

C O P Y

HERBERT BAYARD SWOPE
1270 Sixth Avenue
New York

January 25, 1935.

Dear Mr. Chief Justice:-

May I presume upon the admiration and friendship I have felt for many years, to attempt an indictment of you and your interesting associates? For my purpose, I shall assume the right of the Napoleonic Code, and, regarding you as guilty until you prove your innocence, I return the following presentment:

I accuse the Great Court, of which you are Chief, of having violated an important canon of English.

I accuse the said Court of having permitted tautology, verbosity and redundancy, each of which is an abomination in good usage.

Here is the gravamen of my charge:

On the lintel of the new Supreme Court building there is engraved:

EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER THE LAW

(This is the inscription shown upon photographs, and I assume the photographic record is competent evidence).

I submit, Your Honor, that the adjective "equal" has no place in the sentence. It is a distorting qualification which robs the thought of its true meaning. At best, it is supererogatory. Its employment is proof per se of my complaint.

I ask for immediate judgment and the excision of the offending word, so that the house of the United States Supreme Court may continue to be the temple of Astraea, where there always shall be "a well of English undefiled."

With high regard,

Faithfully,

S/ Herbert Bayard Swope

The Honorable
Charles Evans Hughes,
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court,
Washington, D.C.