

THE SCIO TRIBUNE

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T. L. DUGGER, EDITOR AND PROP.

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*I pledge allegiance to my flag and
the Republic for which it stands, one
Nation, indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all.*

SCIO, OREGON, APRIL 7, 1921

WHY THE TRIBUNE OPPOSES THE BONUS.

A few days ago in an editorial the Tribune opposed the Soldiers Bonus Bill. The main reason is because Oregon is now overburdened with taxation and no matter what the measure is, if it increases taxation, this paper will oppose it. That is to say so long as it remains under the present management. By appealing to the people in a seemingly plausible manner, advocates for different projects have succeeded little by little in piling up the tax burden, until the value of property is being effected. So long as the farmer could sell his produce at war prices the adding of a few mills to the tax percentage made but small difference to the average property owner. In his mind he would say: "I'll simply have to raise an extra pig or a calf to pay the increase". But now that the value of grain and stock is rapidly declining to normalcy, the farmer or stockman finds that his tax bill has increased until several pigs or calves must be raised to satisfy the tax collector.

This is the leading reason why the Tribune opposes the soldier's bonus. But there are several other reasons why these additional bonds should be defeated.

As compared with what soldiers were paid in previous wars, the soldiers of the war with Germany were treated very liberally in the way of wages, insurance, etc. In addition the general government is being asked to provide a bonus for these boys and this is from whence a bonus should come, if a bonus is paid.

Another fact to consider is but half of the soldiers who were drafted or who volunteered, were sent to France, the other half were well housed, well fed and fairly well cared for if they should get sick. In fact many of this last half mentioned were better clothed and had better food than they were accustomed to at home. Even those who went across the water came home in good shape and ready to go to work if they desired, excepting those who lost their lives or who were wounded. Of course the wounded should and are being cared for by the government. Surely these boys who never left the camp of instruction should not be paid any bonus whatever. The government paid them as before stated, the highest wages she has ever paid her soldiers and they were in duty bound to defend our government in time of need. The boys who were not called out, but were ready to go when called are just as much entitled to a bonus as are those who never got past a camp of instruction.

Again in asking for a bonus from the state, these boys who wore the khaki are placing themselves on a par with mendicants and this is surely beneath their dignity. It is not claimed the state owes them anything. Hence the debt, if any, is of a patriotic gratitude nature which if paid as is asked, releases the state from even this gratitude. As a matter of fact they are simply trying to get, while the getting is good. The people, who stayed at home, worked and ate black bread are to be considered as well as the soldier boys and these last will be taken care of by the government in due time. If we could transfer the state college funds or some of the other funds to paying the bonus, well and good, but let's not do anything to add to the tax burden.

UNDER THE YOKE.

In a series of articles discussing taxation, The Journal has shown: That there has been an enormous increase in taxation in Oregon.

That after a certain limit is reached, over-taxation becomes destructive to property and prosperity. That an excessive tax rate discourages the coming of new industries and the investment of new capital with a corresponding stagnation in development and growth.

That excessive taxes reduce the value of land, discourage building, and drive those who would be home owners into the renter class.

That when development is restricted, assessed values decline with a corresponding increase in the tax rate.

That a heavy tax burden drives capital into non-taxable investment, stagnates business, decreases consumption and production and creates unemployment.

And that the major portion of taxes ultimately fall on the consumer, the owner of idle property, and the man who lives on improved property.

A tendency toward some of those results has already been noted in Oregon. Taxation has fallen heavy on land and on the consumer.

Perhaps no one class of individual has suffered more from present taxation than the farmer. Times are trying to him. He was gutted in the process of deflation. Consumption decreased, manufacturers reduced the amount of their products, and the producer could not sell his crop. His wool laid in the storehouse, his wheat was unsold and other of his products remained in the ground. Prices dropped below production costs.

On top of that his state tax burden is increased 111 per cent in one year. He paid 1.45 mills in 1912. He pays 9.93 in 1920.

When he goes to purchase his supplies the producer, as a consumer, absorbs part of the taxes of the merchant, of the manufacturer, and of the retailer. Their share of taxes is shifted forward to the consumer, and the producer, in purchasing his supplies, is a consumer, and he, therefore, pays the capitalized value of the tax when he purchases.

But he has his own taxes to pay in addition. Can he shift them? He cannot. In his sales others fix the prices of his products. Foreign goods imported, help hold his prices down. He cannot, therefore, add his taxes to his sale price and sell his goods.

And what does that tax do to the value of his land?

The market value of any property is established by the return on the investment. If the producer's yearly profits are cut 20 per cent by the imposition of a heavy tax which he cannot shift the value of his land immediately declines 20 per cent. If he attempts to sell to escape the burden of taxation he must pay the

taxes of the purchaser through the reduced value of the property. And, perhaps, if the tax is general, as it is in Oregon, he will find difficulty in reinvesting his capital in a more productive enterprise. Often, then, if he is financially able to absorb the taxes it is better for the producer to hold the property and pray for a reduction in taxes and an increased demand for his product.

The man in the city will say he is not concerned with the farmer's problems. But if he votes more tax burdens and renders more acute the producer's plight what happens to the wage earner? Some farmers withdraw their capital and re-invest it in other lines of endeavor or in non taxable bonds. The number of growers decrease and production diminishes. Other producers who have insufficient financial resources to withstand losses incurred by heavy taxation, or who have been operating on a narrow margin of profit, are forced out of business. Again farmers decrease and production diminishes. As production declines, employment and wages decrease, and prices to the consumer increase.

Then, under present conditions, the producer is forced to pay part of the taxes on all articles and supplies he purchases, he is forced to pay his own taxes on his land, and he is forced to pocket a loss in the value of his land as his taxes are elevated. Overtaxation drives him out of business and production diminishes. And then, every worker in the state, through increased prices of commodities and decreased value of labor, pays, along with the producer, for the destruction reaped by excessive taxes.

It is a situation menacing this state that can be relieved by clamping the lid on taxes.—Oregon Journal.

Whenever some of our big city republican newspapers run short on editorial subjects they take a turn at abusing ex-President Wilson. They never weary of hitting a sick man. Must be they want to prevent his getting on his feet, for he probably will never be a well man again. His administration is now history and he will be an honored figure in national affairs, when these yelping fists are forgotten. If President Harding leaves his imprint on world politics and affairs in general, as has Woodrow Wilson, he will do well, if nothing more.

Dollar a bushel wheat a few years ago was considered an extra good price. But now as it is about that price in country towns, it is thought to be the ruination of farmers, and it is, for it has cost farmers \$1.50 or better to raise it.

A recall election over a county office has just cost Polk county \$2500. The state recall of the public service commission will cost the taxpayers at a special election \$150,000. Soon we will recall a judge or the supreme court if it renders a decision that some one can get up a case against. There must be a better way.

British Columbia is having experience with the Pinchot policy which arrested development of the West and Alaska, and does not like it, if the Vancouver Sun expresses public opinion. Oil is believed to exist in the Peace river basin and prospectors are ready to go in and drill for it if assured of the benefit of their discoveries, but the dominion and provincial governments block the way by delaying action on laws fixing the terms. The Sun truly calls this the "blind, fatuous, strangling policy of conservatism—a policy of postponing prosperity." Western states know what it is and that the description is accurate.

Advertise in the Tribune.

What People Must Learn.

There is one idea that all Americans must learn, that is the simple truth that business is far more competent than public administration. Our country is still suffering from an overdose of belief in socialism and lack of confidence in common business efficiency.

Railroad labor leaders believe they are capable of telling the railroads how to manage the transportation problems.

Congress and state legislatures believe they can direct the operation of the merchant marine, public utilities and packing houses.

The people have suffered enough from panics to know that politicians cannot run our banking system, and are proud when banks make big profits.

The people have learned that big factories and big mines and big mercantile operations, that reduce overhead, serve them best.

They have still to learn that production and industries and business make the country prosperous, unless politicians interfere with them.

They have still to learn that high taxation and multiplicity of laws and regulations are only forms of confiscation of private enterprises.

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