

ship of public utilities ; there would be less opposition from the owners of the land if it were proposed to nationalize it in the same manner as it is understood the public utilities are to be taken by the government, that is by paying the owners ; so the conspiracy of silence would be broken, and before long the public would begin to realize that the earth is a public utility.

In the writer's opinion it is probable that the nationalization of the land will be accomplished by a combination of the Single Tax and compulsory purchase such as prevails, to some extent, in New Zealand. The taxation, actual or potential, will have the effect of lowering land values and make the land owners more willing to make terms.



THE SINGLE TAX IN OHIO POLITICS.

(Expressly for the Review).

BY J. B. VINING, SECRETARY-TREASURER OF THE OHIO SINGLE TAX LEAGUE.

During the past few years the Single Taxers of Ohio have gone on, step by step, until to-day the entire Democratic organization is thoroughly permeated with their influence; you will find no considerable gathering of Democrats that does not contain a group of forceful, tactful "George" men. They can be found on the party committees, in the Legislature and as candidates for the coming election. Everywhere they are in evidence, from the ward-worker to the candidate for Governor.

Of course, it is understood that the principal reason for this is the leadership of Tom L. Johnson. Single Taxers understand, if others do not, the motive that impels him to carry forward a fight which is at all times an up-hill struggle against the tremendous power of conservatism. Conditions to-day show that they appreciate this leadership, and are not slow in putting forth every effort to aid in the advancement of the cause.

In so far as the city of Cleveland is concerned, there can be no reason for other feeling than that of pride and hope by all who desire good government. On the eve of a political battle, which has seldom been exceeded in bitter denunciation from our opponents, there has been little effort made to attack our present municipal administration, over which Mayor Johnson has held undisputed sway for more than two years; indeed, what little is said in the way of criticism is so insignificant as to attract hardly any attention. Never before in the history of this city has there been such a clean business management; one, too, that is free from the suspicion of "graft." The word "crooked" is no longer applied to the Council and high officials, as has been common in the past. In fact, a new life in municipal affairs has taken hold of the citizens; they are beginning to believe that some politicians are honest; that some of the men they have of late elected are both faithful and sincere.

One of the contradictory features of the present fight is the fact that the speakers and press, who have all this time declared, in season and out of season, that Tom Johnson is not sincere, are now laying tremendous stress upon how absolutely sincere he is in his advocacy of the Single Tax. They are beginning to feel and know what the people of this town have long since found out; that Mr. Johnson is not only a sincere advocate of the Single Tax, but that he is sincere in his advocacy of higher civic virtues and public rectitude in government officials. If the Republicans do not realize that Mr. Johnson is sincere in his pre-election promises, and party platforms, and present pledges, those recreant Democrats who have felt the power of the Mayor's righteous indignation by

their complete political annihilation, can well testify to his sincerity. The absolute sincerity of the man is the shaft that is sinking deep into their hearts, and causing them to cry out in terror, for, say what you will, to-day they are frightened, from the smallest politician to the Senatorial candidate, who has emitted the despairing cry of "God help us."

Nothing has done more to bring this condition about than the frank and open manner in which the campaigns have been carried on in the old tent. Here there is no climbing of rickety stairs, no ill-smelling, poorly ventilated hall, into which people are coaxed or driven. Easy of access, on the "ground floor," as it were; an absolutely free platform; every one invited to ask questions; opponents urged to divide the time discussing issues face to face, and man to man. When you stop to think of it, there is little wonder that this brainy, cheery, manly character, Tom Johnson, has won the hearts of the people of Cleveland. Ask almost anyone the cause of this brighter hope for good government in our city, and they will answer without hesitation, "Tom Johnson."

And mind, this is not the power of a "boss." Your "boss" never goes before the people and asks their approval at the ballot-box. "Boss" Cox, in this State, was never elected to a public office, and Mark Hanna does not now occupy his prominent place in the Senate by the votes of the people of Ohio. When a man by strength of character and ability can, and does, decide in a great part, the selection of candidates and platforms, and goes before the people in five successive campaigns and says: "Here are our principles, here are our men," that man is a "leader." You can call him a "boss" in your partisan sheet from now until doomsday, but without avail. "Bosses" do not fight in the open with their hands up; they "stand pat," and try to keep you guessing, while they pocket the "goods." "Single Taxer" is not synonymous with "Stand Patter." It is a breed that does not mix, and Tom Johnson was never accused of being a "Stand Patter."

When the roll is called at the coming election in November, Ohio Single Taxers will have given a better account of themselves than ever before. Win or lose, it does not matter. The thing to grasp is that they are in the fight to stay.

Encouraged by the attitude of the members of the Ohio Single Tax League, at its conference last June, the officers immediately began to cast about for an opening in order that they might get into the thick of the fight. President William Radcliffe, of Youngstown, having sold his hotel to go on the road for the summer, called on the writer one Sunday morning, and together we went to the home of Mayor Johnson to seek his advice as to the best means "Billy" could adopt in order to carry on a Single Tax campaign as a side line. Years of experience has made "Billy" one of the best street speakers in the country, a fact which was well known by both the Mayor and myself. Back in the 80's, "Billy," with his blackboard, had figured prominently in the Mayor's campaigns.

After having outlined to us something of the methods which he hoped to pursue, the Mayor turned to "Billy" and said: "'Billy,' why could you not give up your business and devote your entire time to campaigning from now until November?" to which "Billy" replied: "Nothing would please me better, and if you say the word I am ready." Turning to me, the Mayor said: "Vining, can't you manage 'Billy's' campaign, and see that he is furnished with proper literature and necessary funds to keep up the fight; also studying the situation and laying out such routes as will produce the best results?" to which I replied: "I stand ready to do anything that can be done from this end of the line."

Mr. Johnson went on and said: "I believe there is a fighting chance for the Legislature in Ohio. About the Governorship, I am not so much concerned, beyond seeing to it that we have a platform and a candidate that will face the issues and meet the conditions as they exist here in Ohio to-day.

"Billy" can commence right now in such counties as we have a fighting chance, and lay the foundation for meetings which we expect to hold later. I hope to get into all of these counties with the big tent, using the "Red Devil," as we did in Richland, for short stops through the counties, thus seeing the farmers, merchants and the workingmen face to face, and presenting the issues in a frank, open manner. Whatever the results may be at this election, I am satisfied that this will do good, so that in the end we are bound to win. Now, as soon as possible, "Billy," start the "ball-a-rolling," and a little later on I will come after you, and keep going."

That same night, "Billy" and myself laid the plans for his Ohio campaign, for which we got out a call to the friends throughout the country for funds. From the time of starting on the 29th of June, "Billy" has been in the field continuously until this time, and our plans will keep him out until election day. "Billy" tells the following story of his work, which I copy from a letter:

"I can report that I have been on the road since June 29th, a new town, a new crowd, every night, and besides making a talk, have put out each night from 100 to 300 sets of literature, with from five to ten pieces in each set, and I don't forget the mail boxes along the road.

"I am driving a pretty pair of black and white ponies to a surrey. I take a spin about town right after supper or just before supper, and announce 'a free concert on the street to-night,' and at seven o'clock, I open up with two big lights and with graphophone, banjo, songs, and sleight-of-hand tricks. I get a crowd of all sorts of people, and when I have them just as I want them, I hang up a black-board, and go at them till nine or later. They get straight Single Tax for half or three-quarters of an hour, and the balance of the time, 'Home Rule' and 'Municipal Ownership,' 'Referendum,' 'Taxes as they are under Hanna' and 'As they would be under Johnson.' It is fun to see the people when they discover they are right in the center of a Democratic meeting. I try not to chase any of them away; but some of them do sneak off."

Starting in at Portage County, Radcliffe has covered a tier of counties extending to the Ohio River, returning through as many more back as far as Wayne County.

That Mayor Johnson does not intend to waver in his Single Tax fight, is attested by the following fact. A number of our good Democratic friends thought that "Billy" was talking too much Single Tax, and intimated as much to me, and suggested that he be called in for a conference with the State Committee. The Mayor, getting wind of this, sent word to me that no change should be made in "Billy's" plans without consulting him. At the same time he told me that he was entirely satisfied with "Billy's" methods of campaigning, that he thought "Billy" knew better than any one could tell him how to present the issues, and that he should be allowed to continue his work as his own judgment dictated.

Among the many interesting things that come in from Billy, the following story, just as he tells it, is a gem:

"Mr. Johnson has a very warm friend in the Mayor of New Straitsville, named Ed. Call. In 1879 I was with a medicine man at Straitsville; we had worked there one night, and Charles Foster, who was running for Governor, came in on our second night. The Marshall of the town was very anxious that we get out and work in opposition to Foster. We did, and with a brass band. All that Foster could get together were too few for a talk, and after trying to buy us off, he gave up. The Cincinnati *Enquirer* had a half column the next day on 'How an Indian medicine man and his clown knocked out Charley Foster at New Straitsville.'

"Remembering this when I got to Straitsville, I enquired for the Marshall, and found him Democratic Mayor of the place, and when I called on him, I

asked him if he remembered the man who knocked out Charley Foster in Straitsville in 1879. He said: "Billy Radcliffe, by the Great Horn Spoon! how are you?" and then the town was mine; he made my meeting a success all around.

"He was a 'green-backer' in 1879, and is red hot for Johnson. Has Johnson lithographs all over town, and a Johnson button on his vest. *He is all right and has been from way back.*"

Here is one of Billy's original illustrations; it hits the bull's eye:

"I have a lot in Youngstown, on which is located the Hotel Radcliffe, 56 ft. front, 150 ft. deep. The lot is on the tax duplicate for \$16,500 by County Board of Equalization. The Erie R. R. has land right alongside of this lot, 60 ft. front, 5,280 ft (one mile) long. It is down for only \$17,000, just \$500 more than my lot, and it is 35 times as long and 4 ft. wider.

"That's the way I and other people get it in Youngstown. That is the way you and other home and farm owners get it here. The County Board of Equalization fixes values on homes and farms, the Auditors on railroads.

The following report in the Mansfield *Shield* is characteristic of "Billy's" meetings :

That the people are getting their eyes open on the subject of equitable taxation and are doing some investigating for themselves was manifest Tuesday evening when "Billy" Radcliffe, of Youngstown, one of the plain people who is full of his facts and knows how to present sledgehammer arguments which cannot be refuted; held forth at the corner of Main and North Park streets. He began with a concert, after which he took up his blackboard demonstrations, showing how the heavy burdens of taxation are borne by the common people who not only pay their just and equitable share, but a large proportion of what the railroads by rights ought to pay.

It was interesting to see the way the crowd increased as "Billy's" talk progressed, for those who were there first remained and those who stopped for a moment became so interested that they could not tear themselves away. It wasn't the man nor his witty sayings which kept the crowd laughing, but it was the facts which came home with full force to crystalize in action for the betterment of the state.

His chalk talks were convincing; his facts were eloquent and he held that crowd by the power of his arguments as he showed how the property of the common people, the farmers and the modest homes of the working people, are taxed anywhere from 60 to 80 per cent. of their real value, while the railroads pay on a valuation of only 15 per cent. It doesn't take much eloquence to bring a fact like that home to taxpayers, and then they see what passes to county and state auditors, governors and legislators and state boards of equalization are for. Facts and figures were produced showing how the railroads and the big corporations escape their just share of taxes. These are things that the people are thinking about. You would think so if you had seen the way the crowd rushed up to the carriage to get the literature and to purchase pamphlets by Henry George.

At this writing "Billy" has turned south towards Cincinnati. He will stop at Marion, where the well-known Single Taxer, Chas. E. Lukens, is Democratic candidate for Representative; from there he will work to Columbus, where he will put in four days helping Frank H. Howe, who is on the Legislative ticket. Mr. Howe was formerly President of the Ohio Single Tax League; a Single Taxer of ability and integrity, and Mayor Johnson's confidential man in Franklin County.

The last three weeks of the battle, on the advice and consent of the Mayor, "Billy" will hold forth on the streets of Cincinnati, afternoon and evening.

Mayor Johnson has also made an exception to his rule of "no outside speakers," and has consented to us inviting a number of prominent Single Taxers from other States to take up the fight in Hamilton County along with "Billy." Plans to this end are now being laid, and it is hoped that we can put four or five A No. 1 men in Cincinnati, who will make the balliwick of McLean and Boss Cox ring.

