

THAT "INFAMOUS LAW"

The inquiry of the infamous assessment law passed by the last legislature never was more plainly illustrated than by the assessment roll of Jackson county for 1903. Those free from debt and most able to pay taxes are in most instances assessed for even less than they were the year before, while the assessment of those who are most heavily indebted has been raised and they must bear the brunt of taxation. There is certainly no justice in that. In many cases double taxation is apparent. No body should be sent to represent Southern Oregon in the legislature who is not pledged to the repeal of this outrageous class legislation.

You are right, Bro. Nickell, but you were in the last legislature when this "infamous assessment law" passed, and had an opportunity to oppose it when your opposition would have been effective. Why didn't you give the "measly thing" thunder then? The law is but an experiment at best, but it is liable to prove an expensive one, both to the state and the taxpayers, for it is almost certain to cause litigation that will result in its being declared unconstitutional.

But even if Bro. Nickell did happen to be a member of the legislature that passed the law, or had he been one of its most earnest supporters then, he is excusable for wanting it repealed now, since it has been tried and found wanting. The object for which it was intended, to prevent men owning large properties from sneaking up imaginary debts when listing their property to the assessor and thus escaping taxation on what the actually owned, was good, but it has proven a failure in this, as is shown by the assessment roll of nearly every county in the state. Although this year there was no exemption for indebtedness, there is scarcely a county in which there is a material increase in the total amount of taxable property. Somebody has evidently evaded the law, for the assessment rolls of past years have shown the indebtedness to exceed one-third the gross value of all property in the state. Who has evaded the law it is difficult to say, but as rich men's property is usually more widely scattered than is the property of the poor and those in ordinary circumstances, it is likely it is the former who are escaping taxation. In the mean time an injustice is being done all property owners who own actual debts. Owing to the fact that the total amount of taxable property listed on the assessment rolls this year is but little more than it was last, the levy for 1903 must be about as great as it was in 1902, hence those who are in debt half they are worth and who were honest enough to list all their property to the assessor, are forced to pay twice the amount of taxes they should. Then the system often subjects property to double taxation. For instance, one man sells another \$1000 worth of property and takes his note for full payment, the property is assessed to the debtor and the note to the creditor, the debtor fails, the creditor has to take the property back, and both it and the note having been assessed, he must pay taxes on both, although there is but one property.

A law that works such injustice should have no place on our statute books, and if it is not declared unconstitutional by the supreme court before the meeting of the next legislature, that body should repeal it at once. Oregon's old assessment law was good enough if it had been enforced. About all the improvements it needed to make it effective was to force parties giving their property to the assessor to enumerate their creditors within the state, and then give the assessor power to collect evidence of the statements of indebtedness. At all events the new law is an improvement over the old in the manner of making assessments, and the sooner we return the old system the better.

Prospects are favorable that three new states will be added to the union at this session of congress. Arizona, New Mexico and Utah are knocking at the door for admission, and there appears to be a majority in both houses favorable to letting them in.

AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES.

The report of the secretary of agriculture ranges over a vast area of diverse subjects, inasmuch as it deals with every product of the soil and takes account of markets and foreign imports and exports. No other country can exhibit such diversity of cultivation or such a wide range of possibilities. We have the fruit of the tropics and the hardy timber and grain of the Northwest; the prolific variety of the Pacific coast and the rich staples of the Atlantic coast—rice, tobacco, sugar cane and cotton— together with all the corn, wheat and meat of the West. Here, as in every other country, agriculture is by far the most important industry. When that is in a drooping condition, through sinister accidents of market or bad seasons, every other industry suffers.

We seem now to be reaching a point when better systems of agriculture must prevail to be successful. It will no longer do to make reckless use of the soil and allow it to degenerate by constant cropping of one staple without fertilizing. The vibrant land of good quality has mostly been taken up, and efforts must be made to sustain the fertility of that that has long been in use, or farming will cease to be profitable. In the magnificence of the home market of practically a continent there are inducements to every distinctive section of country, geographically considered, to do its best. There is the assurance of the permanence of a large foreign market for meat, fard, fruit, wheat, cotton and tobacco. It would be well if every pound of surplus cotton and wool were converted into fabric, every bushel of wheat into flour, every skin into leather goods; in fact all our raw materials into manufactured goods before it is exported. This should be the ultimate aim. The country would have a higher position while manufacturing and exporting than when sending raw materials abroad, the home market would be expanded, and the price of the agriculturalist's products would be advanced.

It is the function of the department of agriculture, by its statistics and suggestions, to show the cultivators the right road to success. It is, for instance, far more economical to export beef, mutton and pork than to send abroad the cereals on which stock is fattened. The same is true with regard to all products of the farm. In many of the states wheat growing has become unprofitable, but the market for meat both at home and abroad is far from yet having reached its ultimate. In Oregon our varied climate makes our advantages for agricultural pursuits obvious. Our facilities for producing grain, fruit, vegetables, meat and wool are limited only by the extent of territory. With more scientific systems of cultivation and improved transportation facilities the possibilities of this state are almost unbounded. We could produce three or four times as much farm products as we do now if every acre susceptible of cultivation were by a scientific system of farming, brought up to its ultimate limit. But this will not be done until the demand is increased by the establishment of better transportation facilities to carry our products to market, or more manufacturing industries to enlarge the market at home. And a concert of action by the whole people will in time bring these requisites and then the agricultural possibilities of the state will be realized.

The report of Secretary of the Navy Herbert shows that, compared with the navies of other nations, the United States stands seventh. It also shows the vessels completed since March 4, 1883, have cost \$25,000,432, and those that are in process of construction or authorized to be built will cost \$26,701,056. The secretary recommends that congress authorize the building of one battleship and six torpedo boats at this session.

The United States mints coined more money during November than in any month for many years. The coinage for November was: Gold \$10,784,800, silver \$142,340, minor coins \$80,300. Of the latter there were 4,120,000 1-cent pieces, demanded for the Christmas trade.

If it is good for the manufacturer to have protection against foreign competition, why is it not good for the producer? Protection to one and free trade to the other is an unjust discrimination.

The proposed new tariff bill, it is estimated, will, if it becomes a law, reduce the revenues of the government between \$40,000,000 and \$60,000,000 annually. How to raise that amount is a perplexing problem for the members of the ways and means committee to solve. It was first thought practicable to raise it by an income-tax on incomes and on the incomes of corporations; but that raised such a kick from some of the corporations—the millionaire manufacturers whom the committee sought to enrich by giving them free raw material and protecting their manufactured articles—that this plan is about to be abandoned.

The recommendation of the secretary of interior that the employees of the Indian bureau be selected for their fitness for the positions they are to fill without regard to politics will be endorsed by those who, as yet, are not of the same political faith as the appointing power, but it will meet with opposition from those who are in politics for revenue. However, the chances are against the recommendation being heeded. Like the tariff, the principle that "to the victors belong the spoils" has been in vogue too long to be given up readily.

Congress assembled in regular session last Monday. All preliminaries of organization having been perfected at the special session, there will not be the customary delay of electing officers and assigning committees, hence congress can get down to actual work at once. The tariff will be the first measure of importance to be considered in the house, and there are prospects of a regular "monkey and parrot" time during its discussion.

President Cleveland's message to congress is somewhat disappointing, though it is quite a strong state paper, from a democratic standpoint. It is almost silent on the Hawaiian affair, though it promises another message on that subject soon. On the question of tariff the president fully endorses the Wilson bill, and argues that it is in the interest of the laboring masses of the country.

Both of Oregon's, senators and representatives were on hand at the opening of congress last Monday. Senator Dolph has busied himself during the recess preparing a speech on the tariff, which it is said is one of the ablest reviews of the subject, taken from a protection standpoint, that has been made in many years. He gave notice that he would begin delivering the speech Tuesday.

At the election held in Colorado last month the people granted suffrage to women by a majority of over three and the governor has just proclaimed the change in the constitution. This novel experiment in government by Colorado will be watched with much interest in states where the right to vote has not been extended to women.

James Searing, of Iowa, has succeeded Powderly as general master workman of the Knights of Labor. For many years past Powderly has been the head of the organization, and renouncing him from the management is liable to result in no good.

It is estimated that \$411,879,041 will be required to pay the running expenses of the government for the fiscal year of 1904-05, about \$20,000,000 less than the appropriation for the present year.

The commissioner of pensions thinks \$165,000,000 will be required to meet the expenses of his bureau for the year ending June 30, 1904.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION. LAND OFFICE at LEWIS CLARK. Notice is hereby given that the following named settler has filed notice of his intention to make final proof in support of his claim, and that said proof will be made before Arthur Hobbs, County Clerk at Prineville, Oregon, on December 22, 1903, viz: JOSEPH A. HUBBARD, of the 2d P.M., for the NW 1/4 of Sec 21, T22N, R22E, of the 2d P.M. He claims the following witnesses to prove his settlement residence upon, and cultivation of said land, viz: C. M. Binkins, T. D. Spafford, of Prineville, Or., B. B. Price, of Prineville, Or., B. R. Nichols, of Prineville, Or. J. W. WATTS, Register.

STRAYED OR STOLEN. Two brown horses branded with four-foot shiner or cross-shiner on left side, one white, well branded, black markings, one brown, one bay, one bay mare, branded LY on chest on left side, steers of a large or long way, one bay steered A G on left shoulder. A fine coat would be a splendid introduction of these whereabouts. E. W. GILL, Prineville, Oregon.

BALD HEADS! What is the condition of your hair? Is your hair dry, harsh, brittle? Does it split at the ends? Has it a lifeless appearance? Does it fall out when combed or brushed? Is it full of dandruff? Does your scalp itch? Is it dry or in a heated condition? If there are some of your symptoms be warned in time you will become bald. Skookum Root Hair Grower. THE SKOOKUM ROOT HAIR GROWER CO., 37 North Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

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