

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE SINGLE TAX MOVEMENT IN DENVER.

FROM AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE COLORADO
SINGLE TAX ASSOCIATION OF DENVER,
BY GEO. H. PHELPS.

It was in the year 1886, I think, that the friends of the Single Tax philosophy in Denver first gathered together for mutual encouragement. They met in the court rooms of a justice of the peace on Lawrence street. These meetings became of considerable interest, and many warm debates were held upon various phases of political economy. The first Colorado Single Tax Association was formed, and as I had been instrumental in getting the meetings started I was honored by being made its first president.

The late Andrew W. Elder, then principal of the Longfellow school, was its second president. I have no record of the membership, and only refer to the more active spirits. Mr. Elder took great interest in the meetings from the start, notwithstanding that he felt that active work might jeopardize his position. Mr. Elder thoroughly understood the philosophy of Henry George, and when he spoke it was clearly and forcibly presented.

Another member who has passed away was Chas. N. Monaghan, for many years a cigar manufacturer. Another, of whose present whereabouts I am ignorant, was H. C. Niles who was secretary at one time and a fluent speaker.

Chas. G. Buck, a young real estate dealer afterwards moved to Chicago. He was energetic in every movement for the cause and was at one time a candidate for the State legislature. Through his acquaintance with Mr. Buck, Mr. Geo. S. Robbins became a member and secretary of the Club, and also did much propaganda work among business men. Mr. J. H. Mackey, a bright well-informed colored man, was one of our early members. He was often heard at our meetings, and did much effective speaking among his own people. On account of his color he was ejected from the opera house on the occasion of

Dr. McGlynn's lecture here, and this was made a test case in the courts on which our colored brother lost on a technicality.

Some who are still with us from the early list are Peter Gorman, John Benbow, Geo. Champion and Chas. W. Buford, another colored man who has done noble service for the cause, and some whom I remember but cannot locate now are John McAndrews, C. D. Schwartz, Robert Andrews, J. H. Lloyd, C. D. Schwartz, Robert Jones, John Patterson and others.

In those days the *Arbitrator* was being published as a progressive labor paper and James Crosby was employed on the paper as a printer. With him I had many an instructive argument. He joined the Club and did effective work as a speaker and senator for the Bucklin Bill and other legislation. It was in the columns of the *Arbitrator* that I saw a Single Tax letter signed by John B. McGauran, at that time a college student.

The association took early notice of the corrupt elections being held under the then imperfect ballot law. The association almost unaided took up the fight for a reformed ballot law, and did secure considerable improvement.

The interest in the Single Tax was greatly stimulated by the anti-poverty campaign of Dr. McGlynn and Henry George in New York and a great effort was made to bring both of them to Denver. This was finally accomplished, and Henry George spoke two evenings to crowded houses in the Colliseum. He maintained the great reputation that had preceded him. One real estate man asked him what effect the Single Tax would have upon suburban real estate. Promptly the answer came. It would "prevent unscrupulous real estate men from plotting good farming land into city lots, and baiting hooks with pretty maps to catch the unwary." Dr. McGlynn also spoke at the same place, and for two and half hours the logic of his arguments, the earnestness of his manner, the magnetism of his personality and the magic of his eloquence still thrill the hearts of those who heard him. Judge Maguire also favored Denver with his presence.

As the populist movement grew our members took a prominent part in its councils, and helped to make many Single Taxers among them.

FRENCH APPRECIATION.

Translated from *Maitre d' Hotel Francais*.

"The SINGLE TAX REVIEW (edited by Joseph Dana Miller, New York) in its June number, gives thanks to the *Maitre d' Hotel Francais* for its ardent advocacy, in several issues of our paper, especially in the issue of April 20th, 1914, of the wonderful fiscal reform preached by Henry George, the immortal American economist.

"The distinguished editor of the American magazine not only does us the signal honor of translating our article, as well as the brief eulogy which we paid to Joseph Fels, the eminent disciple of Henry George, whose remains had recently been borne to the grave in Philadelphia, attended by his bereaved widow and a multitude of co-workers and admirers of his generosity, but comparing our idealism with the exclusively commercial spirit of American journals of a similar character, proposes us as a shining example to our fellows.

"The flattering encomium paid us by the SINGLE TAX REVIEW goes right to our heart and we hereby express our cordial thanks.

"It is certain that unless France, and all other nations too, retrace their steps and purge themselves of the fiscal iniquities which stifle the people, they march one after another to certain destruction.

"The decay of public health, of morals, of beliefs are already accomplished facts. The least clear-sighted see in the future a bloody melee of tyrannies followed by a bestial anarchy let loose upon the world. We walk in darkness, feeling our way with our hands.

"Gloomy prophets were right in saying that this world is the prey of hell. In their inspired terrible language they had a thousand reasons for using words of such weighty import. Man has usurped God's earth and has shackled it according to his

will. We pile up the masses in restricted towns, where they die of miserable maladies, in order to give the soil a fictitious value. Like pitiable sheep the so-called friends of mankind bleat in the void urging palliatives which strange to say only make the evil worse. Nevertheless, there exists above our tainted mental fogs a serene region where we might dwell in happiness. The truth has been clearly seen by Henry George and by the steadily growing army of his disciples among whom we are proud to enroll ourselves.

"The noble widow of Joseph Fels intends to continue the work of her husband, heavy though the task may be. May it be true then that in this our hell, there do exist angels of Providence with moral force enough in their souls to bring to success a work of universal salvation. There is in the divine adventure on this earth of Henry George, of Joseph Fels and his wife something of a touching mystery which enthralls and enchants us. And now, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, the most eminent among the intellectual leaders of the Woman Suffrage movement in the United States, has given in her adhesion to the great physiocratic movement of Single Tax internationals; a circumstance which leads to hope for a new revival of the campaign in favor of the Henry George doctrine.

"No one knows better than we how little fitted our paper is, in view of the special field which is its province, to agitate such great questions. That is why we have thought to create an auxilliary publication designed for the public at large—*The Land Set Free*.

"As soon as certain aid for which we hope shall have been assured, the new paper will appear and we shall be able to express with all desirable fullness that faith which animates us in the efficacy of the emancipating fiscal reform.—*The Taxation of Land Values*."

IN 1833 the Pottawatomie Pokagon band of Indians conveyed what is now the city of Chicago at about 3 cents an acre.