

## SOME INTERESTING EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE MANHATTAN SINGLE TAX CLUB. 1886-1892.

(Continued.)

(For the Review.)

By BENJAMIN DOBLIN.

This series of memoranda, as we explained in our last issue, are designed merely to furnish the ground work for a history of the Manhattan Single Tax Club. Those who can contribute anything to the data here collected should communicate with Mr. Doblin or the SINGLE TAX REVIEW.—THE EDITOR.

1893.

Jerome O'Neill, President. Early in the year a dinner was held at the Columbia Restaurant to celebrate the election of Grover Cleveland. It was on this occasion that Thomas G. Shearman related the conversation between Grover Cleveland, Richard Croker, leader of Tammany Hall, and William F. Sheehan that took place at the Victoria Hotel before election in which a demand was made upon the presidential candidate to pledge himself to give all custom house patronage to the organization. Grover Cleveland expressed his dissent, and after an appreciable silence from the other two Mr. Croker replied that the President was quite right.

On April 13th a Jefferson dinner was held in the same restaurant. On April 28th Lawson Purdy was elected a member of the Club.

August 28th to September 23rd Single Tax Conference was held in Chicago. About this time the Indian Land Adjustment League was organized.

October 10th the Club issues a bulletin. At a later date a Conference on ballot reform was held at the City Club. At the end of the year the Single Tax League of New York City was organized.

1894.

Alfred Bishop Mason, President. The managing board of the Club decides that its activities are to be confined to educational work. It was during the prevailing business depression that a large mass meeting was held in the People's Theatre on the Bowery addressed by Henry George; the subject of his address was Hard Times. It was on this occasion that Bolton Hall proposed a legislative act providing that all building construction started at this time should be exempt from taxation on work up to the sidewalk. Trade and labor conference was held representing various labor organizations and civic societies. The Club sent as its delegates Dr. M. R. Levenson, A. J. Steers and Benjamin Doblin. The Club took action regarding the charter of Cooper Union and its founder's purpose, which the trustees were ignoring. A letter of protest prepared by Dr. Levenson was sent to the trustees.

May 1st the Club moved to 31 East 27th Street and the Chickering Hall

meetings were projected for early spring. Six Sunday evenings were provided for, beginning on March 4th and James G. Maguire addressed the meeting.

In April the Club began a campaign for the relief of unemployed labor by a house-to-house canvass by the unemployed under the direction of E. Yancey Cohen, of Henry George's "The Condition of Labor." About this time upon the suggestion of E. B. Swinney, the originator of the Single Tax Information Bureau, an open air cart-tail campaign was inaugurated in Madison Square. Dr. Parkhurst's Church and the Metropolitan Life Co. Building served for a background. These meetings marked a departure in method from previous out-door meetings in that the stand was not moved. Formerly we hired a horse and wagon moving from place to place, stopping long enough at each to gather a crowd, then moving along to get together a new audience. Starting a meeting under these conditions was indeed a task. The wagon would stop anywhere that looked encouraging to the chairman and associates; then a novice was induced to open the meeting to a gathering made up of fellow-members and children; you cannot realize the dread felt by the novice at the ordeal before he introduced the speaker. Before long, however, it would become necessary to pull the coat of the novice who was getting too deeply interested in his work of opening the meeting and advise him to stop his talk and introduce the waiting speaker. On one occasion after much urging, Dan Cavanaugh consented to speak. He had postponed the fateful evening by the promise that some night he would take the stand. The night arrived and Dan, with a roll of manuscript in his hand, mounted the wagon and began with evident vim to address a large crowd. The Club members present listened with concentrated interest. It was not long before Cavanaugh made us feel that he had something real to say—then he lost the thread of his address and had to refer to his manuscript, a sheave of loose sheets, the writing on the manuscript was indistinct in the poor street light and the cue to continue not readily found. The loose pages soon became unmanageable, probably mixed; anyway, Dan could not find the place he was looking for as readily as he wished. Hastily he turned and re-turned leaf after leaf; a snicker that grew into a laugh at the evident predicament of the speaker came from the crowd; then Dan desperately crushed the manuscript in his fist with fiery earnestness, turned to the amused audience and raged out: "You laugh, that's all right, I am only practising on you fellows; you wait until I get this thing solid then I will give it to you good." And he did make good his challenge for he became an effective and witty speaker.

Meeting held at Cooper Union to protest against Governor David B. Hill's veto of ballot reform.

In June the Park Commissioner made a statement about open air meetings which we desired to hold in the park, notifying us that the parks could not be used for mass meetings. Meanwhile, meetings were being held in Tompkins and Washington Parks.

In July a conference was called in concert with the Brooklyn Single Tax Club to determine our action in the coming campaign. A. B. Cruikshank elected a member along with Ernest Howard Crosby.

October 26th the Club engages Chickering Hall for a course of twenty Sunday night meetings beginning December 2nd with James A. Hearn as opening speaker.

On August 31st Samuel Seabury was elected a member. The president of the Club, Alfred Bishop Mason, memorializes the Tenement House committee. Club takes action on the Constitutional convention in the State of New York and devotes its energies to preserving freedom of the legislature to enact tax reform measures. The Club places the *Single Tax Courier* in all the libraries of the City and still keeps up its agitation against inequalities of assessments. The meetings at Chickering Hall offer the club a splendid opportunity for the sale of books by Henry George in the lobby of the hall. One hundred thousand copies of the story, the "Lost Island," published by the Club. Alfred Bishop Mason re-elected president for 1895. The Club prepares and circularizes a card written by Mr. Simpson urging the consideration and study of the Single Tax. It contained a statement to the effect, as I remember it now, what the Single Tax would do, and the comment that such a thing never entered your head before, as Goliath said when David hit him with a stone.

Whidden Graham elected a member December 8th, 1894. Home Rule Taxation League actively agitating throughout the State for the enactment of a law permitting local option in taxation for counties. A class in the study of public speaking was organized and conducted by Marion M. Miller, Litt. D. The City being posted with one hundred thousand "snipe" with the motto: "The Single Tax will reduce rent and raise wages." These posters were contributed by George R. Macey. Club begins agitation to open the school houses for neighborhood meetings. This proposition originated with Antonio Bastida; petitions were circulated and resolutions adopted by trade and labor organizations and finally presented to the Board of Education and refused by them, for they held that the use of the buildings for any other than prescribed school uses was not allowable. The club collected evidence that despite this determination of the Board of Education, some school rooms were being used for sectarian religious meetings.

On August 26th, W. D. McCracken was elected a member. The club goes on record as opposed to special water rates and urges as substitution for water charges that the cost of the water service be made a tax charge along with other public needs. A committee was appointed to confer with labor organizations on the advisability of joint political action in the municipal election. There were twenty organizations and clubs represented at the convention, held on June 1st at Maennerchor Hall, East 56th Street, for the purpose of forming a political labor party. The People's Party, the Manhattan Single Tax Club and the Commonwealth Club each sent delegates. Besides these, the following labor organizations were represented: Journeymen Horse-shoers' Union No. 1, Metermakers' National Union, New York Painters, Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners, Locals 509, 715 and 64, United House-smiths' and Bridgemen's Union, L. A. 8,560 K. of L., Glass Stainers and Lead

Glaziers, Locals 10 and 90 International Cigarmakers, Brassworkers L. A. 2,291, Branch 6 Whitestone Association Marbleworkers, Tin and Sheet-iron Workers, Eccentric Engineers No. 6, Bookbinders Union and Progressive Varnishers. Isaac Bennet, representing International Cigar Makers No. 90, who was a Socialist, suggested that the best plan would be for the convention to hand itself over to the Socialist Labor Party. In reply to this, Mr. Salisbury, representing the People's Party, said that the mountain did not go to Mahomet, and the best thing that the Socialists could do was, therefore, to send delegates to the convention, as the People's Party had done. There were a great many opinions given and considerable discussion held over the plan of organization. Finally, the meeting elected permanent officers with the exception of chairman and vice-chairman, which offices will be filled by election at each meeting. John J. Kenealy was elected temporary chairman and Isaac Bennet vice-chairman, Edward Thimme recording secretary, James S. O'Brien corresponding secretary, J. B. Waldron financial secretary and Richard Patterson treasurer. After a discussion on the question of finances the meeting adjourned.

The Club promotes Delaware campaign and opens subscription in its aid. Independence Day celebration held in the north plaza of Union Square for which purpose the Club was granted the band stand. Meetings inaugurated on Wednesday evenings in Abingdon Square. Club appoints a committee authorizing it to prepare a Single Tax song book. Progress and Poverty class meets every Friday evening during the Winter. The City Club, through its president urged to join in demand that vacant land be assessed on a par with improved land. Whidden Graham, W. B. Scott, Dr. M. M. Miller, Wesley E. Barker and Simon Levy elected members of the Club. The Club takes favorable action on the Pingree vacant lot farm policy.

December 26th Lawson Purdy was elected president of the Club.

(To be continued.)

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## THE INCOME TAX.

*(For the Review).*

By E. J. SHRIVER.

It has always been a mystery to me that so many Single Taxers should accept the principle of an income tax with approval. Based as it is on the theory of taking from the individual in proportion to what he has, irrespective of how he gets it, not in proportion to what service he receives from government or what privilege he may enjoy, it is open to every objection that there is against personal property taxation, which all Single Taxers oppose; and to the additional objection that it is a direct penalty upon productive enterprise, even though it may not to an effective degree operate to discourage production.