

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.
 The only Republican Daily Newspaper in
 Wasco County.
 SATURDAY, - - - DEC. 19, 1896
 EASTERN OFFICE—230 to 234 Temple
 Court, N. Y. City. E. KATZ, Agent.
 TRUE BASIS OF DAMAGES.

Under the above head the East Oregonian comments as follows:
 "Messrs. Seufert Bros. and I. H. Taffe, both of The Dalles, have obtained judgment for \$35,000 and \$18,000 respectively against the government for right of way of the proposed portage at Celilo. Judge Bellinger, of the United States court, before whom these cases were tried, interposes his objection to the verdicts of the juries and has set one of the judgements aside and will probably take action regarding the other with the view of protecting the people against such unreason. The Dalles papers, published in the environment of the beneficiaries of these judgments, complain against Judge Bellinger's action and attack his motives. The Dalles Times-Mountaineer intimates that the "twelve honest men" composing the juries have a better idea of the extent of the damages than Judge Bellinger. This sounds reasonable, and would appear to be the case; but is it true? Will The Dalles papers, that have taken up the cause of these claimants, please inform the public to what extent the Messrs. Seufert and Taffe contribute to the support of government? What are the taxable values of their properties, both personal and real estate? Do they pay taxes based on valuation of real estate, to the extent of the sums awarded them as damages for only a small part of their real property? Were the values on which the damages are based creations of industry or enterprise? If they have not contributed to the support of government through the taxation of values which they claim will be diminished by the building of the government portage, or if the values on which the claim for damages was based were never created by industry or enterprise, but are of the forms of wealth bestowed upon man by Mother Nature, which they have monopolized to their enrichment, why should they be entitled to damages in excess of their real injury, or in excess of the destruction, or taking for government uses of their property, the product of their own toil, or other's toil working for them?"

"With these points fully considered, a just claim for damages could be arrived at, and the East Oregonian ventures the assertion that the 'twelve honest men' composing the juries gave no consideration in these important particulars, and Judge Bellinger recognizing both neglect and ignorance in this connection, has taken the action attributed to him and, in doing so, has done his duty faithfully in the interests of the great mass of the people on whom the burden of paying such unjust damages falls."


The editor of the East Oregonian has peculiar views concerning taxation, being an ardent disciple of Henry George and an earnest advocate of the single tax. He discusses the measure of damages, not from the standpoint of things as they are but from that of things as he would like to have them.

We do not care to enter into a discussion of the single tax question, but without looking at the tax roll we will say that the gentlemen named are heavy taxpayers. They pay taxes on their property, but not on the rights and privileges that "run with the land." The damages in these cases are not caused by either the loss of land, or on improvements "created by industry or enterprise," but belong to the class which the East Oregonian describes as "favours bestowed by Mother Nature, which they have monopolized

to their enrichment"—that is the right of catching fish from the Columbia, of which they had a monopoly, and which the condemnation of their land would deprive them of. The right to catch fish is hardly under our present laws tangible enough property to be taxed, but it is valuable just the same.

We are not defending systems of taxation, but as long as the laws are what they are this kind of property cannot be taxed. It is like a corporation of an "artificial" character, yet it is valuable, even though an incorporeal hereditament. To illustrate our contention: The East Oregonian plant is worth a stated sum, and is no doubt taxed on its value as other property is. That value consists of the worth of its material presses, buildings and accounts, and is the same whether the paper clears \$100 or \$1,000 a month. The earning capacity of the property is not taken into consideration in fixing its value for taxing purposes. So with Seufert's and Taffe's lands.

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