

CONFERENCE OF THE FELS COMMISSION.

(Abstract from the Official Minutes.)

On the forenoon of Saturday, November 19th, the Fels Commission met at the rooms of the Liberal Club on East 29th Street, this city, to discuss what had been done during the past year and talk over questions of future policy. All the members of the Fels Commission were present, Messrs Kiefer, Howe, Ralston, Steffens, and Briggs. Others who have helped in the work in which the Commission has been engaged for the past year were also in attendance. Among these were Messrs. White, U'Ren, Hill, Dickey, Eggleston, Danziger, Post, Garvin. Others who had shown interest in the work had come on from other parts of the country, and among them were Messrs. Starr, Carret, Newburgh, Somers, Theo. Amberg, Rudolph Spreckles, Bucklin, Judge Ben Lindsay, Bailey, Price, Prizer, and others. The presence of Hon. Tom L. Johnson added to the completeness of the gathering of western representatives of the cause. Among the New Yorkers present were Messrs. Murphy, Doblin, Ingersoll, Hall, Heydecker, Ryan, Leubuscher, and others. Joseph Fels, who had only recently arrived from England, was there, glowing and optimistic.

Hon. Robert Baker acted as Chairman, and Joseph Dana Miller as Secretary.

Following is a necessarily brief abstract of the proceedings.

Mr. Fels reported on European progress.

Mr. U'Ren reported for Oregon, and paid a high tribute to the work done by Dr. Eggleston.

Ex-Governor Garvin reported for Rhode Island, and told of the work there.

At the second session which was called to order by Chairman Baker in the afternoon, Dr. William Preston Hill spoke of the work in Missouri.

Daniel Kiefer gave the figures of the *Public's* circulation, and Louis Post reviewed its history. Mr. Post paid a high tribute to the members of the Commission.

John Z. White spoke of conditions in New Mexico.

The secretary now read letters from

Messrs Pleydell, Purdy, Lustgarten and Pollak, in criticism of the Commission and its organization and policies.

Hon. Tom L. Johnson spoke briefly.

Jackson H. Ralston said that Mr. Fels had not sought to direct the channels of activity by reason of his contribution. Said that the initiative and referendum were the open door for the Single Tax, and that Oregon provided one of the most promising fields of agitation.

Here followed a general discussion on matters of policy in which almost all of those present took part.

At the evening session which convened at 8:20 Mr. Eggleston spoke of the work assigned him in the preparation of the Oregon pamphlet, and Mr. Danziger told of a similar pamphlet in contemplation which would be undertaken with reference to the State of Massachusetts.

Mr. Heydecker took issue with Mr. Ralston in his statement that only New York and Rhode Island would permit of the Single Tax without a constitutional amendment, and said that there were at least eight states and possibly more where the legislature had a free hand. Mr. Heydecker contended that South Dakota, which had had direct legislation for many years, had the worst tax system of any of the States.

Mr. Miller spoke of the dangers of "entangling alliances" possible under a program where Single Taxers were agitating for the initiative and referendum, also the danger of diverting our own propagandists from advocacy of our own cause.

Mr. Fels made a strong plea for harmony and Mr. Price said that some Single Taxers were in danger of becoming class-conscious Single Taxers "like the class conscious Socialists who were conscious of very little more than class."

Mr. White reviewed the possibilities of tax reform and the Single Tax in those States where direct legislation had been adopted.

Lincoln Steffens said that we had learned much from the criticisms that had been made and that the results of the Conference were certain to be good. Out in Oregon they were not going to get the Single Tax

by "gum shoe" methods, but by direct propaganda for the Single Tax..

Mr. U'Ren spoke of the work in Oregon, and declared that the Fels Fund Commission had started off with the idea of achieving the Single Tax in five years in some one State. He stated that the way was now clear for a straight out Single Tax fight in Oregon.

Conference now adjourned to meet the following day (Sunday) at 1:30.

On Sunday afternoon the Conference was called to order by Chairman Baker at 2:10.

Mr. Ralston explained that the amount spent for direct legislation bore a very small relation to the total expenditure of the funds of the Commission.

Mr. Prizer offered a number of suggestions in writing as to methods of collecting money and continuing the interest of present contributors.

Mr. Miller offered suggestions on printing bulletins of the work of the Commission which could first appear in the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW* and in different form in the *Public*.

Mr. Doblin suggested the appropriation of five thousand dollars to revive the American Single Tax League.

Dr. Mary Hussey advocated the posting of placards in the form of questions and answers along the fences and roads, and Miss Amy Mali Hicks and Miss Grace Isabel Colbron made suggestions for work.

Mr. Fels outlined a plan for the organization of a land speculation company and the issuance of stock, such investment to be in vacant land, or land inadequately improved.

Mr. Warren Worth Bailey paid a high tribute to Mr. Kiefer.

Ex-Senator Bucklin told something of the history of direct legislation in Colorado.

Mr. U'Ren paid his respects to the critics of the Commission. Concluded his remarks by inviting them to Oregon during the next few months when they would see the Single Tax flag flying in every county. If the county option law had passed we could make the fight in Multnomah County in which the city of Portland was situated, but if not we could fight and win anyhow. The direct legislation law had made it possible to interest citizens everywhere in our fight.

The suggestion was made that Hon. Robt. Baker be engaged by the Commission for soliciting funds and other work.

Mr. Miller offered the following resolutions on the death of Count Leo Tolstoy:

Whereas, the news has arrived this morning of the death of Leo Tolstoy, we, the Single Taxers of America, send our sympathetic greetings to Countess Tolstoy; and

Whereas, this foremost man of the world, whose teachings have made him famous in all lands, has repeatedly announced his belief in the doctrines of Henry George for which we stand, and which we are engaged in popularizing in the United States; therefor be it,

Resolved, that we deeply deplore the death of the Russian prophet, and express our hope that the endorsement by this man, on whose soul rested so much of

"The burden and the mystery
Of all this unintelligible world,"

of those doctrines to which we are pledged, and his statement that he regarded Henry George as the greatest of Americans, may be the means of drawing attention to the plan of industrial emancipation to which he lent the weight of his splendid name."

This resolution was carried by rising vote.

Henry George, Jr., seconded these resolutions in a speech which appears elsewhere in these columns.

After listening to a short talk from Dr. Florence Leigh Jones the conference then adjourned, and the members and visitors went their separate ways, with the feeling that the two days' discussion had been most profitable and was certain to be productive of good in the year to come.

A NEW EDITION OF PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

Progress and Poverty, unabridged and revised by the author's edition, is about to make its appearance in England. The price will be 4d in English money and the book is being produced by Mr. John Bagot, editor of *The Middletown Guardian*. It will consist of 416 pages, be printed on good paper, and will be a marvel of cheapness. It will be in the hands of the public before Christmas.