

The Santiam News

Politically Independent

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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BE HONEST WITH THE ASSESSOR

AS THE TIME OF YEAR is now at hand when the county assessor or his deputy will interview every tax payer, one's thoughts are sure to be drawn towards the subject of taxation in general and to the listing of his own property for taxing purposes in particular. While it is the duty of every tax payer to give an honest and complete return of his property to the assessor, it is a fact, that most men have a faulty memory when in the presence of this official. They overlook their personal property in an astonishing manner and what they do report, is remarkably cheap. For instance the horse, for which a cash offer of \$200 was refused, has become so worthless in the, then, opinion of the owner, that it is a wonder that the horse does not died of old age and decrepitude. And the fact that he, the tax payer, may have deposited \$500 in the bank a short time previously, is completely forgotten.

Now there is a reason for a tax payer to become almost criminally careless in listing his property with the assessor. He has reason to know that corporations and holders of interest paying securities escape with the payment of a comparatively small tax. He sees that his neighbor whom, he knows, is possessed of a large amount of personal property, and who ought to, in justice, pay a much larger tax than himself, discharge his debt to the public, by paying a much smaller amount. Knowing these facts, the taxpayer, though he may be an honest man so far as the public knows, begins to think out plans by which the amount of his tax dues will be reduced. He knows his neighbor has a faulty memory and he is tempted to have a like memory in the future and the temptation is, generally, too great to resist, nevertheless every tax payer subscribes to an oath that he has made a true return of his property to the assessor.

Of course this dishonest property listing is wrong. Men who make them are, practically, stealing from the neighbor who interprets "honesty" to mean exactly what the word implies. But they excuse themselves by saying others do so and I am compelled to follow the example, else be robbed. This same reasoning would make every-one a thief or bank robber.

But, when we consider the large amount of money raised, annually, some of which many of us think is expended unwisely, there is reason for the tax payer to pay his annual dues grudgingly. We see one-fourth of the state's revenue expended in erecting massive stone college buildings and for the maintenance of state colleges and whose teachers are the most efficient obtainable, while our own children must be content with the little red school house and an inexpensive instructor. We see the state expending about \$300 annually for each college student, while the country boy or girl is allowed but \$8 or \$9 per scholar. We see our county expending over \$7000 for an armory; which serves for an auditorium for Albany in case of a large gathering while, at the same time, a paltry \$500 is refused to aid in building up the county fair, something which is of real value to the farmer and which adds to the wealth producing power of the people.

It is this unjust and inequitable expending of public funds, which causes the taxpayer to avoid the payment of taxes to as great a degree as possible.

But there are many public improvements which the people desire and which are of benefit to the public. We want a good and efficient state government. We want the state's eleemosynary and penal institutions given a proper support. We want good roads, bridges, etc. All of these things cost money and the people are willing to provide it; but they do object to having their tax moneys expended for purposes from which there is no possibility that they, (the people,) can receive benefit. Nevertheless, tax moneys are expended unwisely and extravagantly in some instances, in fairness to each other, every tax payer should make an absolutely true return of his property to the assessor. Every man ought to bear his just portion of the burden of government. He is a thief if he steals from the public, just the same as if he should steal from a private individual. He is not a patriot; for he tries to shift the burden he should bear upon the shoulders of his neighbor. He is an honest man, insofar that the law makes him honest.

What a lot of laws we now have, would be unnecessary, if all men were honest and just in their dealings, one with the other. We could then spend the money now required for the prosecution and punishment of criminals, for educational purposes. Applying the same rule to nations, there would be no wars. As people become better educated and are willing to apply the same law to the procreation of the human family that they do to the breeding of stock, fewer idiots and deformed people would be born into the world and fewer people would become insane. Every man and woman should be willing to meet the duties of life, fearlessly and honestly. The human intellect ought not to be employed for the purpose of getting the better of our neighbor. In fact, men ought to be honest and just; but they aren't, and for this reason we are compelled to have rigid criminal laws. And if these same criminal laws should be enforced against the tax dodger, the honest tax payer would be relieved of much of the tax burden.

PATRONIZE HOME

THERE IS A DISPOSITION on the part of some people to send away or go away from home to obtain their supplies. They seem to think that the simple fact of their having purchased this or that article in a distant town, lends eclat to the purchase. Nor is this disposition limited to the country or the country town. Go where you will and you will find people who send away for their supplies. Even in New York City many of the bon ton ladies send to paris for their frocks.

The inspiration which causes people to do this is wrong and un American. It should be the policy of everyone to give home merchants, manufacturers, mechanics and producers in general, the first opportunity of furnishing the article desired. Then if the home supply is not what is wanted, or there is an exorbitant price demanded, the purchaser is warranted in sending away for what he desires.

Many people are in the habit of sending away to mail order houses for articles they can obtain from their home merchants. Presumably they have a sufficient reason for doing so. They either dislike the home merchant, or they can purchase from the mail order house more cheaply. But will it pay in the end? Of course when you order from the mail order house, the cash must accompany the order and you accept the goods or whatever it may be, whether or not your order of purchase has been filled as directed. On the other hand, you inspect the goods of the home merchant before you buy and, too, if the article is not what it is recommended to be, you are within reach of the seller and he will, generally, make his word good. Another feature. The home merchant helps to maintain your churches, your schools, your roads and pays taxes to support your city, county and state governments. If you desire aid in building country roads, the home merchant, manufacturer or mechanic is willing to give aid. The mail order house does none of these things. Every dollar you send him adds to the wealth of his particular city or town and is subtracted from your own. You cannot swap him produce for goods as you can the home merchant; nor can you say "I'll pay next week or next month" and get what you want or need.

And there is a duty resting upon the merchant too. He must keep what his customers want and sell it upon a reasonable margin of profit as well.

So we urge our readers to spend their money at home, so far as practicable. And when you have anything to sell, sell it to your neighbor as cheaply as you are compelled to sell to the commission merchant. It should be the purpose of all to sell anything we may produce as a finished product, if possible. In so doing, money is largely kept at home, home institutions are built up and you, yourself, partake of the consequent prosperity.

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