

NATIONAL SINGLE TAXER

Vol.5 #33

HENRY GEORGE'S LETTERS.

New York Journal's Special Commissioner in
Chicago During Campaign.

That liberal and progressive newspaper the New York Journal published on September 16th an article by Henry George who has been sent to Chicago as special commissioner to review the political situation.

Mr. George thinks that in the calculations of the politicians Illinois has this year taken the place of the traditional "Keystone State," and that Chicago, and not New York, has become the political center, and believes that if the election came off now Bryan would carry Illinois.

In the breaking of party lines, he says, the republicans are undoubtedly losing most heavily in the agricultural districts, the democrats in the cities.

The silver propaganda had been going on long before it captured the Chicago convention, and the promise of higher prices from free silver is proving much more tempting to the farmers than the ancient bait of higher prices from protection. * * *

Influence of the Wealthy Class.

The democratic defections are, of course, of the wealthier class, comparatively small in numbers, but run weighty in influence. And the influence of this wealthier class is being clearly shown in Chicago in outward manifestations of political feeling.

Mr. Bourke Cockran, of New York, in his great speech in the Auditorium last Saturday night, made an effective rhetorical point, * * * when he arraigned Bryan for saying that workingmen were intimidated

by their employers, declaring that if Mr. Bryan knew such intimidation to be a fact, it was his duty as a citizen to have the intimidator punished for his hideous crime.

Innocent Mr. Cockran from guileless New York! Does he not know that when one man holds in his hands the power of permitting another man to get a living, there is no law that can prevent intimidation? I know, from what I learned in far distant places, that there is likely, in the present state of political feeling, to be political intimidation in Chicago. I know as an actual fact that this is the case. * *

Two men of intelligence and position in different railroad companies, have told me since I have been here that they were obliged to keep very quiet as to their political opinions, and did not dare let it be known that they intended to vote for Bryan. And one of them not an hour ago spoke with feeling of his having to join a gold club, for fear of losing his position.

What would have been the use of my prating to these men of the independence of the American citizen and of the inalienable rights of man, still less of talking of getting legal proof of intimidation and having these intimidators prosecuted?

On the contrary, I said, "Don't risk your place if you can help it, for you have a wife and children dependent on you. Thanks to the Australian ballot, you can vote as you please. And by and by, when the single tax comes, men will not have to crowd to get a living." * *

Intimidation may be conveyed by a wink, a nod and the best proof that exists is that men are afraid. A man I know went into one of the big dry goods stores here last week and found one of the salesmen, a friend, wearing conspicuously a nice McKinley button.

"You for McKinley?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply. "Of course I am for McKinley, ain't you?"

"No; I am for Bryan."

This salesman reached his hand from behind a pile of goods.

"Shake," said he. "There are one hundred and forty-seven of us here wearing McKinley buttons, and all talking for protection and sound money - when strangers are around. But all but three of us will vote for Bryan."

And he called up the floor walker to introduce him to his friend, and the floor walker repeated the statement and shook hands.

One does not hear such stories in the clubs and the boulevard houses, but he does when workingmen meet.

Afraid to Refuse to Go to Canton.

Fifty sleeping coaches loaded with railway men leave here Friday evening to go to Canton to pay their respects to Major McKinley - great demonstration of labor. Some of them, doubtless, really want to honor Major McKinley and propose to vote for him, and others will enjoy the free ride, but the train will contain a good many men who do not propose to vote the republican ticket and who will only be in that train because they are afraid to refuse to go.

And why should the average employer feel that he is so hideous a criminal in intimating to the employed, directly or through some intermediate, how he wishes him to vote on a matter which he believes concerns his own business and affects his own revenue? Does not the theory of protection, the theory which governs our national policy, and of which Mr. McKinley is the apostle and Mr. Hanna the high priest,

and which even Mr. Bryan does not now care to question, proceed on the assumption that wages pass from the employer to the employed, and that the workman is the recipient, not the purchaser?

Sept. 30, 1896