

Dinner of the Manhattan Single Tax Club

(REPORTED BY ELMA DAME)

ON Tuesday evening, February 11, a dinner was given by the Manhattan Single Tax Club of New York City at the Hotel Woodstock, to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the presidency of James R. Brown.

It was felt by the directors and members of the Club that the day Mr. Brown assumed the reins of the club had marked the beginning of a new era—a turning-point—in the life of the club and in the history of the Single Tax movement. During these fifteen years Mr. Brown has devoted his whole time to the affairs of the club and to extending a practical knowledge of the Single Tax by his lectures and writings, by newspaper publicity and personal work. It was therefore deemed a fitting thing that recognition of his work be given at this time, and that he be offered an opportunity to give an account of his stewardship.

About eighty persons were present at the dinner. Mr. Richard Eyre presided. Numerous letters and telegrams of appreciation were read from members and friends who were unable to be present. Among these were messages from Charles T. Root, Tom Work on behalf of Buffalo Single Taxers, Alfred Bishop Mason, Grace Isabel Colbron, Mary Fels, Charles J. Ogle on behalf of Maryland Single Taxers, Allen L. Smith, who spoke for "thousands of Canadians," Samuel Seabury, Josiah Dudley, William Lloyd Garrison, Jr., Dr. Solis Cohen, E. W. Doty, R. Louis Lloyd, Frances S. Boulton, Edwin J. Jones and others.

Mr. Root's letter pointed out that under Mr. Brown's leadership the Manhattan Single Tax Club had become a focal point from which the doctrine of Henry George had spread throughout the Western Hemisphere. He stressed the simplicity and directness with which Mr. Brown delivers the central message of the Single Tax, disencumbering it from controversy, condemnation and metaphysical subtlety, and thus opening instead of closing the minds of his hearers to the moral rightness and the far reaching economic benefits of land value taxation.

The speakers were:

Rev. James F. Halliday, pastor of the First Church Congregational, West Hartford, Connecticut, and author of "Robbing Youth of Its Religion,"—a book that is stirring the minds of the theologians. Mr. Halliday was formerly leader of a Forum in Binghamton, N. Y., at which Mr. Brown had spoken.

Professor H. H. Seay, Jr., of the Department of Economics of the University of Richmond—an enthusiastic Single Taxer who arranged no less than eleven lectures for Mr. Brown in his university in 1928 and as many in 1929, and who will do the same again this year.

George H. Cless, Jr., Secretary of the Chamber of Com-

merce, Glen Falls, N. Y., and formerly holding the same position in Portsmouth, Va., where he heard Mr. Brown preach the gospel years ago.

Charles H. Ingersoll told of the deep impression made upon his mind by Mr. Brown's mode of presentation which he had witnessed before classes of high school students. It was a revelation to him in its simplicity and clarity, and constituted what he called "the very height of efficient propaganda."

Impromptu speakers called upon and responding with fervor were Otto K. Dorn, Joseph Dana Miller, Arthur C. Pleydell, Louis F. Bachrach, Walter Fairchild and Anna George DeMille.

The addresses of the evening in general gave evidence not only of deep intellectual appreciation of this devoted apostle of the Single Tax but also of the warmest personal affection.

Last of all, James R. Brown gave his own inimitable account of his work, which has extended all over the United States and many parts of Canada. He said that it is obviously impossible to lay the whole groundwork of a sound economics within the scope of a single lecture. So he drives straight at taxation, and by concrete examples of the stupidity and iniquity of the present system or lack of system, copiously illustrated with incident and intermixed with a laugh, he holds the attention and enlists the sympathy of his hearers from the start. His addresses are delivered before university classes, high school students, Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, women's clubs, Young Men's Christian Association groups and the like. In a word, his audiences represent the classes that influence public opinion, the kind of person who will shape the thought of the future. Everywhere he is heard with enthusiasm and is invited to return. The doors of a dozen universities are open to him. He returns year after year with his message, which is delivered to an ever-growing number of students.

It is his universal practice to visit the tax office of a town he is about to lecture in, and obtain the exact figures and data bearing upon its taxation,—learning its population, the number of lots, their valuation, etc., so that he can make his talk very concrete and interesting for every local audience. The heart of his message—first, last and always—is that taxation is payment for social service, and that land value is the reflection, and therefore the true measure, of that service.

OUR present land laws cause a greater drag upon trade and are a greater peril to the standard of living than all the tariffs of Germany and America, and even our own colonies. * * * What we believe is that with even a moderate application of the principle of land value taxation something appreciable may be done to lighten the burden of house rent, to diminish the evils of crowding, and to relieve the pressure on manufactures.

SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.