

Impartial Inquiry Into Tax Assessment Controversy Should Be Helpful

Not entirely new is the complaint of County Assessor George Stock that he and his staff can't keep up to par with property assessments because our county budget makers won't supply enough money to hire enough help.

Not new either is the allegation of the county commissioners that the present budget for the assessor would be sufficient to get the work done, if he would organize and operate his staff more efficiently.

Not entirely new is the joint complaint of the directors of the Oakway Water and Willakenzie Fire Districts that the reason for this CHRONIC CONDITION in our county government is ORGANIC—inherent in the fact that county commissioners, though nominally "chiefs of state" in county government have absolutely no control over operating methods of subordinates.

(In the several county manager charter battles, this paper has emphasized that structural weakness in county government and we refer to it boldly now realizing that Republican and Democratic politicians will come rushing out hand-in-hand to scream: "Communism! Dictatorship!" etc., etc.)

What is spic and span NEW in this situation is for two official boards—in the study of their own problems—to discover this unpleasant truth about county government and make bold to state it. We doubt if the "super-patriots" will want to call them "un-American" for suggesting that it might be possible to find something better than the present setup.

What concerns us all in Lane county is the utter FOLLY of this condition, for these reasons:

If these districts are losing \$400,000 in valuations through failure to get all properties on tax rolls, this represents approximately a 10 per cent loss on their total potential.

If the same percentage applies throughout Lane county (and there is reason to expect it does) then the loss on total county valuations now set at \$55,033,962 must be somewhere between five and six million dollars.

This is a loss of considerable consequence to cities, school districts and to all of us who pay taxes.

Apart from all the problems of financing and management of public functions, there is the problem of SHEER INJUSTICE because those who are on the rolls must pay for those who are not.

These figures, of course, are mere estimates of possible or probable loss—because as things stand NOBODY KNOWS. And frankly, the rather bland attitude of the commissioners that somehow, in good time "the Lord will provide" is a bit shocking to us because we

think somebody besides Mr. Stock should get excited.

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