

The Santiam News

Politically Independent

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OVER TAXATION INDICATES DECAY

TAXATION IS THE PRICE we pay for civilization. But it does not follow that the higher the taxation the higher the civilization. Indeed an excessively high taxation system is an evidence of national decay; for whenever the earning power of a people is largely consumed in taxes, a gradual growth of ignorance results and this is an evidence of national decay. As a people becomes generally educated, and intelligence is the direct result of education, the general advance of civilization and national progress can always be noted. Transversely, if a people must give their time largely to protection of wealth and this wealth is principally consumed for the support of the state, then ignorance and national decay is a logical sequence.

We, the American people, have entered upon the era of excessive taxation. That the people are taxed, principally, in an indirect manner, has made it possible for this insidious system to grow. And the further fact that the taxes thus gathered have been under the guise of supporting the general government and for the fostering of our so-called infant industries, has caused the American people to rest in fancied security, until an immense system of graft and extravagance has secured a strangle hold upon the people; and the infant industries, practically, say to the people "help yourselves if you can." At least, this is the attitude of congress at the present time.

But few people seem to have any thought about what percentage of cost is added to the things we eat and wear because of the protective tariff. It has been stated by competent authority, that we pay from one-third to one-half more for the things we eat and wear, which are listed upon the tariff schedules, than we would have to pay, if we had not the protective system and our tariff laws were limited to the purpose of raising revenue for the support of the government. The same authority, also, stated, that for every dollar the consumer pays the government for the privilege of consuming foreign food products or for wearing clothing manufactured from foreign made fabrics, he pays our domestic manufacturing trusts and combines, ten dollars for every dollar he pays towards the support of the general government. To illustrate this point: An ordinary suit of clothes costing \$20 if made of American manufactured cloth, does not pay the government one cent of revenue; yet because of the protective tariff our manufacturers are able to charge from \$8 to \$10 more than they could sell the suit for if there was free and open foreign competition. Thus, we see what we are paying in the way of a bonus to our American manufacturers and we can, also, see the reason why these same manufacturers are on hand whenever there is a change of the tariff schedules being agitated by congress. Now if the average citizen consumes two suits of clothes annually, we can see what the indirect tax is in this one particular. And this is only a fraction of the indirect tax we pay. Of every pound of sugar we consume, about 1 1-2 cents goes to the sugar trust in the way of a bonus; all kinds of machinery, of which steel is a component part, costs 25 per cent higher because of the monopoly the United States Steel Corporation is permitted to enjoy. And there are others. In fact, nearly every food product, every article of clothing, machinery, medicine to cure us when we

are sick, the coffin which is the last resting place of our remains, the paper upon which newspapers and books are printed, all pay tribute to the government, trusts and combines. These are the indirect taxes which are added to the price of the goods we buy and which we do not notice and of which the average consumer is entirely ignorant.

Direct taxation appeals more directly to our pockets; consequently we notice it more. Once a year we walk up to the tax collectors office and donate to the state from two to four per cent. of the value of our property holdings. Nor can you put your finger upon a species of property which is not listed upon the assessors books. The time was when a man was not required to pay taxes on property which he did not own or was in debt for. Now he must pay on what he does not own as well as for that which he does own. More than this, the man from whom the property was purchased, is required to pay taxes upon the debt, thus making double taxation. A few years ago, the householder or head of a family, was allowed an exemption of \$300 in his assessment for his furniture and household fixtures; but now nothing escapes the exactions of the taxgatherer. Even the family dog must pay for the privilege of barking. Further, if we should want to take a little recreation in way of fishing or hunting, we must pay a dollar for either diversion. And when we come to vote, we do not escape; if we have not paid our poll-tax, we are in danger of being held up.

Summing up the tax question, the general government, trusts and combines levy tribute upon what we eat and wear, and the state, county, city and school district, road district, etc., require tribute of us for the privilege of owning a home or any other species of property.

If the tariff tax continues to increase and the direct tax by the state, county, city, etc., continues to increase as well, how long will it be until the average income from the farm and shop are, practically, consumed for the support of government and trusts? When this point is reached, ignorance necessarily increases and the decline of government is at hand. When ignorance commences to spread, the day of political and religious liberty will soon disappear and civilization will soon pass under a cloud.—Reproduced from an editorial in 1909.

It is said some of our orchard people are planting land with trees, which is wholly unsuitable for orchard purposes. These lands, in many instances, are sold to people who neither have seen nor do not know anything about growing of fruit in Oregon. Of course trees planted in such lands, will never produce fruit in a profitable way. Oregon is a first-class fruit country, if the lands adapted to the particular kind of fruit are used. But if lands not at all suitable for the growth of apples, or pears, or cherries are planted to either of these fruits, then sold to parties who have not seen them, nothing but harm can result. Such work of our orchard promoting people, is sure to not only rebound to their own discredit, but to the discredit of all Oregon. One man or woman swindled in this manner, means the keeping away from Oregon a dozen who, otherwise influenced, would come. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of good fruit lands in Oregon, and there are thousands of acres valueless for this purpose. The purchasers of fruit lands are very foolish if they buy without first seeing the lands and orchard promoters are simply swindlers if they sell these unsuitable lands to purchasers who do not know what they are buying. Such people would be better thought of if they would steal outright from the ignorant purchaser.

Corporations that violate their contracts, deserve even, less consideration than in the case of an individual. There is no reason, whatever, why the Oregon & California railroad company should have violated the conditions of the grant of land from the government. It is, simply, a clear case of graft.

The business man who, for selfish reasons, attempts to break down a public or semi-public enterprise, deserves to be—well not only boycotted but forced to leave the community. Scio needs to encourage more manufacturing industries rather than to discountage those we have.

"Half a loaf is better than none," appears to be the thoughts of many of our tariff reforming congressmen, these days. Yet if we can get the tariff schedules cut one-half, the result will be an immense relief to the consumer.

People do not object to having a reasonably large amount of public money appropriated for a meritorious purpose, but they will object to the appropriation of, even, a small amount for an unworthy purpose.

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