

*Supreme Court of the United States,  
Washington, D.C.*

May 17th, 1895.

My dear Chief Justice:

I had an experience last evening which nearly brought me to the close of my career, and I mention it to you simply to make a suggestion, that it might be well, considering my condition, that the decision of the Income Tax case be announced as soon as practicable.

I had been advised by some friends to try an injection of carbolic acid into my knee joint, upon the idea that it would remove the possible cause of the continued severity of the internal pain. I yielded to the suggestion, and received an injection of carbolic acid, but the result was anything but pleasant. There followed from it a pain that was perfectly uncontrollable, and lasted for some hours. Indeed, the paroxysms of pain were so great, that I thought for some time I should not be able to survive them; and what gave me additional pain was the thought that if I did not survive, our actions in reference to the Income Tax cases would be entirely defeated. I however, am this morning relieved from the pain to a very considerable extent; and I trust that I shall not be weak enough to yield to any more experiments with my knee joint. But the experience of last night has taught me, that I have no fair assurance of continued life, and the consequences that might follow from my yielding to one of these paroxysms of pain, to which I may be subjected, has led me to venture the suggestion that, as soon as possible, the decision be announced by the court. This, I suppose, of course, cannot be before Monday, but I suggest that it be announced on that day, even if further time be taken to complete the opinion which you may wish to write. My hold upon life is too slight for me to trust, with any reasonable assurance, to the certain continuance of it beyond a day.

I am

Very sincerely you

Stephen J. Field

To the  
Chief Justice  
of the United States.