

GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

By DR. HENRY GEORGE III

LAST SATURDAY was the date of the Democratic primary. I have been told personally by several angry citizens that "If Saturday's voting procedure was an example of our Democratic machinery, then we need some new machinery."

To begin with, for machinery to work, there must be a human hand to guide it, and while there were many hands ready and willing to take part the machinery was difficult to find. There is in my opinion no more important procedure in government than a primary election. Saturday for the first time in years the Democratic party gave the public a primary mayoralty election. The people of this city actually had the privilege of choosing from between two candidates for the city's highest office, and I am convinced that many citizens wanted to assert their right.

However, for many who had not fine-tooth-combed the papers for several days preceding, there was no way of locating where they were to vote. Throughout the entire city there were just two poll flags flying, one that had been wrestled by an energetic woman from the home of a Republican worker, and the other that had been secured after a worker had gone back to the Department of Elections and demanded that a flag be flown.

I hold, that the right to vote is one of the most sacred privileges we Americans may enjoy. That few will assert this prerogative the two thousand votes cast Saturday out of a possible forty thousand will attest, but I hold that it is the duty of the government to protect our right in the ballot.

There is no news of greater local importance than a primary election, I maintain that such news should be on the front page of our newspapers. And if the results can be splashed on the front page, why cannot the polling places be put on the front page? Instead, it was in about the finest print under "Legal News" on page 31 of our evening paper.

It has been said that voting should not be made easy; that when it is the public does not appreciate its rights and will not vote anyway. I beg to differ. There were many people last Saturday who honestly wanted to vote and who called the city building, the Democratic headquarters, the Democratic League, the police department, and some who even called my office to try to find out where to vote.

And for every one who made this effort there were many who took time off from our hectic days of war effort to try to cast a ballot only to find that they were in the wrong section or were unable to find their voting place at all.

We have been fighting a war to assure our rights of self government, but when a people must play hide and seek with a polling place, their rights are not being protected. Irrespective of what the results of this past election might have been I must protest the slipshod methods of the Department of Elections, governed and controlled by the Republican party, and I hold their methods as reprehensible breaches of a public trust.

At any election, if a citizen has a right to cast a ballot, then he surely has the right to the public service of a polling flag, and adequate news spread of the voting places the day of election.

To thwart a man in his right to vote is to discourage him in his confidence in government, and if there was ever a day when we needed to have every confidence in our government and to work as a united whole, this is the time.

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