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APPRECIATES THE COMMONER Ferdinand Erickson of Mt. Pleasant, Utah, sends to The Commoner ten new subscriptions, paying for the same out of his own pocket. In his letter Mr. Erickson says: "I am well pleased with the great work The Commoner is doing in behalf of the masses of the people of this nation, and for this reason I am sending you the foregoing names, to whom I am sending your paper without charge."

of protecting property, protecting gathered and accumulated wealth, of enabling men to make fortunes and to preserve their fortunes and there is no possible argument founded in law or in morals why these protected interests should not bear their proportionate burden of government.

No man in his right mind would make an assault upon wealth as such or upon property as such or upon the honest acquisition of property—we simply call upon those who have the good fortune to have accumulated wealth to respond to the expenses of the great government under which they live and thrive.

ORGANIZE AT ONCE

In an editorial entitled "Organize at Once," and printed in his paper, Senator LaFollette says:

The income tax may not be worthy of the slightest respect as a measure of legislation. The fact that it is a recognized means of raising revenue in the most civilized nations of the world may not mean anything. The fact that Roosevelt was for it, that Taft was for it,—until he changed his mind—that the supreme court was for it for one hundred years, until one of the judges changed his mind over night—all these things indicating a consensus of opinion of the enlightened statesmanship of all the world in its favor may signify nothing.

But it is respectfully submitted that a great majority of the good people of this country believe it sound and just in principle. Presidents have urged its use as a means of reducing swollen fortunes. Political parties have declared for it with honest enthusiasm. The highest economic authorities in an unbroken line for forty years have advocated an income tax to ease the burdens of labor, by placing some

additional weight on the shoulders of capital.

A thing so precious to so many good people should have been given a fair chance for its life—a fair fight in the open forum upon the single issue. When the senate voted to send the constitutional amendment to the state legislatures instead of to state conventions, it gave the enemies of income taxation long odds. It would be hard enough to carry, against the opposition of organized wealth, all but twelve state conventions with a membership chosen and instructed upon this single issue.

It is only necessary for the opposition to carry twelve state legislatures to defeat it. The candidates for the legislatures will be selected with respect to a multitude of issues—highways and bridges and the regulation of electric and steam railways and insurance companies, not to mention the struggle between prohibition and the regulation of the liquor traffic—any one of which issues may be used to obscure or sidetrack consideration of the constitutional amendment to tax incomes.

Besides, there are United States senators to elect in thirty states. It sometimes occurs that all else is lost sight of in the nomination and election of the legislature where United States senators are to be elected.

Is it to be expected that the legislature which is to be chosen in Rhode Island by the Aldrich machine, will be very enthusiastically for a constitutional amendment to tax incomes? How about some of the other states? Burrows, Carter, Clark of Wyoming, Depew, Dick, Dupont, Hale, Kean, Lodge, Nixon, Oliver, Page, Piles, Scott, all come up for re-election in 1911. They voted against the income tax. Unless their respective states elect legislatures opposed to these men, there may be counted against it on this basis alone the states of Rhode Island, Michigan, Montana, Wyoming, New York, Ohio, Delaware, Maine, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Nevada, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Washington, and West Virginia.

The position taken by the administration and endorsed by the senate assumes that it is necessary to amend the constitution before a tax can be laid on incomes. If the amendment is defeated the non-government-supporting millions escape taxation for all time. However hard the fight to carry the legislatures of three-fourths of the states, it must be won. The very existence of government itself might in some dark and unforeseen hour depend upon the right of the government to subject every dollar of the country's wealth to taxation.

It is a struggle to lay the foundation upon which we shall finally rear a more equitable system of taxation. Much of the vast wealth which privilege has taken from the toil of the many, for the benefit of the few, can be forced to render to the government that which it owes to the government, in no other way.

It will be a great battle. The patriotism of the country will contest openly for this amendment; the powerful opposition under cover. Congress having acted upon the amendment its friends should organize promptly in every state to secure ratification. Appeal to the public—arouse every taxpayer. It is the people's opportunity.

INCOME TAX EXCUSES

In the recent debate in the Georgia senate much was made of "saving to the states the right of levying an income tax instead of surrendering it to the general government." The states have got along pretty well so far without exercising the right and they are not asked to "surrender" it.

The income tax, we are told, "strikes every farmer." It will not strike every farmer unless some future congress so levies it as to strike every farmer; and no congress will be so idiotic. The high tariff does strike every farmer hard.

It is a "tax on thrift," objectors say. Often it is. Most taxes are. But sometimes also it will rest on the luck of idle heirs, or on predatory hoards, or on personal property that now escapes, or on American dollars that gild frayed titles abroad and there pay income tax! In every case it is a tax not on need but on means, not on consumption but on possession. It taxes wealth, not poverty.

"We should not help along a republican scheme of taxation," is said with ill grace by nominal democrats in some southern states whose members in congress served as catspaws in framing a republican scheme of tariff spoliation.

Here is the text of the amendment: "The congress shall have the power to levy and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever

source derived, without apportionment among the states and without regard to any census enumeration."

That is just what the democratic national convention of 1908 favored in its platform, in terms the most positive and unmistakable.

The real reasons for opposing the income tax are never mentioned by its foes. They are but two. One is that wealthy people do not wish to pay it. The other is that protected privilege fears income taxation may, by providing revenue, remove one poor excuse for the high tariffs that now throttle trade and load consumers.

Wealth and privilege wield vast power with legislatures, but the people have more if they will use it.—New York World.

CONGRESS COULD, BUT WOULD NOT

A correspondent of the Tribune asks it to tell its readers that if the income tax amendment were ratified a simple majority in congress could "pass a law that would tax every laborer, mechanic, and servant girl to the extent of one-tenth or one-quarter of his or her wages." Unquestionably a bare majority, with the approval of the president, could do that, but would it be done? The Tribune says no. If the correspondent wishes a reason, there is an all sufficient one. Congress would not dare to tax the earnings of laborers and mechanics. Parliament could make British laborers and mechanics pay an income tax. It does not, partly because their votes would upset any administration that attempted it.

The correspondent has forgotten, perhaps, that an income tax law was in force during the civil war. The government was in desperate need of money. It taxed right and left. Yet it exempted laborers, mechanics, and servant girls from the income tax. It is a foolish assumption that congress would do in peace what it did not do in war. There are economic reasons why the small incomes of wage earners should not be taxed. The compelling reason would be that congressmen would know that a majority of their constituents would not put up with it.

The Illinois legislature can tax to the limit. It could, if it deemed it necessary, levy taxes that would confiscate one-tenth or one-quarter of the property in the state. It does nothing of the kind because there would be a revolt of the taxpayers if it did. So there is no occasion for restricting what the correspondent may regard as the dangerous authority to levy taxes which the people have given to the legislature.

The national constitution empowers congress to declare war. Manifestly that is a dangerous power. A simple majority in congress could declare war against the world and then draft all the able-bodied laborers and mechanics into the army, but it would not. If every grant of power which could be abused—if the people permitted it—were stricken out of state and national constitutions, there would not be much left to them.—Chicago Tribune.

ALABAMA THE FIRST

Governor Comer of Alabama has signed the income tax resolution which passed the Alabama legislature with only two votes against it in the lower house, and by a unanimous vote in the senate. This gives Alabama the honor of being the first state in line for this great reform.

A SUGGESTION FOR MR. TAFT

The Philadelphia North American, a republican paper, prints this suggestion for Mr. Taft:

"Would it not be a good 'stunt' for Taft to pay the expenses of his trip around the circuit to tell the dear people what a good thing it is to be buncoed by the Taft-Cannon-Aldrich tariff iniquity just completed? He is fond of everybody confining himself to some particular 'stunt.' This would, at least, ease up on the people a little. Those increased salaries, traveling expenses and automobiles for our 'beloved' king and emperor surely appeal to the thousands of idle persons in central Pennsylvania. Looks as though panics can be caused by other than the democrats, don't it? But then when Emperor Taft meets "Czar Diaz" somewhere along the Mexican border we presume there will be more notes exchanged and experiences gone into to determine how much of oppression and deception the American people will stand from their sworn executives and legislators.

"JOHN G. SMITH. "South Fork, Pa., August 7."