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TERMINAL TAXATION

The Taxation of Railroad Terminals for City purposes will not disturb the present plan of mileage taxation for State, County and School purposes.

Quite a number of taxpayers in the state have written me during the past few months asking my opinion concerning terminal taxation, and especially wanting to know if the terminals of the railroads are taxed whether it will increase the taxes of the people in the counties where there are no railroad terminals. Quite a number of these inquiries have come from the central and western portions of the state. It is manifest that many of the taxpayers over the state have a fear of what is called terminal taxation of the railroads. However, when they come to understand the facts in the matter their fears will all be dispelled.

In the first place it must be borne in mind that all the railroads in the state are assessed by the state board of equalization and assessment. The county and precinct assessors have nothing to do with the assessment of the railroads. Under the law the state board first finds the total value of each railroad in the state. In making up this total valuation the state board is supposed to take into account, among other things, the value of the terminals of the railroads in all the cities in the state. When the state board has once arrived at the total value of a certain railroad, then it divides this total valuation by the total number of miles of this railroad in the entire state. This will give the assessed value of one mile. When the state board once finds the assessed value of one mile, then it is only a question after that of the number of miles in each county and city. The reader will see that by this method a mile of railroad in the sandhills is worth as much for assessing purposes as a mile in Omaha or Lincoln. In other words all the terminals and improvements of the railroads in all the cities are taken into account in the total mileage assessment throughout the state and every county for state, school and county taxes shares equally according to the miles of railroad in the county.

The above theory of assessment for county, school and state purposes is right. Nobody seeks to disturb or

change it in any way. This plan is proper for county, school and state taxes.

But how are the railroads assessed in the cities? The law as it now is provides that the city authorities shall take the assessed value of the railroads in each city or village as made by the state board, which assessment is a mileage assessment and does not include the railroad property in the city or village, except as taken into account and shared in the total assessment.

Terminal taxation means that the plan of assessment for county, school and state purposes shall not be disturbed but that in the cities for city purposes alone the railroads shall be assessed on all the property actually in the cities. In doing this it will not increase the taxes of people in the western counties one cent. It will simply make the railroads pay more taxes in the cities and villages. It will make the railroads pay taxes for city purposes on the actual property they have in the cities and villages. All the railroads in the state last year were assessed in round numbers at \$47,000,000. If we had a law providing for the taxation of railroad terminals in the cities for city purposes this \$47,000,000 assessment would have been made just the same. Terminal taxation therefore is right and such a law should be passed.

As it is now all of the railroads together in Lincoln do not pay as much taxes as some of our single business houses. The same thing is true in Omaha and other cities in the state. Take for instance, in Lincoln, the railroads have valuable depots and other valuable improvements. They own hundreds of acres of land. On all of this property they pay no taxes for city purposes, except only as valued by the state board, which is but very little. That the railroads should pay taxes in the cities on the actual property they own in the cities is obvious for many reasons. They use the streets of the cities; they have police protection; they have fire protection. Quite frequently the fire departments in the larger cities put in all night protecting the railroads from loss by fire. A law properly drawn taxing the terminals of the railroads for city pur-

poses will not increase the taxes of the people anywhere in the state one cent, but will make the railroads pay just that much more in the cities for city purposes alone. It in no way effects other taxes.

Either terminal taxation is not understood or else there has been much demagoguery in connection with it. Two years ago in my campaign I advocated terminal taxation. All over the western portions of the state in nearly every republican paper I found that republicans were appealing to the people to vote against me because I was in favor of giving Omaha and Lincoln more taxes from the railroads and thereby compelling the people in the western part of the state to pay just that much more. I had hard work in combating this appeal to prejudice and self-interest. This year the tables were somewhat reversed. There were some democrats who made the argument that the republicans made two years ago. What the people want is to know the truth about it and when they come to understand the question fully they will know that terminal taxation does not mean more taxes for the people, but it does mean that the railroads shall pay their just share of taxes in the cities. Any bill drawn along these lines, in my judgment, should receive the hearty support of the taxpayers of the state.

GEORGE W. BERGE.

RESENT APPOINTMENT OF BRYCE

English Politicians Made Jealous by Selection of Ambassador

London—Never surely has there been so much heart burning over the appointment of any ambassador as that of James Bryce to Washington. It is now learned it is severely resented and fiercely commented on at the St. James club, for it takes away a plum from the civil service, including a first class pension, and almost certain knighthood. To give it to an outsider in consequence, checks promotion among the higher branches.

There was heart burning enough when Sir Phillip Currie and Sir Julian Pauncefote were given embassies over the heads of some half dozen ministers who thought they had claims, but at any rate Sir Phillip and Sir Julian were not exactly outsiders.

Mr. Bryce's only connection with foreign affairs, however, is that twenty-years ago he was under secretary in Mr. Gladstone's short ministry. He is not even a member of the St. James club.

U. S. SENATOR BROWN

Norris Brown s Elected United States Senator, Receiving the Full Vote of His Party in Legislature

The house and senate met in joint session at 12 m. on Wednesday the 16th and ratified the ballot cast in separate branches of the legislature on Tuesday, electing Norris Brown to the United States senate from the state of Nebraska to succeed Hon. J. H. Millard. The full republican vote was cast for Senator Brown, it being ninety-five as there were two absentees. The fusion votes, thirty-six in number, was cast for Hon. W. H. Thompson of Grand Island.

The ratification of Mr. Brown's election in the joint session Wednesday marks the second event of this nature in the history of the state, the election of a senator nominated by a state convention, Mr. Burkett being elected in the same manner two years ago.

WILL ASSEMBLE BIGGEST FLEET

England Will Hold Greatest Naval Maneuvers Ever Witnessed

London—The largest number of battleships and cruisers ever brought together at one time will assemble at Lagos next month for the combined British maneuvers, which are to take place off the coasts of Portugal and Spain. The channel, Atlantic and Mediterranean fleets, with attendant cruiser squadrons, will take part in the evolutions.

The assembly at Lagos will provide one of the most gigantic object lessons possible as to Great Britain's naval strength under present conditions. The total number of ships which will be assembled at Lagos will be sixty divided as follows:

Battleships, 30.
Cruisers, 16.
Scouts, etc., 14.

When it is pointed out that the total of the effective fleets of Germany and France combined number only seventy-seven ships, the power of the combined British fleet will be realized. At the same time it must be remembered that Great Britain has other ships at home and in different parts of the world, which are ready, if called, for active service.