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THE MODERN DRUGGISTS PENDLETON



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1902.

THE TAX SITUATION.

Between the newspapers, the officers and people, the tax question ought to be settled in Umatilla county. All are taking a hand in the discussion. Discussions are usually resultful. It is hoped that it will be in the case of this county's assessments.

Abuse of officials will do no good. It is admitted that the officials are honest. The point is to go to the root of the evil or laxity of the assessments, if there be any, and then begin on a proper foundation. The officer will then have no trouble in discharging his duty. One man can not revolutionize the collection of taxes in a day in Umatilla county. These things have to be accomplished gradually.

The best methods of collecting taxes and doing so equitably have not been determined. The tax question is an open one. Able writers have discussed the question for ages and they still differ on the subject. Umatilla citizens differ. In fact, there are no two of the same opinion. Admitting that a bad state of affairs exist, if the best conditions existed, they would still differ. It is an inherent disposition on the part of the people to differ in their opinions on all important questions.

In discussing these different opinions they should be discussed without abuse. To read some of the papers and hear some men talk, one would think Assessor Buzan the most corrupt or most ignorant man on earth. But when the matter is investigated all admit that he is absolutely honest and of average intelligence. An interview with Mr. Buzan discloses that a great many false statements have been made in regard to the matter and that there is general ignorance as to the real situation. But still it is admitted that conditions should be improved.

Here are some of the statements made: "Property is not equitably assessed."

"Property in Pendleton is assessed much higher in proportion to its value than is the property in the country."

"Farm lands worth \$50 an acre are assessed at \$5 and \$6."

"Lands lying north and northwest of Pendleton are inequitably assessed—one tract is assessed at 50 cents an acre and a tract lying by the side of it of the same character in every way, is assessed at \$1 an acre. Besides, some of these lands produce 20 bushels of wheat to the acre."

"The corporations are getting the best of it."

"The railroad is not assessed high enough."

"Men are all liars, for there is not a tract of land in the county assessed at its real valuation and the assessments are sworn to. 'I am a liar with the others,' said a prominent citizen."

All of these statements simmer down to the personal opinion of the man expressing them. Many of the statements are true. But there is a wrong impression about the cause of the situation and the manner of improving it. Buzan has neither lowered or raised the assessments on any property since he has been in office. Neither did his predecessor. The same valuation fixed on real property a number of years ago still remains. There has been no raise on the city property.

The fact that tracts of land belonging to corporations in the country are valued lower than those belonging to individuals is explained. When the valuations were fixed corporations held mortgages on many of the tracts of land. Since that time all of the good lands have been redeemed or purchased by individuals and the poor tracts were taken on the mortgages held by the corporations. That is explained as why the corporations all own "poor" lands and the individuals all own "rich" lands.

It is admitted that valuations ought to be raised on nearly every tract of land in the county; that they have all grown in value since the old valuation was put on them in panicky times. But it is still claimed that there is no necessity for this, as the difficulty is met by increasing the levy.

But under the increase in the levy it is claimed that those whose property is not properly valued escape and those with something like the proper value bear the brunt of the taxes of the county.

It is claimed that all are satisfied now for the reason that their property is assessed at less than its value.

It is urged that new valuations ought to be placed on all property; that much of it has increased in value more rapidly than other property since the last valuation, and for this reason the assessments have become inequitable.

The officers all agree that to attempt to raise the assessments at this time would require the sending out of nearly two thousand notices and require the attendance before the board of equalization of nearly every citizen of the county, and to take evidence and adjust the matter would require months of time and a large expenditure of cost to the county and taxpayers. This project will probably be abandoned.

The favorite remedy seems to be to let the present assessment pass, but before the next assessment is made to have a commission appointed to fix the valuations all over the county in conjunction with the assessor, and to let the valuations fixed by this commission stand for four years and then have another valuation fixed and so on as valuations change with the growth of the country.

It is admitted that no one man can do this; that the assessor who would attempt it alone would have a bitter fight from the day he started in to the finish and that one man's judgment would result in unfair assessments. A commission of property owners, versed in valuations, is thought to be the best method.

ZOLA—LESSON OF HIS LIFE.

Emile Zola's courage and sincerity, shown in suffering persecution for what he believed to be right—the cause of the bated Jews in general and that of Captain Dreyfus in particular—are spoken of with profound respect by the press of the entire world.

Courage and sincerity are so universally admitted to be virtues and so universally esteemed that it is to be regretted they are not practiced more. Perhaps it is because of their rarity that they excite such intense admiration.

It costs to be courageous and sincere. Danger must be faced in order to prove courage, and sincerity must do without the rewards that wait on time-serving insincerity.

The primary reason why these high virtues are rare and costly is that they are seldom recognized at first for what they really are.

The courage which dares to utter unpopular opinions, for example, is invariably paid with misrepresentation and abuse at the beginning. The public man who has it usually is so

calculated for a season that most politicians deem the virtue a luxury too expensive for them.

In Journalism it is the same. The newspaper that truckles to the predatory rich and defends their privileges pretends that it is the voice of the "better classes," and therefore eminently respectable, whereas the newspaper that upholds the public rights as against special privileges—which are nothing but license to steal—is denounced as disreputable. The predatory rich and all their organs and other lackeys impute to the courageous and sincere newspaper every sort of sins of which it is not guilty, with the object of punishing it for the one sin it does commit—the sin of trying to keep their hands out of other people's pockets.

When Zola poured his scorn upon the mean-souled bigots in France—many of them polished persons of the highest social position—who made a specialty of hating and traducing the Jewish race, he did a "yellow" thing. When he flung his defiance in the faces of the army and the government that were robbing of his honor and torturing an innocent man, Zola was "yellow" again.

To speak for justice when wealth and power are committed to injustice, to plead for the claims of humanity when it is to the interest of the privileged to be rapacious and cruel, to stand up for right when wrong is on top—these are always and everywhere "yellow" acts.

But in the end courage and sincerity win the victory over cowardice and insincerity. Zola, living, loomed an incomparably larger and nobler figure to the world after he had challenged wrong and taken blows for the right; dead, his memory is dignified forever.

And so must every man grow in the respect of all whose respect is worth having when, a moral question arising, he puts aside expediency and takes his stand for principle. Ultimately it is what one does, not what others who have an interest in abusing him say about him, that counts.—Hearst's American and Journal.



When a woman is nervous her imagination gives fantastic and threatening shapes to the most familiar objects. By day she starts in fear at every sudden or unfamiliar sound. By night the furniture of her room takes on affrighting forms of ghost or goblin. You can't reason with the nerves. Neither logic nor love can quiet them. They must be cured.

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