

# IF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WOULD HAVE FREE GOVERNMENT ENDURE.

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## I. REFORM OF THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES.

1. If the American people would have free government endure, they should attend to its administration as to any other matter of business. They should rid themselves of the notion that the Government will maintain and perpetuate itself. They should give up the wonderful delusion that the business of a public office can be properly transacted, and its duties well discharged, by an occupant who has not had any special training or experience to fit him therefor. Such qualifications as are deemed indispensable for every business position, should be demanded for every official station.

2. If the American people would have free government endure, they should give honest pay for honest labor; and command the best service of the ablest men, by showing an appreciation of great abilities and attainments, and a willingness to bestow a proper reward for the earnest devotion of such endowments to the welfare of the country.

Men who in the most honorable departments of business or professional life can command fame, fortune, and peace, will not "scheme for office, work for nothing, board themselves, and pay for the privilege," for any empty honors or incidental pecuniary advantages. Neither will able men, with rare exceptions, be willing to give the strength of their best years to the public service for salaries which barely cover their current expenses, and leave them at length to an old age of poverty, humiliation, and distress, unless they can manage while in the public service to accumulate a private fortune. Either increased compensation during official terms, or

longer terms, and civil service pensions thereafter, have become a necessity.

The true remedy is to permanently establish the Civil Service Pension for all important public servants who shall have rendered faithful service for a specified term, or who shall have conferred some extraordinary benefit on the people by an especial effort in their behalf. The principle of the military pension should be extended to the civil service, for a self-governed State or nation should always offer the strongest incentives to serve its interests in preference to those of any private business.

The corrupt and scheming adventurer asks no such inducement. To him salary or pension is of little moment. He expects to take his own rewards, whether the people approve or not. But to the upright and honorable soul, moved by an earnest desire to win distinction by worthy deeds, the assurance that those he serves will be just to him in age or infirmity would be a perpetual fountain of strength and courage.

The principle of the Civil Service Pension should be declared and established. It should be made the duty of the president of the United States, from time to time, to nominate, and by and with the advice and consent of the Senate to appoint and commission persons to be members of a body which shall be known as "The Civil Service List of the United States of America," and in and by such nomination, appointment, and commission, to grant to the person so appointed a certain annual pension, to be specified therein, and which shall thereafter be paid, in quarter-annual installments, during the life of such person.

Such appointments should be made and pensions granted for a long continued and faithful public service, or for any extraordinary act of heroism, or for any conspicuous achievement, in any department of life wherefrom great benefits shall have resulted or will result to the people. The amount of the pension should be fixed with reference to the nature and value of the service rendered. In case of the death of the person by whom the service was rendered, the pension might be either granted or transferred to the family of such person, or to any member thereof, at the discretion of the president.

Some such measure is indispensable to the security of our system of free government. For if the influences now so potent should go on unchecked, it will become more and more difficult for those whose service would be most valuable to the people to obtain and hold positions in which they can efficiently render it ;

and so more and more will public offices be debased to the service of private and personal purposes and interests, threatening the final subversion of free institutions.

The prosperity and the power of Great Britain and Germany are due even more to the just rewards and honors of their civil service than to those of their army and navy. Without their statesmen, their soldiers and marines would have no mighty interests to uphold. Their civil pension list is the roll of an intellectual army unsurpassed, if ever equalled, in the history of the world. And one of its glories is the fact that it is not confined to public officers, but extends to all departments of civil life. One may make his country his debtor by a great achievement in science, literature, art, discovery or invention, quite as well as in war, diplomacy or legislation. But, manifestly, such a policy is even more important to America than to England or to Germany. It is the true safeguard of the purity and integrity of free government.

3. If the American people would have free government endure, they should adopt a permanent policy of true economy. The shameful custom of cutting down, for political effect, the pay of honest and faithful public servants below the measure of fair compensation, while millions on millions of the public funds and property are granted to powerful combinations, or wasted in jobs to secure or reward political support, must be abandoned. The economy demanded is the economy of honest, faithful, and competent administration; not the false economy of unqualified, half-paid workmen, incensed at the injustice of their employers, and goaded by debts and hunger to the desperate conclusion that it is "better to steal than to starve."

4. If the American people would have free government endure, they should cease to give their support to the fawning demagogues who seek official power by the arts which honest men despise, and to which men of self-respect will not descend. Great leaders command support by their superior qualities, not by flattery and liberal contributions for party purposes. "Like master like man," is a true maxim. If the people would have noble, honest, and trustworthy public servants, they must be noble, honest, and trustworthy themselves.

## II. REFORM OF THE PUBLIC SERVANTS.

1. If the public servants would have enduring honors and adequate rewards, they should earn them and be worthy of them. They should show a sincere desire to promote the general welfare.

They should prefer the public good to party advancement. They should scorn flattery and tell the truth to their constituents. They should appreciate the merits, and shun the vices of all classes. They should seek their own advancement only by the promotion of the general good, not by a sacrifice of public interests, or the undue advancement of personal concerns.

2. If the public servants would have enduring honors and adequate rewards, they should show practical results as the fruits of their service. The nature of the public service requires perpetual improvement and advance. The country has not yet passed the period of experiment in the best methods of performing the public work, and hence every office-holder should be in the endeavor to improve upon, or to perfect, the methods of his predecessor, and should from time to time afford some evidence of such endeavor.

3. In times of great public peril, those who see what the emergency demands should not stand too much on ceremony, or wait too long for the proper call to action. A good swimmer and brave man does not wait for the formality of an introduction when a fellow-man is drowning. In such cases, prompt and bold action in the right direction is the highest virtue; and it is a greater virtue to risk property, person, or life, in the service of the community, than for the rescue of a single imperiled fellow-being.

4. The public servants should realise the great perils of public service, and understand that nothing less than eternal vigilance is the price of perfect personal integrity in the midst of the bewildering temptations of official life. They should learn by study and observation, not through their own bitter experience, that many an unfortunate office-holder who entered public life without a thought or purpose of any dishonorable act, has suddenly awakened, as from a seductive dream, to find himself in the hands of banditti, and driven to purchase the means of existence by joining an association for public plunder. The field of battle is not more deadly to human life, than is the field of politics to personal independence and uprightness; and to face the perils of the latter requires the highest order of moral courage.

No leader ever commanded the respect of others who did not enjoy his own. The man who would have others believe in him, must believe in himself. The people naturally love and admire what is, or appears to be, superior to themselves. No soldier ever willingly followed a commander whose courage, skill, and knowledge he thought inferior to his own.

## III. REFORM IN ELECTIONS.

1. The "rant and fustian" of "universal" suffrage, and almost universal elections, must give way to a system of common sense. The infant has not the capacity to participate in the government; the vagrant has no right to take part in that to which he contributes no support; and the inexperienced alien has neither the knowledge nor the interest requisite for such participation. There should be, therefore, no such thing as "universal" suffrage.

The family is the unit of the State, and the heads of families constitute the natural governing body. In a free government, the qualification of some education should be added. The idea of a family involves some estate for their support, and in this country some education of the children. Hence, as it is easier to go forward than to go back, the suffrage had better be extended than restricted, so as to allow one vote to every citizen for the protection of the rights of person, another vote to married men for their interest in the welfare of families, and a third vote to taxpayers as a just equivalent for their contributions to the public funds.