

the cause. Then the dawn of day would clearly appear.—GEORGE WALLACE.

A. C. PLEYDELL CRITICISES THE FELS COMMISSION.

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

The Chicago *Public* of August 12, 1910, printed, under the heading "The Joseph Fels Fund of America, an explanatory statement of the work in Oregon, by the Fels Fund Commission," extracts from "an Oregon campaign pamphlet." The general tenor of this statement is that the Joseph Fels Fund is to be devoted primarily to the establishment and maintenance of the initiative and referendum, as the following extracts will show:

"Joseph Fels has agreed to give to this Commission \$25,000. a year for five years, to get the people of the United States to study and apply the science of just taxation in support of their government."

"His object in establishing the Joseph Fels Fund of America is to help to provide an educational fund so that the people may learn to use their power to abolish the 'game of politics,' and apply the science of government to their public business."

"This purpose by Mr. Fels is probably the first attempt by a rich man to establish an educational fund for protection and increase of People's Power in government."

The further statement is made:

"The Fels Commission pays for this pamphlet because the Commissioners endorse its purposes, which is not only to defend the rights and powers already won by the people of Oregon, but to give good reasons for their taking additional powers, and especially the direct power to regulate taxation and exemptions."

The primary object of this pamphlet is to attack the supposed opponents of the initiative and referendum in Oregon. While its one hundred pages contain a number of tables and pictures designed to show the beneficial changes to certain classes of property owners of a change from the present system to the "land value tax," the most striking picture is the cartoon on the back, with a knife dripping blood, endorsing an assertion that the

Republicans intend to repudiate some initiative and referendum proposition; and a number of persons are attacked by name, not because of their opposition to a change in the tax system, but because of some alleged enmity to the initiative and referendum. Nor is this pamphlet the only indication that the Joseph Fels Fund is primarily concerned with direct legislation. It has been spending money in other States for that purpose, and its agents have been dabbling in partisan politics and stirring up strife on behalf of municipal ownership, or at least against corporations operating public utilities.

Letters to members of the Commission have proven of no avail. As they continue to justify their course, I submit this statement of the situation through the columns of the REVIEW.

When the Joseph Fels Fund was started, quite another purpose was announced than the encouragement of direct legislation, or "the increase of the People's Power in government." It was understood that this fund was to be used to bring more forcibly to public attention the great principles which Henry George labored so long to advance, and which, for want of a better name, have been called "The Single Tax."

In fact, the Joseph Fels Fund has attempted to push aside other efforts and to make itself the sole collector and disbursing of funds for "Single Tax" work. In the very first circular sent out by that Commission, and addressed "To the Friends of a Great Cause," the following statement was made:

"The Commission believes that those who contribute to this central fund may feel warranted in referring to us all other requests for contributions for any Single Tax work, confident that if the work for which aid is requested is one that the movement needs, the Commission will appropriate to its support whatever amount seems wise. At the same time, all should feel at full liberty to contribute to as many forms of work as they choose."

Many of those whose lives and work have been influenced by Henry George differ, in details, as to what may properly be embraced within the term "Single Tax." There are some who take it to be limited

merely to a fiscal reform; there are others who do not believe that it is a scientific or sufficient tax system in itself, though admitting much of the fiscal argument in its favor; there are others to whom the main feature is the reform in land tenure that they believe such a system would bring about; but whatever these minor differences, they are in substantial agreement that the "Single Tax" means a philosophy of economic justice and not a little change in the machinery of government.

For Mr. Joseph Fels or others to give their money for the initiative and referendum, individually or collectively, is entirely their own business. But to call this "Single Tax" work, which implies the doctrine for which Henry George worked so long, conveys an erroneous impression to the public, and is calculated to once more sidetrack the Single Tax movement into the wilderness of political expediency.

So long as the Joseph Fels Fund Commission is permitted to retain unchallenged its self-appointed leadership of the Henry George movement, and to distract attention of his followers to political reforms, just so long the great and necessary propaganda work will be neglected. And this work is vital.

There never was a time when there was more demand for a sane, and clear and non-partisan presentation to the public of the fundamental truths contained in the works of Henry George. Yet, after twenty months, and the expenditure of many thousand dollars, the Commission has done nothing to make Henry George's writings more available than if the Commission had not existed.

Nor has the Commission made any attempt, with all its advocacy of democracy in government, to make such an enrollment or organization of the followers of Henry George, as would enable them to have some say in determining the policy of the movement. That policy is still being determined by the five members of the Commission.

Let me repeat so that the point will be clear. I am not asking that any who have seen the great truth proclaimed by Henry George shall stand aloof from other movements towards human betterment, but I hold that an organized movement to promote the principles of the Single Tax

should not be sidetracked into municipal ownership, popular election of senators, initiative and referendum, playgrounds or municipal art, or any of the other movements to increase human happiness.

I have no complaint of the choice which Mr. Fels or anyone else makes as to the purposes for which they wish to spend their money. That decidedly is their business so long as the results do not raise a positive obstacle in the way of progress. But when the dazzling bait of \$25,000. a year is held up before the followers of Henry George and proclaimed throughout the United States in flaming headlines, and the fund thereby established and holding itself out to be the centre of the Henry George movement, is diverted into a side issue, the matter is one that concerns all of those who have at heart the ultimate establishment of the philosophy of Henry George as a rule of social conduct.—A. C. PLYDELL, N. Y. City.

(Mr. Daniel Kiefer, Chairman of the Fels Commission, will reply to this communication in next issue.—Editor SINGLE TAX REVIEW.)

STRONG WORDS FROM JOHN PAUL.

(From a recent letter.)

(Mr. John Paul is editor of *Land Values*, the organ of the land value or Single Tax movement in Great Britain, and one of the foremost leaders there. Our readers are asked to read carefully these words of John Paul in connection with the editorial that appears on page 34 of this issue of the REVIEW.—Editor SINGLE TAX REVIEW.)

We have often been invited, beseeched, and implored, to turn into political fights, on the ground that we could not get Taxation of Land Values until this or that piece of political machinery was effected; or until some obstruction was removed, e. g., the House of Lords. But we just kept on all the same digging away at the ground, and evoking the public sentiment for the Taxation of Land Values, just as if the House of Lords was contained in a page of "Alice in Wonderland." I dare say in this attitude we were likened to the "mad hatter," and that ignoring "the facts of the case," we were asking the question, "Why is a Raven like a writing desk?" We were certainly called some very bad names, and often threatened with some kind of "boil-