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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1901.

DAILY, WEEKLY AND SEMI-WEEKLY

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### OUR PLAIN DUTY IN CUBA.

President McKinley said it was "our plain duty" to establish free trade with Porto Rico, but when the time came to do it "our plain duty" was not performed and the president led the pack that were responsible for it. Now that the time has come to keep our promise with Cuba there is an inclination to even break that sacred obligation in order that the "strenuous life" may be made more strenuous.

It is our plain duty to respect the promise made the Cubans and to give them everything promised by implication and otherwise. We should see to it that they had a chance to govern themselves and create their own institutions of liberty and self-government. We should grant them the maximum of liberty and the minimum of restraint to do for themselves and not in anyway attempt to deprive them of any of the blessings and privileges of free men.

If they should make application to be admitted into the sisterhood of states without pressure on our part, well, that is another story and one to which we could turn an attentive ear. The truth is, we should do strictly by Cuba as we would wish to be done by if we were in her place and she in ours. Any sharp practice will not be countenanced by the American people, if we mistake not their temper and spirit!

### THE BRITISH AND THE ROER.

Upon Sir Frederick Sleight Roberts, first Baron Roberts of Kandahar and Waterford, P. C., K. P., G. C. B., G. C. S. I., G. C. I. E., V. C., D. C. L., LL. D. field marshal and commander in chief, the additional titles of "Earl Roberts of Kandahar and Pretoria and Viscount St. Pierre" have been conferred and gazetted by order of King Edward VII., says the New York World.

The title of Kandahar is given in reward for the valiant march to the relief of that city in 1880, one of the finest military exploits in the long annals of British warfare in Asia.

The title of Pretoria is bestowed because of his taking of that city in 1880 by a forced march, opposed by a far inferior force of Boers.

The Viscountship of St. Pierre is apparently added for good measure, and because it has an aristocratic and mouth-filling sound.

Meanwhile General Dewet, the brave Boer commander, has conferred upon himself, Napoleon fashion, two new titles. Having crossed the Orange river, he has become I. C. C., T. C. T., "The Invader of Cape Colony and Terror of Cape Town—with a military prestige which, already scarcely inferior to Lord Roberts' own, is daily growing brighter.

The one man is the creature of others, with the resources of a great nation behind him, while the other is the creature of himself with the resources of a free mind and strong will to guide him in his struggle to prevent himself and his countrymen from becoming subjects of Make Believe, Pretense and Fawning.

### THE RISING TIDE.

The following paragraph is from a speech made by Senator Cochran of Missouri in the United States senate a few days ago:

"Mr. Chairman: The pending bill, one of the general appropriation bills, forms a part of the budget the most extraordinary ever presented to the consideration of a parliamentary body, it represents an expenditure in line of peace far more than the most lavish expenditure which characterized the darkest hour and the greatest war the

world ever knew. This year the congress of the United States will actually appropriate more money for the support of this government than was appropriated by congress in 1864. Then we had 1200 ships on the sea and maintaining a blockade from Galveston to the Chesapeake; a million of men in the field, and were engaged in the most tremendous military enterprise the history of the ages records. I am aware that the figures show that in 1864 the appropriations were a billion and two hundred millions; and it should be borne in mind at that time the paper currency of this country was worth less than fifty cents on the dollar. So that if the obligations of the government had been discharged in gold they would have been a little over six hundred million dollars."

The rising tide of extravagance of the McKinley administration is good while it lasts and does much to establish the reputation of the "advance agent of prosperity" but this spending of money to make prosperity a dangerous game, which casts a shadow of ultimate disaster upon the country that is appalling. The stiffer the game is played the greater will be the penalty that will have to be paid in the end.

Many an individual has resorted to the same tactics and flourished for a time, to face at last bankruptcy and disgraceful failure. The government is only a sum made up of individuals and subject to the same inscrutable laws.

### TAXATION IN OREGON.

John P. Robertson, of Salem, writes an interesting letter to the Salem Statesman, as follows:

"Very properly the governor in his message sought to emphasize the necessity of reform in our mode of assessment and taxation, as the most important subject to come before them. But words alone fail to fully portray the whole truth. Facts, plain, unvarnished, official facts, diligently and honestly studied, only can honestly and honestly present the mind the extent of the failure of present laws to secure 'equal and uniform' taxation, and exact justice to all taxpayers. In the hope of calling the attention of the powers that be more fully to this subject, I have at much trouble culled from the official records the following statistical facts:

In 1860 the true value of all the property in the state was \$28,000,000. Deducting from this nearly 4 millions, or about 13 per cent—the same as in 1899, as not subject to state taxation—leaves about \$24,000,000 net taxable property within the state. This was assessed at \$19,000,000, or about 75 per cent of its true value. Of each \$100, \$75 was assessed and \$25 escaped.

In 1870 the true value was \$52,000,000; assessed at \$32,000,000—61 per cent true value, and \$20,000,000 was assessed and \$32,000,000 was assessed.

In 1880 the true value was \$154,000,000; assessed \$52,000,000—34 per cent of true value. Of each \$100, \$34 was assessed and \$66 escaped.

In 1890 the total true value was \$500,000,000; not subject to state taxation, \$75,000,000, or about 15 per cent—leaving \$425,000,000 true value, assessable. This was assessed at \$160,000,000, only 37 per cent of true value. Of each \$100, \$37 was assessed and \$63 escaped.

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In 1900 the true value was \$1,100,000,000; not subject to state taxation, \$150,000,000, or about 14 per cent—leaving \$950,000,000 true value, assessable. This was assessed at \$350,000,000, only 37 per cent of true value. Of each \$100, \$37 was assessed and \$63 escaped.

This year our net assessment was only \$117,000,000, \$50,000,000 less than seven years ago, and a fraction less than 25 per cent of our true valuation ten years ago! Thus for the last two years \$77 of each hundred escapes the assessor, and the other \$23 bears the unequal burden!

Here we see a rapid and almost unintermittent decline of assessed valuation, as compared with true valuation, and this decline was "equal and uniform" on all property the evil would not be so intolerable. But obviously it is not. From the official reports let us see what class or kind of property most successfully evades the assessor?

In 1860 the true value of real estate and personal property are not separately given. We will assume that there was a fair assessment and that each was assessed at the same ratio as the aggregate of both—about 75 per cent of true value.

In 1890 the true value of real estate subject to state assessment was \$305,000,000, and was assessed at \$108,000,000—35 per cent of true value.

Personal property was \$210,000,000 true value, and assessed at \$58,000,000—28 per cent of true value—7 per cent less than land.

1897: This year real property was assessed and paid taxes on \$109,000,000—36 per cent of true value; personal property (after exemptions) on but \$20,000,000—only 13 per cent of true

value. This land was assessed nearly three times as high as personal property.

1898: Real estate assessed \$98,000,000, 32 per cent, and personal after exemption at \$30,000,000, or 17 per cent of true value. Here land was assessed nearly twice as high as personal property.

1899: Here the assessed value of land was \$95,000,000, 31 per cent of the true value of 1890; while personal property, after exemption was but \$25,000,000, and only 12 per cent of the true valuation of 1890. 69 per cent of land escapes taxation, and 88 per cent of personal property!

1900: This year exhibits the ripe fruit of the present inefficient system, with land assessed at \$95,000,000, or to 31 per cent of its true value a decade before, and personal property at but \$24,000,000 and only 11 1/2 per cent of its true value ten years ago. Again land is assessed more than two and a half times as high as personal property. A and B have each \$6000 worth of property. A's farm, his home, is assessed at 31 per cent—\$1850. B's merchandise at 11 1/2 per cent—\$675. Say rate of tax is 20 mills. A's tax is \$31; B's only \$11.25, \$19.50 less than A is forced to pay!

Thus for four decades the tendency has been, and is constantly intensifying to heap the rapidly increasing taxation on real estate and exempt personal property, until now the very climax of injustice to the holders of land—little homes—has been reached. Let us trace its growth, and note the results.

In the state of Oregon, in 1860, land paid 35 per cent, of all taxes; personal property, 67 per cent.

1870: Land paid 56 per cent and personal property 44 per cent.

1880: Land paid 61 per cent and personal property 39 per cent.

1890: Land paid 65 and personal property but 45 per cent.

1897: Land paid 81, and personal property but 19 per cent.

1898: Land paid 73 and personal property 27 per cent.

1899: Land paid 79, and personal property 21 per cent.

1900: Land must pay 81 per cent and personal property only 19 per cent of all taxes!

By the census of 1890 land was 50 per cent of all our taxable property. But this year it must pay 81 per cent of all our taxes, nearly 60 per cent more than its just proportion. Personal property was 41 per cent of all our taxable property, but will pay but 19 per cent of all taxes, 22 per cent less than its rightful share.

We are thus within 19 per cent of the single tax on land, with its disadvantages, and none of its advantages.

In this, Marion county, in 1899 land paid 86 per cent, and in Multnomah in 1898, 85 per cent of all taxes.

In the latter county the assessor could find in 1899 but \$2,000,000 of merchandise, surely not 15 per cent of true value. He could find only \$27,000,000 of money in the county, while in one bank alone in 1900 there was \$619,000,000 of specie. Of notes and accounts he returned only \$1,371,000, while the loans of one bank foot up nearly as much—\$1,608,000. He found no shares of stock, and no telegraph lines. "Oh, Justice! Thou hast died to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason." But this is not all, nor perhaps the worst. Some classes of realty not only escape this extra burden thrown onto land by the shrinkage of personal property, but passes that, and a large share of their own rightful burden, over onto the farmers and modest homes of the comparatively poor.

In 1890 railroads and equipments, including street railroads, in Oregon, were valued by the United States census at \$75,000,000. These were assessed in 1890, at \$6,038,000, only 8 per cent of their true value ten years ago!

The attorneys for the Southern Pacific, in resisting the bill for the reduction of passenger rates from 4 to 3 cent per mile, said their road was bonded for \$30,000 per mile. It is taxed but little over \$3000, not ten per cent of true value! Worth \$35,000 to levy toll on the people for freight and fares, but only one-tenth that sum for payment of taxes! What a fall here, my countrymen! This extra burden thrown onto land by the shrinkage of personal property, but passes that, and a large share of their own rightful burden, over onto the farmers and modest homes of the comparatively poor.

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As a remedy it is proposed in house bill No. 68, which passed the senate with only one dissenting vote, to tax the unequal assessments of these last five years—years when this "systematic evasion of law" was the most flagrant—and enact these unjust, and unequal assessments into law, and make them the basis for the demand for the several counties for state taxes!

The counties whose officials have been most successful in evading the law, and defrauding the state for the last five years, are now to be protected in that "systematic evasion of the law" for the next five years! The people ask relief from unequal taxation. The house answers by fastening on them for five years to come the very injustice of which they complain!

What then? After 1905 the state's taxes are to be levied on each county, not on its proportionate amount of assessable property, but on its proportional expenditures for county purposes for the last five years preceding 1905. It would be just as reasonable, as equitable, and as constitutional, to base it on the number of men with red hair in each county. Can you see what law the senate? We shall see what we shall see. It is but the craziest patchwork, a temporary expedient, perhaps only designed to perpetuate present intolerable conditions for another five years!

Since, according to Mr. Robertson, personal property of certain forms is allowed to escape taxation by the assessors, and there seems to be no remedy for the abuse, why would it not be a good idea to put all holders of personal property on the same footing, by exempting that form of personal property, and raise the revenues needed for government by the taxation of land values only, in this way giving relief to the industrious and enterprising and taxing the drones and dogs in the manner. The first step is local option to devise its own ways and means of assessment and taxation, and the state's share being drawn from a tax per capita on the population of each county. If this were done it would be discovered that those whose personal property now escapes taxation because it is of such form that it can be hidden from the assessor, would find their profitable occupation gone, while justice would be done the worker and producer.

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One sorrel mare, white tail, three white legs, white stock in face, branded 8 on shoulder, about 5 years old, weight about 900 pounds.  
One white skanky horse, about 3 years old, weight about 800 pounds, no brand visible.  
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