

phy, while active along lines identifying them with the common life and thought of the time.

LET US GATHER FACTS.

What shall Single Taxers do to most rapidly and effectually advance their cause? After twenty six years labor in the work I am of the opinion that what is most needed to-day is accurate and reliable information concerning all the facts necessarily involved in proving our case.

The average person is far more likely to be impressed by a fact than by a principle. Nearly all can comprehend a fact, but not many an abstract principle of justice. Few care much for justice if they think it adverse to their own interest, and are indifferent to any reform in which they see nothing of personal interest to themselves or their class.

On the contrary, a fact, a business fact, impresses even the most stupid or selfish. If this fact shows a person at a glance that it is to his interest it should not exist as a legal or industrial fact he sits up and takes notice. From knowledge of a fact that is injuring him he is led to a knowledge of the principles involved. He will know why such fact exists to his injury and study the remedy.

In an argument in favor of Single Tax principles one needs facts to refer to as evidence and he needs evidence that they are facts. In twenty six years experience as a speaker and writer on this topic, I have observed that a well proven fact never fails to interest an audience and make clearer a principle.

Many facts familiar to economic students and of unquestionable reliability are received with skepticism by a majority of an average audience, unless absolutely proven when stated by documents then in the speaker's hands.

In addressing an audience of farmers or business men in small towns, a true statement of the relative values of their landholdings and of their share of taxation for national, State and local governments is so utterly contrary to what they have always believed as to cause them to distrust the speaker's intelligence or honesty. Profoundly ignorant of city, mine, forest and franchise values, but with an exaggerated conception of the value of stocks and bonds, bank shares and money, as well as ignorant of the incidence and shifting of taxation, they consider farmers the chief owners of land values and that other classes of people own nearly all the personal property. While the speaker may know—or believe—that the Single Tax would shift much of public burdens from the country to the cities and from the poor to the rich, a bare statement to this effect is apt to be received with astonishment and derision until supported by the best of proof. Such proof given,

that audience is astounded and at least partly converted.

What we need is an authoritative manual of the real, the income producing values, of all the different classes of farm, city, village, mine, forest and suburban lands and of the wealth of the owners of each class, their annual incomes and ratio of taxes to income, together with the shifting or incidence of taxation clearly explained and proven.

Such facts are all strongly in favor of the rental value tax and appeal directly to the self interest of a vast majority of the people. Once convince the average man that he is being wronged and he becomes a fighter for the reform that will relieve him of the wrong's effects. He also learns for the first time to respect and demand just laws. How shall we gather the facts and have them compiled? I leave this for others to say, but all Single Taxers should help by investigation in their own locality. Perhaps a commission to apportion and direct the work would be well and another to digest and compile it.

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ANOTHER CURIOSITY OF TAXATION.

A gentleman by the name of Bradley, of Springfield, Mass., on refusing to pay a tax bill of \$3 for having the street in front of his property sprinkled, has been served with a peremptory summons. His house is bounded on three sides by woods and on the fourth by a brook.

Mr. Bradley cannot avoid the payment of taxes by "taking to the woods."

"OWNS" THE UPPER END OF MANHATTAN.

Mrs. Laura E. Keels, of Chicago, Ill., has set up a claim to about an acre of land running along the Harlem River from east to west. The grant came down through Governor Nichols and from the family of Thomas Dongan, Governor of the Province of New York in 1668. King James authorized the last grant.

Comptroller Metz says (he speaks sarcastically, no doubt) that he has nothing to do but to investigate such claims, and he will see if the lady has any right to the upper end of Manhattan.

Mr. Metz's jest is ill-timed. The title is quite as good as hundreds of others which are recognized to-day. Are not the greater part of the residents of New Jersey paying rent to a few others because Queen Anne (was it Queen Anne?) gave New Jersey to the Duke of Essex? Is it unreasonable to assume that perhaps Mrs. Keels claim is as good—that is, as valid in law and morals? Spencer told us that land titles were founded