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39 Wilson street

London EC

28th July 1911

Mr. A C. Pleydell  
29 Broadway  
New York U S A

Dear Mr Pleydell

Just when yours of the 1st inst, with enclosure, came, I was getting ready to go to Denmark and Sweden for nearly a month's solid Single Tax work. I have just come back. I am ashamed not to have acknowledged your letter before.

I may, <sup>have</sup> as you say, "seemed" to think that your various criticisms re the Joseph Fels Fund Commission showed feeling against me, but there was nothing definite in my mind; and I took your explanations at their full face value.

I'd call your attention to the fact that, at that time, and on every occasion when the Commission has been criticised by you or anybody else, I have declined to take responsibility, because I do not run the Commission. I am only one of many who may criticise it, if they feel like it; but, as I told you at the time, having had enough confidence in these men to let them handle some of my ill-gotten gains, I would not hamper them by Star Chamber proceedings, such as I have noted, from time to time, so many people are prone to put into operation. There are other Fels Fund Commissions, my dear Mr. Pleydell, than those in the United States. There is one in Canada east; another in Canada west; others in Denmark, Sweden, Great Britain, France, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand. In the majority of these countries there have been rows amongst the Single Taxers, the more or less immediate cause being the Fels Fund, and, in many instances, because it could not employ and pay salaries to some people, or could not consult other people for one reason or another, or did not consult still other people because it would have been no use.

I have kept away from mixing myself up with these rows, because I want to sleep solid at nights and want to throw the responsibility on the fellows who are making the mistakes. Yet, oddly enough, I have in no country, so far, been called upon by the facts to make any serious criticisms or any changes in the personelle of those whom I have, after due deliberation, decided to trust.

I should be very sorry indeed if, as you intimate, the Fels Fund Commission has interfered with the work you have in hand, which you tell me had considerable success, that of gradually improving the tax laws of New York and other states. Having no record of such interference, of course I cannot defend or cuss out the Fels Fund Commission.

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As, however, you make a direct charge - that Louis F. Post, through "The Public" has attacked men with whom you are associated - intimating that Post's course is unwarranted by the facts, I am bound to agree with Post, even before I get his explanation and even without proof as to the honesty of the gentlemen you mention as being attacked. I believe in Post, just as much as I did, and do now, in Henry George and I'd have to have a pretty clear-cut proof that he is wrong before I'd even ask him to explain.

You send me an extract of letters from Doctor Eggleston and Daniel Kiefer referring to Mr Purdy and Mr. Foote. So far as I know, these are the self-expressed individual opinions of Eggleston and Kiefer who are, both of them, men able to take care of themselves and responsible for any damage they may wantonly do. I have never met Mr. Foote, but I have a very lively recollection of what a few big public men have told me, in times gone by, of the business in which Mr. Foote was engaged. Of course, if this is Mr. Foote's way of serving his country, why - its his own funeral and not mine, nor Kiefer's nor Purdy's, nor Eggleston's. I would not interfere with Mr. Foote any more than I would with Teddy Roosevelt, or any other sure-footed gentleman who knew he was right.

Now, I would call your attention to an interview that C. H. Ingersoll and I had with Mr. Purdy. Both my statement and that of Ingersoll were taken down by Mr Hall's stenographer. Mr. Ingersoll's statement came to life on the typewritten page. My statement was still-born; at any rate, I have no record or recollection of Hall's typewriter ever having told it to a waiting and anxious world! Maybe, you will ask Hall, or petition the girl, or apply to the typewriter!

My dear A. C. Pleydell, for the sake of decency in this world, and peace of mind in the next, teach me to keep cool.

Still your friend,

Very truly

Joseph Fels