

and held for prospective increment is rarely met with in recent years."

There is much else that is valuable in this important government paper which we wish we could quote from more in detail. But everywhere it bears evidence that the movement for which we are working is steadily nearing its triumph. This report will help our British comrades to show their constituencies that much of their theoretical argument is borne out in practice, the evidence coming now with the weight of government authority.

#### GERMANY.

PROGRESS IN THE EMPIRE—THE GERMAN LEAGUE MEETS AT DÜSSELDORF—THE MAYOR OF ULM MAKES A REPORT THAT AROUSES THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE CONFERENCE.

Since my last report the German League of Land Reformers has held its annual meeting at Düsseldorf, one of the industrial centres of the Rhine district. It was attended by delegates from all parts of Germany and proved a great success, visibly showing the progress our ideas are making throughout the empire. The interest public authorities are taking in our cause was manifested by a generous contribution of the municipality of Düsseldorf towards the expenses of the meeting, as well as by the fact, that the home secretary of the Imperial government sent a representative who welcomed the delegates and expressed his sympathy with our movement. One of the principal features of the congress was the paper read by the Mayor of Ulm, the important old town on the Danube.

Ulm owned a hundred years ago not less than 24,700 acres of common land, but gradually this was disposed of by the shortsightedness of the authorities, till almost twenty years ago another policy was incorporated, inspired by the enlightened man who now reported its results. Common lands that have been sold by the town in 1837 for \$17,000 were bought back some years ago for \$108,000, and even at this figure proved a splendid purchase. Further 1,180 acres were bought consecutively between 1891 and 1906, so that now three-fourths of the whole of the surrounding lands are owned by the community.

The advantages derived from this have been manifold. For one thing the town was enabled to erect workmen's dwellings at moderate expense when ever necessity arose. Important industrial establishments were induced to settle there by cheap offers of building sites, while they were driven away from other towns by speculators who held the grounds for higher rates. And by the well-observed law of ground rents these cheap grants of land meant no loss to the community, for the increase in value caused by these establishments of the surrounding

lands owned by the town, more than compensated for the loss sustained at starting this policy.

Furthermore, the absolute control by the town over its lands has tended to improve the outward appearance of the place. Where land may be bought and sold by private individuals without restriction, it necessarily follows, that a very mixed way of using it predominates. Factories, villas, artisans dwellings, empty sites, uncouth flats follow each other in a hideous mixture, and the common law offers no handle to impede this as everybody can do with his property just what he likes. However, where the land is held by the community, the leases are only granted under such conditions as may serve to safeguard the production of houses within certain limitations prescribed by aesthetical and practical considerations.

Special attention has been given to the encouragement of artisans' dwellings and to checking speculation or rack renting. This has been done by means of a contract, that the land given by the community for this purpose can be reappropriated at the original price whenever the purchasers fail to fulfil the stipulated conditions, *e. g.*, if they are in arrear with their payments for more than six months; if they or their heirs want to sell within 100 years; if they sub-let the houses for more than the highest rates allowed by contract; if they mortgage the property without consent of the authorities; if they don't inhabit the houses themselves; if they fail to contribute to the building fund; if they grossly neglect the property; or if they use the houses for other than dwelling purposes.

By this system speculative profits for private persons in ground values have been practically eliminated, the unearned increment reverting to the community each time such property is sold. The limit of 100 years means practically "for ever," as every house is bound to change hands at least once in that time, and every new contract is again made valid for another 100 years.

At an expense of 750 marks per head, *i. e.*, \$125, comfortable workmen's dwellings have thus been provided for and the Mayor invited anybody to come and see for themselves how clean and airy and spacious these dwellings are and how contented the people who live in them.

Naturally the fact that the community owns such large areas also reacts upon the value of the land still held by private persons. There is no inducement for them to speculate, as people who require a home can get a site at reasonable terms any time they like from the town, and the latter has every facility in creating public squares, playgrounds, parks, family gardens, etc., for the poorer classes at moderate rents.

The Mayor further stated that all such improvements, far from being a weight upon the budget, had materially improved

the public finances, so that provision could be made for the aged city employees, work could be found for the unemployed, free milk could be given to the infants of poor people or such with large families, sanitary and dental supervision of the public schools could be provided for, and everything without any additional burden to the rate payers.

The town also owns the electrical traction service, the electric lighting, gas and water supply, and it is quite superfluous to state that the control of public utilities works most harmoniously and economically together with its control of the land.

The money saved by wisely combining all items necessary for the development of a town in one intelligent centre has been proved to be very considerable.

Naturally this report roused a great deal of interest, the benefit of public ownership being thus clearly demonstrated to all who wish to see.

Ulm had the advantage of a capable, enlightened Mayor for a long period when land still was cheap and at a time when by laying down the old fortification works wide spaces were thrown open for building purposes. Therefore, the same system of purchasing land to such an extent cannot be followed indiscriminately by any other place. In many of our larger towns such policy would lead to increased speculation, enhanced land values and higher rates. They therefore rightly pursue a policy of taxing first and buying afterwards, at least those who have come to understand the question do.

A. POHLMAN.

Potsdam.

We stand committed to democracy, which if it has its dangers and drawbacks, has its promises and rewards. The attempt to feudalize society and mediaevalize thought, as a remedy for social evils, has proved hopeless \* \* \* It is no use attempting to preserve institutions which have their foundations in ideas and ideas no longer alive in the minds of men. The best service we can show to our generation is to hasten the fall of the remnants of a social fabric which is crumbling, that the ground may be sooner clear, and fewer people tempted to rest within its doomed walls.

—*The Speaker*, London.

The Philadelphia *Inquirer* nominates Warren North Bailey, of the Johnstown *Democrat* for President. As a republican paper it says it would oppose his candidacy, but it would like to see the honor of the democratic nomination go to Pennsylvania. It says that "Bailey is as good a thinker as Bryan—a little better." What the *Inquirer* says in good humored fun, will be echoed in all seriousness by thousands who know of the admirable work for true democracy that is being done by the Johnstown *Democrat*.

## COMMUNICATIONS.

### WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD UPON EARTH?

Editor *Single Tax Review* :

I have read with much interest several articles in a recent issue of the *REVIEW*.

The system under which we are living forebodes an important change. Whether the change will be in the line of enlightened progress or a step back towards Feudalism and slavery of the masses to the plutocracy of organized wealth, depends upon the action of the masses of the people themselves, in whom the only real sovereignty rests.

The fundamental doctrines taught in our churches are being questioned on every hand. No system of religious principles is being taught in our public schools, and the Altar in the home has become exceptional.

In the realm of business and industry, the idea appears to be, in the language of Wall street, to get a corner on the economic resources of the world (which were provided for the benefit of humanity) and exploit them for the benefit of the few who are able to get into the combine.

It is evident to the reflecting mind that in the production and development of this world, the Creator has a definite purpose in view, and that man being the highest form of life in the material world, is an important feature in that development.

The writer is preparing for publication a work on this subject from the view-point, "What is the purpose of man's existence upon the earth, and how can that purpose be accomplished?"

The theologians have in metaphysical discussions and otherwise, to a very large extent, substituted the visible church and theology for the simple principles which Jesus teaches to be the rule of conduct which leads to eternal life.

If the matter can be presented in a practical way, so that the people can clearly comprehend the purpose of the Creator, what is the Will of God? and what is expected of man in his life upon earth? the average man will be likely to make an effort in the direction of the accomplishment of that purpose.

R. E. GUNNING.

West Nashville, Tenn.

### FROM JOHN EMMELUTH.

Editor *Single Tax Review* :

It affords me great pleasure to inform you that one of our wealthy young men has intimated his acceptance of the theory of the Single Tax in relation to Homestead holdings and a gradual application of the Land Value Tax to all holdings.

This young man is now on his way to New Zealand and will arrive there about the time this reaches you.