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EDITORIAL

THAT'S JUST IT, YOUR HONOR.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ADDRESSING a number of societies in Milwaukee on the morning of the 21st of last month, David J. Brewer, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, took Congress severely to task for its proposition to tax incomes.

His honor did not criticise the proposition on the ground that it is a clumsy way, aye, a quack way, of meeting the distemper which prompted the prescription. Had His Honor done so, He would have deserved applause. If it is realized that these fortunes are ulcers, then, the way to tackle the evil is to tackle it organically. A system of taxation, whether petty or large, is, under existing conditions, no better than was the Mosaic system of recurring jubilees, when re-distribution was to remove concentrations of wealth and restore equilibrium. But His Honor did not find fault with the proposition on that score.

On what score did He then attack the proposition?

Let the following paragraph from the great speech answer the question:

“When George Washington in his farewell address cautioned this nation against going into needless debt, and when he advised that whenever it should become necessary, by reason of wars, to pay as promptly as possible, not casting an unjust burden upon posterity, I believe he stated a political and philosophical truth which ought never to be ignored.”

That's just it, Your Honor! That's just what Congress says it wants to do—pay up “as promptly as possible,” and not “cast an unjust burden upon posterity.”

What Congress claims is its object, but will never accomplish, Socialism will, because only Socialism proposes to use the power of taxation in such manner as wholly to remove the burden from all posterities.

Again in the language of His Honor, used in the Milwaukee speech:

“The power to tax, as John Marshall said, is the power to destroy.”

Socialism proposes to destroy capitalist usurpation—That's just it, Your Honor!

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