

JOSEPH FELS FUND BULLETIN

BLYNMER 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 3

Cincinnati, Ohio, July, 1915.

Number 7

THE PROPER FORM.

To answer requests that have come for the proper way to word a bequest for the benefit of the Fund, the form below is printed. In literally following it, testators will avoid all error:

I give, devise and bequeath unto the Single Tax Endowment Fund (a corporation duly organized under the laws of the District of Columbia), its successors and assigns, the sum of Dollars, (or the following described real estate, to-wit) the same to be used, managed and controlled and disposed of in any manner the said Fund may see fit for the purpose of advancing the adoption in the United States of that method of taxation known as the Single Tax.

KEEP THE WHEELS MOVING.

Remember that single tax work can only be kept going when given adequate financial support, and the Joseph Fels Fund has been established to secure it. Mrs. Fels and some others are giving their share. Are you giving yours? If not, now is the time to begin.

THE AUGUST CONFERENCE.

The National Conference of Single Taxers will meet on August 23, 24 and 25 in San Francisco at the Fair grounds. It is fitting that there should be such a conference in the city where Progress and Poverty was written, and in the State where we have 267,000 votes to our credit, and which has put the single tax system in partial operation in 1,500 square miles of rural territory.

This will be the most representative gathering that has yet come together. Clubs and State Leagues will send authorized representatives. Foreign countries will also be represented, and from places where delegates can not come, letters telling of the local situation will be sent.

But the meeting will not and should not be a mutual admiration nor a jollification affair. Plutocracy is more thoroughly alarmed than before. When we undertake a local campaign now it is not merely the opposition of the local monopoly crowd

that we meet. We must fight opposition financed from national headquarters of plunderbund interests. Such was the case in Denver and in Colorado Springs. Such will be the case in other campaigns.

So the conference will have serious work to consider, and will need the help of all who are in position to give it. So all who have the good of the movement at heart and can see their way clear to attendance should let themselves be heard from.

Advise the chairman of the Conference Committee, James H. Barry, San Francisco, of the likelihood of your attendance.

A REMINDER.

The following letter speaks for itself. The Commission has had some experience in sending out letters that called for a reply, and so feels safe in declaring that though every reader of the Bulletin has probably received one of these letters, and though a postal card for reply was enclosed, very many have neglected to answer. To remind these negligent ones, the letter is reproduced and prompt attention is urged.

San Francisco, June 23, 1915.

Dear Friend:

On August 23, 24 and 25 of this year there will be held, on the grounds of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco, an International Single Tax Conference, in connection with the annual meeting of the Joseph Fels Fund Commission. Mrs. Mary Fels, Mr. Daniel Kiefer and other leaders of the Single Tax movement will be present.

A program is being prepared, which will show the progress and present status of the Single Tax movement in every part of the world.

This will also be an opportunity to see the SINGLE TAX IN ACTUAL OPERATION in six irrigation districts, comprising over 1,000,000 acres in city lots and farms, in California.

In arranging the program and in making other arrangements, also in our publicity work, it is extremely desirable for us to know exactly who is coming.

Will you please inform us by return mail, or at the earliest possible moment, whether you expect to attend the conference.

Hotel accommodations may be had at moderate rates.

With best wishes,

JAMES H. BARRY, Chairman.

A LAND OWNERS' SINGLE TAX ORGANIZATION.

There are probably as many land owners in the single tax movement, in proportion as there are landless ones. The possession of a title to land does not interfere with their appreciation of justice nor with their desire to promote the general welfare. A movement is on to organize these land owners into a national league, and in all probability this will be done. Needless to say that the motive is an excellent one. It will impress upon the uninformed outsider the fact that the single tax movement is far from being one that consists of landless persons alone. The temporary committee having the matter in hand consists of the following:

W. D. George, Pittsburgh, Pa.; J. J. Pastoriza, Houston, Tex.; Alex. Y. Scott, Memphis, Tenn.; F. F. Ingram, Detroit, Mich.; Jas. W. Hill, Peoria, Ill.; George F. Peabody, Saratoga Springs, N. Y.; David J. Lewis, Cumberland, Md.; F. I. duPont, Wilmington, Del.; Bolton Hall, New York City; J. H. McGill, Valparaiso, Ind.; John Salmon, Baltimore, Md.; John T. McRoy, Bennington, Vt.; George L. Record, Jersey City, N. J.; E. B. Swinney, New York City; Dr. M. D. Hussey, East Orange, N. J.; C. A. Lingham, Lockport, N. Y.; R. N. Douglass, Postville, Ia.; Geo. P. Hummer, Holland, Mich.; M. F. Bingham, Oxford, Md.; John D. Fackler, Cleveland, O.; C. H. Ingersoll, New York City; F. T. Moreland, Portsmouth, O.; W. I. Boreman, Parkersburg, W. Va.

LAND AND LABOR.

The following from an active worker in Little Rock, Arkansas, shows clearly the relation of the land to the labor question:

"I have some real estate in Enid, Oklahoma, which I am selling on time payments. I have some real estate in Pulaski Heights, a suburb of Little Rock, which I am purchasing by the same method.

"The Pulaski Heights space I am buying is as absolutely devoid of anything bearing the imprint of man as it was during the days that the dove flew from Noah's ark and returned with the olive branch. In other words, so far as there are any evidences, a plow, an ax or other tool of man have never touched this land. It therefore possesses no value ever given it by a man. However, I am paying for considerable value that has been given it by the collective presence of the people of Little Rock, Pulaski Heights and the rest of the population of the State of Arkansas.

"You will note that in this instance, as is true of every other foot of ground on this planet, the purchaser is paying for it; not the producer, but the non-producer of the value. The effect is to defer the building of a real nice bungalow which my wife and I have in mind. Another effect is the prevention of the cutting of lumber and the employment of a number of workmen in building the bungalow.

"Last winter our Mayor and some of our citizens were much interested in alleviating the poverty of the unemployed. It did not occur to them to give any attention whatever to the principal CAUSE of their involuntary unemployment.

"Having no direct connection with above, from a number of conversations I have recently had with others, I have come to the conclusion that a very large percentage of men who do not understand Single Tax consider it only in so far as being a fiscal change in taxation which would shift the burden of the necessary revenue to be derived from the products of man to land values. With this impression, they feel that it would make scarcely any change in social conditions, and therefore prove of little value to mankind. The change mentioned is in my opinion the slightest effect that would accrue to society by a change in the method of taxation. A change which would be of universal and of most tremendous advantage to society would instead be an opening up of opportunities for producing wealth which are now closed

to production, or are so nearly closed as to have the effect of producing on the one side widespread poverty and on the other unreasonable riches. A fiscal change in taxation such as would be brought about by the Single Tax is the very smallest factor to be considered. I think the feature to which I have alluded should be brought out more in detail or made more plain by some of our Single Tax writers."

Sincerely yours,

"K. P. ALEXANDER."

AUTHOR OF THE TEXAS LEAGUE'S PROBLEM.

It is due an active worker in the cause, C. M. Koedt, of Chicago, to explain that he is the framer of the problem propounded in the last issue, for the solution of which the Texas League for the Taxation of Land Values offers \$50 in prizes. In The Public of January 16, 1914, Mr. Koedt suggested this problem as "one that the universally talked-of small farmers of Denmark have proposed to themselves, and solved to their entire satisfaction."

HEALTH AND WAGES.

Dr. Alexander Lambert, Chairman of the Judicial Council of the American Medical Association, says it is estimated that the total loss to American working classes due to illness amounts to \$366,000,000 of lost wages annually, and \$285,000,000 for medical aid, etc., making a total of \$651,000,000 for the 33,500,000 wage earners.

That is a fearful economic loss, and Dr. Lambert says it is small wonder, in view of that loss, that under those governments in which a compulsory system of insurance is possible, sickness is treated as a national calamity to be guarded against by insurance that gives a relatively large return for the smallest outlay from the individual, thus protecting the individual and the community against loss.

The Judicial Council of the American Medical Association advocates workmen's compensation laws for individual and community protection. That is wise. At the same time, thoughtful members of the medical profession would do well to read what Surgeon-General Gorgas of the United States Army says in a small pamphlet recently issued. Dr. Gorgas advocates single tax. He sees the economic side, as does Dr. Lambert. But, in addition, he sees the root of the low wage evil. His pamphlet is very interesting, and may be obtained by writing to Daniel Kiefer, Blymyer Building, Cincinnati, Ohio.—*San Francisco Star*.

OUR NATIONAL VOTE.

In the May Bulletin appeared figures showing that in three States and six cities where the single tax has been an issue at elections, it received 454,298 votes. Since these places contain 7½ per cent of the population of the country, the conclusion was drawn therefrom that a similar vote in a nationwide contest would make our numbers 6,057,200.

There was no mathematical error in this result, but there was an error in the assumption that the places containing 7½ per cent of the population contained but 7½ per cent of the voters. This would be the case, were it not for the fact that woman suffrage is not yet universal. In two of three States (Oregon and California) woman suffrage prevails, as it also does in all but one of the

six cities. To accurately figure what the same proportion of votes in a nation-wide contest would be, it would be necessary to ascertain the ratio of the total votes cast in these places to the total in the United States.

One correspondent thought to solve the problem by cutting in half the vote in suffrage localities. But that was on the assumption that woman suffrage doubles the vote. This it has not done. Since the almanacs only give Presidential and other election statistics by States and counties, official figures of the total votes in the six cities are not available. It would be within the bounds of reason to estimate that the places contain between 10 and 12 per cent of the total vote of the country, which would make a proportionate single tax vote throughout the nation range from 3,800,000 to 4,500,000. That is not a bad showing.

WHAT ORGANIZATION CAN DO.

Our Socialist friends can nearly always give a fairly accurate forecast of the votes their ticket will get at an approaching election. It usually receives about ten votes for every dues-paying member of their organization. They had 100,000 such members in 1912 and figured consequently on 1,000,000 votes for Debs, which came very close to being correct.

Figuring the same way, it may be said that with as good an organization as the Socialists have we should have 45,000 contributors to single tax work in the places where elections on the single tax issue have taken place. The difference between the actual number of contributors in these places and 45,000 is what we are losing by having no organization in those places alone. There is undoubtedly similar loss in other places. The question of thorough organization is an important one for the coming conference.

\$3 Worth of Books Free

Any reader of the Bulletin who sends six new yearly subscriptions to The Public before the end of this month will receive, all charges prepaid, three dollars' worth of books, to be chosen by him from our new book list.

Help us get 1,000 new readers in July, and at the same time, build up your library.

THE PUBLIC

The Circulation Department.
Ellsworth Bldg., Chicago

A "People's Land and Loan Measure" is to be submitted in Oregon by the Central Labor Council of Portland through the initiative. Its provisions in brief are as follows:

First: To absolutely protect private ownership of private property, including the workman's right to employment and to receive and own the products of his labor.

Second: To restore public ownership of ground rent and collect all of it in Oregon, as nearly as may be practicable, by taxation for public purposes.

Third: To restore to every citizen his inalienable right to make a job for himself on the land when he desires to do so, without depriving him of any right to work for a boss when he finds one that is satisfactory.

Fourth: To provide a system of State loans to aid farmers and other home makers in establishing themselves in Oregon.

THE YEAR BOOK.

It is disappointing to read in the May-June number of the Single Tax Review that sufficient orders had not yet been received by Mr. Joseph Dana Miller to make possible the publication of his year book. No doubt this is due more to carelessness than anything else. Many who intend to order have put it off and forgot about it. But such delays should not occur. It is to be hoped that the next issue of The Review will contain the announcement that work on the Year Book is proceeding.

WASHINGTON'S PROGRESSIVE FARMERS.

Farmers of the State of Washington have been studying taxation questions with open minds. There can be but one result of such study, and so it is not surprising that at the annual meeting in June, at Centralia, of the State Grange, the following resolution was passed:

"That we go on record as favoring the adoption of a system of taxation whereby personal property and all improvements would be exempt from taxation and the burden be borne entirely by land values."

This was not all. The tendency of the State Grange to settle questions on their merits has long been noticeable. That is not the way privileged interests want questions settled, and so a systematic campaign had been carried on to capture the Grange and put in a set of reactionary officers. This plot failed. The Grange re-elected, by a big majority, C. B. Kegley as State Master, who has long held that position, and under whose administration the organization has been devoted to the interest of working farmers, in preference to privileged corporations. The farmers of Washington can not be fooled.

POTENTIAL JOBS WITHHELD.

According to the Tax Department of New York City, there are 454,095 parcels of land vacant within the city limits, assessed at \$618,041,300. That is, the assessors think that for the privilege of making use of this land it would be profitable for producers to pay that sum, or to annually pay the interest thereon. To put it in another way, this land can be made to produce enough wealth to afford a living to workers, pay interest on the capital needed to secure best results, all expenses incidental to its use, and over and above all about \$31,000,000 a year ground rent. With such opportunities lying idle, how comes it that the city is filled with involuntarily unemployed men? And why is it so difficult for idle capital to be profitably invested? The reason is that the owners do not see fit to let these opportunities be used. It is only natural that they should not. The laws of New York penalize improvement of land. The landholder who improves must pay more taxes in consequence. The one who holds land out of use has the opportunity to gain unearned increment without any particular effort on his part. The result is seen not only in these 454,095 parcels of unused land, but in land but partly used, in dilapidated buildings which should long ago have been replaced with better ones: in con-

gested population, and in prevailing poverty, vice and crime. To remedy this state of affairs would seem to be the most urgent and important matter for a legislative assembly. Yet New York has not yet had a Legislature that could see that far.—*The Public*.

SOME CONVENTION MONTH.

Single taxers and others who intend to visit San Francisco during the latter part of August, when the single tax conference and Joseph Fels Fund Commission convention will be held, will find that a most interesting period of the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Conventions and congresses have been made a special feature of this exposition. In all a total of 822 great gatherings are to be held in connection with this celebration of the opening of the Panama Canal. August 10 to 14 the National Tax Association will hold its convention, also the California County Assessors' Association and the Political Science Association. During the month of August a multitude of college fraternities, fraternal and life insurance societies and companies will hold national meetings. Lawyers, teachers and press humorists hold their gatherings at the same time as the single taxers. Florists, park superintendents, railroad superintendents, librarians, hygiene experts, shorthand reporters, farmers' institutes, medical societies, various druggists' associations, biological, seismological, paleontological, bacteriological, and practically all of the other known ological societies will hold their national meeting during August in San Francisco. Two great Esperanto gatherings, the Society for Study of the Feeble-Minded and the Daughters of Liberty will also meet at that time. Altogether 248 separate organizations will hold their national convention during August in San Francisco.—*E. P. E. Troy*.

FARMERS AND SINGLE TAX.

The following from a farmer at Houston, Virginia, shows how all working farmers would feel toward the single tax but for deception practiced on them by opponents. When a farmer once understands the single tax it is only natural that he should be as enthusiastic in its favor as this letter shows:

"We possess 445 acres of land almost paid for, the gambling value of which is about \$20,000. Would shout for joy if we could change to single tax conditions. Every farmer who has not the cash to pay for land (and few have) sells himself and family as slaves for life to a landlord, when they buy land, needed to farm on, because all they can earn more than needed to live on must go in one form or another to pay it. Negro slavery was bad, but this in many ways is worse."

HENRY CRAMER AND FAMILY.

SOME INTERESTING OCCURRENCES.

Governor Martin G. Brumbaugh, of Pennsylvania vetoed the bill repealing the law of 1913, providing for gradual untaxing of improvements in Pittsburg and Scranton. The repealer was forced through the gang Legislature by the political bosses to oblige Pittsburg's big landed interests. Citizens protested against this action, but that cut no figure with the Legislature. It was different with the

Governor. He considered his veto justified by the fact that the repealer was "opposed by the largest group of protestants that had been heard on any bill." The bosses are still wondering what that had to do with the case.

The Ohio Site Value Taxation League is preparing to circulate an initiative petition for Home Rule on Taxation.

REJECTING THE SINGLE TAX.

At a recent election the people of Denver, by a vote of 27,125 to 7,989, declined to avail themselves of a provision of the constitution of Colorado which permits charter cities to exempt personal property and improvements on land from taxation for city purposes.

The latest annual tax in Denver was \$1,048,760 on land and \$1,270,706 on personal property. If the amendment would have passed, the figures would have been changed to \$2,097,831 on land and franchises and only \$231,834 on personal property and land improvements. The Denver home owners failed to see the advantage to them of adopting this Henry George single tax system; and they rejected it by a vote of four to one.

While single tax advocates are usually over-enthusiastic disciples of the idea, practical business men and industrial builders do not seem to have been drawn very far into their circle.—*Beaumont Journal*.

Those who rejected this measure knew nothing about it, except the distorted ideas gained by political spellbinders on the payroll of wealthy landlords and subsidized newspapers. Had the measure carried, Denver would soon become a happy scene of industrial activity. People can not grasp the fundamental import of single tax in a campaign of only a few days' or weeks' duration. No sane man can deny that withholding land out of use, regardless of whether it be Denver lots or Colorado farms, for mere speculation, would benefit anyone except the speculator, whose gain is always at the expense of industry. His gain is the community's loss and there is never a chance to get justice till the incidents of taxation are changed. All Denverites produced the value of Denver lots, and why should they not take it back in the form of taxation. Dead millions are always tied up in the sponge of land values and always will be, so long as individuals can pocket values created by all. This impoverishes business and wage earners, producing poverty and hard times. If such industries were free from taxation the millions now sunk in land values would seek investments in payroll enterprises, and Denver's stagnant business would flourish as never before.

The defeat of a measure is by no means a test of its real merit. People vote rather cautiously, and they reject measures they know nothing about. Very likely the opposition to single tax in Denver could defeat the ten commandments if they desired. One-fourth of the Denverites have their eyes open and their faces turned toward the rising sun of a brighter day. You will hear from them again.—*Corpus Christi (Texas) Democrat*.