# WILLIAM J. BRYAN'S LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

Gentlemen:—In accepting the nomination tendered by you on behalf of the Democratic party, I beg to assure you of my appreciation of the great honor conferred upon me by the delegates in convention assembled, and by the voters who gave instruction to the delegates.

I am sensible of the responsibilities which rest upon the chief magistrate of so great a nation, and realize the far-reaching effect of the questions involved in the present contest.

In my letter of acceptance of 1896, I made the following pledge:

"So deeply am I impressed with the magnitude of the power vested by the Constitution in the chief executive of the nation and with the enormous influence which he can yield for the benefit or injury of the people, that I wish to enter the office, if elected, free from any personal desire, except the desire to prove worthy of the confidence of my countrymen. Human judgment is fallible enough when unbiased by selfish considerations, and, in order that I may not be tempted to use the patronage of the office to advance any personal ambition, I hereby announce, with all the emphasis which words can express, my fixed determination not, under any circumstances, to be a candidate for re-election, in case this campaign results in my election."

Further reflection and observation constrain me to renew this pledge.

The platform adopted at Kansas City commands my cordial and unqualified approval. It courageously meets the issues now before the country, and states clearly and without ambiguity the party's position on every question considered. Adopted by a convention which assembled on the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, it breathes the spirit of candor, independence and patriotism which characterizes those who, at Philadelphia in 1776, promulgated the creed of the Republic.

Having in my notification speech, discussed somewhat at length the paramount issue, imperialism, and added some observations on militarism and the Boer war, it is sufficient at this time to review the remaining planks of the platform.

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### Trusts.

The platform very properly gives prominence to the trust question. The appalling growth of combinations in restraint of trade during the present administration, proves conclusively that the Republican party lacks either the desire or the ability to deal with the question effectively. If as may be fairly assumed from the speeches and conduct of the Republican leaders, that party does not intend to take the people's side against these organizations, then the weak and qualified condemnation of trusts to be found in the Republican platform is designed to distract attention while industrial despotism is completing its work. A private monopoly has always been an outlaw. No defense can be made of an industrial system in which one, or a few men, can control for their own profit, the output or price of any article of merchandise. Under such a system the consumer suffers extortion, the producer of raw material has but one purchaser, and must sell at the arbitrary price fixed; the laborer has but one employer, and is powerless to protest against injustice, either in wages or in conditions of labor; the small stockholder is at the mercy of the speculator, while the traveling salesman contributes his salary to the overgrown profits of the trust. Since but a small proportion of the people can share in the advantages secured by private monopoly, it follows that the remainder of the people are not only excluded from the benefits, but are the helpless victims of every monopoly organized. It is difficult to overestimate the immediate injustice that may be done, or to calculate the ultimate effect of this injustice upon the social and political welfare of the people. Our platform, after suggesting certain specific remedies; pledges the party to an unceasing warfare against private monopoly in nation, state and city. I heartily approve of this promise; if elected, it shall be my earnest and constant endeavor to fulfill the promise in letter and spirit. I shall select an attorney-general who will, without fear or favor, enforce existing laws; I shall recommend such additional legislation as may be necessary to dissolve every private monopoly which does business outside of the state of its origin; and, if contrary to my belief and hope, a constitutional amendment is found to be necessary, I shall recommend such an amendment as will, without impairing any of the existing rights of the states, empower Congress to protect the people of all the states from injury at the hands of individuals or corporations engaged in interstate commerce.

The platform accurately describes the Dingley tariff law, when it condemns it as a "trust breeding measure, skillfully devised to give to the few favors which they do not deserve, and to place upon the many burdens which they should not bear." Under its operation trusts can plunder the people of the United States, while they successfully compete in foreign markets with manufacturers of other countries. Even those who justify the general policy of protection will find it difficult to defend a tariff which enables a trust to exact an exorbitant toll from the citizen.

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### Corporations in Politics.

The Democratic party makes no war upon honestly acquired wealth; neither does it seek to embarrass corporations engaged in legitimate business, but it does protest against corporations entering politics, and attempting to assume control of the instrumentalities of government. A corporation is not organized for political purposes, and should be compelled to confine itself to the business described in its charter. Honest corporations, engaged in an honest business, will find it to their advantage to aid in the enactment of such legislation as will protect them from the undeserved odium which will be brought upon them by those corporations which enter the political arena.

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### Interstate Commerce.

The Republican party has persistently refused to comply with the urgent request of the Interstate Commerce commission, for such an enlargement of the scope of the interstate commerce law as will enable the commission to realize the hopes aroused by its creation. The Democratic party is pledged to legislation which will empower the commission to protect individuals and communities from discrimination, and the public at large from unjust and unfair transportation rates.

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### The Financial Plank.

The platform reiterates the demand contained in the Chicago platform for an American financial system made by the American people for themselves. The purpose of such a system is to restore and maintain a bimetallic level of prices, and in order that there may be no uncertainty as to the method of restoring bimetallism, the specific declaration in favor of free and unlimited coinage at the existing ratio of 16 to 1, independent of the action of other nations, is repeated. In 1896 the Republican party recognized the necessity for bimetallism by pledging the party to an earnest effort to secure an international agreement for the free coinage of silver, and the president, immediately after his inauguration, by authority of congress, appointed a commission composed of distinguished citizens to visit Europe and solicit foreign aid. Secretary Hay, in a letter written to Lord Aldenham in November, 1898, and afterwards published in England, declared that at that time the president and a majority of his cabinet still believed in the great desirability of an international agreement for the restoration of the double standard, but that it did not seem opportune to re-open the negotiations just then. The financial law enacated less than a year ago contains a concluding section declaring that the measure was not intended to stand in the way of the restoration of bimetallism, whenever it could be done by co-operation with other nations. The platform submitted to the last Republican convention with the indorsement of the administration again suggested the possibility of securing foreign aid in restoring silver.

Now the Republican party, for the first time, openly abandons its advocacy of the double standard, and indorses the monetary system which it has so often and so emphatically condemned. The Democratic party, on the contrary, remains the steadfast advocate of the gold and silver coinage of the constitution, and is not willing that other nations shall determine for us the time and manner of restoring silver to its ancient place as a standard money. The ratio of 16 to 1 is not only the ratio now existing between all the gold and silver dollars in circulation in this country, a ratio which even the Republican administration has not attempted to change, but it is the only ratio advocated by those who are seeking to re-open the mints. Whether the senate, now hostile to bimetallism, can be changed during this campaign or the campaign of 1902 can only be determined after the votes are counted, but neither the present nor the future political complexion of congress has prevented or should prevent an announcement of the party's position upon this subject in unequivocal terms.

The currency bill, which received the sanction of the Executive and the Republican members of the House and Senate, justifies the warning given by the Democratic party in 1896. It was then predicted that the Republican party would attempt to retire the greenbacks although the party and its leaders studiously concealed their intentions. That purpose is now plain and the people must choose between the retention of the greenbacks, issued and controlled in volume by the government, and a national bank note currency issued by banks and controlled in their own interests. If the national bank notes are to be secured by bonds, the currency system now supported by the Republican party involves a permanent and increasing debt, and, so long as this system stands, the financial classes will be tempted to throw their powerful influence upon the side of any measure which will contribute to the size and permanency of a national debt. It is hardly conceivable that the American people will deliberately turn from the debt-paying policy of the past, to the dangerous doctrine of perpetual bonds.

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### Election of Senators by the People.

The demand for a constitutional amendment providing for the election of Senators by direct vote of the people, appears for the first time in a Democratic National platform, but a resolution proposing such an amendment, has three times passed the House of Representatives, and that, too, practically without opposition. Whatever may have been the reasons which secured the adoption of the present plan, a century ago, new conditions have made it imperative that the people be permitted to speak directly in the selection of their representatives in the Senate. A Senator is no less the representative of the State because he receives his commission from the people themselves, rather than from the members of the State legislature. If a voter is competent to vote for a member of Congress, for State officers and for President, he is competent to choose his representative in the Senate. A system which makes the Senator responsible for his election to the people, as a whole, and amenable to them if he misrepresents them, must commend itself to those who have confidence in the intelligence, and patriotism of the masses.

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### Direct Legislation.

The platform indorses the principle of direct legislation. This is already applied to the more important questions in nation, state and city. It rests upon the sound theory that the people can be trusted, and that the more responsive the government is to the will of the people, the more free it will be from misuse and abuse.

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### Labor Question.

Several planks of the labor platform are devoted to questions in which the laboring classes have an immediate interest, but which more remotely effect our entire population. While what is generally known as government by injunction is at present directed chiefly against the employes of corporations, when there is a disagreement between them and their employer, it involves a principle which concerns every one. The purpose of the injunction in such cases is to substitute trial by judge for trial by jury, and is a covert blow at the jury system. The abolition of government by injunction is as necessary for the protection of the reputation of the court, as it is for the security of the citizen. Blackstone in defending trial by jury, says:

"The impartial administration of justice, which secures both our persons, and our properties is the great end of civil society, but if that be entrusted entirely to the magistracy, a select body of men, and those selected by the prince such as enjoy the highest offices of the state their decisions in spite of their natural integrity, will have frequently an involuntary bias toward those of their own rank, and dignity. It is not to be expected from human nature that the few should be always attentive to the interests and good of the many."

If the criminal laws are not sufficient for the protection of property, they can be made more severe, but a citizen charged with crime must have his case tried before a jury of his peers.

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### The Blacklist.

The blacklist as now employed in some places enables the employer to place the employe under practical duress, for the skilled laborer loses his independence when the employers can not only discharge him, but prevent his securing any similar employment. The blacklist enables employers to secure, by mutual agreement, that control over the wage earners which a private monopoly exercises without contract.

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### Arbitration.

The platform renews the demand for arbitration between corporations and their employes. No one who has observed the friction which arises between great corporations and their numerous employes can doubt the wisdom of establishing an impartial court for the just and equitable settlement of disputes. The demand for arbitration ought to be supported as heartily by the public, which suffers inconvenience because of strikes and lockouts, and by the employers themselves, as by the employes. The establishment of arbitration will insure friendly relations between labor and capital, and render obsolete the growing practice of calling in the army to settle labor troubles.

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### Department of Labor.

I cannot too strongly emphasize the importance of the platform recommendation of the establishment of a department of labor, with a member of the cabinet at its head. When we remember how important a position the laborer fills in our economic, social and political fabric, it is hard to conceive of a valid objection being made to this recognition of his services. Agriculture is already represented in the president's official household; the army and navy have their representatives there; the state department, with its consular service, and the treasury department, with its close connection with fiscal affairs, keep the executive in touch with the business and commercial interests. A cabinet officer truly representative of the wage earning class would be of invaluable aid, not only to the toilers, but to the president.

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### Chinese Exclusion.

The Chinese exclusion act has proven an advantage to the country, and its continuance and strict enforcement, as well as its extension to other similar races, are imperatively necessary. The Asiatic is so essentially different from the American that he cannot be assimilated with our population, and is, therefore, not desirable as a permanent citizen. His presence as a temporary laborer, preserving his national identity, and maintaining a foreign scale of wages and living, must ever prove an injustice to American producers, as well as a perpetual source of irritation.

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### Pensions.

The party expresses its pride in the soldiers and sailors of all our wars, and declares its purpose to deal generously with them and their dependents. A liberal policy is natural and necessary in a government which depends upon a citizen soldiery, instead of a large standing army. Self-interest, as well as gratitude, compels the government to make bountiful provision for those who, in the hour of danger, and at great sacrifice of business, health and life, tender their services to their country.

The pension laws should be construed according to the generous spirit which prompted their passage. The platform very properly reiterates the position taken in 1896, that the fact of enlistment shall be deemed conclusive evidence that the soldier was sound when the government accepted him. A certificate given now to the health of a person 40 years ago, even if easily obtainable, should not have as much weight as the certificate of the medical officer who examined the volunteer with a view of ascertaining his fitness for army service.

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### Nicaragua.

The Democratic party is in favor of the immediate construction, ownership and control of the Nicaragua canal by the United States. The failure of the Republican party to make any progress in carrying out a pledge contained in its platform four years ago, together with the substitution in its latest platform of a plank favoring an isthmian canal for a specific declaration in favor of the Nicaraguan canal, would indicate that the Republican leaders either do not appreciate the importance of this great waterway to the maritime strength and commercial interests of the country, or that they give too much consideration to the interested opposition of transcontinental lines. The Hays-Pauncefote treaty, now before the senate, would, if ratified, greatly lessen the value of the canal, if it would not indeed convert it into a positive menace in time of war. The paramount interests of the United States in the western hemisphere, together with the obligations to defend the republics to the south of us, makes it necessary that our government shall be able to close the canal against any hostile power.

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### Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma.

Arizona, New Mexico and Oklahoma have long been ready to assume the responsibilities and enjoy the privileges of statehood, and it will be a pleasure, as well as a duty, to carry out the platform pledge concerning them.

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### Alaska and Porto Rico.

There will be a popular acquiescence in the demand for home rule, and a territorial form of government in Alaska and Porto Rico. Both are entitled to local self-government and representation in Congress.

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### Cuba.

The recognition contained in both the Democratic and Republican platforms of the right of the Cubans to independence, removes the general principle involved from the domain of partisan politics. It is proper, however, to consider whether the accomplishment of this purpose can be safely entrusted to the Republican party after it has yielded to the allurements of the Colonial idea, and abandoned its earlier faith in the natural and inalienable rights of man.

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### Reclamation of Arid Lands.

The time is ripe for a systematic and extended effort to reclaim the arid lands and fit them for actual settlers. The last agricultural report estimates that homes can thus be provided for many millions of people. The impounding and use of the waters which are wasted in the spring would people the western states with thrifty, intelligent, and industrious citizens, and these would furnish a valuable market for all the products of the factories. A small percentage of the money spent in a war of conquest would provide occupation and habitation for more people than would ever seek a residence in colonies within the tropics.

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### Foreign Alliances.

The reasons given by Washington, Jefferson, and the other statesmen of the early days in support of the doctrine that we should maintain friendly relations with all nations, but enter into entangling alliances with none, are even stronger to-day than they were a hundred years ago. Our commerce is rapidly increasing, and we are brought into constant communication with all parts of the world. Even if we desired to do so, we could not afford to alienate many nations by cultivating unnecessary intimacy with a few. Our strength and standing are such that it is less necessary than ever before to lean for aid upon the friendliness of a foreign power.

We cannot connect ourselves with European nations, and share in their jealousies and ambitions without losing the peculiar advantage, which our location, our character and our institutions give us in the world's affairs.

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### Monroe Doctrine.

The doctrine enunciated by Monroe, and approved by succeeding presidents, is essential to the welfare of the United States. The continents of North and South America are dedicated to the development of free government. One republic after another has been established, until to-day monarchial idea has barely a foothold in the new world.

While it is not the policy of this country to interfere where amicable relations exist between European countries and their dependencies in America, our people would look with disfavor upon any attempt on the part of European governments to maintain an unwilling or forcible sovereignty over the people living on this side of the Atlantic.

The position taken by the Republican leaders, and more recently set forth by the Republican candidate for the Presidency, viz: That we cannot protect a nation from outside interference without exercising sovereignty over its people, is an assault upon the Monroe doctrine, for while this argument is at this time directed against the proposition to give to the Filipinos both independence and protection, it is equally applicable to the Republics of Central and South America. If this government cannot lend its strength to another Republic without making subjects of its people, then we must either withdraw our protection from the Republics to the south of us or absorb them. Under the same plea, that the guardian nation must exert an authority equal to its responsibility, European nations have for centuries exploited their wards, and it is a significant fact that the Republican party should accept the European idea of a protectorate, at the same time that it adopts a European colonial policy. There is no excuse for this abandonment of the American idea. We have maintained the Monroe doctrine for three-quarters of a century. The expense to us has been practically nothing, but the protection has been beyond value to our sister Republics. If a Filipino Republic is erected upon the ruins of Spanish tyranny, its protection by us will be neither difficult nor expensive. No European nation would be willing for any other European nation to have the islands, neither would any European nation be willing to provoke a war with us in order to obtain possession of the islands. If we assert sovereignty over the Filipinos we will have to defend that sovereignty by force, and the Filipinos will be our enemies; if we protect them from outside interference, they will defend themselves and will be our friends. If they show as much determination in opposing the sovereignty of other nations as they have shown in opposing our sovereignty, they will not require much assistance from us.

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### Extravagance.

The Republican party, drawing as it does enormous campaign funds from those who enjoy special privileges at the hands of the government, is powerless to protect the tax payers from the attack of those who profit by large appropriations. A surplus in the treasury offers constant temptation to extravagance, and extravagance, in turn, compels a resort to new means of taxation, which, is being kept in the background until the campaign is over, is a fair illustration of the imposition which will be attempted when there is a considerable amount of money idle in the treasury. The rehabilitation of the merchant marine, laudable in itself, is made the pretext for expenditure of public money for the benefit of large ship owners, and in the interests of a transportation monopoly. The government being only the agent of the people, has no right to collect from the people taxes beyond the legitimate needs of a government honestly and effectively administered, and public servants should exercise the same degree of care in the use of the people's money that private individuals do in the use of their own money. With a restoration of a foreign policy consistent with American ideas there can be an immediate and large reduction in the burdens now borne by the people.

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### Income Tax.

By inadvertence the Income Tax plank agreed upon by the Resolutions committee, was omitted from the platform as read and adopted. The subject, however, is covered by the reaffirmation of the Chicago platform, and I take this occasion to reassert my belief in the principle which underlies the income tax. Congress should have authority to levy and collect an income tax whenever necessary, and an amendment to the federal constitution specifically conferring such authority ought to be supported by even those who may think the tax unnecessary at this time. In the hour of danger the government can draft the citizen; it ought to be able to draft the pocketbook as well. Unless money is more precious than blood, we cannot afford to give greater protection to the incomes of the rich than to the lives of the poor.

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### Imperialism.

The subjects, however, treated in this letter, important as each may seem in itself, do not press so imperatively for solution as the question which the platform declares to be the paramount issue in this campaign. Whether we shall adhere to, or abandon those ideas of government which have distinguished this nation from other nations and given to its history its peculiar charm and value, is a question the settlement of which cannot be delayed. No other question can approach it in importance; no other question demands such immediate consideration. It is easier to lose a reputation than to establish one, and this nation would find it a long and laborious task to regain its proud position among the nations, if, under the stress of temptation, it should repudiate the self-evident truths proclaimed by our heroic ancestors and sacredly treasured during a career unparalleled in the annals of time. When the doctrine that the people are the only source of power is made secure from further attack we can safely proceed to the settlement of the numerous questions which involve the domestic and economic welfare of our citizens.

Very truly yours,
W. J. BRYAN.

## *Sayings of Lincoln*

Following are taken from a recently published work, edited by Dr. H. S. Taylor and D. M. Fulwiler, entitled "Lincoln's Words on Living Issues." Trusty Publishing Co., 418 Roanoke building, Chicago.

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Letter to H. L. Pierce, April 6, 1859, —Irelan 16—263. All honor to Jefferson—to the man who, in the concrete pressure of a struggle for national independence by a single people, had the coolness, forecast and capacity to introduce into a merely revolutionary document an abstract truth, applicable to all men and all times, and so to embalm it there that today, and in all coming days, it shall be a rebuke and a stumbling block to the very harbingers of reappearing tyranny and oppression.

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(March 4, 1865, Second Inaugural—Hapgood, p. 403.) It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing bread from the sweat of other men's faces.

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(August 26, 1863, Letter to James C. Conkling—Herndon, p. 555.) For the great republic—for the principle it lives by and keeps alive—for man's vast future—thanks to all.

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(September 30, 1859, Speech at Milwaukee, Wis.—Complete Works, Vol. I, p. 577.) Farmers being the most numerous class, it follows that their interest is the largest interest. It also follows that that interest is most worthy of all to be cherished and cultivated—that if there be inevitable conflict between that interest and any other, that other should yield.

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(July 5, 1861, Annual Message—Raymond, p. 186.) This relaive matter of National power and state rights, as a principle, is no other than the principle of generality and locality. Whatever concerns the whole should be confided to the whole—to the general government; while whatever concerns only the state should be left exclusively to the state.

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July 16, 1852, Speech at Springfield, Ill.—Complete Works, I, p. 171.) A free people in times of peace and quiet —when pressed by no common danger —naturally divide into parties. At such times the man who is of neither party is not, cannot be of any consequence.

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(September 17, 1859, Speech at Cincinnati, O.—Debates, p. 268.) The people of the United States are the rightful masters of both congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.

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(October 16, 1854, Speech at Peoria, Ill.—Howells, p. 279.) Well I doubt not that the people of Nebraska are and will continue to be as good as the average of people elsewhere. I do not say the contrary. What I do say is that no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent. I say this is the leading principle.

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(March 4, 1861, First Inaugural—Raymond, p. 167.) I do not forget the position assumed by some, that constitutional questions are to be decided by the superior court. * * * At the same time the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the supreme court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation, between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal.

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(May 17, 1859, Letter to Dr. Theodore Canisius concerning law of naturalization, etc.—Howells, p. 85.) As I understand the spirit of our institutions, it is designed to promote the elevation of men. I am therefore hostile to anything that tends to their debasement.

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(February 12, 1861, Speech at Cincinnati, O. Complete Works, Vol. I, p. 676.) The workingmen are the basis of all governments for the plain reason that they are the more numerous.

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