

If you are opposed to the present revenue law that has so greatly increased your taxes vote either the straight Democratic ticket or the straight People's Independent ticket. Both parties are pledged to the repeal of this iniquitous and unjust law.

OUR NEW REVENUE LAW

Its operation fully explained by Hon. W. H. Thompson, in a speech at South Omaha. Burdens farmers, favors railroads.

In discussing the present revenue law we should not forget to inquire how and for what purpose it was enacted, remembering that in the campaign two years ago the issue was not as to the enactment of a new law, but the failure to honestly enforce the old. It must further be remembered that neither platform advocated its enactment, but that both recognized that the valuation placed upon the railroads years ago was not the fair valuation thereof for the last four or five years. The populists in their platform insisted that the assessed valuation should be raised at least \$50,000,000 before other property was touched in that regard. The democratic platform demanded a material increase in this valuation, and the republican platform recognizing this same situation, demanded a raise in the valuation thereof, but not quite so definitely. And thus the campaign was fought out, each party denying that it intended to enact a new law on the subject, while the candidate of the democrats and populists for governor insisted that if he was elected he should enforce the old law as it stood, but warned the people, if it permitted the republican party to become successful at the polls, that in order that they might be blinded and misled as to the real raise in the value of the railroad property, a new law would be enacted, and by reason thereof all of the taxes of the people of the state would be raised; and while the railroad assessment would necessarily be increased, that the relative position of the assessed valuation of the property of the state would not be changed to the advantage of the people, but by reason of the law, the republican party would be permitted to go before the people at the next biennial election and proclaim that they had raised the assessment of the railroads, as they do in this campaign, to some \$27,000,000, and therefore, that they had answered the demand of the people. When in truth and in fact, the railroad valuation is farther out of comparison to the real value of the property assessed now than it was be-

fore the enactment of the law. Hence, I fearlessly charge that this law was enacted, not in compliance with the demand on the part of the people, but as a direct attempt on the part of those who had previously been shirking their duties to blind the people to the actual facts.

During that campaign the candidate of the democrats and populists insisted that the floating debt of near \$2,000,000, unconstitutionally created, was the direct fruit of the failure on the part of the state board of equalization to fairly value the railroad property of the state, and that this property should be compelled to bear that burden, and that the same should not be transferred to the shoulders of the general tax payers of the state, and that if he was elected he should attempt to so have the property of the state valued as to gradually wipe out this blot on its fair name. The republican candidate insisted that he was equally conscientious, equally desirous of protecting the people as against the encroachments of the railroads, and that he too was equally anxious for the wiping out of this floating debt. Yet, notwithstanding this insistence on his part, we find that the floating debt under the first biennium of his administration will be increased nearly one half million.

It must be remembered to start with that the railroad property of the state is not assessed, and has not been, as other property, but that a separate and distinct tribunal has been created for this purpose consisting of the governor and other state officials. That the complaint for the last five years or more has been against this extraordinary tribunal, owing to its failure to do its duty as to the property that came under its special and exclusive jurisdiction. That the campaign was waged against this board's dereliction, and not as against the dereliction of the numerous local assessors. The people had complained against this special tribunal and against this favoritism and exclusiveness as to taxation that this state board had been

used as a tool of the corporations, as a political machine, and that they had failed to represent the best interests of the state, and that a deaf ear had been turned to the ordinary taxpayer, and in every complaint, and in every appeal that had been made to them, as shown by the true history written in the records of these different offices, as well as in the reports of the supreme court. Hence, instead of the people desiring to give this state board of equalization more power, they desired that they first fulfill their duties as to the power they had. But, instead of carrying out this desire on the part of the people after election, a new scheme was evolved, and that was, that a new revenue law should be enacted, and that in it all of the power of the people as to local taxation, as to their right to select by their ballot their own local assessors, should be wiped out and the little protection and power that the people had should be taken from them and lodged in this same state board of equalization, which was made by this law the absolute and unqualified czar of the taxing power of the state, the sole tribunal as to questions of taxation. It lays down the rules and regulations, and transmits them to the county assessor, and the county assessor, at the peril of losing his office, is bound to follow them.

That this new revenue law was enacted as hereinbefore indicated, and inspired as hereinbefore suggested, by the corporations seeking to farther advance their interests in the premises, let me call your attention to its different provisions.

It is provided that the lands of the people of the state shall be assessed but once in four years. Section 121, 2d paragraph. That the property of the railroads of the state shall be assessed every year. Section 54. And thus this high valuation that has been placed upon the lands of the state at the last assessment shall stand as against them, without power to in any manner change it, for four long years, and the people are left to trust this state board of equalization that has heretofore failed to do its duty to keep the railroad assessment as it is, or at least not to reduce it.

This local assessor is a county officer, elected for four years. Section 19.

His salary ranges from \$250 to \$2,400 per year, section 22; besides \$3 a day for each of his deputies, section 22. You are not permitted to elect your own local assessors in your respective townships, but the county board and the assessor appoint these deputies, determine the number, and they are not necessarily taken from the respective wards or precincts in which they live. The county assessor being authorized to discharge the local assessors, and to re-appoint who he may see fit, without any consultation with the county board. Section 20.

So much for its centralizing effect, as well as its cost, and its deprivation of the people of their right to local self-government.

That this law was inspired by the railroads themselves, and that you can hear the ring of the bell and the toot of the whistle in every section, let me call your attention to some further provisions thereof, and prove by the law itself that wherever it lays its hand upon the individual it lays upon him the strong arm of the criminal law of the state, smirching his reputation and stealing his good name; but where the arm of the law touches at all the railroad corporation, or the telegraph, or others heretofore assessed by this same state board of equalization, there the frown and the disgrace of the criminal law is removed, and the smiles and beauties of the civil law take its place. That while the criminal law is to grasp the county assessor, the local assessor, there is no law enacted that touches, or in any manner interferes with the good name of this same state board of equalization, against whose acts the entire state stands in revolt.

If any assessor, or deputy, refuse or neglect their duty, they are guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction shall be fined not less than \$20 nor more than \$100. Section 27.

If any individual fails to list his property, or to answer inquiries when made, then he is guilty of a crime and subject to a fine of not less than \$50 nor more than \$2,000. Section 53.

And if he knowingly swears falsely he is guilty of perjury and punished by imprisonment in the state penitentiary. Section 53. The same as to corporate officers; being the only section where the criminal law is to such officers applied.

If the individual fails to report or list his property with the county assessor, then his property is to be listed by the assessor, and as a penalty, the valuation thereof is to be raised 50 per cent. Section 55.

The farmer, the mechanic, or other citizen, can not even move or tear down a building, old or new, on any land where any delinquent taxes are unpaid, and if he does he is guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in a sum not exceeding \$100 and costs; and moreover, be liable to the county in a civil action for the amount of all delinquent taxes on said real estate. Section 160.

Further, any county officer (not state officer), who shall fail and neglect or refuse duties imposed, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction fined not less than \$50 nor more than \$500.

The officers of the said corporation are to make statement. Section 87. And if they fail to make the statement, as asked by this state board of equalization, are they to be guilty of a misdemeanor? Their names blasted and in every complaint, and in every appeal that had been made to them, as shown by the true history written in the records of these different offices, as well as in the reports of the supreme court. Hence, instead of the people desiring to give this state board of equalization more power, they desired that they first fulfill their duties as to the power they had. But, instead of carrying out this desire on the part of the people after election, a new scheme was evolved, and that was, that a new revenue law should be enacted, and that in it all of the power of the people as to local taxation, as to their right to select by their ballot their own local assessors, should be wiped out and the little protection and power that the people had should be taken from them and lodged in this same state board of equalization, which was made by this law the absolute and unqualified czar of the taxing power of the state, the sole tribunal as to questions of taxation. It lays down the rules and regulations, and transmits them to the county assessor, and the county assessor, at the peril of losing his office, is bound to follow them.

Thus it will be seen they are not only shielded by having to deal alone with the civil law, but the forfeiture is but a mere bagatelle, compared with that which is placed upon the individual by way of fine, when you take into consideration that the individual might not be worth to exceed \$25, and that he is to be fined not less than \$50; he has no resort to the civil courts but must appear before the criminal court to answer as to his neglect. He may not be worth more than \$25, all the property that he has, and yet he must forfeit to the state \$50 or stand imprisoned until it is paid; while these corporations, that are worth their millions, can defy the state officers and yet simply forfeit the sum of not less than \$1,000 nor more than \$5,000, and this amount to be recovered in a civil suit; not against the officer who has failed to do his duty, no smirch even of a civil suit is to touch his name, but the corporation that he represents will appear on the title page of the action. They can go down into the merchant's business, demand his books, his invoice, his insurance, his accounts, and every minutiae of his own private business can these officers demand, and if he fails to comply with any of their insinuating requests, he is guilty of a misdemeanor and fined as hereinbefore stated. Yet, if the officers of one of these corporations fail to respond to the process of the said board, or who refuse to answer any proper question put to him by said board, he simply forfeits the sum of \$500, to be recovered in a civil action. Section 91.

And all of this for what purpose? Simply to evade the demand of the people made two years ago, which was but the culmination of a growing storm raised solely and alone by the actions of these corporations, and this same state board of equalization to raise the valuation of railroad property in harmony with other property of the state that the floating debt and the necessary expenses of the state's operation might be paid, and the onward march of our progress not retarded. And what excuse is given by the governor, honored by our state, for the placing of his signature to such an enactment. Simply that "the people wanted it." Yet the people knew nothing about it. It had never been submitted to them, either by vote or discussion. And what excuse, when asked if the favors that he had received from the railroads might not have had some influence on his actions in this regard, his answer is, "I admit that I have received these favors from the railroads; there is no law preventing me from receiving these favors from the railroads." "If the people desire that I should not receive them, let them enact some law preventing me, and I will sign it." "If governor, I will sign it!" Certainly he would not give his approval to an act that he deemed had no merit and was not for the best interests of the state. If for the best interests of state along moral and economic lines, there must be a sentiment at least abroad in the state that these favors accepted and held by him as a public officer are not conducive to independent and unbiased action. Thus if the governor would approve an anti-pass bill, then he knows that in morals he should not now receive them as governor. Further, if he knows there are some of the people of the state who believe these favors influence him in the performance of his duties, then he owes it to himself, as well as to his constituents, to refuse all favors. As he acts for all, he should strive to have the confidence of all. Even those who do not seriously oppose the receiving of these favors, or the use thereof, will most seriously dissent from his excuse for receiving them. The flimsy excuse he gives is far worse than the act itself. As well say, I know it is not right in morals that I, as governor, should receive these favors, but as there is no law prohibiting it, I will continue to do so until the people in their might demand and obtain a legislative enactment prohibiting the receiving of favors from those asking special leniency. "If the people desire that I should not receive them, let them enact a law preventing me!" This kind of logic might fill the governor's cellar with standard oil. It might stock his farm with blooded stock by those who desire to ship into the state diseased cattle and horses. It might fill his larder with the purest of foods by those who desire to palm off impure products upon the state. It might encompass him with all of the beauties, the grandeur, and the pleasures of a king.

Our friend, Governor Mickey, might obtain valuable instruction along these lines by examining the records of his home county of Polk, which show that in 1902, Polk county paid Nebraska in taxes, \$9,000.

In 1903, Polk county paid Nebraska in taxes, \$13,120.

In 1904, Polk county will pay the state of Nebraska in taxes, \$20,470.

In 1903 the railroads had their taxes reduced in Polk county, by the state board, about \$75.

And this year they were placed back to about what they were before being reduced, so that in 1904 the railroads will pay no more taxes in Polk county than they paid under the old revenue law, and not as much as they did pay ten to twenty years ago. And further, that the assessment under the new law cost Polk county some \$1,200 more than under the old.

It is to be hoped that the day may speedily arrive in this state when its officers may feel that a public office is a public trust, and that that trust should be kept so sacred as to let no act of him who holds it cast any suspicion thereon. At least that he who holds these high and sacred positions may so guard and protect them both by act and expression as not to poison the fountain of patriotism in the minds of the rising generations.

State Warrants

One thing that unfailingly indicates the general condition of state finances is the standing that claims against the state have in the open market. If the public eagerly seeks these claims for investment, it indicates a general confidence in the financial condition and management of the state government. When the public eagerly seeks these warrants they go to a premium. They will command in the open market a price above par, since they are a secure investment and bear good interest. When the reverse is the case and the public does not seek investment in these warrants they will not only not command a premium, but may fall far below par and be at a discount.

Another point worthy of consideration regarding the value to the people in having state warrants command a premium in the open market, lies in the purchase of the state of its immense supplies. For instance: If a firm bids on furnishing any supplies to the state, it is very likely to accept state warrants in payment for them. Therefore, if a firm realizes that state

warrants are at a discount, say 6 per cent, then the firm figures that in furnishing goods in the sum of \$100, it is to receive only \$94. It will therefore figure the cost of the goods accordingly, and will furnish only \$94 worth of goods in place of \$100 worth. On the other hand if these warrants to be used in payment, command a premium, then the state will receive as much over \$100 worth of goods in the purchase as the premium amounts to in the open market. When it is considered that the purchase of supplies for the state amounts to hundreds of thousands of dollars, then the consideration to the state in this matter of warrants becomes stupendous.

A bit of history upon state warrants may be of some interest now. In 1896, when the "redeemers" of old had sway in the state of Nebraska, state warrants were drawing interest at 5 per cent. At the same time they could not command a market even at par, but sold for 94 to 96 cents on the dollar—a discount of from 4 to 6 per cent. Soon after the fusionists took control these warrants not only began to sell at par, but went to a premium of 1 per cent. In July, 1899, the rate of interest on state warrants was reduced to 4 per cent. Nevertheless, these warrants continued at a premium of from one fourth to three fourths per cent, and remained so until the infamous "redemption" of 1900. Since the "redeemers" secured control, and during the entire period of their "incumbency," these warrants have not been at a premium once. They are now selling at par.

Cowardly State Officials

Did Not Dare to Follow the Intent of the Legislature and make Provision for Paying the State Debt.

During the last session of the legislature and during the time the new revenue law was under consideration the principal arguments made in support of its passage were upon the theory that some provision must be made for paying the state's debt. It was upon that theory that many of the members were induced to give the law their support. The law resulted in greatly increasing the grand assessment roll to \$294,779,244.65. When the board met to make the levy, to fix the number of mills of taxation, it refused to make the rate high enough to raise even as much money as the last legislature had appropriated. It totally ignored the intent of the legislature and made no provision whatever for paying any part of the state debt. The board of assessment of which John H. Mickey is chairman were too cowardly to perform their full duty as intended by the legislature. They knew that the present administration had recklessly squandered the people's money, that taxation must be much higher on that account, and feared the wrath of the voters if they should also make provision for paying a part of the state debt. Intelligent voters will see to it that such cowardice, duplicity and hypocrisy is properly rebuked at the polls on election day.

Here are the figures for proof that the levy is insufficient and that the state must necessarily go deeper in debt instead of having it reduced as the legislature intended.

The grand assessment roll of property in the state is..... \$294,779,244.65
The state board made levies as follows:
For general fund 4 1/2 mills which would raise in 1 year..... 1,326,506.60
For schools 1/2 mill, which would raise in 1 year..... 147,389.62
For University 1 mill, which would raise in 1 year..... 294,779.24
Total for 1 year if all taxes levied and assessed are paid..... \$1,768,675.46
The same levy in 2 years, the period covered by the legislative appropriations would raise..... \$3,537,350.92

The total appropriations made by the last republican legislature for the two year period were \$3,740,280.70 or \$202,929.78 greater than the total amount of taxes assessed for state purposes. This means that if every dollar of the greatly increased taxes is paid it will still lack \$202,929.78 of meeting all appropriations made by the last republican legislature.

That is what The Independent calls an unequalled record for extravagance. That is why every farmer and every small property owner and tax payer in Nebraska should vote for George W. Berge for Governor, and the straight Democratic or Populist ticket, including members of the legislature.

The Independent, Lincoln, Neb.

THE REASON WHY.

State taxes this year are approximately 60 per cent higher than in the years 1897-8-9.

The county assessor and his deputies have made a most thorough, painstaking search for every scrap of property owned by the people, so that this big increase in taxation may be placed upon it.

But why should state taxes be so much heavier this year? The question is easily answered. It is because the

Republicans Redeemed Nebraska.

Let us compare notes. In 1897 a Fusion legislature appropriated \$2,335,843.40 to be expended by Fusion officials in maintaining state government for the two years ending March 31, 1899. Fusion state officers carried on state government with efficiency those two years at a total cost of \$2,161,587.17, and paid off \$364,589.46 of the floating debt.

The republican legislature of 1903 appropriated \$3,740,280.70 to be expended by republican officers in maintaining state government for the two years ending March 31, 1905.

Fusion state officers in four years cut down the state debt \$677,093.10. In the three years of republican "redemption" the debt has been increased \$535,729.49. And why?

Because the "redeemers" are spending the people's money with a lavish hand. Let us put the figures in handy form.

The State Debt.

Fusion reduction, 4 years..... \$677,093.10
Republican increase, 3 years..... 535,729.49

Appropriations.

By Fusion in 1897..... 2,335,843.40
By Republicans in 1903..... 3,740,280.70
Republican Increase..... 1,404,437.30

Do you wonder why your taxes are so much heavier? Study the figures and know the reason why. Increased state taxes are absolutely necessary to pay for the luxury of

REPUBLICAN "REDEMPTION."