

REPORT ON TAXATION STATE PRESS ASSOCIATION

To the Officers and the Members of the Nebraska State Press Association:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—Your committee appointed at the last State Convention, held in Omaha, June, 1913, to investigate and report upon the subject of taxation in Nebraska, begs leave to submit the following in compliance therewith:

In the first instance, this committee desires to extend to the editors of this state its heartfelt thanks for their ready assistance asked by the committee. In order the better to ascertain general public sentiment, the committee drafted a form of ballot stating certain propositions in tax reform and asked the readers of Nebraska papers to vote thereon.

The editors of the state, to the number of about one hundred and fifty, kindly inserted in their papers a stereotype plate of the ballot, and some others set up the form in their own establishments, publishing the same in their papers. A copy of the ballot to which reference is made is hereto attached and made a part hereof.

The most conspicuous result of the vote cast is the demonstration made that the present revenue system of Nebraska has few if any intelligent defenders anywhere within the state.

Our revenue statutes, published in a book of more than 120 pages, are a most pitiable fumble of idiocies, the strict enforcement of which would crush out of existence every vestige of enterprise in the State of Nebraska, except that of the foreclosing of mortgages and the business that grows out of sheriff's sales. Were it possible strictly to enforce these revenue laws, the people would flee the state as from a pestilence, and its prosperity would be doomed.

Therefore, while it is generally dangerous to allow public officials any discretion in the execution of the law, still the people of this state owe to their tax officials a certain debt of gratitude for their non-enforcement, even were the enforcement of these revenue laws possible.

There is today before the people of this state an amendment to our constitution which would, if adopted, enable the legislature, which under our initiative and referendum laws, includes the people, to remedy the defects of our revenue system.

The main object of the ballot was for the committee to find out if, in the average reader's mind, there was any idea that the State ought not to tax those things that the people desired and ought to have, or things that could hide or run away, or that could and would come into the State.

of all kinds in this state. If it was the intention of the framers of the constitution to encourage tree planting, this section should have enabled the legislature directly to exempt from taxation all trees, and not merely stated that the increased value of the land due to that fact should not be assessed. This, for the simple reason that the exact amount of increase in the value of the land due to the planting or cultivation of trees could never be ascertained with any degree of accuracy.

Let it be observed here that if to exempt trees from taxation will tend to produce orchards and timber lands, why will not the exemption of industry of all kinds from taxation encourage the establishment of industries of all kinds in this State?

The question of taxing the market value of franchises secured the highest affirmative vote of any question on the ballot. It was almost unanimous. There might be some of the spirit to "soak the corporations" in this vote, and yet there is some considerable degree of justice in the idea that the franchise of public service corporations should be taxed.

The franchise usually constitutes the most valuable part of the assets of these public utility corporations. The franchise is practically never taxed at present. The justice of taxing these franchises is in the fact that they constitute a natural monopoly granted by the people to the corporation, and are not in any sense the result of the efforts of the corporation itself.

This question of taxation, like most public questions, proves how the people in general may be opposed, and vigorously opposed, to the present system, and yet utterly unable to suggest a remedy. It is because of this general ignorance of the question of taxation that privilege is able to "put across" so many unfair jobs upon the people.

Naturally, then, it followed that in response to the question upon the ballot as to the source from which revenue should be derived, only about half of those voting suggested any remedies at all. However, of the total who did make suggestions of a remedy, about 75 per cent. either solely or in connection with other ideas, mentioned the value of land as the proper source from which revenue should be derived.

An overwhelming number of those voting supported the idea that the matter of local taxation should be left in the hands of the counties or cities directly interested. Local control of taxation is one of the progressive ideas of our time, and soon or late must be conceded to every community of the state.

subject to revision by the commission. There should be elected in every county an assessor for such county, with power to appoint his own deputies. He should be ex-officio a member of the State Tax commission.

Third. When the law makes certain exemptions from taxation, as of churches, schools and the like, it should not leave such matters in the hands of local assessors. Assessors are not the proper persons to decide matters of law. Such should be for the courts to determine.

Fourth. Though the Constitution directs that the value of all property shall "be ascertained in such manner as the legislature may direct," it would appear that the courts have arbitrarily ruled to inhibit the legislature from using any discretion.

Fifth. The statute providing that lands should be assessed every four years, while other properties are assessed every year, should be repealed. If our Constitution intends what it says about equality of taxation, this statute is clearly in violation thereof.

Let us be conservative. Let us consider the figures of the assessor only. In 1908 the value of this lot, not counting the improvements, was \$132,000. In the following four years it had increased to \$264,000.

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When I see about me, in the fields of intellectual attainment and culture, in the walks of business and in family life, so many disasters and tragedies long drawn out, of failing health and collapse of nerve, brain and muscle, I feel that health is the only bulwark upon which everything we prize in intellectual culture and religious perfection can ever be reared.

result only from his individual enterprise, while this increased value comes to this land not only independent, but in spite of what the owners have done. That is the manner in which the present revenue laws of this State reward those who are indolent and punish those who are thrifty.

Sixth. There should be a provision of law requiring each owner of land to make his own assessment, fixing its value for purposes of taxation. As a penalty for false estimates, any person or the State itself should be empowered to purchase such lands at the value so fixed by the owner.

Seventh. Many people do not realize the absurdity of the law requiring that taxes shall be levied upon only one-fifth of the assessed valuation. This law was framed and passed at the behest of the railroads, and the only honest excuse, if such can be considered honest, was that by this process the taxing authorities would be limited in the amount of taxes raised.

Eighth. All personal property taxes should be repealed. They are unjust in their very nature. They compel people to commit perjury, and they punish those who attempt to be honest.

Ninth. As a step in the line of progressive legislation, the State should provide for the assessment of all franchises in the State according to their market value. It should also provide for the assessment of the land of the State under the supervision of the State Tax commission, eliminating as far as possible taxes upon improvements.

The first electric plant within the Arctic circle will be erected at a mission at Point Hope, Alaska, the power being supplied by a windmill.

Old Coats and Old Friends. My coat and I live comfortably together. It has assumed all my wrinkles, does not hurt me anywhere, has molded itself on my deformities, and is complacent to all my movements.

Character is made up of small duties faithfully performed, of self denials, of sacrifices, of kindly acts of love and duty. —Emerson.

GET WIRELESS BY BEDSPRING

Eastern Amateur Experiments With a Novel Form of Antennae and Its Successful.

Cyrus H. Flandreaux of Peekskill, N. Y., gives the following interesting account of his experiments with a novel form of antennae for wireless telegraphy:

"There are many things used as antennae to catch the mysterious electric waves which carry our wireless messages through space, and I find that the springs of my bed serve as very efficient antennae. My room is on the second story of my house, and by using these springs as antennae I can easily read the signals sent out every night by the wireless station at Sayville, L. I., although they are not by any means so loud as when I use my outdoor antennae, which are 40 feet above ground, 60 feet long and consists of four wires on spreaders, the wires being two feet apart.

"The bedspring antennae are best for use with near-by high power stations. Sayville, L. I., is about fifty miles from Peekskill. With my outdoor antennae I continually hear the Arlington (Va.) naval station when it sends out the correct time signals at 11:55 a. m. and at 9:55 p. m.; also the weather reports, Brooklyn navy yard; New London, Conn.; Cape Cod and others, including amateur stations too numerous to mention.

"I have an all-round good apparatus. I hold a station license and an operator's license, both issued by the United States government. My official call is 3 V U."

Marble Windows.

Remarkably beautiful effects are secured by the use of marble as a means of transmitting light instead of glass. This has been accomplished by a new process which has been devised by an engineer of Hamburg, W. Engle.

Responsibilities. "Didn't you ask me why I paid rent instead of owning my own home?" asked Mr. Crosslot.

To Blow In, Probably. Mother—What are Richard and your father storming about?

The first electric plant within the Arctic circle will be erected at a mission at Point Hope, Alaska, the power being supplied by a windmill.

A friend in need seldom hesitates to tell you so.

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THOUGHT SHE COULD NOT LIVE

Restored to Health by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

Unionville, Mo.—"I suffered from a female trouble and I got so weak that I could hardly walk across the floor without holding on to something."



"I had nervous spells and my fingers would cramp and my face would draw, and I could not speak, nor sleep to do any good, had no appetite, and everyone thought I would not live.

"The makers of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound have thousands of such letters as that above—they tell the truth, else they could not have been obtained for love or money. This medicine is no stranger—it has stood the test for years.

If there are any complications you do not understand write to Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co. (Confidential) Lynn, Mass. Your letter will be opened, read and answered by a woman and held in strict confidence.

Your Liver Is Clogged Up

That's Why You're Tired—Out of Sorts—Have No Appetite.

CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS will put you right in a few days. They do their duty. Cure Constipation, Biliousness, Indigestion and Sick Headache.

Small Pill, Small Dose, Small Price. Genuine must bear Signature.

THICK, SWOLLEN GLANDS

that make a horse Whiskey, Roser, have Thick Wind or Choke-throat can be reduced with

ABSORBINE. Book 3 K free.

FREE TO ALL SUFFERERS. If you feel "out of sorts," "run down," "got the blues," "stiff joints," "headaches," "dizziness," "nausea," "indigestion," "constipation," "irregular menstruation," "nervousness," "excitability," "restlessness," "fearfulness," "inability to sleep," "loss of appetite," "loss of strength," "loss of vitality," "loss of nerve force," "loss of mental power," "loss of memory," "loss of reasoning power," "loss of will-power," "loss of courage," "loss of confidence," "loss of self-respect," "loss of honor," "loss of reputation," "loss of friends," "loss of love," "loss of hope," "loss of faith," "loss of faith in God," "loss of faith in Jesus Christ," "loss of faith in the Bible," "loss of faith in the Church," "loss of faith in the world," "loss of faith in the future," "loss of faith in the life to come," "loss of faith in the resurrection," "loss of faith in the judgment day," "loss of faith in the reward of heaven," "loss of faith in the punishment of hell," "loss of faith in the power of 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