

ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRY

A WORD TO THE INTELLIGENT BUSINESS MAN

By David Gibson

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I am frequently asked my views on the problems which beset the business system, particularly in the light of the present business depression, and which have resolved themselves into social problems with an evil effect upon the whole moral fibre of civilization.

It is not possible to cover the subject completely within the limits of this space; all that I have here attempted is to present a basis of observation and thought, a series of mental cues, to the intelligent business man who has not been a student of political economy, but who thinks in debits and credits as they pertain to his daily material life, and the principle of which will apply perfectly to social order.

For a more detailed pursuit of the subject I will refer the reader to any one or all of the following books: *Progress and Poverty*, by Henry George; *Social Problems*, by Henry George; and *Natural Taxation*, by Thomas G. Shearman.

In the course of his thought-provoking statement, Mr Gibson says:—

I hold that neither labour nor productive capital has received one dollar in economic benefits from labour-saving machinery—that is, if measured in terms of dollars and cents, which is the scale by which we do most of our business measuring. All the economies have been absorbed by a non-productive community charge, which has not yet been seen by those who manage manufacturing plants and stores.

Land values are both directly and indirectly a reflection of the benefits from government!

Price a lot where there are police and fire protection, school facilities and the service facilities of public utilities. Then price a lot where these direct and indirect services of government do not exist, and note the difference in price, and you will understand what I mean.

If taxes are for the purpose of paying for government, then why should they not be assessed upon that which government creates, which is the site or location value of land?

Government has no right to man or labour-created property, because it did not create it; but government has a right to that which it created—the site or location value of land—or at least enough of it to bear the expense of government.

I am not a mystic; for in my life I have had to deal with very practical problems.

But sometimes, amid waking dreams, I cannot help but conceive that possibly this great underlying debit has been providentially concealed from those of us who comprise industry.

I believe that there is a natural law of trade, just as consistent as water seeking its level. If this community or social debit were removed, I believe this law of trade would function freely.

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The above words of wisdom are taken from a Broadsheet issued by a leader of thought in the commercial and municipal life of Ohio. Mr David Gibson was one of our summer visitors this year. He was entertained to luncheon by a small group of friends at the National Liberal Club, 22nd August. There was an interesting three hours' conversation and interchange of opinion. Mr Gibson was named as one of the Guests at our Henry George Dinner this fall, but an extended visit to the Continent interfered with his attendance. We hope to see him here again.

A married woman (states the *Cotton Factory Times*), was disallowed unemployment benefit by a court of referees in the Sowerby Division. She was dumbfounded at first, then exclaimed; "Why is my pay stopped? I voted for the National candidate."

JAMES R. BROWN

A gloom was cast over the Henry George Commemoration Dinner held under the auspices of the United Committee in London, 21st September, by a cable from Miss Kaufmann, Secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, announcing that "James R. Brown, a member of the Foundation, died suddenly last night Tuesday." The company stood in silence as a mark of respect.

As our readers will know, James R. Brown was President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club. He was a well-known lecturer and writer on the Single Tax, especially in its relation to business affairs. His activities in this wide field, which was largely of his own making, as reported in *Land and Freedom*, have made Mr Brown's name, especially in recent years, a household word in the organized Henry George movement everywhere.

He will be missed by all who knew him and laboured with him in his unremitting platform campaigns. His work will endure; his effective service is a bright and glowing chapter in the history of the Henry George movement.

One who knew him intimately has said: "He was a ready and forceful speaker and particularly effective in bringing home to his hearers the destructive economic effects of a system of taxation which hampered commerce so grievously. He was frequently invited to address university and business groups throughout the country, and his passing will be lamented by very many groups both in the United States and in Canada."

One of the officers of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, Mr Otto K. Dorn, writes: "He had truly consecrated his life to the principles expounded by Henry George. He was a dynamo for work, and his one task as he saw it was to advance the cause. He could go before any kind of audience and be perfectly at home regardless of whether it was a labour union, a business men's club, Conservative or Radical, a church, a school, or a pleasure club. In each instance he would make his listeners feel at ease, and then work them up to a state of enthusiasm that was really remarkable. We can hardly hope to replace him for there was but one Jim Brown."

Joseph Dana Miller, in his appreciation in *Land and Freedom*, says: "Even those who differ, as Single Taxers will continue to differ, on the modes of presentation of our philosophy, will on review of his great work give him the meed of praise due to him for the distinguished converts he has made among college professors, economists and business men. It is too early to appraise his work, to the value of which we have received of late many surprising revelations. He was, as we said in a recent number of *Land and Freedom*, perhaps the ablest lecturer the movement has known, and we repeat this, keeping in mind both his limitations and his rare excellences."

"He came to New York in 1886. He knew Henry George and Tom L. Johnson, and nearly all the early leaders of the movement. He was one of the Old Guard and had charge of the Speakers' Bureau in the campaign of Henry George for the mayoralty in 1897. In the Manhattan Single Tax Club he established a headquarters that was the pride of interested visitors from every country in the world. A great leader has fallen."

We can understand something of what our people across the water have suffered in this parting. But what James R. Brown was given to accomplish in the strenuous life he gave so freely to the cause is their inheritance. In the name of all friends and co-workers on this side and of the members of our International Union, we join sincerely in mourning the loss of an outstanding leader in the militant and triumphant campaign for just taxation and equal opportunity.

J. P.

Miss A. Kaufmann, Secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, of date 21st October, writes: "I knew Mr James R. Brown personally, and outside of Foundation activities, for a wonderfully earnest man, with deep convictions, strong qualities, and a remarkable gift for speaking and for friendship. We have lost a good friend as well as a great crusader."