is increased and, it may be said, largely created, by virtue of improvement resulting from the labor and enterprise of the entire community, might wisely be taxed on a different basis than some other classes of property, the creation and use of which may be a special benefit and service to the community, adding, perchance, to the value of all the property and especially to that of unused land nearby. The right to use and enjoy the benefits of some classes of property is a special privilege received from the community. The creation and use of other classes of property is a special service rendered to the community."

In the Canadian province of Manitoba, the Grain Growers' Convention at Winnipeg, adopted on January 15 a set of resolutions that would surely take the breath away from the monopolistic tool that talks on the assumption that farmers are necessarily opposed to the Single Tax. This convention of farmers resolved as follows:

"Be it resolved, that this convention of Manitoba Grain Growers strongly urge the Dominion Government to frame a fiscal system of national taxation that will bear justly on all classes affording special privileges to none. That is, by a direct taxation of all land values both rural and urban, including all the natural resources of this nation, forest, mineral, water power and fisheries, so far as these resources are owned or operated by private or corporate interests, with a surtax on that part or all of such resources as held out of use by private interests for speculative purposes."

It would be interesting to hear the comment on

## RENEWALS.

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

these Manitoba farmers that would be made by the privileged patriots on this side of the line who have been trying to "make the Single Tax impossible."

Vancouver re-elected, on January 14, **L. D. Taylor**, known as "Single Tax" Taylor, as mayor. Mr. Taylor was mayor when Vancouver finally exempted labor products from local taxation. He was defeated for re-election two years ago on other issues than taxation and his successful opponent, Mayor Baxter, was also a Single Taxer. This year both Baxter and Taylor were candidates. There were two other candidates, both non-Single Taxers. Taylor was elected and Baxter was second. The combined vote for Taylor and Baxter, the two Single Tax candidates, was two-thirds of the total. It is clear that the steps taken in Vancouver toward the Single Tax has made the principle popular.

Two resolutions for constitutional amendments are pending in the Texas legislature. One recites the experiences of Houston, and proposes to give municipalities full control over local taxation. The other shows how the general property tax bears heavily on the farmer who improves and uses his land and proposes to exempt "all building improvements and all other improvements, including fencing and the clearing of land and breaking and reducing same to cultivation lying outside of the boundaries of incorporated cities, towns and villages." It further provides that "all such lands shall be valued for taxation, whether improved or not, according to the site or raw land value of same, regardless of any improvements thereon."

The home rule in taxation measure has been reported favorably by the committee on constitutional amendments.

The taxation committee of Reading, Pennsylvania's Chamber of Commerce, urges securing for third-class cities, the same exemption of buildings that has been allowed to Pittsburg and Scranton. The Johnstown Chamber of Commerce has taken similar action.

Governor James E. Ferguson of Texas, is wrestling with the land question, but has not yet learned the right way to tackle it. He sees that Texas, with a larger area than the German Empire, and but one-twentieth of the population, has become a State of landlords and tenants. He sees that the tenants are being rack-rented as badly as the peons of Mexico. He sees that the State "has so many homeless people and so much vacant and waste land," and yet he can suggest no better remedy than a law restricting land rents to one-fourth of a cotton crop, or one-third of a grain crop, when the landlord furnishes the bare land and nothing else, and to one-half of the crop when the landlord furnishes something else. The Governor should consult with **J. J. Pastoriza**, **H. F. Ring**, or some equally good expert on the land question.

What makes his inability to see the right remedy even more strange is that he calls

attention to the need of more factories in the State, and urges submission of a constitutional amendment to exempt all cotton and wool factories from taxation. Let him just extend that suggestion to cover industry of all kinds, and he will be on the right track sure enough.

In Providence, Rhode Island, Alderman **John Kelso**, has introduced an ordinance in the city council to exempt personal property from local taxation, and is pushing it for passage. More than three hundred prominent business firms of the State have signed a request that the Legislature enact a home rule in taxation law.

In the Nebraska Legislature, Senator **Laurie J. Quinby** has introduced a measure to classify property for taxation, and has also introduced a number of other bills bearing on taxation. If Nebraska legislators won't know more about correct principles of taxation at the end of the session, than they did at the beginning, it will not be the fault of Senator Quinby.

In the Arkansas Legislature, Representative **R. H. Carruth** has introduced a bill which passed the House by 69 to 17, to put a graduated tax on large unimproved land holdings. Mr. Carruth is after the big monopolists. He will realize some time that he cannot frame a bill that will reach these monopolists as effectively as a straight out unlimited Single Tax measure.

In California the Home Rule in taxation amendment has been re-introduced in the Legislature by Assemblyman **George Gelder**.

A popular vote is to be taken on February 19 in the Turlock irrigation district of Stanislaus County on the question of defraying all irrigation expenses by a land value tax. There seems little doubt but that it will carry.

The following amendment to the charter of Colorado Springs, Colorado, will go to a popular referendum at the April election:

Be it enacted by the people of the City of Colorado Springs, That Article VII of the Charter of the City of Colorado Springs shall be amended by the addition of a new section, to be known as 48-a, to read as follows:

48-a. (1) Personal property and the products of labor and all improvements in or upon land are hereby declared to be exempt from taxation for municipal purposes in the City of Colorado Springs, such exemption to become effective on and after January 1st, 1916.

Provided, that nothing in this amendment shall be construed to abolish or in anywise affect such licenses or taxes as usually come within the police powers of the city.

(2) On and after January 1, 1916, land, exclusive of all improvements thereon and all interests in land, including easements, privileges and rights of way over private lands, and franchises in public roads, streets and alleys shall always be subject to taxation for municipal purposes.

Provided, that nothing in this amendment shall be construed as imposing any tax on or subjecting to taxation any property exempt therefrom by the Constitution of the State of Colorado.

(3) The purpose of this amendment is to have installed and put into effect in the City of Colorado Springs what is known as the Single Tax for municipal purposes, and to that end the Council is hereby instructed and directed, on the adoption of this amendment, to provide by ordinance some just and equitable system for the valuation and assessment of land and interests in land for taxation:

and also to provide by ordinance such other rules and regulations concerning taxation for municipal purposes as may be requisite or necessary to carry out the purpose of this amendment.

Anything in the Charter of the City of Colorado Springs or in any of its several sections in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of this amendment to Article VII is hereby repealed.

This is probably not a complete account of all that has happened in one month to show progress. But it gives one a pretty good idea.

Single Taxers have right now a better opportunity to push the movement to success than ever before in its history. Now is the time to put your shoulder to the wheel.

### ALABAMA BARBAROUS ALSO.

A friend at Camp Hill, Alabama, commenting on the article in the January Bulletin, entitled *Barbarous Miami*, writes:

"The same barbarous method of collecting taxes still prevails in Alabama too. Could you refer me to any pamphlet, brochure, magazine article or anything of the sort which treats this subject more exhaustively, one which publishes the names of the States which continue this relic of feudalism? Also could you tell me of any way to beat this outrageous thing except by going to jail? I would attempt it here if I knew a way."

The system of taxation is a so-called street tax of \$3.00 which every man between twenty-one and fifty-five years of age must pay or go to jail. It does not matter whether he has the money or not, or how badly he may need it for other purposes, if he has it.

There are still a number of backward States that levy a poll tax, but this street tax is a special tax levied in addition to the poll tax. Whether it is levied in any other States than Florida and Alabama we are unable to say at present.

As to beating the tax without going to jail. The tax is clearly contrary to the provision of the United States Constitution which forbids slavery or involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime. Any tax, the non-payment of which involves loss of liberty is clearly contrary to this constitutional clause. One need not be a lawyer to see that. Ordinary knowledge of the English language is enough.

But to take the matter up to the Supreme Court and get the—perhaps reluctant—judges to overturn the law is an expensive proceeding. Justice is not to be had free of charge.

### BIG BUSINESS MEN ARE LEARNING.

The United States Commission on Industrial Relations has succeeded at least in getting some expression of opinion from many of the great captains of industry concerning economic conditions. A few of these men, it seems, have done some thinking on the matter, although they may not be ready to advocate a radical remedy. Thus **George W. Perkins** said:

"Anyone approaching this country in an airship and looking down on it and seeing our great and fertile fields and rich mines and the comparatively small population, and then see-

ing the number of unemployed—the number of people who are not employed as they should be—would think this was a lunatic asylum."

**Daniel Guggenheim**, a hide-bound reactionary so far as his political activity is concerned, admitted that he knows conditions to be radically wrong. "*There would be a revolution in this country if it were not for the philanthropy that is being done*," he said, thus making clear that private contributions to charity must go on—not for fear of what may happen to the poor, but for fear of what may happen to the rich. He holds furthermore that the Government should see to it that every man has a job. Let Mr. Guggenheim keep on thinking and he will realize that every man would get a job quickly enough, were it not that the Government is preventing them. Let the Government but stop protecting such privileges as have made the Guggenheims multimillionaires and there will be no further trouble with joblessness.

**Professor Jacob Hollander** of Johns Hopkins University has progressed far enough to see that poverty is an unnecessary evil which can be abolished. But as to how to do it he is still in the dark and does not know it. Professor Hollander is supposed to teach political economy at Johns Hopkins. He ought to devote some time to studying it. He could then become fitted to present an easy and practicable method of abolishing poverty.

**Amos Pinchot** was already known as a man who can think straight and who is not afraid to publicly advocate what he thinks. So there was no occasion for surprise at his expression of opinion. He clearly showed that monopoly of natural resources must be abolished to open the way to economic freedom.

**Henry Ford** added to his laurels as a progressive business man by showing himself to be a progressive thinker on public matters also. Said Mr. Ford:

"I think that the tariff should be abolished entirely. I believe in free trade all over the world. If we had it things would adjust themselves and we would all be better off."

Thus the man who pays the highest wages in the United States, shows what he thinks of the "pauper labor" bugaboo. He told the commission how by increasing wages he had reduced the cost of production. High priced labor is always the cheapest. The tariff is only a curse to labor. But Mr. Ford is not only an absolute free trader. He knows that there are more fundamental evils than the tariffs. So he took occasion to say about **Daniel Guggenheim**:

"Where does Mr. Guggenheim get his money, anyway? Out of the ground, doesn't he? Well, I hold that all that should go back to the State. I believe in the public ownership of natural resources, such as mines and water power."

This may not be as clear as it might be, but it shows that Mr. Ford sees the wrong of private monopoly of natural resources. That is the essential thing. Perhaps he also sees that the single tax is the best method to put an end to monopoly. But even if he does not he has said enough to make the fact clear to many others.

**REJECT ANTI-SINGLE TAX.**

A proposition to again submit an anti-Single Tax amendment was rejected in the Missouri House of Representatives on February 11, by 81 to 59.

**OHIO SINGLE TAXERS MEET.**

Ohio Single Taxers met at the Hotel Hartman, in Columbus, on February 2, in response to the following call:

It has been determined to hold a conference to which shall be invited, not only those who view the problems of taxation from the land-value tax theory, but others who are at least open-minded as to the proper remedy. You are invited to be present and are asked to invite others who may desire to participate in such conference. There are two objects in view:

First—Determination of the best procedure under the initiative provisions of the Ohio Constitution, to make possible the enactment of tax laws that will be just.

Second—The formation of a state organization of those who believe in the taxation, exclusively, of land values.

This conference is planned to be a free and open discussion, not only of the topics indicated in this call, but of any others touching the great question of Ohio's tax methods and proposed changes therein.

The date set is Ground Hog Day, Tuesday, February 2, 1915. The place is the Hartman Hotel, Columbus, Ohio.

Three sessions will be held; one at 10 o'clock in the morning, the second at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and the third in the evening.

As Exhibit "A" of this conference, Mr. David Gibson, editor of "The Ground Hog," will parade at noon on High street, with a banner setting forth some facts concerning one economic monstrosity.

Several able speakers will be placed upon the program, but only enough to start things; ample provision for discussion by the folks who come will be made.

Whether you come or not, will you not kindly indicate as much on the enclosed post card?

E. W. Dory, Chairman.

Committee on Arrangements.

The meeting was held on schedule time, with a splendid attendance from all over the state. Among those who addressed the gathering were: Elizabeth J. Hauser, Mayor Newton Baker of Cleveland; Peter Witt, Carl Nau, A. B. du Pont, David Gibson, John D. Fackler of Rockefeller delinquent tax fame; J. B. Vining, Herbert S. Bigelow, W. P. Halenkamp, William Holloway, George Edwards, Daniel Kiefer, and others.

The meeting decided to organize The Ohio Site Value Taxation League. Henry P. Boynton of Cleveland, was made president; Carl P. Brannin of Cincinnati, secretary, and George T. Spahr of Columbus, treasurer.

According to promise, David Gibson picketed the Chittenden corner, at Broad and High streets, carrying a transparency telling of the rise in value of the corner from \$3,500 in 1837 to \$280,000 at the present time, and showing the moral to be drawn therefrom.

**ADDRESS OF DANIEL KIEFER**

**At Single Tax Convention At Columbus, On February 2nd.**

Active Single Tax work will not be on a solid foundation until we have a national organization composed of bonafide, dues-paying local organizations. That is one kind of work that needs to

be pushed. A local organization does not consist merely of twenty or thirty enthusiasts who each at more or less regular intervals, elect a president, secretary, and other officers and pass resolutions. It means an organized body where membership involves responsibility and is dependent on regular payment of certain fixed amounts. In this way the Socialists, both here and abroad, have built up national organizations that make them an effective force. It is in this way that the German Boden-reformers have built up their national body, which has done so much to advance our cause in Germany. What Boden-reformers and Socialists have done, American Single Taxers can also do.

The next National Single Tax gathering should consist of delegates regularly accredited from local organizations and this meeting might take some action toward organizing Ohio.

When we go into a campaign we must be prepared to discuss the Single Tax in its entirety. The specific measure up for action may be only a Home Rule measure, or something in the way of exemption. But merely because the measure that is up does not happen to be the Single Tax is no reason why we should refuse to discuss the whole program provided our opponents are willing to accommodate us by offering a proper challenge. When they do that we should promptly meet them. When Home Rule in Taxation is opposed, on the ground that it makes Single Tax possible, our opponents take for granted that their hearers, knowing nothing about Single Tax, believe it to be something terrible with which they can afford to take no chances. When they object to Single Tax, saying that it will put an end to property in land, they imagine the case for property in land to be unassailable.

Now there are arguments for Home Rule in Taxation that have nothing necessarily to do with Single Tax. It would be a desirable thing, even though it did not make Single Tax possible. But the fact that it does make Single Tax possible is an additional powerful argument in its favor and we should let no chance go by to present it.

So when we have a campaign on any kind of measure, I think we should talk to the specific question as long as our opponents are willing. But I hope that they won't be. I hope that they will bring up the arguments that will make it our duty to present them for answer, the whole of "Progress and Poverty," from cover to cover, including questions of property rights, the question of taking all of the rental value of land and the facts which show beyond dispute that there is not a single claim put forth in behalf of private property in land, that could not be made with many times the force in behalf of the complete unlimited Single Tax program.

The people of Ohio may not be ready for Single Tax, but they have shown what they think of a measure purported "to make Single Tax impossible."

Let us make such a fight and we will deserve to win, and when we deserve to win, we will have laid the foundation for ultimate victory.