

CLUB MAKING.

BY BOLTON HALL.

To some of us the value of many of the Single Tax clubs seems very doubtful, because they absorb the resources of the members in keeping them up and because they attract cranks and in some measure give to any blatant or foolish members a certain endorsement and prominence as representatives of the Single Tax.

It is also suggested that they sometimes "degenerate into debating clubs."

Enthusiasm is contagious; without company and the warmth of fellowship it dies. Organization, however imperfect, is our only hope of doing systematic work or of finding out our own resources. Though many Single Taxers are poor and though many give liberally, hardly any give all that they would be justified in giving. They are little to blame for that, for men follow the strongest motives, but they are to be made, by each other, to wish to do otherwise.

We have always found that the more we do the more we give. There never was a club which, when its interest was really aroused, did not contribute to its cause.

A blatant and foolish Single Taxer is infinitely better than a quiescent and wise one.

"If you'll only call us cranks
We'll acknowledge it with thanks,
We fear we've been respectable too long."

Where is a foolish or uneducated Single Taxer to learn wisdom except in the club? Where is he to find out how little he knows and how poor his arguments are except in a debating society. If he is not a student where else can he learn at all? Where can he learn to use the weapons of logic better than in the debate?

The causes of the failure or inertia of some of our clubs are to be found elsewhere.

First, I think, is the savage and stupid mistake of subordinating or excluding women. It is not only the influences, but far more the attraction of women that is valuable. What kind of intimacy can you have with a man of whose wife and family

you know nothing; you only "met him at the club." Where the best men cannot bring their wives and families they are apt to stop going themselves.

Suppose the Salvation Army proceeded to drive the women out of the corps or decided that regular organization "gave prominence to the cranks" and should be discontinued—what would become of their work?

Women alone make a real social life possible. They prevent debates degenerating into wrangle and they will usually give more time to details than men can do. Suppose the early Christians had decided that the churches of Ephesus and Colossæ took up too much of the resources of the members and encouraged cranks like Peter and Paul, or degenerated into debating societies, where would Christianity be? Suppose they had organized a separate "Woman's Church of Philippi" and Paul had never met Titus' mother and the Elect Lady. Christianity and women's rights would long ago have been forgotten together.

Now as to the degenerate "Debating Society." If we are content to leave the Single Tax where its great teacher left it, interest in the clubs will die. In cases of controversy we have thought that a quotation from "Progress and Poverty" settled the matter; but it is ours to make the advance. Our movement is a progressive one; it is revolutionary; we must see that the revolution is an even and thorough one.

No one has deeper gratitude nor a higher respect for Mr. George than the writer, yet I think he is wrong upon interest. Had he been right the Peoples' party would be a Single Tax party. I think his view of the money question and some other subjects is socialistic. We must decide whether or not these views are socialistic and whether we are to accept them or not. Money, restriction, immigration, transportation, the functions of government, and so on, will be discussed and wisely or foolishly discussed in proportion as we are prepared to consider them.

We will not again be left out in the cold by an issue like the currency; unable to

show because we had not examined it, that the principle of liberty, with its corollary equal rights, would settle that, too. Had we been instructed about that, had we agreed because we knew what was right we could then have got a hearing for the further extension of the principle to land, instead of wasting our time and influence trying to ignore it. Some one says, "That is not Single Tax." Then how does it come into "Progress and Poverty?" Is it unnecessary there? If it is, let us have a new and expurgated edition.

We were afraid of that question and we lost probably ten per cent. of our people to the free silverites, and allowed a lot of our workers to stamp themselves as illogical and crack-brained Populists, simply for want of instruction.

One principle underlies Single Tax and all these things. If we find the principle and argue logically from it we cannot diverge on these subjects; but if we get Single Tax without finding its foundation, we will simply have injected a land value tax into socialism.

Debate on these questions makes speakers. Argument on them makes thinkers. This is the only way to avoid discredit and comparative failure.

This seems to me to be the main feature needed to strengthen the clubs, but there are other points. At Single Tax dinners there should be no wine nor liquor served; perhaps this is an unnecessary restriction, but it reduces the expense to the members. Neither need there be any smoking. This encourages in great part the large attendance of ladies. At first it seemed to me that it would be hard to make a dinner go off without cigars, but experience shows that there is no difficulty, and it encourages many to bring their wives and daughters who would have otherwise stayed away. Surely this is not too much to give up for the Single Tax; but if it is, an increased membership would enable us to have a smoking room, as other clubs have, so that women may not be offended and excluded by drinking and tobacco.

Could we get in as many women as men we would double our strength at once. Now in order to build up a club it is ne-

cessary that we should find some few men and women who will be regular in attendance so as to form a nucleus. That we have in most clubs, but when each knows the ideas on the Single Tax of each other member, the interest dies and can only be revived when there is definite club work to be done.

We must see that the club forms a mental stimulus to the members. How else can this be done than by making it a forum for practice in reasoning by discussion on allied economic subjects. We agree substantially on Single Tax. On other subjects we do not agree, yet if we find the basic truths which govern other conclusions we will come to agree on these too. It is necessary to get new members. For these we should not rely solely upon Single Taxers. Our discussions should be open to the public and we should get our friends, and those of whom we have some hope, to come with us in order that we may make, first, Single Taxers, and, second, club members of them.

We all know the stimulus that the open air meetings have been to ourselves and we know what a help music of any kind has been in attracting and holding an audience. We should cultivate this.

In this connection I bespeak for the SINGLE TAX REVIEW hearty support from the clubs as such. My observation is that when a man ceases to take a Single Tax paper, he usually ceases to work, and I do not think that subscriptions are often given up for the lack of interest in the Single Tax. Carelessness, poverty or thoughtlessness allow them to expire, and we shortly after lose a fighting man. It appears to me that the clubs should find lists of hopefuls who may be induced to join, and send to them copies of the REVIEW, and should examine the members from time to time to see that they make good use of their own copies instead of throwing them in the waste basket when read.

The REVIEW forms an organ of inter-communication between us, and for myself I can say, that although I am by no means the most easily discouraged of men, I rely upon the REVIEW for a stimu-

lus. The REVIEW is costing us very little. It has a fair circulation and gives us all the news. It should be made the organ of our clubs and besides the organ of our differences of opinion and a forum for the discussion of those questions about which our people need information.

Just now conservation, especially of forests, is a burning question in the club.

How many have we who can show how Single Tax is applicable to that and defend the position?

Truly "theoretical discussion" is not too abundant yet. The discussion of this question was suppressed at a recent conference because "we differ on it."

IS RENT PART OF PRICE?

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

Many years ago, this question was raised in the Chicago Single Tax Club by one of its keen witted members, and it would seem that it is like "Banquo's Ghost," it will not down, even to this day.

I believe that rent is a part of price, and here are a few reasons.

If not a part of price, where does the tenant, merchant, who has no income outside of his sales, get his rent from to pay his landlord for the particular location he occupies, whether it be State street, or away on the city outskirts?

Why does the State street merchants pay higher rents than those on West 48th St.?

Is it not because he can sell more goods and hence there are a far larger number of rent units to make up the grand total than there are on 48th St.?

Some Single Taxers claim that the cost of living is high because we have, by reason of inflation, forced the margin of cultivation away out beyond the normal, and that we are now paying the high prices for everything we buy that it costs to produce at the point of least economic advantage.

This at first blush seems true; but it is only true of foodstuffs. Nearly everything else is produced today at the point of greatest advantage. As competent evidence of this, we select Pittsburgh and

Gary for steel. We make brick next door to the clay hole, and we get stone from the nearest and most available quarry; to say nothing of coffee from Brazil, bananas from Bocos Del Toro, rubber from Borneo and Para, tin from the Straits of Malacca and Cornwall, coal from the 20 ft. seam, coke from Connellsville, and wood from the nearest forest; where else could we get these things to such advantage?

Even today with economics in a perfect whirl, we do lots of sane things because we have to; we cannot do otherwise. Multitudes of things are produced at the center rather than on the margin of cultivation.

There are two kinds of values and only two; they are labor values and monopoly values.

More than half of the property values in this country are monopoly values, created and sustained by the law, as every Single Taxer knows.

If monopoly values were obliterated, there would be but one kind of values we would purchase, when we bought goods upon the market, and they would be labor values; and labor values, being less than one half of all the property values, the cost of living would be less than one half what it is now. If this is not clear, the term clear does not mean anything as applied to economics.

Attack the problem from another angle and the net result is the same.

Labor, capital and land produce everything; wages, interest and rent get everything; 100 per cent. of all that is produced.

Wages and interest were never so low as they are today, relative to production.

The high cost of living is not due to high wages, nor to high interest rates because both labor and capital are more abundant than ever before; in fact the market is always glutted with men looking for good safe jobs and capital looking for safe investments.

If wages and interest do not get the high prices, rent does.

Rent is the only other factor, it is the only other direction in which the abnormally high prices can go, and if this does not prove that rent is a part of price, what