

must have been that work, yet we were loath to give full credence to a statement nowhere else mentioned, so far as we knew. None the less, we gave ourselves the thrill of sitting in the arm-chair, trying to reproduce within ourselves the urge which permeated that great philosopher and friend of mankind.

What a setting for contemplation and introspection! The beautiful sunlight, the clear atmosphere, the balmy air, the fertile valley spread out below, then probably, as now, partially withheld from productive use by speculative landlords! An ideal spot for the evolution of a programme calculated to free the human race from bondage.

Subsequent search in Watsonville for corroboration led us at length to Mr. Joseph G. Piratsky, long-time editor of the *Evening Pajaronian*. Without hesitation he informed us that Judge Gaffey, for years his close friend, had told him "more than a hundred times" that Henry George did most of the writing of "Progress and Poverty" at his ranch. Two considerations brought him there. The friendly entertainment, in a period of financial stringency, was extremely helpful, while the peaceful surroundings were conducive to undisturbed study. Moreover, Henry George found in Judge Gaffey's humorous conversation a delightful foil in moments of relaxation.

It seems particularly opportune that, just at this time, when interest is being aroused for the collection of Henry George memorabilia, this apparently well-authenticated but hitherto unrecorded chapter in his life should be added to the list.—GEORGE H. DUNCAN.

State Housing

I READ the editorial in a recent number of *Labor* on the housing bill signed by Governor Smith of New York. In the editorial it said:

"So far as *Labor* is aware, this is the first public housing effort in America. On the other side such efforts are common."

It is true that on the "other side" efforts at public housing are common, and, you could have added, futile. I speak with knowledge gained on the spot and from literature constantly received from the "other side." Reports of royal commissions uniformly testify to the failure of such housing schemes to aid the workers.

But suppose you did succeed in *building down to the poverty line*. Is that a commendable thing? Instead of trying to construct houses for the poor, why have poor people? Let them earn good wages, that is *real* wages, and they will be able to pay the rent of a good home.

ABOLISH PRIVILEGE

A consequence of poverty is inability to pay rent, hence the poor must live in hovels. But shall we seek to abolish this one, among many consequences of poverty?

Why not abolish the cause of poverty, that is privilege? I have a great amount of literature and data on this subject, but I know you are a busy man, you are getting out a fine paper, and so I will content myself with sending one little folder gotten out by the Single Taxers of Manchester, England.

Housing schemes like that of Governor Smith are more than cruel deceptions, they are positively reactionary, in what our Socialist friends call the capitalist state. In a cooperative commonwealth it would be quite proper to build houses through "public" effort.

ALFRED HENDERSON in *Labor*, Washington, D.C.

The Inalienable Right to Work

PRESUMABLY representing the views of the British Government, of which he is a conspicuous member, Sir William Joynson-Hicks has announced the policy that should be adopted if the coal mine operators decide to resume work without coming to an agreement with the mine workers' union. In that event, he recently declared: "If any man chooses to go back to his work as soon as the mines are open, it will be our duty to give him the inalienable right to work if he so desires."

In thus setting forth clearly the fundamental truth that men willing to work should be protected in their right to labor, the spokesman for the British Government has enunciated an important truth. It is, however, only a half truth, unless along with it there is given the further assurance that the opportunity to work will be afforded, in so far as the powers of government can be extended for that purpose. It is manifestly reasonable and just that men willing to dig coal should be protected against intimidation or violence.

There remains the other, and equally important, truth that since men have the "inalienable right to work" governments should be equally zealous in protecting that right when it is denied by conditions other than those created by a strike.

Take the case of an idle miner seeking employment, who travels from one colliery to another, but finds no one to hire him. Suppose that he decides to co-operate with some of his fellows and dig coal. There are great seams of coal underground awaiting the miner's pick, but these deposits are all "owned," and cannot be touched without the consent of the "owners." To tell a man that he has the right to work, while conditions deprive him of the opportunity to labor, would appear to be similar to putting him overboard in midocean and telling him that he has the right to walk ashore. The inalienable right to work must imply conditions under which employment of some kind, not necessarily at coal mining, is open to all. To provide these conditions is the prime requisite for the solution of what is popularly termed "the labor problem."

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