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T. L. DUGGER,
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THE PROPOSED TAX LAW.

THE VOTERS of Oregon will be required to pass upon a new system of taxation, next June. The proposed change is so radical that it behooves every tax payer to study the matter well, that he may vote intelligently thereon.

Everyone will admit that taxation, to be just, should be equal. That is to say, all property should be listed and valued relatively the same. The farmer, stockman, merchant, mechanic, professional man, and corporate wealth of every description—all should bear its just proportion of the burden of government. This is the purpose of our present taxation system. While, it is true, we have not brought our present system to the degree of perfection which we desire, we are continually patchingup the weak and defective places in the machinery, so that it is beginning to cut a level, clean swath. Experience will enable us to continue to strengthen the weak points as they are developed, until the system will come as nearly treating all equally and justly as may be. Let us, therefore, be very certain that a new plan will reach very much more nearly perfection than our present system, before we make the change.

The NEWS, without giving the proposed new taxation system as much study as it merits, is inclined to think unfavorably of the change. Our present system, as before stated, may yet need some "fixing," yet it is far superior to the proposed new law, in that the intent is to cause every property owner to contribute to the support of the state, in proportion to his holding.

This, the new law would fail to do in so glaring a manner, that the NEWS wonders why such an apparently unjust measure should be proposed and to expect the people of Oregon to give it their assent. It is proposed to exempt personal property from taxation and place the entire burden upon real estate. A sop is thrown to the farmer land owner, by exempting his stock, machinery, tools and improvements. But think of the merchant with his thousands invested; the professional man who earns more in one year than the average farmer can in ten; the money loaner, railroad rolling stock; the machinery and tools of the trust manufacturing establishments—all to be exempt, and then think who will have to bear the burden.

Farmers! suppose your stock, machinery, tools and other personal property and improvements should be exempt and the tax on your real estate should be doubled or trebled? Would you gain or lose by the change? Somebody, or his property, must bear the burden. So much money is required to support the town, county, state, schools, etc., and recently lots of it has been required. If you excuse, say one-half of the property from paying taxes, manifestly the other half will have to pay just double. No other solution of the question is possible. While it is true that we would make the holding of timber and other lands held for speculative purposes so unprofitable that they would be sold, we would burden the little home farm so heavily that it, too, would have to be sold. Indeed nobody would want to own land because of excessive taxation. One would prefer investing in personal property and manufacturing plants. The inevitable result would be that land would become valueless and revert to the state.

No, no! Our present system may be faulty; but the NEWS thinks it is infinitely superior to the "Single Tax" theory proposed. We know that under the present system, people can and do own their homes, and find it profitable to do so. It does not seem possible that they would own them a very great while, if the preposed measure becomes a law. A certain Mr. Shakespeare we believe, once said "Better bear the ills we now have than to fly to those we know not of." This advice may not have been very progressive; yet it possesses the virtue of being safe.

But why this anxiety to make this radical and untried change in our tax system? We are continually improving our present law in some of its defective respects. Last year our assessors, as a rule, made the most complete and just assessment, in the history of the state. Railroads, timber lands, telephone and telegraph companies, were required to pay more nearly upon a just and equitable assessment, than ever before. True, it made them squirm and use very strong language, when speaking of assessors and arbitrary equalization boards. But, probaply, the people, assessors, boards and tax collectors, will be able to bear the abuse heaped upon them from this source. The NEWS is a reform newspaper. It will favor any reform which it believes will make the condition of the people better. But it will never favor class legislation let it come in whatever guise it may. It will never favor the enactment of a law, either by the people or legislature, which will favor one class or classes of the people at the expense and loss of the remainder. The proposed new tax law is class legislation of the rankest kind. We don't want it. It would be destructive to the very foundation of American liberty and prosperity—the American home.

Therefore, voters, study this question thoroughly and unselfishly. Look at it from all points. See if it treats all classes of the people with equality and fairness. If you will, the NEWS thinks, as an honest fair-minded man, you will vote, "NO."

PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION.

PROPORTIONAL Representation is another measure which the people will be called upon to pass, next June. Of course the politicions will oppose proportional representation; for they are opposed to any plan that distributes political power and more completely represents the peolpe. These political bosses may be depended upon to be like the early Christian Fathers, opposed to any thing that will enlighten and make wise the common people. The Christian Fathers wanted to do all the religious thinking for the people in the early days; so that their power would be supreme. To enlighten the common people in matters pertaining to religion meant the dethronement of these early religious bosses. The modern political boss and professional politician is tarred with the same stick. If the people do their own political thinking and act in accordance therewith, they will soon find themselves (the bosses) searching for an occupation.

Proportional representation means that the minority party shall have representation in all branches of the government where there is more than one man holding the same office. The legislature, in particular, would be effected by the enactment of this law; but there is no reason why it should not embrace supreme courts, county commissioners courts or the circuit courts in counties like Multnomah. But the legislature is the particular branch of government this proposed law is intended to effect. The measure, should it become a law, will effect Linn county as follows:

This county has three members of the House of Representatives in the legislature. Each party would nominate three candidates as they now do. The two leading candidates of the majority party and the leading candidate of the minority party, would be elected. To illustrate: Suppose, in our total of about 5000 votes, 3000 are Republicans and the other 2000 are Democrats. A, B and C are the the Republican candidates and D, E and F are the Democratic nominees. A receives 3000 votes B 2995 and C 2990; D gets 2010; E 2005 and F 2000. Now all three of the Republicans, under our present law, would be elected; for they have each received nearly 1000 majority. Under proportional Representation A, B and D would be declared elected. According to our present political methods, it would seem unjust for C with 2990 votes to be defeated by D with 2010 votes. Looking at the matter from a Proportional Representation view point, the matter is different. A gets 3000 votes. 2995 of these same votes are cast for B. They are, to divide the vote, each representing 1500 constituents. D who would have 2010 votes would have a larger constituency than either A or B.

Considered from an equity standpoint the 2000 Democrats ought to be represented in the legislature in proportion to their number as well as the 3000 Republicans and vice versa, if the relative position of the two parties was changed.

The majority party, under this proposed measure, would always have a good working majority in the legislature; but not so large as to be cumbersome. Oregon has, probably, about 90,000 votes. Conceding the Republicans a majority of 20,000 would mean a vote of 55,000 and 35,000 respectively. The House of Representatives would then probably stand, if divided accurately by this plan, 37 Republicans and 23 Democrats.

Of course the division might not be in this exact ratio, for legislators are elected, with few exceptions, by counties and a different ratio would probably result. At all events, all of the people would be more truly represented than they are under the present system.

Yet Proportional Representation is open to grave objections. It opens a field for the fine work of the politician and, in all cases in Linn county, one of the majority candidates would be defeated by a minority candidate with a less number of votes. It would probably result in nominating two strong and one weak candidates by the majority party and and one strong and two weak ones by the minority.

All of the points and others, both for and against the measure, should be considered. The object of the NEWS in discussing these proposed measures, is to familiarize the people with the measures they must either vote for or against. If it can make these matters better understood by its readers, it will have accomplished its purpose.

Political Announcement

In this column will be published the announcements of any citizen who aspires to the candidacy for any office, subject to the will of the voters at the forthcoming primaries.

To the Republican voters of Linn County:

I hereby announce myself as an aspirant, subject to your will at the forthcoming primary election, for the candidacy for the office of

COUNTY RECORDER

GRANT FROMAN,
Present Recorder.

To the Republican voters of Linn County:

I hereby announce myself as an aspirant, subject to your will at the forthcoming primary election, for the candidacy for the office of

COUNTY TREASURER

J. B. LEATHERMAN,
Albany, Oregon.

To the Republican Voters of Linn County:

I hereby announce myself an aspirant, subject to your will at the forthcoming primary election, for the candidacy for the office of

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

T. J. BUTLER,
Albany, Oregon

To the Democratic Voters of Linn County

I hereby announce myself an aspirant, subject to your will at the forthcoming primary election, for the candidacy for the office of

COUNTY JUDGE

C. H. STEWART,
Present County Judge.

To the Democratic Voters of Linn County:

I hereby announce myself as an aspirant, subject to your will at the forthcoming primary election, for the candidacy for the office of

COUNTY JUDGE

C. L. SHAW,
Price Precinct,
P. O. Albany, Oregon.

COUNTY COURTS STATEMENT.

Four years ago the undersigned were chosen by the people to serve the public as members of the county court of Linn county. We have now almost served out our term, and are ready to report to the people what we have accomplished.

When we entered upon our duties in July 1904, the county was in debt $35,000. That is we had to borrow that amount in the fall of that year to pay running expenses until the new tax was received in March. A debt of something like this sum, we are told, had been in existence ever since the building of the new court house, and we concluded to get rid of it if possible. In our efforts to do this afterwards we were ably assisted by Commissioners Russell and Powell, the former during the first two years and the latter during the last two. The first year we cut the debt to $26,000; the next year we went several thousand lower, and this year we have succeeded in pulling through without borrowing a dollar and the county is now practically out of debt for the first time in years.

In the canvas four years ago Mr. Butler advocated the plan of the county building its own bridges. The matter was thoroughly discussed and he elected on that platform. The court accepted the instructions of the people and followed the plan with the result that we have built 49 spans, as many as were built in the 18 years prior to 1904, and without incurring one cent of indebtedness. This could not have been done had we not built them at a saving of from 20 to 30 per cent less than the usual cost.

During the canvas of four years ago the people made it very plain to us that they wanted more money spent upon our public roads. This we have done, and we are proud to be able to say that the roads give proof of it. Any one who has traveled over the county knows this to be a fact.

We have also bought several stone quarries, and gravel pits for the use of the county, and have added to the stock of tools and implements used by the supervisors, and still the tax levy has been reduced as follows—1904, 23 mills; 19.5, 21 mills; 1906. 10 mills, and 1907, 9 mills.

In 1906, when the system of assessment was changed from half to full valuation, the total valuation jumped from $8,000,000 to $18,500,000—$2,500,000 more than double the valuation of the preceeding year. Some have thought this would have justified the Court in making the levy less than 10 mills, but they forget the enormous raise in our state tax for that year. Ten mills on this excess of $2,500,000 would amount to $25,000, and the raise in our state tax that year was $23,000, so that all the raise in the valuation of that year was virtually swolled up by the additional sum we were compelled to pay the state.

The total valuation last year was $18,855,000 and a levy of 10 mills gave us $188,550. This year it is $20,582,000 and we have placed the levy at 9 mills, producing $187,038. The total amount on the tax roll is $235,3[illegible], but $44,367 of this is special school taxes and city taxes, leaving a balance of $187,938 to come into our hands. Of this fund a little over $60,000 goes for state taxes; about $48,000 to the schools; $18,720 goes to the special road fund, and the balance, about $61,000, will be used for general county expenses, such as roads, bridges, the poor, the courts, county offices, etc.

This is a condensed report of our stewartship, and we are somewhat proud of it. In administering the affairs of the county we have not allowed party politics to have any influence over us whatever, and in all things we have been governed only by what we thought was the welfare of the people. The term for which we were elected is about to close and we each have received many solicitations from members of all political parties to try for the same positions again. We are certainly better qualified now to carry on the business of the county in the way it should be done than we were four years ago, or possibly better than anyone else who has not had the same experience, and if the people, after reading the above statement, think we have done well and care to trust us again with the business management of the county, we have decided to accept it and will try our best to eclipse our former efforts to so conduct the affairs of the county as to meet their appropation. To this end we will each be a candidate in his own party for the official position he now holds.

C. H. STEWART
T. J. BUTLER.

EXECUTOR'S NOTICE.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been duly appointed Executor of the last will and testament and estate of Rebecca Jane Iorns, deceased, by the County Court of Linn County, Oregon. All persons having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present them, duly verified as by law required, to the undersigned, at his residence near Lyons, Linn County, Oregon, within six months from the date of this notice.

Dated February 7, 1908.

Thomas Iorns, Executor.

T. J. Stites,
Attorney for Executor.

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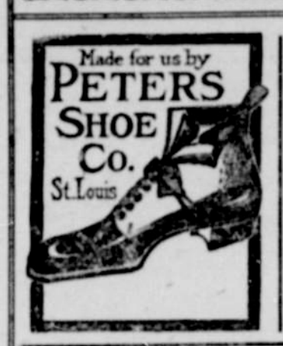

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