

Something of Taxes In Richardson County

(Continued from former page.)

This shows how much the burden has added, even after the state board has made the ten per cent increase. Here are fifteen individuals, taken as their names appear at the head of the records who have been increased only \$10.24 for all of them for state taxes.

The fact that some these making individual showings of less than \$200 in valuation are generally reputed to be worth upwards of \$50,000 in personal property—farmers too, makes the room for complaint smaller yet.

The showing in the matter of real estate also leaves little room for complaint. From the records are here taken two quarter sections from the extreme corner of each of the fifteen precincts of Richardson county. For the nine precincts first named the southwest quarter and the southeast quarter of the sections are taken. For the other six the northeast and northwest quarters are cited. The figures for 1904 include the 10 per cent increase made by the state board, and which is now in the courts for legal interpretation.

	Val	State	Val	State
Sec	1903	Tax	1904	Tax
Speiser...1	\$ 880	\$ 8 36	\$1,520	\$ 9 12
Speiser...5	880	8 36	1,584	9 50
Humboldt 6	1,155	10 97	1,964	11 78
Humboldt 6	866	8 22	1,300	7 80
Franklin...1	925	8 78	1,623	9 73
Franklin...1	1,045	9 92	1,683	10 09
Nemaha...1	711	6 75	1,584	9 50
Nemaha...1	700	6 65	1,584	9 50
Grant...1	1,100	10 45	2,178	13 06
Grant...1	1,070	10 16	2,178	13 06
Porter...2	942	8 94	1,336	8 01
Porter...2	1,124	10 77	1,425	8 55
Ohio...2	1,259	11 96	2,182	13 09
Ohio...4	935	8 88	1,559	9 35
Barada...1	420	3 99	712	4 27
Barada...1	440	4 18	712	4 27
Arago...2	530	5 03	792	4 75
Arago...3	555	5 27	1,330	7 98
Salem...1	1,210	11 79	2,534	15 20
Salem...1	1,100	10 45	2,376	14 25
Liberty...1	1,133	10 76	2,376	14 25
Liberty...1	1,133	10 76	2,217	13 30
Falls City 1	1,075	10 21	1,692	10 15
Falls City 1	1,175	11 16	1,692	10 15
Muddy...3	1,050	9 97	2,257	13 54
Muddy...4	1,100	10 45	2,106	12 63
Jefferson 2	1,075	10 17	2,059	12 35
Jefferson 2	900	8 55	1,584	9 50
Rulo...12	1,105	10 46	1,995	14 97
Rulo...6	800	7 60	1,663	9 97
	\$269 97		\$300 61	

In reading the above it must be remembered that much of this is \$100 an acre land. There is very little of any other kind in Richardson. The Muddy precinct man whose farm shows an assessed valuation of \$2,257, (an actual valuation of \$11,285) would not sell the place for less than \$16,000 cash if a buyer should appear tomorrow. His state taxes are increased from \$9.97 in 1903 to \$13.54 to 1904. He is willing to pay that much additional toward paying off the state debt providing for the growing needs of the

state institutions. The increase is larger than the average, but the extra \$3.57 will not break him up. He is likely to say less about the new revenue law than some man who has had his personal taxes for state purposes raised from 22 cents to a fearful total of 34 cents.

SOME PERTINENT QUESTIONS.
Some instances are particularly interesting. Take the 253 acre farm of Henry Gerdes of Barada. Gerdes is running for the legislature on a platform demanding the repeal of the "robber tax law." The fusionists are going to try to elect him, using the other legislative candidates as trading stock. Last year the Gerdes farm was assessed at a valuation of \$1,315, although he would not have sold on an offer of \$20,000 spot cash. His share of the state tax was \$12.49. This year the assessors placed the valuation at \$2,317 and the state tax on that amount is \$13.90. That gives Henry \$1.40 worth of campaign thunder to use before election. If the 10 per cent raise by the state board stands, he will have been abused to the tune of \$1.39 more all for the trivial and insufficient reason that the state needs more money than it has been receiving during past years.

Another interesting case may be noted. Take the Sam Lichty farm of 160 acres in Falls City precinct. The farm sold a few months ago for \$16,000 cash. Last year the valuation was placed at \$1,375 by the assessors and the state tax was \$13.06. This year the valuation was \$2,558 and the state tax on that is \$15.34. Imagine Sam Lichty or the present owner of this magnificent farm making a howl because there was a raise of \$2.28 in the state tax, or even because the state board added on \$1.53 more. Farmers like Lichty do not kick on paying their debts. They know that the state debt must sometime be paid, and that increases of two or three dollars on \$16,000 farms will no more than keep the state machinery grinding and will not catch up with the debt in a hundred years.

RAILROAD VALUATION.
In 1903 the railroads in Richardson county were valued at \$454,221 and this year the valuation is \$768,396. The increased state tax on this is \$301. The fusion campaigners will try to show that this is not enough. Yet a fusion state board of assessment left it at the lower figure and worse during their four years of control, and John F. Cornell, a

TIMOTHY SEED

NEW CROP

RECLEANED

Alex F. Meyer

Richardson county man, was a member of the board. Cornell is high up in the counsels of the fusion party here and desires to run for the state senate on a platform demanding a return to the other revenue law. He is the same Cornell who as state auditor rode over the main lines of a railroad with his family in a special car during the night time in order that he might continue to assess the property as branch lines. One of these fictitious "branch lines" runs through Richardson, and in the old days the railroaders induced reformers like Cornell to leave the figure as placed by reformers like Benton. In the meantime a poorer road which maintained no lobby in the fusion court was assessed high to make up some of the difference. When Cornell runs for the legislature this fall he will not explain in his speeches why he permitted this to go on while he was auditor. He will simply charge that the increase of the roads here was small this year at the time of readjustment because a lobby kept the valuation of one down and the other was already so high they were ashamed to jolt it up much more. In the meantime the democratic board and the local democratic officers have been busy piling up county taxes and township taxes and school taxes and township taxes, and all other possible kinds, in order that the tax burden may be so heavy it will prevent the citizens from seeing where the real fault lies.

The situation in other counties may be the same as here, except that few of them can show up the real wealth in such quantities. Frequent lawsuits are carried on here over a million dollar estate. Nearly \$1,700,000 on deposit in the banks. True, under the revenue law so much abused the assessors found only \$466,224 of these deposits, and the state board in its wisdom manufactured \$46,000. But that is ten times more than was ever found in one year under the old revenue law.

Here are some items from this year's assessors' books showing other things that go to make up the wealth of Richardson.

	No.	Total Value.	Average Value.
Horses...	11,458	\$140,962	\$12.30
Mules ..	1,847	30,283	16.40
Cattle ..	37,818	153,477	4.06
Hogs ..	54,323	63,563	1.17
Sheep ..	7,265	3,967	.54
Wheat ..	29,586	66,343	.15
Corn ..	901,248	66,343	.07

As to the need of the new revenue law, there is no honest difference of opinion. All political parties were pledged to repeal the old one and enact a new one. Here in Richardson we have the official message of Auditor Cornell for reference. In his annual report to the governor he said:

"This indebtedness can never be met under our revenue law as it is now enforced; hence a probable increase in prospective liabilities without any prospective assets. Such is the condition that confronts us.

"The inequalities resulting from the present construction and enforcement of the revenue law relating to assessment and taxation is agitating the minds of the people. Immediate legislation is demanded.

"If all property was assessed at one-fifth of its money value there would be no injustice to tax-payers. In fact the only injurious result that could possibly come from the low valuation is, reducing the revenues below the actual needs of good government. Admitting the fact that the revenues are not sufficient to meet outstanding obligations and current expenses of the state, would it not be better to enact a law that would absolutely tax all kinds of property rather than to increase the value of the property that now bears the burden of taxation?"

So here we have good official fusion authority that the law was a failure, that the state was running into debt under the fusion administration so fast that a new revenue law was needed, and needed badly, and that the assessment of all property at one fifth its actual cash value would be no injustice to anyone. The important thing about this new law is its enforcement all along the line. The more dodgers that are reached, the less will be the burden on patriotic citizens.