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IS IT CARELESSNESS?

Readers of The Independent whose subscription accounts are delinquent will confer a favor upon the management by promptly sending the amount due. Several thousand of our readers are careless in this regard. The result is that important educational work planned by The Independent is frequently delayed pending the accumulation of the necessary funds. This is true now. Organization work preparatory for the national convention should be done, but shortage of funds handicaps every proposed movement. With most of the delinquents it is only CARELESSNESS—NEGLECT. We hope those who read this will profit by it and send payment without delay. Remember that the principal expense for publishing a newspaper is for labor, paper, and postage, all of which requires SPOT CASH. The Independent has no corporation friends to draw upon for funds. It is published in the interest of its readers and depends solely upon their patronage for its support. Examine the date with the address on the wrapper of your paper and if delinquent send the amount due without delay. We need it.

OMAHA TAXES

The tax levy in Omaha is 60 per cent higher this year than it was last year, and last year it was 30 per cent higher than it was the year before. The people down there are praying for "a scourge of populism" to take the place of republican redemption. There is a widow down there, who, when her husband died, left her \$1,000 from a fraternal insurance company. This she invested in a mortgage, friends advising it. It is her only property, save a few household goods. When the assessor came around she conscientiously returned the mortgage at \$1,000 and her household goods at their full value of \$50. Thus she has a tax of \$14.70 to pay.

Another case is where a woman had saved up \$100 from her husband's wages of \$45 a month. She reported this \$100, which she was saving to pay a debt along with her household goods. Thus, though the \$100 was used up for necessities long before the tax became due, this family, with its income of \$45 a month, finds itself paying over \$4 personal taxes, while the president of one of the large banks of the city pays but a little over \$3 on the personal property of his home.

There are 531 of the wealthiest men of Omaha who have made no sworn return of their personal property. Republican redemption came high, but the corn shuckers and mullet heads would have it.

THE SOCIALISTS

Many of the phrases of the socialist national platform are of the exaggerated kind that socialists delight in using in conversation and debate. Here are two of them: "It is impossible for a majority of human beings to ever become possessors of private property." "Conscious and complete triumph of the working class as the only class that has the right or power to be." After inditing that long address containing many extravagant statements they proceeded to adopt the populist platform. It must be remembered that there are two socialist parties in this country. The other one does not believe in reform, but

holds that it is best to let things wax worse and worse until they are unendurable and then right them by a revolution. The populist platform that the Debs branch adopted at the close of the long essay, is as follows:

"The socialist party pledges itself to watch and work in both the economic and the political struggle for each successive immediate interest of the working class; for shortened days of labor and increases of wages; for the insurance of the workers against accident, sickness and lack of employment; for pensions for aged and exhausted workers; for the public ownership of the means of transportation, communication and exchange; for the graduated taxation of incomes, inheritances, franchises and land values, the proceeds to be applied to the public employment and improvement of the conditions of the workers; for the complete education of children, and their freedom from the workshop; for the equal suffrage of men and women; for the prevention of the use of the military against labor in the settlement of strikes; for the free administration of justice; for popular government, including initiative, referendum, proportional representation, equal suffrage and municipal home rule, and the recall of officers by their constituents; and for every gain or advantage for the workers that may be wrested from the capitalist system, and that may relieve the suffering and strengthen the hands of labor."

The convention nominated Eugene V. Debs of Indiana for president and Benjamin Hanford of New York for vice president. What can be attained by organizing another party whose practical demands are identical with populism is hard to understand. What is practical could well be fought for with some show of success under the populist banner, and the dreams and visions could be indulged in without bringing them into politics.

RAILROAD ASSESSMENTS

The Independent is not at all querulous. It does not wish to find fault with the John M. Baldwins and the other high-priced and eminent lawyers who have been trying to inform the board of equalization and the public generally concerning the right way to tax railroads. The Independent agrees with them all. In the first place, they say that the roads ought to be taxed according to their "net earnings." That's all right. But let the farmers be taxed under the same rule, so that when the grasshoppers eat up all the crops or the hot winds blow and the farmers have no "net earnings," they will have no taxes to pay. That is only another form of the income tax and The Independent has always advocated that mode of taxation as eminently just.

Then these lawyers say, let the railroads be taxed on the cost of the roads. If the roads only cost \$20,000 a mile to build, let them be assessed at that. Here again The Independent agrees with these eminent hired men. That's all right, only tax the farmers in the same way. If a farm only cost \$5 an acre, and most of them only cost \$14 for 160 acres at the time they were settled and at the same time the railroads were built, assess the farms at that. If a farmer has a steer that he paid \$5 for when it was a calf and is now worth \$25, assess it at \$5.

The lawyers don't want the roads assessed as a unit or a whole. That's all right. But when the steer is assessed apply the same rule. Find the value of the steer's horns, his hide, his meat and his tallow and assess each part of the unit separately. The Independent is not captious. It makes no objection to any of the propositions submitted by these eminent hired men. All it asks is that the rules asked for should be made of universal application.

NOW LISTEN, BIXBY

The editor of The Independent has no secrets concerning public affairs, and none concerning the administration of state affairs by the populist party. Dr. Bixby indited the following, accompanied by some of his felicitous rhymes the other day:

"Some day we are going to lariat T. H. Tibbles and hold him in captivity until he gives up the secret upon which he has been silent so long. He must tell us why the populist party when in power failed to tax the railroads as it agreed to do if intrusted with power. In his editorial columns he studiously avoids mentioning this question, though multitudes are famishing to read what he has to say."

The facts are these. Dr. Bixby: When the populists first captured the legislature they bent all their efforts to getting lower freight rates. Local

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rates were then, and are now, double in Nebraska what they are over in Iowa. A maximum freight bill was passed and relief from railroad oppression was sought in that way. The roads fled to the federal courts and by the treason of the republican attorney general to the interests of the people, who put things into the record without the knowledge of the attorney hired by the people, Mr. Webster, got the federal courts to shut off any relief from that course.

When all hopes in that direction were gone, then the populists turned their attention to more severe taxation of the roads. They put in their platform an express declaration on that subject and demanded that the assessment of the railroads should be raised to \$40,000,000. Then you, Dr. Bixby, and the rest of the republicans, did all in your power to defeat us and we were defeated. The people declared by their votes that they did not want the assessment of the railroads raised to \$40,000,000. The last legislature and the present state officers were elected on that issue. They are therefore under no obligations to raise the assessment of the railroads to that amount. If the people do not want the railroads to pay taxes on \$40,000,000 of property, The Independent cannot see how state officers elected on that issue can in any way be bound to do a thing that the people repudiated at the polls. The railroads spent many thousands of dollars to defeat the proposition advanced in the populist platform that their assessment should be raised to \$40,000,000. They bought space in the newspapers of all parties and explained their position to voters of all kinds, and the voters said that they should not be assessed that amount. The roads won a victory in a fair fight before the people and the men that they elected have no right now to desert the roads. If a majority of the voters of this state want a railroad government, they are entitled to, and ought to have it. The Independent believes in a government by the majority and it wants to see the will of the majority enforced.

The populist party, when in power, never made any agreement whatever concerning the taxation of railroads. It first attacked high freight rates and agreed to lower them and it passed such laws. Then it attacked the low assessment and promised to raise it to \$40,000,000, but it was defeated. The populist party grew up first on national questions. The farmers had been reduced to penury by low prices and those of us who were on farms at that time will never forget the horrors of those days. They demanded more money, higher prices for farm products and lower freight rates. The men who were elected to office by the party were unaccustomed to lawmaking and the details of government. The man

elected governor was counted out. There were some traitors in their ranks, but they gave this state the best and most economical government it ever had. During the hardest years that this state ever saw, much of the time corn selling at 10 cents a bushel, they paid off over \$600,000 of the state debt. They did not increase taxes. Every institution of the state was well cared for. While Dr. Bixby and his fellow republicans are in the habit of referring to this period as "the scourge of populism," every man connected with it is proud of the part he bore in it. There were some minor scandals, and there always will be, but the state never lost a dollar by embezzlement or otherwise.

Compare this with the record that the republican party has made. Embezzlement of a million dollars. The more than doubling of taxation. An enormous increase in the state debt. High offices parcelled out among the railroads—one road taking one United States senator and another road the other senator. The governor named by the railroads far in advance of the convention. Is there any doubt that the record of the people's party will always be a bright spot in the history of this state?

Two decisions of the supreme court of the United States were handed down last week, one of which was in the line of despotism and the other in favor of the railroads, in which it spread out the infamous "fellow servant" ruling wider than it was ever spread before. Heretofore if a railroad employe was killed or injured by the negligence of a man working with him, it has been held that the road was not liable for damages as it was the fault of a "fellow servant." Now that has been spread out to cover men in different trades working anywhere for the company. Step by step corporate power advances. In the Turner case, while no one will deny that every government has the right to exclude from its shores whom it pleases, the argument which the judges used to sustain it is purely despotic. Under that ruling, Tolstoy could not come to the United States.

The talk of the delegates from Omaha to the republican state convention was to the effect that nominations had long been made and the party completely controlled by Tom Dennison and other gamblers in Douglas county, but they modestly claimed that this delegation was of a better sort. However, Tom Dennison has not yet been turned over the court that indicted him in Iowa. No other indicted criminal was ever treated in the same way. Tom must still have a big "pull."

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