

Dinner to Judge Ralston

ON the evening of April 14, a dinner at the Town Hall in New York was given to Jackson H. Ralston, leader of the Single Tax amendment campaign in California.

There was little time to arrange for a general attendance to do honor to this veteran of the movement since he was on his way to visit Boston, Washington, and other centers, but hasty invitations were issued by an improvised committee of which Charles H. Ingersoll was chairman, and twenty of the local Georgeists gathered.

On motion of Mr. Miller, Mr. James G. Blauvelt of Ridgewood, N. J., was made Chairman. He introduced Judge Ralston, whom all were anxious to hear.

Among those present were Anna George deMille, John Lawrence Monroe, Bolton Hall, Clifford Kendal, Hon. Edward Polak, Whidden Graham, and others.

Judge Ralston prefaced his remarks about the situation in California with a brief description of his earlier activities in the State of Maryland. He said that he and his associates had been responsible for the Maryland constitution being amended so that now, when the people in that state get around to it, there is no constitutional barrier to the enactment of the Single Tax.

The Judge stated that most persons outside the State of California were quite unfamiliar with the real reasons for the defeat of the so-called "Sales Tax Repealer." In order to understand this situation, and to appreciate the future course planned by the Judge and his associates, it must be borne in mind that the California procedure for initiative legislature requires petitions signed by a certain percentage of the voters participating in the previous gubernatorial election. In 1924 the necessary number of signatures were secured—approximately 100,000,—but many signatures were challenged and a sufficient number of unacceptable ones were found to disqualify the petition.

Again in 1936 adequate signatures were secured, and the opposition was unable to disqualify enough of them to cancel the petition. Accordingly resort was had to a very technical provision of the California law. The law requires that each petition must carry on the first page the complete act which is proposed, and a one-hundred word digest of that act, usually issued by the attorney general. Subsequent pages must contain a twenty-word digest prepared by the sponsor of the petition. The opposition proved in court that Judge Ralston and his friends had omitted in this twenty-word digest to state from whence the revenue would be derived to replace the sales tax. It was common knowledge that the revenue would be obtained from land value taxation, but the court disqualified the petition. The Judge said that a bill is now pending in the California legislature which will safeguard future initiators against such tactics.

A fact which will have serious effect on the policies of

the Judge and his associates is, that 1936 was a phenomenal election year, with the gubernatorial vote increasing in proportion to the presidential vote. This will greatly increase the number of signatures which must be secured on the petition in 1938. However, the Judge is optimistic.

Judge Ralston said they have a number of labor papers favorable, together with the labor organizations, and that the socialists were friendly. Judge Ralston said he had talked with the socialists, and that he had said to them, "Go along with us now, and if we cannot always agree on everything, we can settle that later." A paper in San Francisco on which they can rely for friendly comment has on its staff one of the old *New Republic* editors.

The Judge described the difficulties that were encountered in securing such a tremendous volume of signatures, and pointed out how impossible it is to do this work with volunteer help. If it is to be done and done successfully, funds must be raised to carry on the work.

During the last campaign, two friends of the Judge in Washington—one of whom is Congressman Byron N. Scott of Los Angeles, had two documents written into the Congressional Record, and these were franked through the State of California with practically no cost. The opposition accused the Judge and his Committee of many things, but, said the Judge, "Somehow we are not contrite."

Judge Ralston, in his closing remarks, urgently requested that Single Taxers everywhere who are interested in the California situation bear in mind the needs of his Committee, and make such contributions as they can afford.

New York Chapter Henry George Fellowship

ON March 30 the New York Chapter of the Henry George Fellowship held its annual meeting for the purpose of electing officers to fill the vacancies created by the resignations of Arthur H. Vetterman, President, and Will Lissner, Vice President.

Mr. Sidney Tobias, Certified Public Accountant and Treasurer of the Young Men's Board of Trade of New York City, was unanimously elected President. Mr. C. O. Steele and Miss Claudia Pearlman were elected Vice Presidents and Mr. John Munson was re-elected Secretary and Treasurer.

Mr. Arthur H. Vetterman was elected honorary chairman in recognition of his work in behalf of the Fellowship for the past year.

The President and Committee Chairmen are now formulating interesting plans for increasing the activities of the Chapter and enlarging the sphere of its influence. The members of the Fellowship feel that under the able leadership of Mr. Tobias, the New York Chapter of the Henry George Fellowship will be in position to assume an important role in furthering the philosophy of Henry George.