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## THE RIGHT OF PETITION.

SOME of the arbitrary positions taken by the City Council are contemptuous and tyrannical. These tendencies are exhibited to a greater or less extent at nearly every session of that body. In some instances the right to petition is practically extinguished. The right to set forth reasons and grievances is recognized by every civilized government, and is guaranteed by the Constitution in this Republic. It ought not to be abridged with impunity.

This disagreeable feature of the present administration of the city government cropped out no longer ago than Tuesday, June 17th. As an instance, a protest was introduced, signed by between sixty and seventy residents around the locality where the Fifth Ward meeting-house is situated. The document was in opposition to the Rapid Transit Company being permitted to construct a switch in front of and in close proximity to the building named. The protest was never read in the Council, but, like rejected manuscript in a newspaper office, it was filed without reading, a motion to that effect prevailing without a dissent. A protest against the extension of water mains was similarly treated.

No matter what may be the subject of a petition or the attitude assumed by the petitioners, the latter are, in a civilized government, entitled to a hearing. This has been, to all intents and purposes, in a number of instances, denied by the present City Council, and such an exhibition of contempt for popular rights is, we contend, tyrannical.

This summary and undemocratic manner of doing public business should cease. If not, those who are thus insultingly treated ought to insist on being heard.

Such a course as that complained of exhibits plainly that the Council, on some subjects, are unwilling to listen to any additional reasons that may exist concerning them. The cavalier treatment of popular ex-

pressions referred to is not excusable on the ground that the matter involved had previously been referred to a committee which had already prepared a report upon it. For aught the Council or committee may have known the document may have given good ground for a reconsideration of the report, unless sound reason is not to be the basis of the transactions of those entrusted with the performance of the public business of this community.

The Council should act in the capacity of servants and not in that of masters or lords of the people. They should be careful to preserve and not invade and destroy the right of petition.

## PRONOUNCED OPPOSITION TO CONFISCATION.

THE confiscation of the property of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to be denounced by the patriotic portion of the American press. As a rule the influential journals of the country express a willingness for "Mormonism" to be opposed, but many of them pronouncedly dissent from the methods now being applied in that direction, the process being uncalled for and irredeemably unjust and dishonest.

The *Denver Republican* is one of the papers which assail confiscation, and presents the following condensed plea for fair-dealing and honesty:

"Is the handful of Mormons in Utah and other parts of the country such a menace to our institutions that it is necessary for the government of the United States to resort to confiscation in order to hold the Mormon Church in check?

"There is such a thing as honesty in dealing with one's enemies. There is such a thing as justice to criminals. There is such a thing as doing right for right's sake, and in the face of popular prejudice. But the bill which Senator Edmunds introduced to turn the property of the Mormon Church over to the public schools of Utah fails to recognize any of these general propositions.

"The fact that some of the Mormons are polygamists and that the Church teaches the doctrine of polygamy will not justify the supposed confiscation. The Constitution of the United States declares that private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation. We do not mean to say that the transfer of the property of this dissolved corporation to the public schools of Utah would be in violation of this provision of the Constitution. But we do say it would be in violation of the spirit.

"Why should not Congress be just, even to the Mormons? Thousands of members of the Mormon Church have never lived in polygamy. Ought they to be made to suffer because of the crimes of others, or because their Church teaches the doctrine of poly-

gamy? The proposed confiscation is unnecessary. It would be unjust and unfair."

The foregoing is tersely put, is *multum in parvo*, and simply unanswerable from the standpoint of reason, justice and Republicanism.

Some time since the *New York Sun* had a strong article with the right ring to it upon this important subject. It was largely quoted and variously received. While some journals opposed its position, others as strongly supported it. A private gentleman—Mr. H. C. Baldwin, of Broadway, New York—took unqualified ground with the *Sun*, as will be seen by the following, which appeared in the columns of that paper in the form of a correspondence from his pen:

To the Editor of the *Sun*:

"Sir—Your remarks on the Mormon confiscation case are timely and just, but not severe enough. The Edmunds act in many of its features was the most infamous that ever disgraced our national statute book, and there have been some very infamous. The decision of the Supreme Court sustaining the act will return some day to torment not only the court but the Congress of the United States. The real cause for the passage of that act never showed itself in the discussion over it in Congress. Its defenders claimed its object was to destroy polygamy. The real object was to destroy co-operative stores that interfered with a lot of sharks who wanted to control the trade of Utah. That act took from the women of Utah the right of suffrage, and confiscated the property of the people and all under the pretext of morality. But I felt from the day of its passage until the decision of the Supreme Court that it was so contrary to every principle of natural justice that a judicial decision would kill it.

"I have not a word to say in defense of polygamy, but I have more respect for the Mormons, who had no houses of prostitution and no illegitimate children to put into foundling hospitals, than I have for the hypocrites who from unworthy motives secured the passage of the confiscation act."

Mr. Baldwin is a man who is a credit to the race. He has clear convictions of right and the courage to fearlessly state them over his own signature. Long may he live and be able to raise his voice and wield a pen in favor of the right and in denunciation of heartless demagogues whose un-American political and mercenary schemes are threatening the very existence of the Great Republic.

The *Los Angeles Express* very properly shows the absurdity of the insinuation offered against Chief Justice Fuller because of his disagreement with the majority of the Supreme Court on the recent confiscation decision:

"The dissenting opinion of Chief Justice Fuller in the decision of the United States Supreme Court declaring the Mormon Church property