

is in the nature of things for them to do so. Our mission should be to use this tendency to induce men to gather to talk the philosophy of Henry George.

I believe Single Tax Reading Circles can be made a custom. The reading circle spirit, once properly inoculated, is catching, being both infectious and contagious.

The possibilities are unlimited. Each Reading Circle will, in the natural course, draw to it some person from a more distant neighborhood, who in time will form the center of a new neighborhood circle himself. Whoever has once been part of a Reading Circle will readily serve as the nucleus for another.

It will be part of the work of this League to keep in touch not only with the readers or leaders of the various Reading Circles, but also with each member of such circles, and to help and encourage this work. It will give the League a list of names (if indeed not a list of members) that could not be otherwise obtained. And who does not see the possibility of an endless chain of circles each ever prolific of further increase?

I can see only one outcome to the proper expenditure of effort in this direction on our part. The people will respond if we are in earnest and our work will be crowned with success. We will lay the foundation of justice and democracy so firm and true that it will not be dislodged, and that Freedom, Social and Economic, will be served.

ORGANIZATION.

By **PROF. LEWIS H. CLARK.**

(Read at the Buffalo Conference of the New York State Single Tax League.)

Having been invited, quite to my surprise, to read a paper on the subject of organization, I respond gladly to the call, not because my experience justifies the invitation, for it does not, but because it is both a pleasure and a duty to serve our cause in any possible way. In my home town will be found the reason for my interest in this subject. Those of us there who have grasped to an extent that truth of "Progress and Poverty" are very few in number and are quite isolated from other disciples of Henry George. Until Miss Colbron discovered us, we had had no connection with the outer world. We have known you only by seeing your names in print, and in whatever we have done for the Single Tax, have been like lone guerrillas, fighting without the inspiration of numbers, or the advantage of an organized force. And while we feel that in any case the responsibility of spreading the truth in our own locality rests upon us, I, for one, am sure that I could work with more courage and effectiveness if I knew that I was one of a great organized host

systematically fighting the same battle shoulder to shoulder. Those also whom we would win would be more quickly attracted if they knew that we represented a large and growing band of workers. It is for these reasons that you are invited to listen to a few thoughts on this important subject.

Before giving my conclusions as to the best form for an organization of the Single Taxers of our country, I will take up briefly the subject of its general character and purpose.

At the very beginning let me venture the opinion that a Single Tax association should devote itself *chiefly* to *educative* work and very little to *political* activity. As the tide of sentiment favoring a reform rises higher and higher, existing political parties are *forced* to take it up and enact it into law. The chief duty of the advocates of the reform is to see that the tide keeps rising. Of course there is abundant political work for Single Taxers as *individuals*. They must, for example, use all their influence for the cause of *direct legislation*—a reform that is absolutely vital to the success of our own cause. They must petition, regularly and unitedly, for the passage of Single Tax measures, question candidates, cast their votes where they will do the most good, and use all other legitimate political means to advance their cause. Nevertheless, it is highly important for their organizations to avoid all partisan entanglements. Nor can I agree with those who would have Single Taxers form a party of their own. The party Prohibitionists have given us a good example of the mistake of such a move as that. For forty years they have struggled—valiantly, it is true—but vainly, and are now no nearer a party triumph than they were at the beginning. Meanwhile, temperance legislation has made wonderful progress, not by their efforts, but by the non-partisan privilege of the direct vote. We should learn a lesson from this and cease to dream of a Single Tax political party sweeping the country. Our triumphs will not come in that way. Our hope lies in the initiative and referendum. Where they can be secured, victory will be ours as soon as the educative work has been done. As the initiative and referendum have already been established in a fourth of the States of the Union and the Single Tax not fully enacted in any of them, it should be perfectly evident to all that the opportunities are coming faster than we can use them, and that the educative side is the one for us to attend to.

In the second place, our organization should be simple, flexible and adaptable. It should be so simple and adaptable as not to disturb seriously any existing organizations, but even to include them. It should be a federation or extension of associations already existent. If any are disposed to ask, "What's the use of it? Why unite independent associations already doing successful work?" let them reflect upon the strength that comes from *union*, the possibility of a greater esprit de corps, the enthusiasm of numbers, the advertising value, the stronger front, the better heart.

Thirdly, our organization should cover all parts of the country, and not merely the large centers. The societies in the large centers should see to it,

so far as possible, that there are workers in all the country towns as well as in all city wards. This may not impress you all as an important point, but right there is where the law of diminishing returns ought to apply. That law is that beyond a certain point increase of labor and capital will not give proportionate increase of product. In every place there are certain people, who because of temperament or education, can be won over to the Single Tax more quickly than others. People of that sort are already won over in places that have been organized for some time. Why, then, is it not good strategy to go out into other places and gather all such to our standard and set them to work? Would not their assistance make the remaining work easier? It may be objected that that would be diffusion of effort and that we ought to concentrate on particular localities. To this it may be replied that some kinds of concentration are not advisable. The spreading of truth is like the sowing of seed. The kernels must be at proper distances and not too many at one point. So with Single Tax sentiment. We cannot tell where it will flourish best. While we are centering our efforts on Delaware or Seattle, an unexpected Houston or Pueblo is fully as likely to place itself on the Single Tax map. Let us then distribute our labors more evenly and widely, until every village, town and city has its workers.

Leaving now the general character, let us consider more particularly the form of organization best suited to our needs.

Of such organization the principal feature, in my opinion, should be a complete set of committees and chairmen in all suitable divisions of the country; that is, an organization resembling in some respects that of a political party. I think, however, I have already made it plain that I would not under any circumstances have such an organization used as, or turned into, a political party. On that account our organization could be even simpler and more compact than that of a political party. For example, there would be no need of organizing senatorial, congressional or judicial districts. The plan as outlined in my own mind would be as follows:

First, there should be a basal unit, preferably the election precinct. The town would not be so suitable for such unit as it varies too much in population, while the precincts are fairly uniform. If found desirable, the precincts in a town or city could unite their efforts and engage jointly in public meetings and other propaganda. Nevertheless, it would seem important that each unit of population be represented in the higher bodies and remain separately organized, but for propaganda and correspondence purposes only. All questions of importance must of course be decided by direct vote of the enrolled Single Taxers. It would ordinarily be considered unfair for the chairman of a precinct having only a half dozen Single Taxers to have as great representative power as that of a precinct having sixty, but he must be looked upon as a missionary representing in part the interests of the unevangelized members of his community and in part the larger body of Single Taxers in places where the work is farther advanced.

Starting then with the election precinct, there should be a Single Tax association of some kind in it, either fully organized with a president or chairman and holding regular and frequent meetings, or a mere enrollment with only a chairman and an annual meeting. The second unit would be the assembly district, as called in this State. Its organization would consist of a committee composed of all the precinct chairmen in the district, 40 or 50 in number. The third unit would be the State whose committee would be composed of the district chairmen, making in this State a committee of 150 members. The fourth and last unit would be the nation with a committee consisting of the 48 State chairmen. These committees should be chiefly advisory in character and charged with the carrying out of the plans of the association. Thus would be formed a very simple association of forces in the form of a pyramid, with four strata or layers, the associations in the precincts at the bottom, then the district committees, the State committees and lastly the national committee, the chairmen of each stratum forming the committee of the next higher. Such an organization appears to me sufficiently simple, compact and well coordinated; and it provides for aggressive work in every township of the nation, however thinly populated.

Secondly, as to the rules for membership, or the question of enrollment. My suggestion is that there should be two lists in every precinct—one of regular paying members, the other of associate members having no vote and paying no stated fee. The one condition of associate membership should be an expressed willingness to sign petitions to the legislature for separate assessment of land values, and for the privilege of a direct vote of the people in city, county, and State, on exemption of improvements. Thus the associate members would not commit themselves to the Single Tax but merely to fair play for the Single Tax. This point should be strongly emphasized. Men who want to see fair play for the Single Tax are only a short step from becoming out-and-out Single Taxers. It is quite worth while to make a list of their names and to have them even slightly connected with us. From them will come our recruits.

Thirdly, as to the *government* of the association. There should, of course, be a constitution, and it should provide a thoroughly democratic system with responsibility centered strongly on the chairman of each unit. The constitution and all important measures should be adopted by the direct vote of the entire membership.

Fourthly, as to *finances*. A stated fee, paid annually and divided equitably between precinct, district, State and national associations, would seem best. In addition to this, frequent opportunity for voluntary contributions should be afforded.

Lastly, may I speak briefly of the *functions* of each division? Among the duties belonging to the national association would be the influencing of national legislation, the publication of a national bulletin, and the holding of large national conferences. The national conference should be an event

of great importance. Its membership might best consist of all the district chairmen or their proxies. If this did not prove practicable, it might consist of the national committee and as many others as could attend. The State association would look after State legislation and carry out various other lines of work, as already admirably outlined by our own state league. The chief work of the district committee would be to hold annual conventions in one town after another for the purpose of arousing the people and encouraging the workers. The local or precinct associations would do the hand-to-hand work among the people. The best methods of work are too well known to need lengthy discussion. One plan that promises good success in my own town may deserve particular mention; that is to gather a small company of men at a private house, give them a plain talk on the Single Tax, afford them an opportunity to ask questions and to buy literature. A few congenial spirits at a private house will feel more at ease and talk more freely than a larger number in a public place. Another duty that devolves upon the local association is just before the legislature convenes, to secure the signatures of all regular and associate members to a petition for separate assessments and the privilege of the direct vote. In thus asking from the legislature merely a square deal, Single Taxers take a strong position that must appeal to every right thinking man; and when the concession of a square deal has been granted us, the victory will be more than half won. With so reasonable a proposition, it ought to be possible, in a short time, to fill our rolls with the names of a host of fair minded men.

This finishes what few suggestions I have to offer, and they are offered, not as in anywise of superior merit, but in order to add one more voice to those that are calling for a better correlation of our forces. Never more than today has the world of toiling humanity needed the remedy for social wrong that we have to offer. Suffering millions are blindly groping for relief, are beginning fiercely to demand it. But for "lack of knowledge" they are "destroyed." "Lo! Here! Lo! There!" they say, "comes our help." Often deceived, they little believe or realize that within our hands has been placed the magic wand of justice. Upon us, therefore, rests greater responsibility. Much splendid work, it is true, has been done by isolated workers and the progress of our cause is extremely encouraging; but we are not yet welded into one great army. As scattered groups, we still lack the strength and burning enthusiasm, that comes from united effort and conscious, nation-wide cooperation.

No thrift of owners created this value; but the coming of population, the development of commerce and industry and the perfection of the arts and sciences—these agencies have brought into existence unearned incomes more princely than that which enabled Crassus to unite with Caesar and Pompey in the control of the Roman Republic.—The late F. Townsend Martin, Social Leader and member of the 400.