

## DELAWARE

In the Spring of 1895 Mr. Jackson H. Ralston, of Hyattsville, Md., proposed to concentrate the forces of the Single Tax upon a single State and named Delaware as the best place, his main reason being that the State was small, was evenly balanced politically, and offered no constitutional barrier to the adoption of the reform.

While the matter was being argued as to the best State on which to concentrate the Philadelphia Single Tax Society decided to inaugurate a Delaware campaign, and on Saturday, June 15, it sent a number of speakers into the State, and on that evening a number of open-air meetings were held in Wilmington and adjacent towns.

As soon as it became known that the campaign had begun the National Committee appointed a committee of three, the late A. H. Stephenson, of Philadelphia, Jackson H. Ralston, of Hyattsville, Md., and Harold Sudell, of New Castle, Delaware, to supervise the campaign. The first named was elected chairman, the last treasurer of the committee. They appointed Mr. Frank Stephens to take charge of the meetings, and under his direction a wonderfully active campaign was soon in progress. As far as money would allow the whole State was covered every Saturday. Later in the Summer, Dr. Longstreet (now deceased) with a large tent was brought from Texas to tour the State.

When the weather grew too cold for out-door work, in-door meetings were held in the Wilmington Opera House on Sunday evenings. The opening meeting was addressed by Henry George, drawing an immense house, hundreds being turned away. The City Solicitor made a threat to have Mr. George arrested for talking politics on Sunday, but, though police officers were in attendance, no attempt at arrest was made.

In the Spring of 1896 the out-door meetings were resumed with redoubled vigor. The results appeared to be very gratifying.

From all points came the cheering news of numerous conversions to the Single Tax.

But troubles appeared. The Campaign Committee was strongly persuaded that it was not wise to form an independent political party, but that political action should be confined to endorsing those candidates of either political party who should pledge themselves to support Single Tax measures. Yet a large number of the local men, deluded by our rapidly increasing numbers into thinking that they could beat both the Democratic and Republican parties, were insistent that a State ticket should be nominated. Accordingly it was decided to form a Single Tax Party, putting on the legislative and Constitutional Convention tickets those candidates of either party who would give the required pledges.

Alarmed by the growth of the movement the Democratic politicians decided to have the speakers arrested on the charge of disorderly conduct. The first attempt was made in Middletown, but the justice of the peace before whom the prisoner was brought declared that he had done nothing wrong, and discharged him from custody. But in Dover, the capital of the State, a more bigoted justice was found, and Single Tax speakers began to be arrested until thirty prisoners were in jail. Meanwhile legal proceedings looking to the release of the prisoners were undertaken which finally terminated in their favor, not however until some of the prisoners had served out their time.

As the election drew near it began to be seen that the more sanguine view of the outcome was doomed to keen disappointment. The injection of the money question into the campaign by the nomination of Mr. Bryan drew many of the lukewarm Single Tax supporters to a new allegiance. Had it been possible to hold the election earlier the vote for the Single Tax in the opinion of some of the best posted politicians in the State would have amazed the vested interests. But the result was disappointing. When the election returns were in the Single Tax ticket had polled a little short of 1,500 votes in a total of 38,000.

The Legislature when it met rejected all Single Tax proposals, and to make matters worse the Constitutional Convention in-

serted in the new Constitution a clause which was specifically meant to prevent the adoption of the Single Tax by directing that in all assessments of real estate both land and improvements should be included.—H. S.