

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
JOSEPH FELS FUND COMMISSION
AND (UNOFFICIAL) SINGLE TAX
CONFERENCE.

At Boston, in the meeting hall of the Twentieth Century Club, on the morning of November 29, Mr. Daniel Kiefer called to order the delegates to the Advisory Conference of the Fels Commission, and Mr. Louis F. Post stated the purposes of the Conference.

Dr. Charles S. Millett, of Brockton, was chosen chairman; Prof. Carroll W. Doton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, vice chairman, and Reginald Mott Hull, of Cambridge, secretary, on the motion of Mr. L. J. Johnson.

It was moved by Mr. Post that the programme adopted at the informal meeting be the order of procedure and this motion was adopted.

Mr. Kiefer read his report of what had been done by the Commission during the year. Mr. Kiefer also read report of the receipts and expenditures, and Mr. Post reported for the *Public* and Mr. Miller for the *SINGLE TAX REVIEW*.

Hon. John F. Fitzgerald, Mayor of Boston, was then introduced. He said that he himself was the publisher of a weekly paper, and knew the trials of a publisher. He expressed the wish that Andrew Carnegie might be present, to be relieved of some of his surplus cash. He spoke of the increased land values in the dry goods district of Boston, and said that much of this land had doubled in value without the owner doing a thing to cause such increase. "Conditions like this," continued the Mayor, "exist everywhere in the world." He concluded with the advocacy of a transfer tax such as prevails in Frankfurt and other German cities. "Most men do not want to discuss the Single Tax. They think it is an illusion. When men are interested in tariffs, trusts, and the many questions before the people at election time, the consideration that ought to be paid to this question, is overlooked. Yet a beginning might be made by introducing the transfer tax. As mayor of the city, I am glad to welcome you here."

Hon. Robert Baker moved a rising vote

of thanks to the Mayor, and three cheers were given.

Mr. Danziger reported for the Press Bureau, announcing that 700 papers were being supplied with matter on free trade and the Single Tax.

Mr. B. Dupont addressed the conference. He said, "I don't want the Single Tax in itself. I want the abolition of every law on the statute books that permits one man to steal from another. Come out in the open and say that we want to abolish legalized theft—and that is all there is in Single Tax."

FRIDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

Mr. Frank H. Thomas, of Cambridge, called the meeting to order, saying that he was not familiar with the work that was being done, but the aim of which had his approval. Then he was assured that whatever Prof. Thompson and Governor Garvin advocated must be all right, and he hoped to be in full harmony with it.

Mr. Daniel Kiefer read report from California.

Mr. R. L. Scott spoke at some length of the movement in Canada. The referendum vote for the Single Tax in Victoria carried by nearly five to one. All of the revenue in the city of Edmonton is raised by a tax on land values. The Premier of the province prevented the taking of referendum in Winnipeg, saying that we had a system that had come down to us through a period of five hundred years. We have had the Single Tax in rural communities in Canada for a period of twenty years. Farm improvements are not taxed. Saskatchewan has had the system of exemption for a number of years. Both the Conservative and Liberal leaders are for it. Premier Scott has come out within the last few months in favor of the Initiative and Referendum, and promises that a bill will be introduced this session. He said that the people would make mistakes, but that they had the right to make mistakes. A bill was introduced into the legislature of the province of Alberta making the adoption of the Single Tax mandatory. We have an advantage in Northwestern Canada because we have the farmers with us. We owe a great deal to the leaders of

the Farmers' movement. They have some forty thousand members, these Grain Growers' Associations, and an organ which is edited by a Single Taxer.

Prof. Thompson here introduced a set of resolutions which recounted the work of the Commission. It advised that the Jos. Fels Fund Commission be continued, that at the end of two years or sooner at its discretion, it call another advisory conference, that the Commission continue to assist efforts to apply the Single Tax through direct political action upon measures before legislative bodies or before the people by popular initiative or referendum petition, that it continue to expend portions of its fund in promoting measures for the increase of peoples power in government, especially the initiative and referendum, and protecting such measures where they may be threatened. It was also recommended that the work of the Commission with reference to the distribution of Single Tax literature of a general and abstract character be continued. On the motion of Mr. Hall these resolutions were made a regular order of business for Friday morning. Mr. Alexander Law introduced a set of resolutions from the Tenants' Union of New York City which were referred to the Commission.

Mr. S. R. Fuller, of Boston, now spoke of the movement in France where he has been a resident for a number of years. "The movement is taking a strong hold in Paris and promises to extend its influence throughout France. We are trying the experiment of civilization. Athens tried it, Rome tried it, Venice tried it, and we have tried it here in these United States. But all these experiments have failed because such civilization has not been founded on a natural law. Mr. George was the Darwin of the natural social order, and that was the message he gave us. Friends of the Conference, I bring you from France that spirit of comradeship between those whose aim it is to bring civilization to the world without end."

Mr. Kiefer here read a letter from Oregon signed by F. E. Coulter and others severely criticising the conduct of the campaign in Oregon, to which Mr. U'Ren replied at some length. Mr. U'Ren denied

the statement that he had tried to keep down the discussion of the Single Tax. "But I did try to confine it to the specific measure before the people. In this I failed. Those who voted for the measure did so because they believed in the Henry George philosophy. Those who voted against it, many of them, voted that way because they did not understand it, because they were afraid, or because they thought it too soon." Mr. U'Ren announced that whatever was done hereafter would be done absolutely along the Henry George lines. "Our mistake was in thinking that we could make Single Taxers too soon. As Charlie Ingersoll said, you cannot make a three year old steer in ten minutes. We tried to do it in Oregon, in a two years campaign. But we will do it yet." Mr. U'Ren then defended the Graduated Tax, which was the specific measure urged by the leaders of the movement in the State of Oregon. He thought the people were scared, but did not think they could be scared again. The cry of "wolf" had been raised, and might be raised a second time, but they "could not do it a third time without producing the wolf." The victory that we will win in another campaign will be based upon a knowledge of our principles.

Mr. Kiefer now announced that Dr. Hill, Herbert Bigleow and H. Martin Williams had entered the hall. There was loud cheering.

Dr. Eggleston spoke briefly for Oregon, and Mr. J. W. Bengough, of Toronto, told of the street meetings, and said that the crowds addressed showed interest and exemplary patience, "so that I almost felt that I was engaged in a reputable calling even though the *Portland Oregonian* called me a crank cartoonist who was degrading an honorable profession." Mr. Bengough read a parody on James Whitcomb Riley's Little Orphant Annie, which threw his hearers into spasms of laughter.

FRIDAY EVENING SESSION.

Mr. S. L. Moser speaking for Missouri said that we did not get 87,000 votes out of a total of 580,000 for the amendment in that State. But he was not discouraged. The fight had its small beginnings in 1909;

the real fight began in 1911. "We got an organization together. We had men of influence and prominence in business affairs. The first pronouncements of the press were favorable. We found in the beginning that it was not hard to get signatures to the petition by volunteer work. But the enemy got busy. The measure was condemned in the platform of the two parties, and when the Bull Moose party was organized its candidate for governor declared against it, though it is unquestionably true that a majority of the rank and file of that party looked upon it favorably. Then in addition to all this the first favorable attitude of the press was changed to the cry of confiscation. But it is a question if this cry can be successfully raised again. We have in Missouri a Farmers Educational Co-operative Association. A leader of this organization told me that if we could get together some figures backed with a sound moral reason we might hope to win. Most of those with whom I have talked are in favor of continuing the fight, and are of the opinion that we ought not to allow this first set-back to retire us from activity." Mr. Moser referred to a class of work which he thought would be the most effective in Missouri, and that is the personal appeal. He told the conference of the adverse conditions that they had to contend against, one of which were the threats used by those who possess the power that comes from land ownership. Thus in one county of Missouri 81 per cent. of the people are tenants, and the threat of increased rents was used with tremendous effect.

Dr. Hill, also speaking for Missouri, said, "The cause of this defeat may well be looked into. The opponents of the measure were able to stir up prejudice by assertions that the campaign was being financed outside the State. They showed that Henry George had taught the confiscation into the public treasury of the value of land." Dr. Hill thought that the only power to which appeal could successfully be made was the moral force.

Mr. John Z. White also spoke of conditions in Missouri, urging that those who

appealed exclusively either to the moral impulses of men or to their motives of self-interest were doomed to failure. He showed that farm lands have increased enormously in population and that the farmers want the unearned increment. And this is the reason they voted against the Single Tax. The farmers were the political power of Missouri, and the farmers have been favored by politicians and legislatures. We do not know personally of all counties, but from his knowledge of the situation farm lands are under-assessed from 2 to 5 times in proportion to city land. We must be in a position to answer the questions that affect individuals. We can tell them how the application of our principles will affect counties, but must be able to answer as to how they will affect the individual, and until we are in a position to meet questions of this kind we cannot win victories. We win "near" victories in the cities because we are in a position to know things in the cities. But in the country districts that knowledge is wanting. We do not know, and until we do know we will not get the farmers' votes.

Mr. Black, of Kansas City, announced his unwillingness to add anything to what has been said by Messrs Hill, White and Moser, but he declared himself more hopeful than he was a year ago. "I am not going to add to what has been said. But one thing we have done if we have done nothing more—we have checked land speculation. You have heard of what we were up against. Let me add to the testimony. In one county an advertisement appeared announcing a mass meeting against the amendments, signed by all the opposing candidates. And we were cheated in the final count. In one county 600 more votes were recorded against the amendments than there were voters. Just across the river from Kansas City in Clay County, an old Bourbon County, if you please, they raised the United States flag for the first time since the war. Pike County has never taken the trouble to do it, but said they would go through fire and water for the country, would actually fight to prevent the Single Tax coming.

But we know that when the patient has recovered from hysteria he is much more amenable to reason."

Herbert S. Bigelow said there was a good Single Taxer in Columbus who took his customers to the mill to see the chips fly. We have seen the chips fly in Oregon and Missouri as they have never flown before in the whole history of the Single Tax movement. Referring to his own State he said that Ohio had lived for years under a constitution that was as much outgrown as the stage coach. Mr. Bigelow recounted at some length the movements of the progressives for the election of radical delegates to the Ohio Constitutional convention. In answer to a question from Mr. Leubuscher Mr. Bigelow said that they had preserved the right to use the I and R to get a constitutional amendment for the Single Tax. They had sacrificed nothing.

SATURDAY MORNING SESSION.

Mr. Chas. W. Doton called the meeting to order and introduced Mr. E. W. Doty, of the Manufacturers Appraisal Company, of Cleveland, who spoke of the Somers System, and its adoption in Houston, Texas.

Ex-Governor Garvin urged the claims of Rhode Island as a fighting ground, and asked that these be considered by the Commission. He said that any town in the State had the right to ask the legislature to exempt personal property and improvements. It is the custom in Rhode Island to allow a town to do what it wants to do.

Congressman George told of the work he had been able to accomplish in Congress as a member of the sub-committee on taxation of the District of Columbia Committee, in the presentation of a bill along our lines for the capital city. In answer to a question of John J. Murphy Mr. George explained the provision of that bill.

Mr. Post now proposed that the resolutions introduced by Prof. Johnson be considered, together with the incorporation of the 1890 Single Tax platform in those resolutions. The debate that now ensued was participated in by Messrs Hall, Stephens, Judge Edward Osgood Brown,

John J. Murphy, W. S. U'Ren, Jackson H. Ralston and many others. The division here was the old one between the advanced individualist Single Taxers represented by Messrs Hall and Stephens, and the opposing view held by Post and others. It revolved around the words "controlled and managed" referring to natural monopolies in the 1890 platform and the explanatory clause in the resolutions which read as follows:

"By the terms "controlled and managed by and for the whole people concerned," as used in the above platform, this Conference means what it understands the Conference of 1890 to have meant, namely, in the terms of the present time, "public ownership and operation."

SATURDAY AFTERNOON SESSION.

The Conference convened at 2:30, and the public monopoly paragraph together with the explanatory clause was again taken up. The debate was vigorous but more or less unsatisfactory, owing to the academic nature of the question. It resulted in the final adoption of the resolutions with the exception of the explanatory clause which leaves the language of the platform of 1890 as originally drafted, urging that public monopolies be "controlled and managed by and for the whole people concerned."

It may be said that the following paragraph of the resolutions was also the subject of debate, but was finally adopted. It seemed to many present that the statement was entirely unauthorized by the facts:

"When this Commission was organized, in 1909, there was no general discussion of the Single Tax in the United States. Apart from the sporadic work of a few public speakers and clubs, a limited distribution of literature, and occasional indirect and obscure efforts at securing favorable consideration from legislative bodies, the movement appeared to have but little life in this country. To those within it the future seemed as one of mere academic interest, in so far as it was generally considered at all. This condition changed with the advent of the Commission."

The resolutions now being disposed of Mr. Fels addressed the Conference. Mr. Fels complained that he had not been backed up in his efforts. There are many Single Taxers in the United States able to put up \$100,000, but they don't.

Mr. John J. Murphy, of New York, spoke briefly, advocating a plan of referendum for suggestions as to methods of work by the Commission, and in reply to a question of Mr. Fels whether this should include all Single Taxers or only contributors to the Fund, said that in his opinion, only the contributors. Mr. Murphy said his object was to secure expressions of opinion as to what propaganda methods should be supplemented to the political programme of the Commission.

After a short address by A. B. Farmer of Toronto, the Third (unofficial) Single Tax Conference in connection with the Fels Fund Commission finally adjourned for the banquet which followed an hour later.

THE BANQUET.

The dinner at Ford Hall was attended by nearly five hundred persons, perhaps. At this writing we have no means of knowing the exact number, but it was an audience remarkable for its character, and representative of the best intelligence of Boston. Prof. L. J. Johnson introduced John J. Murphy, of New York, as Toastmaster. The Chairman announced that the Land Song would be sung, which was done by all present standing, and the voices rang out with fine spirit. The speakers were Hon. W. S. U'Ren, S. R. Fuller, Grace Isabel Colbron, J. W. Bengough, Jos. Fels, Congressman Henry George, and Herbert Bigelow. The best part of the entertainment were the chalk talks by J. W. Bengough, whose inimitable "asides" while engaged in the work of drawing with colored chalks his wonderfully illustrative cartoon caused constant laughter. It must have been to the non-Single Taxers present a revelation of the truth of our principles conveyed in fable.

The banquet of Saturday night was followed on Sunday afternoon by an address from Herbert Bigelow at the Majestic Theater on the Single Tax. The

hall was crowded, and the address was well received.

A final meeting was held at the Twentieth Century Club on Sunday evening, and those present listened to an address from R. L. Scott on the movement in Canada and an explanation of the spiritual side of the Single Tax.

A PARTIAL LIST OF THOSE PRESENT AT THE FELS FUND AND (UNOFFICIAL) SINGLE TAX CONFERENCE.

Following is the list of persons who had arrived at the Conference on Friday afternoon. A number arrived later, but the names of these have not been forwarded the REVIEW as promised by a good friend, and we present this incomplete and rather partial list.

Massachusetts—John S. Coxman, Boston; Franklin E. Smith, Chicopee; Rev. W. A. Wood, West Upton; Wm. Lloyd Garrison, Boston; Edwin A. Hallit, Dorchester; S. Richard Fuller, Boston; Henry A. Waters, Salem; Mary J. Jacques, Arlington; Reginald Mott Hull, Cambridge; Wilford Warren, Boston; Fred A. Moore, Attleboro; Benjamin F. Ellery, Annisquam; Henry W. Pinkham, Boston; Prof. Lewis J. Johnson, Cambridge; Mary D. H. Prang, Roxbury; C. M. Stow, Boston; Mayor John F. Fitzgerald; John O'Callahan, Boston; John R. Nichols, Cambridge; Jerome A. Johnson, Cambridge; James R. Livingston, Winchester; Jane Dearborn Mills, Jamaica Plains; C. B. Fillebrown, Boston; R. B. Capon, Newtonville; Florence Burleigh, Springfield; Eliza Stowe Twitchell, Wollaston; Andrew H. Paton, Danvers; Geo. F. Hall, Worcester; Dale G. Greeley, Cambridge; John S. Crossman, Boston; Sophia E. Haven, Boston; Mrs. G. Henrietta Blake, Boston; Harlan P. Kelsey, Salem; Robert H. Schulz, Dedham; Dr. P. W. Goldsbury, Warwick; Alice Stone Blackwell, Dorchester; R. M. Cushman, Dorchester; Seth H. Howes, Southboro; W. L. Crossman, Boston; William Rogers Lord, Dover; Frank Grant, Westfield; Obert Sletter, Cambridge; Chas S. Hillel, Brockton.

Pennsylvania—Mark. F. Roberts, Pittsburg; R. F. Devine, Erie; Henry J. Eckert, Monica; W. D. George, Pittsburg; Hon. Warren Worth Bailey, Johnstown; Joseph Fels, Philadelphia; Charles R. Eckert, Beaver; James B. Ellery, Beaver; Mary Fels, Philadelphia; A. H. Swope, Johnstown.

Chicago, Ill.—Louis F. Post, A. P. Canning, Dr. C. L. Logan, Stoughton Cooley, Wiley W. Mills, Otto Cullman and wife, Theodore J. Amberg, John Z. White, Judge Edward Osgood Brown, Mary Wilmarth Brown.

New York City—Bolton Hall, Wm. J. Blech, Joseph Dana Miller, Robert L. Hale, Geo. R. Macey, W. A. Somers, F. C. Leubuscher, Hon. Robert Baker, Gertrude A. Baker, Alexander Law, C. H. Mann, E. H. Underhill, John T. McRoy, Chas. T. Root, Aurelia Lange Leubuscher, Amy Mali Hicks, Grace Isabel Colbron, Mrs. E. H. Murray.

Missouri—William A. Black, Kansas City; Dr. William P. Hill, St. Louis; S. L. Moser.

Ohio—E. W. Doty, Cleveland; Arthur H. Guild, Cleveland; Rosa Kiefer, Cincinnati.

Maine—Edwin P. Wentworth, Portland; S. E. Kittredge; Christopher, M. Gallup, Skowhegan; Kingsbury B. Piper, Fairfield; Katherine A. Wood, Portland.

Rhode Island—Lucius F. C. Garvin, Lonsdale; Florence Garvin, Lonsdale;.

New Hampshire—Geo. H. Duncan, East Jaffrey; Helen P. Duncan, East Jaffrey; Chas. Hardon, Contoocook; Chas. C. Davis, Contoocook.

From other States—Charlotte O. Schetter, Orange, N. J.; A. Romberg, Cambridge, Mass.; W. G. Eggleston, Portland, Oregon; Jackson H. Ralston, Washington, D. C.; B. Marcus, Montreal, Canada; Robert L. Scott, Winnipeg, Canada; J. W. Bengough, Toronto, Canada; Louis A. Bregger, Bangor, Maine; Geo. A. Briggs and wife, Elkhart, Ind.; B. Du Pont, Gresselli, Del.; Charles H. Ingersoll, So. Orange, N. J.; Mary Boies Ely, Greenwich, Conn.; W. S. U'Ren, Oregon City, Ore.; Robert Standen, London, Eng.; Eleanor Bond Ingersoll, So. Orange, N. J.; Mary D. Hussey, M. D., East Orange, N. J.; Western Starr, Westover, Md.; Arthur P. Davis, Washington, D. C.

GEORGISM.

(From *El Comercio*, daily paper of Manila, September 5, 1912), and translated for the SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

The studious and notable Spanish writer, Baldomero Argente, has published in Madrid the book which has been announced, "Henry George, his life and his work."

Of this work I do not know any more than the title, which has been announced in *El Imparcial*, and which our readers already know from its having been copied in these columns. Although the Madrid paper praises very much the work of Argente and appears to consider the illustrious Madrid councillor as the author of the eloquent paragraphs which he transcribes, I have to remark that the greater part of them are copied absolutely and literally from the fundamental work of the great North American sociologist in the work entitled *Progress and Poverty*, as anyone may verify who possesses the Spanish translation of this admirable work, published in Barcelona in 1893, which is the best we have, for the translation of Sempere is rather deficient. Nearly all the paragraphs which *El Imparcial* gives us are literally copies from Chapter III of Book X, entitled "The Law of Human Progress," and the rest are inspired by other passages from the master and adorned by his own ideas. So that the richness of ideas and the lofty eloquence so much admired in this admirable chapter are the diction and ideological vigor of the "prophet of San Francisco."

As I have not yet read the work of Argente, I will not try to judge it, nor detract from the merit which without doubt it has in common with all the works of this industrious and well informed author. I will only offer this observation to explain the commentary of *El Imparcial*, which does not appear to me very explicit. Among its editors, or among those connected with the paper, are many who are very well informed on sociology and who might very well speak clearly in this work of spreading the doctrines of Georgism.

The doctrines of Henry George have been extending rapidly through the entire