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"If the People Rule Why Don't They Get What They Want?"

Isaac Rimel, Wichita, Kan.—One of the great causes that prevent the people getting what they want is found in the halls of congress. Some eighteen or twenty years ago under the speakership of Mr. Reed the rules adopted destroyed popular government in the house of representatives. From that day to this we have been under the most despotic and tyrannical rulings of a tyrant speaker of the house that any government was ever cursed with, and for the last seven years the power of the speaker has been increased until he became dictator, and the people's representatives had little to say or to what should be enacted into law. Until the people throw this Caesarism overboard and restore and make the house the popular branch of government again then, and only then, can they think of getting what they want. Then with the initiative and referendum and recall they will be able to get the greatest good to all and special favors to none. Then we will have democratic government in truth and not a mere sham.

G. Soule, Los Angeles, Cal.—The reason the people do not rule, therefore do not get what they want, is due to their own inactivity. I am more grateful to you than I am able to express, for the invitation you have offered me to co-operate with you in the matter of obtaining candidates who stand for the people, instead of special interests, and I more than appreciate the good work of The Commoner in championing this cause. I assure you that I am with you and trust that the democrats of the next congress and senate will be found loyally standing on the platform. I am an ardent follower and admirer of W. J. Bryan, who has and is still doing so much for the people's cause. I class him as man's greatest disciple, the champion of champions, and I am not the only democrat and am safe to say republican who class him as such.

F. W. Moore, Brooklyn, N. Y.—Abraham Lincoln, in his first inaugural address, said: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not mine, is the momentous issue of civil war." When it is remembered that Lincoln would be dictator in case of war, that he had already been elected by the votes of the people, and therefore he was already their ruler, it is very clear that he considered the people to be the real rulers, and that he expected dictation from them. This is an example from the very best of leaders or rulers. Napoleon, whom many regard as the very worst of rulers, said: "I have always marched with the opinion of great masses and with events." Here again it is perfectly evident that Napoleon regarded the people as the real rulers. The mere fact that people don't get what they want is no proof that they do not rule. People are imperfect; why should they expect perfection in government? Every man would like a competency for himself, but how miserably he often goes about obtaining it. Many people are ignorant, and it is natural that their ignorance should find expression in government. It requires leisure, intelligence and considerable mental training to understand how the individual is positively affected by governmental regulations, methods and laws. Under these circumstances, people may, and often do, vote for their worst enemies, and it is more than probable that these worst enemies are often unaware of the fact that they are

the people's enemies. As a nation our intelligence upon these problems is swiftly advancing. This fact is typified by The Commoner in its advocacy of the initiative, referendum and recall. Some four billion newspapers circulate per year carrying a vast amount of intelligence along these lines. Illustrations of a peaceful political revolution such as that of Los Angeles (the recall of the mayor), and the recent change of front in Denver, are signs of a growing intelligence among the people, and with this greater intelligence must come that intelligent instead of ignorant rulership of the people by which the millionaires' power in legislation becomes less, and a just apprehension of the needs of the people becomes the paramount consideration of government.

Harry A. Mumper, Mechanicsburg, Pa.—Probably there is no reason so potent why the people do not get what they want as the very evident reason that they do not try to realize that idea of government which is the implantation of our conceptions of liberty and duty. The true man has always found that the first principle of duty is the satisfaction of the will with regard to that duty; and that he who wills the duty and fails of fulfilling that will is lacking in what is commonly termed moral courage. I believe this is acknowledged as to the individual; how is it as to the commonwealth? We as a people, might fairly regard ourselves in the mass as a fellow world (to paraphrase Hugo Munsterberg); and while it is true that the fellow world is not the same as the inner consciousness, yet it is true that the principles and values applicable to one apply with no less force to the other, else it would cease to be fellow-world and fellowship would be lost in a mass of animal-like momentary sensations, without value. And the principle might be extended to include the question at issue upon both its sides. First, "If the people rule," it must be evident that the rule they bear can be no other than the agreement which they reach among themselves in the realm of our unquestioned freedom, and that the limits of the possibility for good under such rule are boundless, while the limitations placed upon their freedom by the people themselves are only such as their agreement validates. Therefore, it stands to reason that if the people have failed of attaining what they would the cause lies in the lack of agreement amongst themselves upon principles valid for all men and for all time, and the satisfaction of a definite will which is the realization of the idea of the good, the beautiful, the true, the absolute; limited only by the modes prescribed by our constitution and the negative principle therein prescribed of the nullity of religious controversy. It is barely possible that some greater principle will be enunciated by our generation and the generations to follow, as, for instance, the nullifying of financial controversy as condition of growth and achievement; but it is certain that all true growth and becoming find their truest and best and sole value in the conscious effort of men unto the performance of a realized ideal, and this is true regardless of the modes or forms of government under which the effort is put forth; and the worthlessness of their forms and modes, if confused as ends, is as true today as it was in the days of Israel's backsliding. The world is a deed; it never has been and can not