

The Improved Order of Red Men, with 525 registered delegates, met in State Convention in Olean during the past summer. Fifty copies of the Rusby booklet were furnished by the State League, which, with the Land Song and Rockefeller Idea slips, were handed the men as they entered their place of assemblage.

Many forceful leaflets, such as "Moving Toward Single Tax," and "Workingmen and the Single Tax," by John T. McRoy, can be kept on hand in quantities. They can easily be placed in one's letters, or in borrowed books, given to professional men and women, to artisans and delivery men and boys who come to one's house for any purpose whatsoever; the eyes of the unemployed and of the tramp will light up with hope if after they have earned a meal they are given a brotherhood thought and a sandwich of Single Tax literature.

Next week our city has its annual fair. We certainly should make an effort to circulate literature and, if possible, have speakers at all State, county and local fairs.

There are many ways by which women can be reached: during college life, in granges, clubs, reading circles, parlor meetings, and by the personal loaning and giving of information on the subject to many whom we meet day by day.

"Sowing the seed by the wayside high,  
Sowing the seed on the rocks to die,  
Sowing the seed where the thorns will spoil,  
Sowing the seed in the fertile soil—  
Sure, ah, yes, sure, will the harvest be."

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## SINGLE TAX ACTIVITIES IN BUFFALO.

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By F. P. JONES.

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*(Prepared for the Buffalo Conference, but not read, owing to the illness of the author).*

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It would obviously be incorrect to limit the report of Single Tax activities in Buffalo to the brevity of the celebrated essay regarding the snakes in Ireland, although to the Buffalo Single Taxer, reading of activities in other quarters of the world, it seems that we are not making the most of our opportunities. May the spirit and enthusiasm of this Conference inspire us in such a manner that when next called upon to give an accounting of ourselves, we may come to the front with pride and confidence.

We have, at the present time, a local association of about forty active members, and are laying plans to do some educational work the coming Fall and Winter, in the way of supplying lectures to clubs and associations that may give us a hearing; the distribution of literature, letter writing and any other form of propaganda which may commend itself to our membership. We have not, in years past, constantly maintained a formal organization in Buffalo, but we have not been entirely inactive at any time and it would seem to me, perhaps, not improper or ill-advised, at this time to place on record a sort of summary of Single Tax history in Buffalo as I have known it since 1888, when the outlines of "The Cat" were first pointed out to me by a young machinist whose name I have forgotten, but who loaned me a copy of that great "eye opener," Social Problems.

At that time the dozen or so Single Taxers were members of a lodge of the Knights of Labor, which met in a hall on Clinton street. There I met Sam Rogers, Charles D. Blackhall, Harry B. Buddenbourg, Dr. Thomas M. Crowe, Robert White and some others whose names have gone from me, and who were "Johnny on the spot" every meeting night, ready to give the proper tinge to the proceedings, and show their brother lathers (I think it was a lathers union we belonged to) what course was to be followed to secure Life, Liberty and Happiness, or whatever else they might be after at the moment. I remember that there were very few public questions coming before the people of Buffalo at that time regarding which the Lathers Union did not have a very decided and emphatically expressed opinion.

#### BUFFALO STICKERS.

Ten million of these little messengers were put out by Mr. Charles D. Blackhall during the years between 1885 and 1890. They were sold in the form of books and sheets, and orders were received from all parts of the world. Blackhall sold stickers, pasters, envelopes and printed slips for enclosing with other mail, all good Single Tax material. The stamps or "stickers" were of sizes from that of a postage stamp to about three times as large and were printed on gummed paper and with perforations between them, like postage stamps, and were intended to be used, like a postage stamp, by wetting the back and sticking it where it could be seen. Some of the sticker mottoes follow:—

"A natural right to life, but only a purchasable right to the natural opportunities that sustain life; what a farce."

"Private ownership of land is wrong. Private possession is right and necessary. Study the Single Tax and learn why."

"Tax dogs, they become scarce. Tax windows, houses darken. Tax wealth, it disappears. Tax land values and more land is offered for use."

"There are a thousand things hacking at the branches of evil. The Single Tax is hacking at the root."

The "pasters" were of larger size (5" x 6"), printed in large type, and varnished on the face to resist the action of the rain. They were suitable for decorating fences and buildings, telegraph poles, etc., and were often placed in position during the "wee sma' hours," when honest folk were supposed to be abed. Blackhall sold a pasting brush which could be carried in the pocket ready for instant use, and pasting "clubs" were organized and did their work, like a celebrated, or much advertised medical commodity, "While you slept." Some of the "paster" mottoes follow:-

"Notice. Anyone erecting a building on a vacant lot, or constructing a factory to produce goods, shall be treated as an enemy, and punished according to law, by an increase of taxes."

"The Single Tax will bring about the improvement of this lot."

"The Single Tax would destroy the vacant lot industry."

"A laborer turns a desert into a garden, and then we increase his taxes. The speculator turns a garden into a desert and then we diminish his taxes. Verily, we are a great people."

The mottoes used in this matter were selected from a thousand or more sent in by individuals throughout the country, whose names were on a list furnished by Henry George, and who were written to on the subject by the Buffalo men.

Charles D. Blackhall, Samuel C. Rogers and Robert White are the men whose names should go on record as entitled to the credit of preparing and issuing the "Buffalo stickers."

Another creditable piece of Single Tax work produced in Buffalo, one also highly approved by Mr. George at the time, was a demonstration based on official estimates, that the application of the Single Tax in Buffalo would not increase the tax rate. Dr. Crowe and H. B. Buddenbourg were the authors of this pamphlet, and in the preparation of it considerable ingenuity was exercised by these gentlemen; particularly in getting on record what would be generally accepted in Buffalo as reliable authority as to the actual value of the land.

At that time one of the leading real estate firms of Buffalo, James Mooney & Co., received a complimentary and alluring communication from one "Kuhn," (pronounced *Coon*, note the significance!), inquiring about land prices in various parts of the City of Buffalo, with a view to making investments of certain funds which said "Kuhn" was supposed to control. Mooney & Company furnished all the information asked for, very fully and completely, and somehow Crowe and "Bud." got hold of the correspondence. They prepared a map of the city patterned after one in the City Hall, showing the layout of the city in concentric circles or rings one mile wide, with the City Hall as a center.

Deducting the area of streets, parks, public property and other property

which was exempt from taxation, they arrived at a pretty close estimate of the actual taxable area of each section. The books of the Assessor's office showed the actual assessment, and the Mooney correspondence showed the actual value of the land. A careful comparison was made and the result arrived at was to the effect that the tax rate of the City of Buffalo could be reduced about 20% and still raise the same amount of money, exempting all improvements and personal property. This was a valuable contribution to Single Tax literature at that time, for the opponents of the system often raised the objection that the Single Tax would not produce enough revenue to run the government.

The "Demonstration" circular was printed in *The Standard* and thousands of copies distributed by Mr. George.

"The Farmers of the Revenue" is the title of a book written by one of our faithful Buffalo Single Taxers, Hon. W. S. Rann, now Corporation Counsel of the City of Buffalo. It was published about 1901, by Frank Vierth of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. It is a careful study of the growth of land values in the State of New York, and the western portion in particular, showing how the burdens of our predecessors and ourselves were increased through special legislation which gave to favored individuals so-called *rights* in our highways, forests, mines and streams.

To enumerate in detail or in consecutive order all the interesting things I think of, relating to the Single Tax in Buffalo, would string this paper out too long, and therefore I will mention just a few matters.

There was Sylvester Croll, editor of a Buffalo paper in 1896 or thereabouts, and still with us. James Malcolm, once editor of the *National Single Taxer*, for a long time on the *Buffalo Courier*, the terror of the gangsters in the City Hall and now doing noble work for God, Home and Country, on the *Knickerbocker Press*.

There was the time Henry George came to Buffalo to address the National Association of Real Estate Agents. Again Mr. George spoke here at Music Hall, under the auspices of the Buffalo Single Tax Club, and we filled the hall with people who paid a quarter each for seats. We had another visit from Mr. George in 1896 when he was reporting the Bryan campaign.

We have had several visits from John Z. White and other campaigners; Hardinge, Lybarger, Peter Witt, Raymond Robins and other good friends from abroad, whose welcome presence revived our hopes and stimulated our activities. Bengough and Douglas from "over 'ome," we mustn't forget them. And Powers—Levi M. Powers. My heart stops working a minute every time I think how we let him get away from us. But there is no use in repining. There is work to be done in Buffalo and in our Empire State. Let us be about it.