

endum "in the interests of the people" but expecting to use it as an entering wedge to bring to pass their primary purpose, the Singletax and the common ownership of land? . . . I received through the mail a pamphlet styled, "The Joseph Fels Fund of America." The letter of transmittal explains that the pamphlet is issued "to emphasize again the far-reaching nature of the social and economic changes that would flow from the reform first suggested by Henry George more than a quarter of a century ago." The pamphlet explains that the Joseph Fels Fund now aggregates a total of \$250,000. The pamphlet insists that "the Singletax is least of all a taxing measure. This is but incidental though essential to a larger ideal; an ideal as far-reaching in its consequences as Socialism but far simpler in its application." Again, that "many owners will sell their land to be relieved of the burden of taxation." Again, that "land value taxation would socialize from 50 to 75 per cent of the wealth of America." Yet farmers are expected to support the I. and R. and thus aid in "diffusing the ownership of their farms."

That piece of Constitutional convention campaign-literature, with its false appeal to farmers, marks the character of its origin and the impulse of its promoters. An appeal as demagogic as false, it has long been a favorite of Big Business when beguiling innocent voters into standing between Big Business and political hell-fire "to keep off the heft of the heat." But it has begun to lose its force, and we need give its merits no attention here.

As to the appeal to the people of Ohio to kill the Initiative and Referendum so as to prevent the possibility of their utilizing it to adopt the Singletax, no other reply is necessary than that the people cannot use the Initiative and Referendum for that purpose or any other until they wish to; and when they do wish to, they ought not to be legislatively shackled and politically hamstrung.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

GERMAN LAND REFORMERS.

Dresden, June 8.

The annual meeting of the League of German Bodenreformers took place at Dresden during the Whit-sun holidays from 4th to 7th of June. Friends of the Henry George movement gathered, not only from all parts of Germany, north and south, east and west, but also from Austria, from Russia, from Australia, and from Canada. One of the features of the gathering was the presence of Mr. Joseph Fels, who was elected a member of the committee at its first session and who announced his purpose to continue his subscription to the League and to raise it in conformity with the subscriptions raised by the members themselves.

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On June 3, before the actual work of the meeting began, one of the most strenuous supporters of the League, Mr. von Schwerin, arranged a reception at

his house. After a *conversazione*, a kind of prelude to the sittings of the following days, he and his accomplished wife, amongst whose ancestors rank Moses Mendelssohn, the philosopher, and Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, the composer, presided at a dinner of about 80 invited guests, a most representative company of all classes including the Mayor of Dresden and an admiral of the fleet as well as a variety of Singletax men.

Mr. A. Damaschke delivered an address on this occasion on the question: "What are the social duties of our upper classes?" He recalled the times when the courtiers around Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette felt bored by the demands of the Physiocrats, Turgot's "impot unique," and ridiculed their warnings. The evil sores on the public body that originated from misusing land, "the original inheritance of the whole species," they thought to cure by laying on the perfumed rouge of charity. He then dealt with the social abuses in this country in connection with the unjust distribution of wealth. He gave statistics as to the number of married women working in mills and factories, statistics as to human dwellings where one room has to suffice for five—men, women and children,—statistics as to criminal offenses and corporeal diseases. Could these evils be removed by charity? Was there no other way that led out of this misery? Lassalle had not detected it. Quite unjustly he arraigned the employer, and expected everything from advanced wages and pecuniary assistance; he did not recognize the fact that advanced wages will be absorbed by an increase of rent. We had still to learn the truth as proclaimed by Henry George, that Bodenreform is at the bottom of every other reform. Ground rent belongs to the community and should return to it, not to a few speculators nor to those who regard land as something created by men.

After Mr. Damaschke had finished, Mr. von Schwerin while thanking the speaker, added a few instructive remarks on the Physiocrats, Henry George, and the Singletax.

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This annual meeting bore quite a different character from that of the preceding year. While at Gotha the league was in the greatest of suspense and full of excitement, taking on rather an aspect of political demonstration and fighting as it were for a government bill that recognized for the first time (in however small degree) Singletax ideas, at Dresden there was the chance of sowing much new seed that in time will bear fruit. In Gotha nearly all the hours were devoted to addresses and debates; in Dresden social entertainments relieved the work performed at committee and public meetings.

The sittings were held in the public hall of the hygienic exhibition. Besides the public dinners which form a regular part of such meetings a steamboat trip had been arranged by the local committees up the Elbe and no one who spent the afternoon amongst those lovely surroundings will ever forget its glory. On another day experts were invited to show the members around the exhibition; and a morning was devoted to a visit to a garden city near Dresden.

While entertainments formed a prominent part of the meeting, attention was directed to what had been attained by the League during the past and what it

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was aiming at in the future. In his general report Mr. Damaschke stated that receipts and expenditures of 1910 had risen to 54,000 marks including a special agitation fund of about 9,000 marks and a balance from 1909 of 4,000 marks. Membership had increased by 900. Of public bodies and professional associations but 583 joined the league. These organizations represented about 800,000 men altogether; 450 lecture nights on Bodenreform subjects were held during the time under survey, all over the country; the work of training young men and women of all professions was continued during the winter by the committee at Berlin at a University class room specially put at its disposal; other nights were arranged with University students at their request with addresses and discussions on Singletax questions.

Classes held during the Easter holidays at Berlin were a new feature of last year; lectures were delivered by prominent men of science and political experience, more than 300 students of all parts of the Empire taking part and 101 enlisting as new members of the League. These classes will be enlarged in future.

As to the literature issued by the League there may be mentioned two pamphlets, one on Civic Education and Bodenreform, the other on Women and Bodenreform; 600,000 leaflets were distributed at about 900 meetings and sent to various societies and associations. The Jahrbuch of the Bodenreform maintains its place of high literary standing. Our periodical, "Bodenreform," is published twice a month giving editorial articles on the land question and news of the movement at home and abroad.

In indicating the future policy of the League, Mr. Damaschke spoke of taxation of land on its site value first of all in the Colonies on the basis of the Kiaochow system, but not the less in the whole Empire. The principal step was to be valuation of land. It was hardly imaginable that up to the present no statistics were available as to the wealth of our nation represented by the most precious and by the most indispensable of all necessities—land. The proportionate payments made annually by the States to the expenses of the Empire ought to be levied on the ratio of land values instead of on the number of inhabitants. Since a poll-tax is regarded as preposterous in countries like Turkey and China, it ought to be utterly intolerable in a civilized country like Germany. Taxation of land values ought to be based on self-assessment; any expropriation of land to be converted into public use ought to follow the same lines; it was a plain fact that laws of expropriation in their existing form were far from safeguarding public interests.

The principal subjects discussed at the meetings were in connection with addresses delivered by Dr. Slegert of Cologne on the housing question in its bearings upon provision for infants; by Prof. Oertmann of Erlangen on reform of the laws of expropriation; by the Mayors of Bensheim and Langenfeld on the relation of Bodenreform to small towns, and by Mr. Sembritzki, town councillor of Königsberg, on a tax on land values and its practical application. The main interest was evoked by Prof. Oertmann's lucid and masterly exposition of the present laws of expropriation and their many shortcomings from the point of view of Bodenreform.

The first night Mr. Fels reported to the committee on the work performed by our friends in Canada, Denmark, Australia, England, Sweden and other countries and paid a tribute to Henry George whose books had been translated in all languages of the civilized world. At the formal opening meeting he spoke of being a reformed monopolist and gave illustrations of the advancement of the cause he had noticed on his travels. Above all he quoted the example of Vancouver, where the Singletax in its purest form, though moderate in degree, had taken effect. At the dinner in the exhibition hall he told how he had been converted to Henry George's principles, and pointed to the future when—he hoped in 20 years' time—every monopoly would be regarded not only as obnoxious but also as dishonest.

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That everything went off so well is due in no small measure to Mr. von Schwerin, the president of the Saxony branch, and his local committee.

W. SCHRAMEIER.

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DEMOCRATIC REORGANIZATION IN PENNSYLVANIA.*

Pittsburgh, July 23.

The reorganization movement of the Democratic party in Pennsylvania, which was begun last March, culminated in a complete victory last week at the meeting of the Democratic State Central Committee in Harrisburg.

When the reorganization of the party began, the "old guard" controlled 41 members of the Committee and the reorganizers 42. With this majority of one, A. G. Dewalt was deposed as State chairman, and G. W. Guthrie, ex-mayor of Pittsburgh, was elected to fill his place. But so fast has the progressive movement in this State been advancing since, that the reorganizers were able to increase their followers to 56 last week, whereas the "old guard" could gather only 27.

Dewalt, who refused to abide by the decision of the committee last March, although he participated and voted in every action, called these 27 members together in the Casino Theatre for a rump convention, which elected Walter E. Ritter of Lycoming, chairman. At the meeting of the progressives in the Board of Trade Building, G. W. Guthrie was re-elected chairman, and Congressman A. Mitchell Palmer was chosen national committeeman.

The "old guard," which had realized its defeat for weeks, ardently sought a compromise; but the progressives ignored every proposition. This steadfastness of the reorganizers brought forth the bitterest invective from the Brennans of Pittsburgh, and the Ryans and Donnellys of Philadelphia. Their denunciations, however, had lost their old time effect. They had played the role of Penrose assistants too long. At last they were found out.

Then they resorted to all the tricks of the political game. The card with which they hoped to win back a few was their endorsement of Woodrow Wilson for President. Relying on the popularity of this champion of the people among the Democrats of

*See The Public, current volume, page 581.