

there is no reason why confidence in the general sanity and fair-mindedness of the people, which is the essence of democracy, should fail with respect to judges.

When fairly looked at it seems that this fear of impulsive action is mainly a left-over product of oppressive and repressive government.

It ignores every-day proofs of the natural conservatism of really self-governing people. It tends to hide the real danger to democracy of giving irresponsible power to any class of men.

A "Judge Jeffreys" impressively shows that judicial office does not sanctify the incumbent, and that democracy cannot safely make judges responsible to any power other than the people. Surely a good judge has no special reason to fear the people, or to demand insurance against their possible mistakes.

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W. G. STEWART.

AN OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR WILSON.

I want to express my appreciation of the advanced position you have taken with reference to legislation that will extend the power of the people. You seem never to have come under the influence of the fear of mob rule and ill advised decisions which animate the disciples of Hamilton.

Without considering the right of the people to rule their own affairs, it is plain that they constitute the most conservative force in the nation. From the very nature of the situation, in the aggregate they approach questions without motives of narrow personal selfishness; and when this factor is eliminated it is characteristic of human nature to act from principles of justice.

In the course of events in England, in New Zealand, in Oregon and elsewhere, when the people have a chance to express themselves authoritatively by means of the ballot, it is amazing to observe their conservatism. As a rule a measure that is not fully understood is lost, and the people seem willing to suffer the evils that they have unless it can be shown unmistakably that remedial measures will come up to the specifications of their proponents.

If this be true, then both principle and expediency call for an adjustment of our institutions that will give all power to the people. Even their mistakes will be valuable educationally, especially since such mistakes will not be motivated by personal selfishness.

I feel sure, for instance, that if the judiciary were subject to recall, no majority would ever recall a judge unless his course was plainly and unmis-

takably contrary to the spirit and genius of our people. And any judge who permitted his decisions to be biased by fear of the recall would be at least no worse than the hordes of present day judges who are influenced either by the wishes of their political creators or by those more subtle influences of habit and association which are crudely expressed by the word Caste.

The judiciary is the last refuge of privilege and aristocracy. The Recall is a sure means for eliminating them from the common life.

Of course all this is for the future, but as one of your political followers, I think I voice the sentiment of large numbers when I express the hope that your vision of democracy may have no Hamiltonian alloy, and also when I express the belief that the day has passed when a leader of the people can fail to see that what is basic in principle must be expedient.

GEORGE A. BRIGGS.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

THE SINGLETAX IN VANCOUVER.

Vancouver, B. C., June 21, 1911.

Twenty-five years ago the site of Vancouver was a dense forest, although a small village had sprung up along the banks of Burrard Inlet. It is estimated, however, that at that time the entire population in the neighborhood did not exceed a thousand persons. On a Sunday afternoon in June, 1886, this village was almost destroyed by fire, only a few houses somewhat isolated escaping. But the territory of what will be Greater Vancouver in the near future, has today a population of 140,000 to 150,000 and is growing at a rapid pace.

Vancouver has become famous for totally exempting buildings and other improvements from taxation, and from consequently levying taxes on land values alone is called a Singletax city. Since the experiment began, land values have jumped tremendously and many fortunes have been made out of speculation in building sites. Every step towards the reduction of taxation on buildings has given added impetus to the value of land. Some correspondents of The Public have consequently expressed apprehension that low rates of land value taxation and undervaluations would result disastrously to Vancouver through further speculation in land values followed by a crash; and that as the city is represented as a Singletax municipality this disaster might give a back-set to the Singletax movement unless it were generally understood that the disaster was due not to the Singletax but to not enough of the Singletax.

These fears caused the publisher of The Single Tax Review of New York to commission me to make a thorough investigation, so that the Review could place before its readers definite information to guide them in forming conclusions. I came here with many misgivings, and my first fortnight of investigation