

THE ONTARIO ARGUS

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GEO. K. AIKEN, Editor and Publisher

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- County treasurer—C. C. Mueller.
- County surveyor—James F. Miller.
- County commissioner—J. F. Weaver.
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- Justice of the Peace—G. L. King.
- Constable—J. H. Denison.

HILL'S DEPUTY NOW BLAMES FIELD MEN

In Letter to All Newspapers Defends Chief and Asserts Blame Should Go to Equalization Board.

C. A. Gilham, deputy assessor in the office of L. E. Hill in a letter to all the newspapers in the county takes up the defense of his chief. Among other things Mr. Gilham says that perhaps some of the inequities in valuations are due to carelessness on the part of field men. To the Readers of the Argus:

Believing in justice to all men, I cannot refrain from expressing my views in regard to some of the criticisms and reflections on Mr. Hill's work as assessor of Malheur County.

In the Enterprise, the article under the caption of "Peoples Committee Makes Report," is in some places misleading and in others absurd. That "committee" which was appointed by the chairman, who makes a twenty thousand dollar howl and pays no tax, on the 6th day of October after the people had met and adjourned, surely did some rapid work in making their investigations as some of the committee went home having no time to make such investigation.

That so called committee did not report to the readers it was the duty of the Board of Equalization to equalize the assessments and correct all errors and irregularities found in the assessment roll.

No man is infallible. Sometimes the assessors field deputies make errors and the Board of Equalization is for the purpose of correcting such errors.

He misrepresented facts when he said "Owyhee lands were assessed at \$40 per acre." Some lands under the Owyhee ditch were assessed at \$40 per acre, as the Owyhee ditch has the best water-right in the county. There is plenty of room for difference of opinion as to what land is worth in this county.

The law required land and city property to be assessed, taking into consideration any rights or privileges attached thereto or connected therewith, the quality of soil and the natural resources in, on, or connected with the land, its convenience to transportation lines, public roads and other local advantages of a similar or different kind. Is not the land irrigated by the Owyhee ditch of more value than lands on Dead Ox Flat or any other part of the county?

In another column of the Enterprise, you will find the big head lines, "Low Value High Rate." If you want the farmers and small taxpayers to walk out of the county as bankrupts, just listen to, and follow the advice of some of the newspapers and the agents of the large cor-

porations and before long you will see them go, while the big land companies who are holding their land for speculation will still hold their land and pay but little tax.

There is just one thing to do and that is to assess these big land companies so they will be glad to farm or sell their land, and then there will be some progress in this county. I think they have held this country back long enough.

In one place in the Enterprise it says: "In a short time the budget will be published. Then is the time for a citizens committee to come in and show the board of county commissioners where to lop off expense". True! You are right. Show the board where the raised \$30,000 or \$40,000 more than was necessary on the 1915 roll. Show them where it is not necessary to raise \$14,000 for

"retiring county warrants and emergencies" when the county is out of debt and has no outstanding warrants.

Show them where it is not necessary to pay a fruit inspector \$1500 for a few weeks work. Show them \$5000 will not be needed for elections in 1917. Show them the county court can be run for less than \$3,600 for one year. Show them it is unnecessary to raise \$1,000 for the juvenile court when the county judge is the juvenile court. Show them they can save \$50 per month by compelling the county attorney to do his duty. Show where \$1500 was raised for the county official printing. (A few columns in the Enterprise, etc.

Ask the county court, what became of the money collected as fees, by the county clerk, the money collected by the assessor and sheriff, the interest on county money and the circuit court fines all of which amounted to \$21,000 last year.

The county court levied a tax on the 1915 roll in the sum of \$196,092.33 and I have found nothing to indicate that any part of that \$21,000 was ever considered in making up their budget. I believe the budget for 1917 can be reduced to \$160,000 and possibly less. Suppose the budget is reduced to \$160,000 and suppose the assessment roll totals \$7,500,000 after the state tax commission has assessed the railroad companies and other public service corporations, saying nothing of the city and special school levies, it will require a levy of 21.4 mills to raise \$160,000. This means you will pay \$21.40 on every thousand dollars worth of your property where you paid \$27.90 on the same property on the 1915 roll, \$6.50 less than you paid last time, yet the Enterprise

would have you believe the county is going to perdition and nothing to stop it.

The Enterprise man howls about a levy of 77.6 mills in the City of Vale. Suppose you do pay 77.6 mills. Do you know you paid at the rate of 80.1 mills when you paid on your

last assessment, taking this years assessment as a basis?

If you hold the county, state, general school, high school and road levies down to 21.4 mills as I have stated before, there will be no reason that I can see why the people of Vale should not pay at least \$6.50 less taxes on the thousand than last year.

On the basis of this year's assessment where the people of Ontario paid at the rate of 66.6 mills on the 1915 assessment, they should not pay over 57.5 mills on the 1916 assessment or about \$9.00 less on the thousand. (I have understood the city

(Continued on page five)

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This Coupon entitles you to enter our Free Counting Contest.
You may win the handsome Set of pure aluminum ware to be awarded the person counting the nearest correct number of parts in the construction of Cole's High Oven Range. Counting takes place during our Big Factory Stove Sale.

Big Factory Stove Sale

Large crowds intend to visit this Big Sale. In order that you may receive the personal attention of the factory expert we remind our customers and their friends that the Sale starts promptly at 9 a. m. It continues both morning and afternoon. *Come early*—Remember the date. Everybody cordially welcome.



Cole's High Oven Gas-Coal Range



Cole's High Oven Range



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