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House of Representatives,

Committee on

Expenditures in the Interior Department,

Washington, D. C.

July 25, 1911.

Mr. A. C. Pleydell,
 29 Broadway, New York City.

My dear Mr. Pleydell:

Public business has prevented earlier reply to your letter of the 17th -- your second on the Fels Fund Commission matter.

You again argue that the private letters from which you quoted had become public by wide circulation. I cannot agree with you. They were privately written and were quite privately circulated. Your insistant quoting from these as proof that the Fels Fund Commission is publicly attacking you make you yourself appear to be seeking ground for attacking the Fels Fund Commission.

In this second letter is a passage that calls for special remark. You say: "These attacks upon Mr. Purdy and upon me have not been based upon anything which we have done in connection with the movement which you represent, but are due entirely to our opposition to municipal ownership, to the initiative and referendum, and to the profitable contracts which Mr. E. W. Doty sought to make with Ohio Cities last year".

I don't know anything about the profitable contracts you speak of, unless they relate to the Somers appraisal system for ascertaining the value of land in municipalities with a view to its taxation. In that case the end seems good, and surely "the laborer is worthy of his hire".

But be this as it may, how is it that the movement which you say I represent--- by which you doubtless mean the single tax--- has nothing to do with municipal ownership or the initiative and referendum? Where do you find authority for this statement? Certainly not from anything I have ever written or spoken. On the contrary I have always contended that the initiative and referendum were means to obtain the single tax. I have also always contended that municipal ownership was of the essence of the single tax philosophy, and I believe that in making the long struggle for the latter in Cleveland against such terrible odds, Tom L. Johnson sacrificed his life to our cause.

If you oppose these principles and obstruct their application you must expect to provoke the hostility of the great body of single taxers. But this I need scarcely tell you after all these years.

You also press me to make a defense of Mr. Purdy. His character needs no defense in my eyes.

Yours very truly,

Henry George