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JOSEPH FELS A WISE MAN

By Alfred D. Cridge.

"Isn't this Joseph Fels, who gives money to promote the principles of land value taxation, a Shoney?" asked a friend.
"Indeed he is," was the reply. "Shoney" means wise man. Joseph Fels is wise—very wise.

"Why don't he give his money to charity, then, like Carnegie?" asked the friend.
"Because Joe Fels knows that all charity is a fraud, and all swollen fortunes are robberies, and says so. Fels gives his money to secure justice, and where justice reigns, charity is out of a job," I replied.

"Did this wise man you admire work for his money, then?"
"Surely," Fels said some months ago in Canada that he got all his money by hard work and sweat—other people's hard work and sweat.

"What the dickens does he expect to accomplish with the money he gives to this land value tax cause?"
"Justice."

"Is this land value tax scheme justice?"
"Nothing else."

"I don't see where the justice comes in to the farmer. As I understand it, the farmer would have all the taxes to pay on the land, and the big corporations would go free. If Joseph Fels is such a wise man, I should think he would not try to drive what farmers there are left off the land. Up the Willamette valley there are fewer farmers now than there were 20 years ago."

"Unless the scheme of land value taxation which Joseph Fels advocates is justice to the farmer it is not justice to all. To place taxes on land values would not drive the farmer from the farm, but would attract the workers from the cities. This is because the farmer does not own, and never will own, the land values of the state. In the nature of things it is impossible."

"I am a farmer, and from Missouri, Fels has got to show me; if anybody else that preaches that kind of justice."

"If you will read the pamphlet sent out partly through money contributed by Joseph Fels to every citizen of Oregon you will see that the farmer is over assessed more than a hundred millions of dollars in Oregon; while we all know that timber, mineral and speculative lands are under assessed more than that many times over."

"Where does that pamphlet get such figures?"
"From the assessment returns and from official estimates. There is no questioning them, for the benefit of the doubt is generously given in every instance to the other side. There is no doubt but what the farmers of Oregon are paying 60 per cent of the taxes and actually own less than 15 per cent of the land values."

"Then I will have to read that pamphlet. You see it was sent to me and I was too busy to read it; but I put it to one side. There is nobody to tell me about it. Why don't some of you land value tax fellows limp around once in a while? You know the farmers of Oregon are prejudiced against this justice you talk about; but you also know that the farmers are a hospitable lot of people, and that they want to do right. I have an idea they would much rather have justice than charity themselves."

"There is no doubt that everybody would rather have justice than charity, unless they are criminals or grafters."
"Well, how does Mr. Fels propose to establish justice when he advocates a scheme that would let the corporations go?"
"I told you that Fels was a wise man. No wise man pro-

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poses to let corporations go, or anybody else go, that has a special privilege. By corporations I presume you really mean railway corporations. Their principal power of extracting wealth from the people lies in their franchise, and that franchise is in final analysis a continuous strip of land over which the railroad, and nobody else, can transport freight, passengers and intelligence. Its rails, cars, depots, etc., amount to very little compared to the value it has in the land that makes its right of way. The waterfront holdings at terminal points are tremendous in value.

"What is the value of the railroad franchises?"
"Fully four hundred millions of dollars in Oregon and assessed at over a hundred millions."

"What is the value of the farmers' lands in Oregon, then?"
"The assessment for 1909 shows that the farmer pays taxes on a valuation on tillable lands of \$135,000,000, of which fully a hundred millions is improvement values, according to the report of the tax commissioners. Allowing a fair valuation on the tillable lands and that the farmer on the average has as many acres of untitled lands, the farm lands should not be assessed at more than \$66,000,000. Not counting the improvements on town lots, the lots alone are assessed for nearly \$160,000,000."

"Well, coming back to this Joseph Fels: What is his idea in advancing this cause of land value taxation? Does he expect to be made an English lord or duke, or has he an idea that a Jew can ever be president of the United States, or what is his game, anyhow?"

"Joseph Fels cannot have any other idea than pure humanitarianism. He sincerely believes that justice will promote the welfare of humanity more than charity, and he realizes that the greatest injustice of all is the monopoly of God's gift to man—the whole earth. He would give to mankind what has been theirs from the beginning, and would open their eyes to the gift that is within their reach. He is a prophet of old come to earth again to bring confusion upon the hosts of the oppressors. As he says, the mission of the Jews is to preach Christianity to the Christians; and he is one of the missionaries."

"He hasn't made much of a start, has he?"
"More than you may think. Since Joseph Fels took hold of the agitation in Great Britain and backed up the cause of justice with his money, more things have happened to the British aristocracy than they ever thought could come about. Land value taxation is a fixed pledge and policy of the dominant party, and there is no doubt but what the money of this little, but great, American Jew has done more than any similar amount ever contributed to charity to forward the day of justice."

"You don't think he wants to be a lord, then?"
"More than any other man, he has indirectly contributed to the downfall of the power of the British lords and their legislative house. He is not much inclined to worship titles."

"What is he going to do in Oregon?"
"Nothing that I know of. If the progressive people of Oregon want to establish justice in taxation, now that they have the power, he will probably help to some extent. He is not going to try to force any law on the people. He will probably help to inform them on the way to establish justice in taxation. If they do not wish to be informed and prefer to continue to drive out our farmer as fast as they

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Corrections to this list will be made promptly on receipt of information. Notices known to be wrong will be dropped until correct data is supplied.
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Brotherhood of Carmen of America—Portland Lodge No. 208—Every 2nd and 4th Monday. Carpenters—Every 2nd and 4th Monday. Carpenters—Every 2nd and 4th Monday. Carpenters—Every 2nd and 4th Monday.

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LEND A HAND
"lend a hand" is the name of the monthly Journal published by the prisoners of the state in Salem. It is a beautifully printed, issue for December, wishing all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The Journal especially advocates the parole system as tending to make men out of outcasts. It opposes the building of roads by convicts, as not teaching them any trade and subjecting them to hardship and humiliation without in any way bettering their condition.

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