

THE GENERAL MOVEMENT FROM 1897

The general movement from the death of Henry George in 1897, which was followed by the candidacy of Henry George, Jr., for the nomination left vacant by the death of his father, and the casting of about 20,000 votes for the son, continued to make progress, though without attracting the universal attention that had been aroused by the two dramatic campaigns of Henry George, the McGlynn episode¹ and the Anti-Poverty Society. But with the advent of Joseph Fels² on the scene the movement assumed greater activity. His offer to finance the movement and his own abounding enthusiasm for the cause found immediate response both here and abroad.

We shall find it convenient in pursuing the history of the movement from 1897, to treat under separate heads of its progress in States where State-wide campaigns have been waged for some measure of Single Tax, and in cities where partial exemption of improvements has been obtained, or has been fought out in campaigns.³ The story of Houston, where the Single Tax found practical application through the extra-constitutional acts of Tax Commissioner Pastoriza, belongs to another category, though marking time quite as significantly in the progress of the movement.

The advance of our doctrines shown in their acceptance by an increasing number of men and women, where no direct vote has taken place, but where organized education has been systematically pursued, places Massachusetts, under the leadership of Mr. C. B. Fillebrown, in the front rank of the States, though Mr. Fillebrown, it should be said, is what is termed a "Single Taxer limited" and belongs to the group of whom Thomas G. Shearman was the first great protagonist.⁴

¹See Index for The Catholic Church and the Single Tax; also Edward McGlynn.

²See Index for Joseph Fels.

³See Index for Houston, Pittsburgh, Everett.

⁴See Appendix for Thomas G. Shearman.

In New York City, the splendid agitation carried on by Benjamin C. Marsh, of the Lower Rents Society, has familiarized many thousands with the principles of improvement exemption and the taxation of land values. Mr. Marsh disavows a belief in the Single Tax, but the distinction is not important in these days of the initial stages of our progress. The bills introduced into the Albany legislature embodying the demands of the Lower Rents Society for the exemption of improvements to be submitted to a referendum of the voters of New York City have never emerged from committee. Mayor Mitchell on the eve of his election held out the promise to the ear that he would favor such a referendum, but broke it to the hope. Nevertheless, the Lower Rents Society has kept up the fight, and has enlisted in the support of its demands many who, like Mr. Marsh, disavow the name of Single Taxer. Besides the work of Mr. Marsh's society there has been carried on for many years a constant agitation by the Manhattan Single Tax Club, and its work will be found briefly described elsewhere.¹

Henry George, Jr.'s two successful campaigns for Congress in Manhattan (1910-1912) are incidents in the history of the movement. Mr. George was the candidate of the regular democracy (Tammany Hall) and the Independence League. His campaign was made for straight-out free trade. His work in Congress included a notable address on the Single Tax and a report on taxation in the district of Columbia which attracted much attention.

In Cleveland during Tom L. Johnson's incumbency the Single Tax, though over-shadowed by the comparatively less important issue of street railroads, was kept alive through the nation-wide popularity achieved by the imposing figure of its chief executive.²

In New Jersey the movement has shown many signs of life, and these have been manifested through the Progressive Party more lately merged into the Republican, and led by E. B. Osborne, Everett Colby, and George L. Record, and through the Democratic party in legislative struggles in Trenton under the leadership of Senator Charles O'Connor Hennessy to secure the passage of

¹See Appendix.

²See Appendix.

local option and other measures favorable to our doctrines. The Single Tax has been extensively popularized by the political agitation of these men and others under their leadership.

Under separate heads incidents of historical importance to the movement, such as the Delaware Campaign, the Hyattsville Experiment, etc., are treated in the pages that follow. The aim has been to cover with sufficient amplitude such facts of moment as may be deemed matters of reference, and to provide a world-wide survey of the movement. Those who would gather a more detailed view of Single Tax progress in this country are referred to Arthur N. Young's admirable *History of the Movement in the United States*, to which the editor of this work in the preparation of much of his material acknowledges his indebtedness.—EDITOR.