

Address of Albert E. Schalkenbach

IN the following address delivered at Fairhope Mr. A. E. Schalkenbach presents his views of our principles. It will be observed that he accentuates the ethical aspect of the question, which is the side that most appeals to him. Mr. S. is a brother of Robert Schalkenbach and a director of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

"According to my views we Single Taxers here in Fairhope are engaged in something more than demonstrating a better, a more scientific method of raising public revenues, although we do claim that our method as a fiscal measure is far superior to any other method known.

We challenge the moral right to impose the present outrageous system upon society because it violates the inherent rights of the individual.

We regard men as being equally entitled to the natural opportunities that the world affords, because all men must have access thereto in order to live at all. We believe our present system of private property in land compels the landless to accept such terms as the land holder is willing to give in order to have the right to life, which is unnatural and therefore morally wrong. We repudiate the policy that makes some men owners of the land which in turn makes them owners of those who have no land.

We believe that a man has a right to all things that he produces. If he catches fish in the ocean he has a right to the fish but not to the ownership of the ocean. If he builds a windmill he is entitled to the power he gets and the things he makes, but has no right to the ownership of the air. If he raises crops he is the rightful owner of the crops but not the sun and land that brought them forth.

To attach to the natural forces the same right of ownership that attaches to the things man produces is a denial of the true rights of property. A man who out of the product of his labor is obliged to pay another for the use of the ocean, the air, the sunshine or the soil, which may all be properly classed as land, that man is denied his inherent right and is being robbed. We recognize, however, the absolute necessity for security of private possession so long as it does not interfere with the rights of others. We do not propose equal rights to land by common possession, letting anyone use it when it pleases him so to do, nor do we propose to divide it up in parts or equal shares. We propose leaving it in possession of the holder with full liberty to give or bequeath. We would simply levy for public purposes a tax that will equal the annual value of the land itself irrespective of any improvements thereon, and since this tax would be enough for public necessities we would repeal all other taxes, federal, state or otherwise, now levied on the products of human labor.

We believe these taxes check industry, check commerce; they punish thrift, they prevent the largest production and a fair division of wealth; they encourage monopoly and other social evils too numerous to mention.

The annual rental value that we propose to collect for all public necessities does not come from any exertion of labor, physical or mental, or the investment of capital on the part of the individual, but is the direct result of increasing population and social progress and therefore is the natural fund that should be collected for public purposes.

The collection of land values irrespective of improvements does not lessen the reward of industry, add to prices or take away from the individual anything that belongs to him. It takes only what the community as a whole produces. To take land values for all public purposes, abolishing all taxes on the products of labor, would leave the producer the full product of his energies and therefore all that rightfully belongs to him.

The refusal to collect the full annual rental value of land for public purposes necessitates the collection of taxes that lessen production; it allows a few to take what belongs to all. It foregoes the only means by which it is possible to combine the security of possession that is necessary to improvement with the equality of natural opportunity, which is the greatest of all natural rights.

The collection of land values prevents land speculation because the seller of land has no capitalized rent or property value to sell; nothing except his improvements. The collection of land values encourages the building of the best types of buildings, causing more beautiful homes and adding to the beauty of the community. It creates a demand for better and more skilled labor, thus producing in turn general prosperity. It discourages the wastefulness of not using land for its best purposes and forces into use land that now is held idle awaiting the individual who through necessity must pay a monopoly price.

The founders of Fairhope believed in the principles I have just set forth and in so far as the federal and state laws would permit they have founded this Single Tax Colony pledged to carry out these principles, welcoming to their midst any and all who desire to accept the advantages thereof and aid in the demonstration that they believe must lead to universal practice in all civilized countries."

A Progressive Governor

INDIRECT taxes are the most insidious taxes. They are always increasing, never decreasing. They are the kind you pay and don't know you are paying. Every legislature provides more indirect taxation. If the people of America knew how much indirect tax they are paying to Federal and State governments there would be a revolution, I verily believe.—GOVERNOR DONAHEY of Ohio.