

# JOSEPH FELS FUND BULLETIN

BLMYER BUILDING

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

PUBLISHED BY JOSEPH FELS FUND COMMISSION

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## MRS. FELS' ANNOUNCEMENT.

Before sailing for England Mrs. Mary Fels addressed the following letter to the Joseph Fels Fund Commission:

"Philadelphia, April 15.

"The time has come when you would naturally expect a formal statement of what I shall do toward a renewal of my husband's agreement with you and the Singletaxers of the United States. I am sorry to disappoint you, but cannot say just yet what I shall be able to do, except that after a few months I hope to meet all your present expectations and carry out my husband's part in contracts made and plans laid. I mean that I will continue his \$2,000 a month to July 1, when I should be able to report more definitely as to the future. I hope, I may say expect, by that time to see my way clear to renewing our offer to match dollar for dollar all the money contributed by the Singletaxers of the United States, up to some such limit as \$25,000 per annum.

"The delay is due in part to settling the estate; but also it is my desire to comprehend personally the policy, plans and personnel, not only of the United States Commission, but of similar groups and commissions working toward the same end in England, Denmark, Germany, France, Spain, and other countries, where Mr. Fels was giving support to our cause, his and yours and mine. It seems right to me to look over the whole field, then, to resume the work everywhere at about the same time with a clear, personal knowledge of the movement in all its parts and as a unit. And I may then have a suggestion for all the commissions for some loose sort of co-ordi-

nation and active interchange of ideas and experience.

"There is another reason for my wishing to begin by getting into close touch with all parts of the movement. I do not want to give money alone; I want to give myself to this cause of justice, as my husband gave himself. It was a happiness to him to work for it; it will be a happiness to me. And if I give personal service thus, it may put me in a position to plead for personal service from others also; and not as a duty either, but as a happiness.

"That, as I understand it, is why you of the Commission are so urgent in your appeals for a large number of small contributions of a dollar or less. You want the contributors. From my heart I approve that policy. It is human; it is democratic; it is good politics. If every man and every woman—if every giver of a dime would give himself or herself also; if each self-giver would then go out and get others; and having their dimes and dollars, would send them on to get yet others in the same spirit, we would soon have this country girdled with living chains of living people all devoted happily to a happy cause.

"I shall sail for England on April 28. I am going there to work. While I am working there, you will be working here to continue the movement started spontaneously by the contributors to 'match their own dollars as Joseph Fels did.' The results already achieved indicate that it may succeed. If it does, it will indeed be a monument to Joseph Fels, for that was his spirit.

"I should be glad to be reduced to merely one of many equal contributors and workers in our cause; equal, not in amounts of money, but in the heart we all put into our work. In a word, I would like to match you all, but especially the humble givers, not only dollar for dollar, but man for man, woman for woman.

"MARY FELS."

## 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.



**HAPPENINGS IN WASHINGTON.**

Commissioner Oliver P. Newman, of the District of Columbia, proposed in a speech on April 8 to the Commercial Club of Washington, the exemption of improvements from taxation, since these, he said, "are the result of the energy and thrift of the individual for the manifestation of which he is now penalized." Before making this announcement Mr. Newman presented his suggestion to President Wilson for his consideration.

**HOUSTON NEWS.**

About fifty or seventy-five land speculators of Houston, Tex., calling themselves the Harris County Property-owners' Association, held a meeting on April 7 to express dissatisfaction with the Houston plan of exempting improvements and personal property. The other 10,000 property-owners of Houston have shown their satisfaction with the system by signing the assessment roll. Of course the speculators have accomplished nothing, and are little likely to do so. Mayor Ben Campbell, in commenting on the matter, said: "Under our present system of taxation Houston has prospered as it has never done before. We have accomplished a great deal under our new form of taxation."

**ACTIVITY IN DENVER.**

The Colorado Single Tax Association is at work in Denver showing each taxpayer exactly what he or she will gain through adoption of the pending single tax amendment to the city's charter. The following form, properly filled, is being sent:

Your tax schedule for 1913 shows the following:

Land Value.....\$.....  
Improvement Value.....\$.....  
Personal Property Value.....\$.....

Your present yearly tax on the above property is.....\$.....

If the Single Tax Amendment passes, your tax on this property will be as follows:

On Improvements.....**NOTHING**  
On Personal Property.....**NOTHING**  
On Land Value at 24 Mills.....\$.....  
Making an Annual Saving of.....\$.....

In obtaining the above figures, you must bear in mind the sum of taxes to be collected for state, county, school and municipal purposes. This amount in Denver was \$4,800,000 for 1913. The same amount must be raised under the Single Tax, therefore, by dividing that amount by the total land values of Denver, that, according to assessors' books, are 167,000,000, plus franchise values of \$33,000,000, making a total of \$200,000,000, a levy of 24 mills was found to be sufficient.

By improving your property you benefited the community and you should not be fined for doing so.

The Central idea of the Single Tax is to make the man with the vacant lot pay as much as the man with an improved lot. No doubt you agree that the man who holds lots vacant, covered with tin cans, dead cats and weeds, ought to pay as much tax as the man who improves his lots.

We need your co-operation to carry this Single Tax Amendment. As it will save you the amount stated above, we trust you will be willing to subscribe 25 cents per month to win this fight. The enclosed circular explains our work.

Very truly yours,

THE COLORADO SINGLE TAX ASSOCIATION,  
B. J. SALMON, Secretary.

**A POSTHUMOUS ARTICLE BY JOSEPH FELS.**

The May issue of the National Magazine contains a posthumous article by Joseph Fels, entitled "How Poverty May Be Abolished." It was prepared for the press just before he was struck down, and comes as the last contribution of his lifetime. The National Magazine can be obtained at newsstands, or ordered from headquarters in Boston, through any dealer.

**COLORADO—A VICTIM OF LAND MONOPOLY.**

Colorado is reaping today the fruits of an unjust system. The mineral resources of the state originally the property of the Spanish and Mexican Governments, and later of the United States Government, were allowed to pass into the possession of the Rockefellers and other monopolists. As always occurs when land is thus acquired, the interest of the public has received the lesser consideration if it has received any at all. To get the largest financial returns the monopolists have held most of the resources out of use, thus better enabling them to get big prices out of the public for their product. This policy has furthermore restricted the demand for labor so that in order to keep wages from sinking too low, laborers found themselves obliged to combine into trade unions and to insist on collective bargaining. Refusal to grant the demands of the union would not alone have brought on industrial war, if the unused natural resources of the state had not been withheld from use. On the other hand, if all these resources had been open, laborers could have obtained the full product of their labor without combining into unions. So land monopoly has brought on a barbarous civil war in the carrying on of which neither age nor sex has been spared.

Twelve years ago there was submitted to the voters of Colorado, the Bucklin Australasian Tax Amendment. It provided for home rule in taxation. Had it been adopted, the mining counties and other counties that so desired, could have used the taxing power to break the hold of Rockefeller's corporation and all the other monopolistic corporations on the natural resources of the state. The corporations saw that this would occur and raised heaven and earth to defeat the proposition. Every paper controlled by these mining interests, by the railroads or by land grabbers generally, howled against it. Of course, the usual lies about the single tax hurting the farmer were presented as the reason why these monopolistic organs were so opposed to a measure that would empower the farmers of any county to decide for themselves whether or not they wanted the single tax. And the bunco game worked. The measure was defeated. This result was helped along by tremendous frauds.

Feeling themselves safe, the mining monopolists provoked a strike within a few months after the result on the Bucklin Amendment had been

announced, and carried matters through with a high hand. The history of Colorado mining districts for the years 1903 and 1904 is one of violence, martial law, illegal deportation of strike leaders, illegal arrests without warrant, upholding of those outrages by a corporation-controlled Supreme Court, and similar outrages. Finally the strikers were superseded by strike breakers and for a number of years the monopolists have had their way. Now trouble has broken out once more. It was inevitable. Holding Colorado's resources in their control, they knew that when a miner leaves them he must travel far to get another job, even though in traveling he passes over the best of unused mining lands.

The remedy is in the hands of the voters of the state. Let them undo the blunder of 1902. Let them adopt the measure that plunderbund interests of that year fought so hard. That is what Colorado needs. That is what every state needs. Colorado owes her troubles of today to those who defeated the Bucklin proposal. Had that measure carried, the state would by this time be leading in prosperity. Its great resources would be open to labor; demand for laborers would be in excess of the supply and poverty and resulting distress would be but painful memories. When the voters of 1902 allowed themselves to be hoodwinked and coerced because they allowed ballot boxes to be stuffed and votes miscounted, they opened the way to events that have culminated in the awful tragedy at Ludlow, with more tragedies—perhaps even worse ones—by no means improbable. Can Colorado workers afford to delay adoption of the remedy?

#### “GOOD WORK” BY THE INTERESTS.

A New York dispatch in the Philadelphia Ledger of March 24 speaks of “good work” done by the Allied Real Estate Interests in defeating the Herrick-Schaap bill. This bill would have given New Yorkers a chance to say whether tuberculosis and infant mortality should continue as before, through overcrowding in the tenement districts, or whether by increasing land value taxes, land owners should be forced to permit increase of housing accommodation, and tuberculosis and infant mortality be checked. Defeat of such a measure is called “good work.” Why? Because, first of all, New Yorkers would have overwhelmingly voted in favor of taxing improvements less and land values more. Second, this would not only have increased the taxes of vacant land owners, but would have stimulated building, increased competition among the house owners for tenants and reduced rents. It consequently seemed desirable to the Allied Real Estate Interests to defeat the bill. If the bill has been defeated, then several thousand infants in New York City's congested districts will prematurely die, and thousands of new cases of tuberculosis will be bred—all a result of the Interests' “good work.” What sort of testimonial does New York City intend to present to these “benefactors?”—The Public.

Tammany and the allied interests succeeded in defeating the bill and incidentally in condemning

a number of New York's tenement dwellers to premature death. But the fight goes on just the same. The Lower Rent Society, in addition to its other activities, has started a paper, “The Tenants' Weekly,” with Benjamin C. Marsh as the editor. The voters of the city will now be given the opportunity denied them by the daily press to get the facts concerning this measure.

#### VANCOUVER ADVANCES.

A desperate attempt was made by the reactionary element of Vancouver to have the city council order a return to the antiquated system of taxing improvements. Great pressure was brought to bear on the councilmen, but it was all in vain. Council decided not only to retain the single tax system that has made Vancouver prosper, but raised the tax rate from twenty mills to twenty-two.

#### A TAX FABLE.

Once upon a time there was a little kingdom in which the principal industry was growing figs. The King needed more revenue, so he issued a proclamation, levying against each fig tree a tax of one piece of silver. The growers of the fig trees looked for a way to escape the tax. Soon hatchets were laid at the roots of the trees, and the industry was a thing of the past.

Across the bay lay another little kingdom whose industry was also the growing of figs. This king also wanted revenue, and he issued a proclamation levying a tax of one piece of silver against each block of land. The people tried to avoid the tax, but they could not do away with the land. So to raise the tax, they planted more fig trees, and the industry thrived, and the people grew rich; so that the people from the first kingdom crossed the bay to the second kingdom where industry was encouraged. And the fame went to all the countries roundabout.

—John W. Dix.

#### STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, ETC.

Of The Joseph Fels Fund Bulletin, published monthly at Cincinnati, Ohio, required by the Act of August 24, 1912:

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George A. Briggs, Elkhart, Ind.;	Frederic C. Howe, 31 W. Twelfth Street, New York, N. Y.;
Charles H. Ingersoll,	315 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.;
Jackson H. Ralston,	Union Savings Bank Building, Washington, D. C.;
Lincoln Steffens,	Players' Club, Gramercy Park, New York City.

#### MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.

Known bondholders, mortgagees and other security holders, holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None.

DANIEL KIEFER.

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 28th day of March, 1914.

[SEAL]

THOMAS GREGORY, Notary Public.  
(My commission expires June 22, 1914.)