

Agent for the Division, and in this capacity he organized meetings for many Single Tax speakers. In 1903 he became General Secretary of the Yorkshire League, and since then has been settled both in the matter of work and of home. His platform efforts are a comparatively recent feature of his work for Land Values, but he is now kept busy speaking since the movement has widened out. He has in Yorkshire a band of earnest supporters and that county therefore has a prominent place in the movement.

**WILLIAM REID, Yorkshire**—William Reid has had a good deal to do with gathering the materials for this number of the SINGLE TAX Review and his most disagreeable task has been the following autobiographical sketch. Some years ago he was associated with John Cassels in the teaching of a Political Economy class in Glasgow, and his latest ventures in this field have been in Yorkshire. There does not appear to him very much that is interesting which he can say about himself. Born in Glasgow in 1870, he was educated at a school belonging to the "Auld Kirk." He learned to reason there, which he understands is a form of exercise not encouraged in the great seats of learning. His friends credit him with knowing some things, which is a tribute to the successful way he has managed to conceal his ignorance. Having satisfied the requirements of the Scottish Educational authorities in his twelfth year, and being in need of earning a little more money than he had hitherto done, he went to work in the newspaper business. This was the time the people like Joe Brady and Dan Curley were being arrested and tried for the Phoenix Park murders in Dublin. The work was onerous and lasted from 5.30 A.M. till about 8.30 P.M., so he looked about for something else. His occupations since then include electro-plating, clerking, liberal agent and his present calling.

In 1890 he heard Henry George speak in Glasgow, and he had read some of his pamphlets prior to that date. About that time he became acquainted with John Paul and the other Glasgow friends, and he succeeded John Paul and James Busby as Treasurer of the Henry George Institute, which continued for a session or two after the present League was formed in Glasgow. Afterwards he was Minute Secretary to the League for some years. During the Budget fight he was agent for J. Dundas White, M.P., for Dumbartonshire, a position he vacated to take up Land Values work in Newcastle. Eighteen months later he joined Mr. Skirrow in Leeds, where he is now resident. Amongst his other work he has taken up that of teaching Political Economy in Sheffield, Huddersfield, Leeds and other towns. Looking back on his connection with the Land Values movement he has no regrets, but would be pleased to live it all over again. He believes that the two toasts at all fraternal gatherings should be—to quote George Bernard Shaw—"Ourselves" and "The other poor devils."

**JOSEPH FELS**—Mr. Joseph Fels appeals to the imagination of Reformers and Conservatives alike. This does not mean that the political Tories

who call themselves conservatives see anything to admire in him. They being radicals in wrongdoing have a wholesome fear of anyone who wishes to conserve the good that is in civilization and to abolish the evils that have kept pace with our progress. In politics in Great Britain we have not enough conservatives to make a substantial opposition. The sensible man of doubts and fears has been completely snuffed out; and all that remains is a motley crowd of second and third raters, and the real conservative has to choose between going forward and upward into the unknown, or being dragged backward and downward at breakneck speed with the brakes off.

These nondescript politicians who ask funds for their own propaganda which are in the nature of an investment, can hardly understand a man of purer motives. To them no man is different from themselves, or to be judged by any higher standard. If he spends money in propagating Land Reform in Great Britain, they feel it incumbent upon them to discover some base motive. To credit him with unselfishness would be to judge him by a standard unknown to them; to describe him as a monopolist who desires the abolition of monopolies is to them a strange language which they do not understand. This description of the position accounts for many things. Ill natured references are made to Joseph Fels on Tory platforms; in the syndicated Press of the country, as well as in the House of Commons itself. In the latter place there are several skeletons at the Tory east. One is Henry George with his Single Tax; another is Lloyd George with his Limehouse speech, then there is the Lord Advocate who exposed the fraud of pretending that any substantial revenue could be got for Dreadnoughts or old age pensions by a ten per cent. tax on import manufactures. The worst of the lot, however, is Joseph Fels. He is an American, and Americans and Germans who refuse to tell untruths about tariffs are a great danger to the Tory Party. Not content with saying that taxes on imports do no good to the people, Mr. Fels holds that taxes on home manufactures are also bad. He denounces taxes on buildings and machinery and worst of all he proposes to put the taxes on Land Values. Tories pretend that they object to foreigners interfering in such matters. As a matter of fact they have equal objections to anyone doing so, but they are bankrupt of reasonable objections, and America appears more objectionable to their ears than Wales, to which they sometimes refer when reduced to desperation.

Mr. Fels was asked in an interview if it was a fact that he was a much abused man. His reply was that he had letters every day from people calling his attention to the fact that in the view of the writer his room was better than his company in the tight little island of Great Britain. Yes! he said, I am perhaps the worst or rather best abused man in Great Britain. Of course, he added, this is highly entertaining not to mention profitable, as it enables me to send on some Single Tax literature to my would-be advisers. Continuing, he said he had received some very special attention from a society called the Land Union, but which should be called the "Landlords' Union," as that was really what it was. This society was headed by a mem-

ber of the British House of Commons called Captain Prettyman. He was extremely obliged to the doughty Captain for helping along his reputation as a dangerous agitator. Through him Mr. Fels had his name brought before the House of Commons on a charge of corrupting British politics with American money. Some people who were very much concerned in British politics possibly felt the sting of his way of "corrupting" politics.

As a missionary to business men Mr. Fels is full of enthusiasm. He pleads with them to devote a little time to the study of social problems. Even as a business proposition he can make this interesting, though he makes no appeal to the pocket except when asking for subscriptions. This kind of appeal he feels justified in making having led the way by his own example.

He has lectured to business men in many of the big towns; in such towns as Manchester, Glasgow, Bradford, etc. In addition he has appeared before City Councils, notably Glasgow. On his last trip to Canada, he addressed various gatherings of business men, Church Congresses, Chambers of Commerce, City Councils and Builders' Exchanges. At one of these gatherings he had as his audience architects, builders, real estate brokers and land speculators. In America he has done similar work. During his last visit—but one—he addressed a gathering of cotton manufacturers in Washington where representatives of six to eight hundred mills were present. He thought that was the most successful meeting of that particular American trip.

Such countries as France, Germany, Denmark and Sweeden have been visited by Mr. Fels, and in all these countries he has helped financially good Single Tax activity. In France there is a journal devoted to the Single Tax movement called *L'Impot Unique*, edited by Georges Darien. In Denmark Henry George's books are used as text books in some schools. The farming class is being educated to the Single Tax by a group of speakers and writers who appeal to the country side. This is how Mr. Fels is "corrupting" politics in other countries besides Great Britain, including his own. Besides the assistance he has given in all the countries named there is still to take into account such countries as Italy and Spain. In the latter there is also a Single Tax journal called *Impuesto Unico*, edited by Senor Antonio Albendin. Perhaps some landowner or some gentlemen who has been about five minutes in the building trade in one or other of these countries will also turn their attention to Mr. Fels and send him a pungent post card.

At the time Mr. Fels was interviewed with a view to this article he was of opinion that the Liberal Party had gone back on its 1909-10 enthusiasm for land reform on the lines of the taxation of land values. He thought that if the Party did not warm up before the next general election, it would go down in a well deserved defeat. He had hopes of great advance in the States of Oregon and Missouri and thought that China might take a big step in the right direction. In the Argentine some satisfactory progress in the matter of land valuation had been made, landlords had been invited to value their own land within a given time, or risk the penalty of having an extra percentage added to the assessment by the government officials.

Although he was not altogether pleased with the progress in Great Britain Mr. Felsexpressed himself as pleased with the grip that the common people had got of just principles. He thought they were better informed than those in higher places. The propaganda was influencing the agricultural laborer as well as the town mechanic and it was the people as a whole who had the power to decide such matters both in Great Britain and America.

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## LAND VALUES GROUP IN PARLIAMENT.

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**ALDERMAN PETER WILSON RAFFAN, M.P.**—Alderman Raffan is the Hon. Secretary of the Land Values Group in Parliament and President of the Welsh League for the Taxation of Land Values. He was elected to the House of Commons in January, 1910, after a whirlwind campaign of three weeks' duration. Late in coming into the field he managed to secure a notable victory in a three-cornered contest. Like many more leaders in the movement Mr. Raffan was born in Scotland, being a native of Aberdeen. He helped to organize a meeting for Henry George in Forfar when the author of *Progress and Poverty* first visited Scotland. Later he was an active member of a South of Scotland Land Restoration League in Dumfries, where he sought to popularize the teaching of Henry George. For the last twenty years he has carried on similar work in South Wales, having been resident in Monmouthshire during that period. In business he is managing director of Messrs. P. Wilson Raffan and Co., Ltd., Printers and Publishers, and he is Editor of the *South Wales Gazette*. His public work has attracted the attention of such men as Lloyd George who described him as one of the best fighters in South Wales.

For fifteen years he was continuously elected without opposition to the Abercarn District Council. He was elected to the Monmouthshire County Council as representative of the Abercarn district, and became an Alderman three years later. In 1901-2 he occupied the chair of the Abercarn Council, and the chairmanship was memorable because during his term of office the Council obtained powers from Parliament to purchase the local Gas Works. The burden of the negotiations fell to Alderman Raffan and the Clerk of the Council, and local opinion was sharply divided on the matter. It is now, however, conceded that the step was a wise one. When the Monmouthshire Water Bill was before the House of Lords in 1908 Mr. Raffan had to bear the burden and heat of the fight, his examination and cross examination lasting a whole day of Parliamentary time. Sir Henry Mather Jackson, Bart, subsequently told the members of the Council that he had never known evidence given with greater ability before any Parliamentary Committee. On the passing of the Tory Education Act, Alderman Raffan became a foremost exponent of what was known as "the Welsh Revolt Party." On the formation of the Education Committee to carry out the Act he was elected Chairman of the Finance Committee. This was a difficult position especially in Wales.