

## JOSEPH FELS IN CALIFORNIA.

Joseph Fels enjoyed four days of triumph in the cities about the Bay of San Francisco. His first appearance was in Berkeley, where, Feb. 3d, he spoke before the faculty and students of the University of California. Dr. Benjamin Ide Wheeler, President of the University, introduced Mr. Fels in a notable speech, most cordial in tone. He said:

"Henry George may have been visionary, and those who have accepted his doctrine of the Single Tax may be visionary but this must be said:

From the teachings of Henry George there flows a stream of idealism that seldom has been equaled. Whenever you find Single Taxers you will find men and women who are interested in what is going on in the world for reasons other than personal reward. They are earnestly seeking the good for its own sake, and for what they believe to be the good of the country. Their doctrine is simple, yet it is far-reaching. It is far-reaching because it is fundamental. This doctrine is generally opposed by the entrenched interests, and for myself, I confess that I have a lurking desire to be on that side which is opposed by these interests. About thirty years ago Henry George delivered his message to the world, and speaking from the very spot on which we stand to-day gave the reasons for the faith within him. I am glad to be able to introduce an earnest man who is a devoted champion of that message and that faith, embodied in the philosophy of the Single Tax as enunciated by Henry George."

Mr. Fels made a most happy address, dealing with the advance of the Single Tax doctrine and practice, with special reference to British Columbia in general and the city of Vancouver in particular. He showed that Vancouver by the exemption of buildings and all property created by the hand of man had outstripped its rivals so rapidly that Victoria, which was nearly half a century older than Vancouver, was compelled to adopt the Single Tax plan in order to save its fame as the metropolis of British Columbia. Vancouver has only three taxes, he said, namely on liquor, because that is a dominion tax and cannot

be remitted by the local government; on dogs, because Vancouver doesn't like dogs, and on real estate values, because the people of Vancouver believe in justice to all and special privileges for none.

After the reception at the University Mr. Fels spoke before the Tri-Rotary Club at the Key Routs Inn, Oakland, before a gathering of representative business men.

That evening (Friday, Feb. 3d) Mr. Fels spoke at the Lyric Hall in San Francisco before a large and enthusiastic audience, composed largely of non-Single Taxers.

Saturday morning (Feb. 4) Mr. Fels addressed the League of Justice, delivering a spirited discourse on the history and progress of the movement, winning the favor of his hearers, exclusively business men of large interests. He pointed out that the great Phelan building would not be taxed under Single Tax rules. After the meeting Mr. Phelan invited Mr. Fels to join him in an automobile tour of the city.

Saturday night a banquet in honor of Mr. Fels was held at the old Poodle Dog restaurant, at which about 200 covers were laid. It was a most enjoyable occasion, Mr. Fels manifesting his delight by his beaming countenance and the witty remarks that flew like sparks from a smithy enlivening the company, and keeping all in good humor with life.

James H. Barry was toastmaster and introduced Mr. Fels as a man honored because he is a man—a man who is giving his life for the manhood of men. This man declares that he has consecrated the remainder of his life to an ideal—to advancing the philosophy of the greatest man in all the tide of time—Henry George. (Cheers.)

In a charmingly humorous way Mr. Fels told the story of how he first became famous as one of the "truly good." It was the history of how he bought 11½ acres of clay land in West Philadelphia as a speculation, and determined to show how cheap it is for a man to gain a reputation for charity while waiting for the unearned increment on his land to grow.

"It all came about this way," said Mr. Fels. "One day while making a business visit to my home in Philadelphia a real estate agent named Yokum called and said he

could get 11½ acres of land in West Philadelphia for \$37,500 and wanted to know if I wished to invest. It happened that I had seen the land, so I said that such horrible red clay land couldn't tempt me very much, but Yokum pointed out that this land would soon 'come in,' as the real estate men would say. That is, the city was about to move out that way. So I bought it. Then all at once I resolved to go into the business of being a truly good and charitable person at the expense of my neighbors. I wanted to get into the class of benevolent and beneficent individuals like Rockefeller and Carnegie, and Mrs. Sage. So I sent for the agent of the Single Tax Club, that is composed of men and women who are pretending to do something for the relief of the poor by encouraging them to grow truck on vacant lots, but who in reality are seeking to draw attention to the land question and its bearing on the problem of making a living. When I told this representative of the Single Taxers that he could have the use of 11 acres of my land absolutely free of charge he almost fell off his chair, and was about to hasten away to tell the joyful tidings, when I halted him with the warning that this offer had a string to it, and that there was something he would have to do in order to get my land. The poor fellow immediately looked as woe begone as if all his friends had died. "All you have to do," I continued, "is to go to the newspaper and give them a column article telling what a benevolent man I am, and all that, and get my picture in the paper, and praise me as one of the truly good and charitable men of the country." Then he was radiant again. That was easy, and soon my fame was noised abroad as a philanthropist. You see I insisted on this because it was part of my little joke that I intended to spring when I got ready. After 44 men were put to work on my land planting vegetables I resolved to do another charitable thing, so I sent for the secretary of a young ladies' association which is formed to provide vacations for deserving working girls, and told her that her society could have the use of the old mansion on my land free of charge, and all they would have to do was to paint it up, paper it and furnish it at their own expense, and in addition tell the

reporters so that I could get another blast from the trumpet of fame as one of the truly good. All this was done as before, and the churches were after me to fill their pulpits and tell the people how it feels to be a philanthropist, but I declined, as I was not ready to spring that joke."

Mr. Fels explained that the 44 men are still planting vegetables on his land free of charge, and the old Pascal mansion on his land is filled with happy young women who if they had not this opportunity for recreation and rest would be deprived of this enjoyment, and all the time the people are praising him for his generosity and his philanthropic spirit.

Now he is ready to spring that joke. He was offered \$50,000 for the land, then \$75,000, then \$100,000, and finally he was offered \$125,000, but he is still holding, and will continue to hold until he gets a profit of at least \$90,000, and this he will devote to a special fund for the propagation of the Single Tax philosophy. He explained that Yokum's judgment had proved sound, that the land 'came in' even sooner than he expected, and that the reason was that a street railway had been run past his place, and nearly 3,000 new homes had been built in the neighborhood by thrifty and desirable citizens. This unearned increment, he declared, in justice and right belongs not to him, but to the community which created it. He had done nothing to make that new value, and his part was merely to hold the land out of use, yet the profit is legally his, and he has some consolation from the thought that he intends to expend it in such a way that conditions may be changed, to the end that neither he nor any other man shall have the power to make money out of the work and sweat of others. He would do his part in this work by devoting his means and his efforts to the disseminating of the truth of what some of our opponents speak of slightly as the Single Tax, which some refer to lovingly as the economic philosophy enunciated by Henry George, and which he called plain justice. He paid a glowing tribute to his good wife, who is constantly urging him to greater efforts on behalf of the truth. Every letter that he receives from her contains a reminder of duty to the truth he has set

out to show to the world, and he intends to keep up the good fight to the best of his ability.

In conclusion Mr. Fels said: "With the help of that Great Power to which all must bow, I want to have it said, when I leave my work here below, that I have done something for my fellow men. I want to have it said that I earned the right to live and work, and that I earned the right to rest. When I go I want to leave a dent in the world—a place that those who know me will say could be filled only by me. I want to do my duty by myself and my fellow men by helping to bring about conditions better than now exist. I would have it so that little children would not longer starve, and mothers weep and fathers groan under the burden of this land monopoly. (Applause.) There was a moment's pause of perfect silence, and the speaker in gentle tones of direct appeal said: "Now who will help me?"

Daniel Keifer made a brief address on things that have been accomplished, and what is planned. He hoped that his hearers would get behind W. S. U'Ren, of Oregon, and help bring the Single Tax into operation in Oregon. He said that although Mr. Fels had pledged only \$25,000 for the year, yet in fact he had contributed \$55,000 in eighteen months. By what Mr. Fels said to U'Ren as they were parting at Oregon City he had been led to believe that whatever was needed in Oregon would be forthcoming if nobody else came to the rescue just before the next election. Aside from the Fels contributions, Mr. Kiefer said, only about \$18,000 has been raised during the past twelve months.

Richard I. Whelan, the incomparable story teller of San Francisco, regaled the company with a choice collection of witticisms and humorous instances. Kiefer at once declared that such a man would be invaluable as a traveling companion for a Single Tax combination, and was disappointed when told that Mr. Whelan although a Single Taxer, enjoys sufficient of the unearned increment to be beyond the temptation of an offer for such a position.

Judge James G. Maguire, an old friend and associate of Henry George, Joseph Leggett, one of the first to acknowledge the

Prophet of San Francisco, and P. J. Healey, a most devoted follower of the Single Tax cause, spoke upon the subject near and dear to their hearts.

Fremont Older, editor of the San Francisco *Bulletin*, briefly referred to the work that is being done by Mr. Fels, speaking of his earnestness and declaring that his presence and utterances had been inspiring in the highest degree. He expressed himself as being ready to consider the plan presented by Mr. Fels with an open mind, saying that he is willing to accept any solution that will bring our people out of their difficulties.

Sunday, Feb. 5, Mr. Fels occupied the pulpit of the First Unitarian church in Oakland, and Monday, Feb. 7, he delivered two addresses at Stanford University, then went on to Los Angeles and San Diego, near the latter place being the guest of E. W. Scripps, head of the Scripps-McRae newspaper syndicate. While at the University of California Mr. Fels met Dr. Shearer, President of Throop Polytechnic Institute of Pasadena. President Shearer announced himself a through-going Single Taxer, and induced Mr. Fels to make a stop at Pasadena, that place being the center of the largest colony of millionaires in California.

#### WELLS DRURY.

THE assistance of the Henry George Lecture Association (356 Dearborn St., Chicago) will enable surprising results to be accomplished by any Single Taxer. By becoming the representative of the Lecture Association in his immediate locality, even the humblest and most lonesome Single Taxer can readily give an impetus to the cause. He will find himself getting into touch with the most influential men in his neighborhood, and holding their respect and confidence and inclining them favorably toward the Single Tax. The public everywhere is hungry for lecturers upon economic subjects of every variety.

F. H. AUGSPERGER, of Trenton, Ohio is writing occasional letters to the papers of his state.