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THE TAX SITUATION.

A general misunderstanding exists in the minds of many Clackamas county tax payers regarding the tax situation this year. Many intelligent people are laboring under the impression that because property values were doubled in this county, then their taxes must this year be double what they paid a year ago. This is a mistake. Such is not the case.

We will illustrate. The assessment roll for the year 1902 represented property of the value of \$4,526,000 while the roll for 1903 and upon which taxes are now being collected, aggregates \$9,016,211 in assessed values or nearly double the roll of a year before. In 1902 the total county levy was \$32 mills, made up of the following items: State, 6 mills; state school, 5 mills; county, 12 mills; road, 9 mills. Compare these respective levies with the following for the year 1903: State, 5 mills; state school, 5 mills; county, 6 mills; road, 4 1/2 mills; total, 20 1/2 mills. It will be noticed that the total of the levy for county purposes in 1902 was 21 mills, being made up of the levies of 12 mills and 9 mills for county and road purposes respectively. For 1903 the total of the levy for county purposes is 10 1/2 mills or just one-half the levy for the preceding year but this levy is made on an assessed valuation of nearly double that of 1902. The actual facts are these: While the levy for 1903 is reduced by fifty per cent from that of the year before, it is applied on an assessment roll that comes nearly being double that for the year before. As a matter of fact there will not be raised this year for county purposes the same amount that was raised last year by about \$5000.

But there is considerable complaint among taxpayers because their individual taxes are slightly heavier than they were a year ago. Without stopping to investigate the situation, the majority of these persons are disposed to censure the present county officers and saddle on them all of the blame for the existing conditions. This is an injustice. The reason that taxes are this year higher than a year ago is a state and not a local condition, over which the county officers have no control and are powerless to remedy.

The system under which the state taxes are levied and collected from the respective counties, is not understood by the average tax payer. At the session of the legislature in 1901 a new law was enacted regulating the apportionment of state taxes. At that time an average of the assessment rolls of the various counties for the preceding five years was taken as a basis upon which to compute the pro rata share that each county should pay towards the expenses of the state. The per cent of the total amount of taxes to be raised for state purposes by Clackamas county was fixed 0335. This law will remain in effect until 1910 when a new basis for apportioning the state tax will be determined by getting an average of the expenses not including the item of roads and highways, of each county for five years. Under the present system the state officers determine the amount of money that will be required for state purposes and then compute what each county must raise under the apportionment of the tax that has been fixed by legislative act. This year the state board concluded that \$1,225,000 was needed. The per cent of this amount that is required of Clackamas county—0335 per cent of the total—amounts to \$41,037.50, including the county's share of the agricultural college tax. Under the provisions of the law it is required that the county board of each county make a levy for state purposes sufficient to raise the amount that is due from that county. The Clackamas county board had to make a levy of 5 mills this year in order to raise this county's share of the state tax—\$41,037. Last year Clackamas contributed only \$27,718 for state purposes so it will be seen that nearly twice the amount of money must this year be raised in Clackamas county for state purposes as was raised last year.

At the last session of the legislature the school law was so changed as to require a per capita tax of \$6 from each county for every child of school age in that county. Under the old law each county was required to levy a tax sufficient to raise a per capita tax of \$2.96 for every child of school age residing in that county. It will be noticed that the new law a little more than doubles the per capita tax so with an assessment roll double that of a year ago, the Clackamas county board had to levy the same tax of a year ago—5 mills—in order to raise the required \$6 per capita. Last year Clackamas county had to raise \$22,649 on the state school account while this year it must contribute \$46,622 to the same fund.

So it will be seen that Clackamas county is this year required to pay about \$14,000 more state taxes and \$24,000 more state school taxes, or a total of \$38,000 more taxes for state purposes than were raised

last year. Herein lies the cause of the high taxes that are complained of. The blame for the condition lies with the legislature and not with the officers of Clackamas county, who are only complying with the provisions of the statutes in making the levies. Extra appropriations, aggregating \$865,000, and covering the Lewis and Clark Fair, The Dalles Portage Railway and the Indian War Veterans, were made by the recent legislative session, and the money that was so appropriated is being provided from among the money that is now being collected for taxes.

But, with it all, Clackamas county is really fortunate in one respect. Considering the true value of its lands, manufacturing institutions and extensive resources, this county is bearing a small portion of the state's expenses. There are a number of other counties in the state, no more valuable than Clackamas, and a number of them for which the writer would not exchange Clackamas county with considerable boot, that contribute more towards the state's expenses. For instance, the following counties are cited, showing both the per cent and the amount of the state tax that is paid by each:

Table with columns Rate and Tax. Douglas .0340 \$42,262; Lane .0462 56,595; Linn .0526 64,435; Yamhill .0391 47,897; Umatilla .0490 60,025; Marion .0613 75,092; Even Polk pays .0307 per cent of the total or \$37,607.

while Washington, at .0301, contributes \$36,872, and neither of these counties is to be compared with Clackamas in the matter of real value of agricultural lands and resources.

While the taxes this year are rather excessive, yet the taxpayer should not place the blame other than where it belongs. We trust that this somewhat extended statement of facts will correct many of the erroneous impressions that exist in the minds of taxpayers. The county officers have fulfilled their promises by cutting the levy in two, following the doubling of the assessable values of the county. From the figures that have been presented in the foregoing paragraphs, it will be seen that the actual amount of money that will this year be raised for county purposes will be slightly less than was raised a year ago.

Do not unduly criticize the present officers, but give them the credit for having during the last two years given Clackamas county the best administration of affairs that the county ever had. The county has been managed since July, 1902, by the present officers as economically as ever before in the history of the county. At any rate, the expenses have been appreciably reduced from the record made by the preceding administration of Clackamas county affairs by fusion officers. The expenses of the county under the present Republican officers have been reduced from \$60,535.55, in 1901, to \$37,223.30 for the year 1903. During the same length of time the present administration of county affairs canceled a road indebtedness of \$37,000, and in the payment of outstanding county warrants gained three months. All county warrants issued prior to October 1, 1901, have been redeemed. These cold figures should quite completely disprove the charges of extravagance that are being made against the present officers by some Democrats.

THE NORTHERN SECURITIES DECISION

No United States supreme court decision in recent years is of greater importance or farther reaching in its effects than that by which the Northern Securities Company is declared illegal. The case equals in importance the insular cases and the income tax case. Its general tendency is to increase the power of the federal government and to lessen the control of the states individually over corporations. This centralizing tendency is one that has been in operation from the foundation of our government, and will continue. But this decision is a very great step forward in that direction. The political significance of the decision is also great. President Roosevelt is fully justified in his course, for which he was so bitterly denounced in Wall street organs when he entered upon it. It is worthy of special remark that Justice Holmes dissented from the majority opinion. When he was named a year ago by the President, the President was accused by the Sun and other journals of "packing the court" by appointing a man likely to uphold his course. The other three judges who dissented with Holmes were Chief Justices Fuller and Justice White and Peckham. The majority of five were Justices Harlan, Brewer, Brown, McKenna and Day. Even of these Justice Brewer, though concurring, presented an independent opinion, in which he held that previous anti-trust decisions had been more sweeping than was justified. It does not conduce to a high respect for the law in the lay mind when, on so vastly an important decision, five members of the greatest civil court in the world are to be found on one side and four upon the other. Justice Holmes dissented with particular vehemence from the majority. He said: "It is vain to insist that this is not a criminal proceeding. The words cannot be read one way in a suit which is to end in fine and imprisonment, and another way in one which seeks an injunction." He held that logically construed the decision should be followed by criminal prosecution. Justice White was also severe, saying that the principles laid down in the majority opinion are "destructive of government, destructive of human liberty, and destructive of every principle on which organized society depends." When doctors so disagree, who shall decide?—Argonaut.

The Salem Statesman says Hon. Wm. Galloway is one of seven aspirants for the nomination as one of the circuit judges in the Third Judicial District on the Democratic ticket.

WHAT IS MOLYBDENUM?

Few people have ever heard of the recently discovered mineral known as molybdenum, and fewer still know anything of its value, or its products and their uses, since it has been known but a few years, and is still classed among the rare minerals. And very few of our readers know that the richest and most extensive deposit of this mineral so far discovered is situated in Alaska, but a few miles from Skagway, directly on the line of the White Pass railroad, and is owned by residents of Oregon City. There are more than a dozen products derived from molybdenum, and their uses are various; among them being the coloring of porcelain ware, and the coloring of cloth where fast colors are desired. Its chief use, however, is in tempering steel, copper and other metals, its great value for this purpose being shown by the fact that steel armorplate which has been hardened by the molybdenum process has a resistance equal to armorplate of twice the thickness made of Harveyized steel, which has been in use for that purpose by the navy of the world for some years. And when it is remembered that the greatest warships are covered with armorplate ranging from three to nine inches in thickness, and weighing thousands of tons to each vessel some faint idea may be obtained of the importance and value of a substance which renders it practicable to reduce the cost of armorplate to approximately one-half and to increase proportionately the carrying capacity of the vessel. The German navy is now using molybdenum in the manufacture of armorplate, and Krupp, the great German gun maker, is using it for tempering gun metal. And its use in Germany alone is even now so great that the demand is far beyond the supply.

A little more than a year ago the deposit in Alaska was discovered, and several Oregon City people were enabled to get possession of it. They sent Mr. C. A. Miller, superintendent of the Willamette Falls Company, up there to investigate the deposit, with the result that a company, the Oregon and Alaska Molybdenum Mining Company, was incorporated by them, and twenty-two claims, covering the entire deposit, acquired. The company at once inaugurated development work on its property, which was continued all last season at an expense to the original owners of the property of \$3000, none of the company's working stock having yet been offered for sale. It is estimated that a further sum of \$3000, to be expended during the coming summer, will enable the company to prosecute its development work to a point which will show the full extent of the deposit, and put the property in shape for the actual work of mining. To this end the directors have decided to place that amount of the treasury stock, which is non-assessable, on the market for sale at par, or twenty-five cents per share, and this stock has been placed with V. B. Hyde, of this city, for that purpose.

The company is organized on a conservative basis, there being only \$50,000 of capital stock, all sold, and its officers are all well known business men of Oregon City, namely: President, C. A. Miller, superintendent, Willamette Falls Co.; vice-president, J. U. Campbell, deputy district attorney; secretary, J. P. Keating, bookkeeper Willamette Pulp and Paper Co.; treasurer, C. G. Huntley, of Huntley Bros. Co. This management, together with the probability that the \$3000 stock mentioned above, and the fact that the present owners have so much faith in what they have that not a share of the individual stock is for sale, even at par, is a guarantee that the company is not a promoter's scheme, but a genuine business enterprise, and that all holders of the stock will share equally in the profits according to their holdings.

The company has letters from Krupp offering to purchase the entire output of the mine, and from parties in this country making offers for quantities of the product, all at good prices, and with a view to purchasing the property outright. When it is known that there are but two other known deposits of molybdenum in the world, of sufficient extent to be worked with profit, the significance of these offers is apparent, and there is no doubt that the company will find very little trouble in disposing of its stock.

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