

to work for it. I believe that in a few years this movement would grow so that the amount collected from initiation fees would amount to a sufficient sum to make it self supporting. But if the entire amount collected from initiation fees could be paid back in prize money it would add great vigor to the movement.

The work must have an organizer who goes over the ground of each of these colleges and keeps in touch with the needs of each league. Young people in college are busy and even the sports that they love so much need constant oversight, and in each college there is a salary paid for this work. So one must expect that it would require pretty intelligent supervision to start this work and keep it going after being started.

If the movement were successful in New York State, my hope would be that we could organize the same work in every State in the United States.

READING CIRCLES.

By OSCAR GEIGER.

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

Fundamental Social Betterment, to be lasting, must come in response to a demand from the people, and the people must understand before they can demand. If we are ever to get the Single Tax on the statute books so that it will stay there, we must first get it into the minds of the people. We must get the people to want it and to get them to want it we must first get them to know it.

It is proper for us to try to get whatever measure of justice we can by such legal enactments as with the present state of the public mind we are able to obtain, but we must not delude ourselves into believing that merely direct effort toward legislation in the people's present state of mind will secure fundamental justice, or if by chance it does, that it could be maintained. The people themselves would soon undo or sanction the undoing, passively if not actively, of any law, however just or right it may be, which they did not understand. Vested interests would soon proclaim the sacredness of contract, the inviolability of predatory and time-honored institutions, and successfully show how their sacred rights were being violated.

The people are not proof against resounding phrases, against the wiles and cunning of the political boss and the corporation hireling. They must be educated. There is no enduring short cut to freedom. The path of democracy lies through education.

This accepted, there remains only the selection of effective methods of educating the people. There are many ways, most are expensive, while many are fraught with the requirement of undue effort, and therefore wasted energy.

Most methods of educating the people are a sort of hit and miss affair, more often missing than hitting.

This wasted energy we should try to overcome, and I believe the method I am about to propose in great measure does this. I hope you will give it your consideration.

Our propaganda should be separated into two component parts. First, publicity, by which the Single Tax is brought to public attention sufficiently to stimulate the curiosity and the interest of the individual to want to know something about it; and, secondly, educating that aroused interest.

How publicity can best be promoted is not my purpose to explain in this paper. We have among our membership experts in the art of publicity, who, I am sure, if called upon to do so, will ably and willingly plan a State-wide campaign of publicity that could be carried out with economy and produce results.

My purpose is to interest you in one method of educating the individual. Like the fellow who wanted fried fish and conceived the happy idea that he must first catch his fish, so to educate the individual we must first get him.

Individuals merely are not hard to get, but not all individuals will serve the purpose of our propaganda. We must get the individual who wants the light and having got the light is able and willing to spread it. The Single Tax cannot be forced on anyone. When we think we have accomplished such a feat we have merely wasted energy. We must draw from the ranks of those who want to learn, and I believe the Reading Circle lends itself as the best instrument for the purpose.

One's willingness to join a Reading Circle is also the touchstone of his quality; of his fitness for the Single Tax. This man is willing to learn. He is willing to go somewhere to listen, to ask questions, to argue, perhaps to read and then in turn to instruct. In short, it is his action that proves his quality. Our duty is to supply the place to which to go, the things to hear, and the person of whom the questions may be asked. I know of nothing that so effectively supplies these as the Reading Circle, conducted, of course, as is intended with subject matter and formula carefully prepared.

Furthermore, the reading circle soon becomes the meeting place, the clearing house of idealism and philosophies, and what attraction is there greater than a crowd mutually met to talk?

One of the great advantages of Reading Circles as a method of propaganda is the ease with which they are started, and, once started, the ease with which they are kept going. In fact, once started, they cannot be stopped.

As in describing any circle, however, we must have a centerpoint, a place from which to start, so in a Reading Circle we must have the point around which the circle can be described. This point is the reader or leader of the circle. These readers must at first be chosen from ourselves, nor should the choice be limited. These readers must be ourselves.

We are not teaching a philosophy merely. We have a gospel to spread,

and we should not delay longer what should have been done years ago.

What a difference it would make to-day if Progress and Poverty were known and understood throughout this State as only Reading Circles can make it understood. What would be the possibilities at the coming Constitutional Convention if for twenty years the Single Tax had been systematically and positively taught. It is not too late now. This League has been organized for the purpose of bringing about the Single Tax. It has among its members those who have done much for the Single Tax, many who want to do more, all who can do something. Each and every one can help. Holding meetings and conventions is not enough. It is the work that we do among the people that counts. And nothing will bring us closer to the people than the Reading Circle, and I have spoken on street corners for years and button-holed people wherever I could find them.

The Reading Circle gives you a grip on your audience that nothing else can give. It creates a feeling of fellowship that tends to break down the bars of prejudice and bigotry, and puts the reader into sympathetic relation with his hearers.

Perhaps the most important advantage of the Reading Circle as a method of propaganda is that it does not require great skill, or in fact, any previous practice whatever on the part of the leader. Of course, any experience in public speaking that the reader may have is that much gained but no previous practice in teaching or public speaking is necessary. What most likely will result is that not only the reader but also the other members of the circle will eventually be able to express their thoughts in public if they were not able to do so before.

Not least among the advantages of the Reading Circle as a propaganda method is the fact that money is not an essential requirement for its success. Meeting halls are not necessary. Meetings can be conducted in the home of the leader or of one of the members. In fact, the home as a meeting place has many decided advantages. Some may prefer school rooms, where such can be obtained.

The only thing that is needed to successfully conduct Single Tax Reading Circles is a guide, a primary book such as Rusby's *Smaller Profits, Reduced Salaries and Lower Wages*, or *The Story of my Dictatorship*, followed by some such book as *Social Problems* and leading eventually to *Progress and Poverty*. Or as has been suggested, starting with a series of questions and answers made up from such a book as Rusby's, and filling a session of about two hours. These questions and answers are intended to direct the discourse and not necessarily to be used in stereotyped fashion, unless that method for obvious reasons may be deemed the best.

All that is needed is a beginning. The League, or some one authorized by the League, should prepare and have ready new matter for this purpose, and be ready to direct and advise when such advice is needed.

There is no limit to the possibilities. Men congregate naturally. It

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