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Another Big Jolt for The Taxpayers

A. C. M. Subsidies Escape Taxes on Over \$45,000,000

(Special to the Producers News)

Helena.—In the face of Court decision requiring them to increase the assessed valuation they had fixed on the property of the Montana Power company, the Thompson Falls Power company and the Great Falls Power company, all subsidiaries of the Anaconda Copper Mining company, Governor Stewart, Secretary of State Stewart and State Treasurer H. L. Hart, comprising the majority of the state board of equalization, Friday afternoon, Jan. 23, went "to the bat" again for the corporation and succeeded in holding down the increase in assessment from \$49,000,000, as demanded by Attorney General Ford, to \$3,500,000, thus saving to the companies, taxes on the difference between \$34,500,000—the figure at which they are now to be assessed—and \$80,000,000, which the attorney general contended was the actual valuation of the properties.

Early last fall, Attorney General Ford and State Auditor Porter, comprising a minority of the state board of equalization, protested that the assessed valuation of \$31,000,000, placed by the majority of the board on the Anaconda company's subsidiary power companies' property, was inadequate. Attorney General Ford contended that the figures on which the companies should be assessed for taxation purposes should equal the figures submitted by the power companies to the state public service commission as a means of securing their authorized rates for service, which valuations aggregated \$80,000,000.

The matter was taken into the courts with the result that the equalization board was ordered to reconvene and revise upward its assessment on the power companies' property, as reported by the Producers News last week. The above meeting was the result.

Through action of Governor Stewart, Secretary of State Stewart and State Treasurer Hart, the board's majority, the assessed valuation of the companies' property was increased approximately \$3,500,000, bringing the total valuation placed on the property to \$34,500,000. Attorney General Ford and State Auditor Porter, comprising the minority of the board, voted against the majority's action and insisted that the increase should be over \$49,000,000, thus bringing the total valuation to \$80,000,000.

It was asserted by the attorney general that the valuation as fixed by the power companies on their properties when they appeared before the public service commission to have their rates for light, gas and power service fixed, aggregated \$80,000,000, but that when they appeared before the equalization board in the matter of fixing the amounts on which they should be taxed by the people, their figures had undergone a sharp revision downward.

An interesting feature of the actions of the majority of the equalization board in the matter was their retention of Attorney John G. Brown, a noted corporation attorney, as counsel for "the people."

H. L. Hart, who voted to allow the power companies to escape taxation on over \$45,000,000 valuation, had previously announced his intention of running as a delegate to the republican national convention.

Helena, Feb. 3.—Members of the state board of equalization today submitted their report on assessments of "intercounties properties" of the Montana, Great Falls and Thompson Falls Power companies to the supreme court in compliance with the decision and writ of mandate handed down some time ago. The return included a request to the court for an order approving their work and it also shows the allocation of the increased assessment for each of the lines of the companies. The return was signed by GOV. S. V. STEWART, SECRETARY OF STATE C. T. STEWART AND STATE TREASURER H. L. HART as individuals and as members of the board.

The return includes the minutes of the last few meetings of the board in a wealth of details. The board, in arriving at the value of intercounties properties of the company in question, determined the full and true cash values of each company, subtracted the values of local assessments and the balance gave the intercounties properties values, which were added to the previous assessments for each line.

Mrs. Clair Stoner Undergoes Operation at Outlook Hospital

Mrs. Clair Stoner of the Outlook country, well known throughout Sheridan county because of her Farm Bureau activities, submitted to a major operation at the Outlook hospital last week which was successful, and is now recovering rapidly.

Majority Heed the Public Protest

COUNTY COMMR'S DON'T HAVE TO TELL WHAT BECOME OF THE \$20,000

Nobody But a Brute and a Fanatic Would Want Them to Do Such a Thing—Kaiser Weinrich, Looking the Worse for Wear, Is Spectator at Hearing.

MANDAMUS CASE DISMISSED

The application for a Writ of Mandate, filed some time ago by County Attorney Gunther in the district court, praying for an order requiring the County Commissioners to file a statement showing what kind of a final settlement they made last spring with the Montana & Dakota Elevator Company, was heard Wednesday afternoon by Judge C. E. Comer and the writ was by him denied.

County Attorney Gunther, assisted by Attorney George Cudhie, appeared for the taxpayers and Attorney George Hurd of the law firm of Norris & Hurd of Great Falls, appeared for the commissioners.

County Attorney Gunther by this proceeding attempted to compel the county commissioners to tell what sort of a settlement had been made with the Montana & Dakota Elevator Company last spring, when Commissioner Matkin & Weinrich, accompanied by Attorney Ellery and Ex-Auditor James F. Redmond went to Minneapolis and made a settlement with the above elevator company and which settlement has never been divulged and never entered into the minutes of the board or filed in the records of Sheridan county, Montana.

The County Commissioners by resolution authorized themselves to go to Minneapolis and to take with them, J. F. Redmond, to make this final settlement and when they returned \$8,000 was handed to the County Treasurer by Commissioner Matkin with no other explanation than to credit the same to the Montana & Dakota Elevator Company. The expenses of Mr. Matkin and the salary and expenses of James F. Redmond were paid by the county. Who paid Mr. Ellery is not known, but it is suspected that he was paid directly by the Montana & Dakota Elevator Company, deducting the same out of the balance due to Sheridan county after the settlement had been made by the

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CO. AGENT ANDERSON CANNED AGAIN

County Commissioners Don't Want Any Man That the Farmers Want—Won't Work With Portuguese, As They Call Anderson.

The County Agent is canned again. The County Commissioners won't have him.

They told Mr. Taylor of the Agricultural Department, or College of the state of Montana, that the next man that came up to be county agent, they wanted to talk to before they hired him.

It is reported that these birds who happen now to be county commissioners to the great misfortune of the people and the everlasting disgrace of the county, said that they did not desire to nor would they associate with a Portuguese, which they called Anderson.

It is thought that what they want as a county agent is a horse thief, or a third story artist, or a safe cracker, or a highwayman, or some one with whom they can associate with congenially, who will not be likely to spill the beans when some one steals the poison oats.

However, the county commissioners told the Farm Bureau Directors where to head in at, and again canned County Agent Anderson.

DANIELS COUNTY ELECTION CALLED

County Commissioners After Brief Consideration, Deny Withdrawals to Valley County Citizens and Sign Order for County Division Election.

The hearing on the petition for the calling of the election on the proposition of the creation of Daniels county came up before the Board of County Commissioners, Tuesday afternoon, February 3rd.

There was a delegation present from the new county. There was also a delegation present from Valley county to protest against the calling of the election on the proposed Daniels county proposition, with withdrawals to file.

Assistant County Attorney Cudhie appeared for Daniels county and At-

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Court Stood 3 to 2, Brantley and Holloway Dissenting

(Special to The Producers News)

Helena, Jan. 30.—With Chief Justice Brantley and Justice Holloway dissenting, the state supreme court this morning sustained the inalienable rights of the people of Montana to pass upon the actions of their legislators and reversed the decision of District Judge Poorman of Helena in his decision in the closed primary case.

Under the terms of the supreme court's decision the "emergency" law amending the state primary act by making it a closed primary and advancing the date is rendered inoperative until the people of the state have had a chance to express their approval or disapproval. The scheduled closed primary which otherwise would have been held in April will not be held at all and the usual procedure of an open primary in August will be substituted.

The court's decision in the primary case was written by Justice John Matthews and concurred in by Justices Hurly and Cooper.

The opinion of the court as announced today is considered one of the most momentous in the history of the state. According to attorneys, it forever establishes the fact that the acts of the legislature are not supreme to the wishes of the people.

At the last special session of the state legislature, called ostensibly for the purpose of affording relief to drought-stricken farmers, the majority of the legislature amended the state primary law by requiring that every voter should declare his party affiliations when he enters the polls to vote, and should be handed only one party ballot, instead of the system whereby the party affiliations of the voters were secret.

It early became evident that the tampering with the primary law was unpopular with the people of the state generally, and in order to prevent the matter from being voted upon, the legislature took advantage of the "emergency" provisions and amended the primary law on the grounds that its passage was an "emergency" act, "necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace and safety."

Thousands of petitions were presented to the secretary of state by the voters demanding that the amended law be held inoperative until such time as the people could have the opportunity of voting upon it. In an effort to prevent these petitions from being accepted and the matter referred to the people, the advocates of the closed primary, through one Sam Goodman, said to be a business man of Helena, applied in District Judge Poorman's court for an injunction restraining the secretary of state from accepting the referendum petitions and calling a referendum election. The decision of the supreme court this morning reverses the decision of Judge Poorman, who held for Goodman.

As the matters now stand there will be no state primary election held in April as would have been the case had the supreme court's decision been otherwise. There will, however, be the regular presidential primary election in April at which only presidential electors and delegates to the national party conventions will be accepted. The state primary will be held in August, as usual.

Hugo Hess Operated on for Appendicitis

Hugo Hess, one of the members of Hess Brothers, banana farmers in the Outlook country, was taken suddenly very ill at the farm last week and was rushed to the Outlook hospital, where it was found that he was afflicted with appendicitis and was in a very dangerous condition. He was operated upon immediately and it was discovered that the appendix had ruptured. However, the operation was successful and at this time, Mr. Hess is reported to be recovering rapidly.

Plumb Plan Meeting at Outlook

Conductor Moeller, who is chairman of the Federated Railroad Unions of the state of North Dakota and who runs three times a week on the Soo line between Kenmare, N. D., and Whitetail, Montana, spoke to an attentive audience at the Stivers Hall last Friday evening. Conductor Moeller presented his subject in a very instructive and interesting manner and was well received.

WEDDING BELLS FOR WHITETAIL COUPLE

MISS SOPHIA ELFREDA WHITE OF WHITETAIL, AND MR. WILLIAM EDWARD HUNT OF EDDIESIDE, SASK., MARRIED.

Miss Sophia Elfreda White, the popular postmistress of Whitetail, and Mr. William Edward Hunt, a well known and popular young man of Eddieside, Sask., Canada, were united in the holy bonds of matrimony at Plentywood, Saturday afternoon, January 31st, Rev. R. E. Fridley saying the words that united the happy young couple for life.

The newlyweds left Monday via Raymond for Whitetail, where they will visit for a time before leaving for their home at Eddieside, Sask., where they will be at home to their many friends after April 1st.

The bride is the popular postmistress of Whitetail, where she has resided for several years and has many friends. The groom is a prosperous farmer of Eddieside, Sask.

DOLIN MANDAMUS CASE HEARD

The Mandamus Action brought by Joe Dolin against Clerk & Recorder A. A. Major, to get a writ compelling him to issue a warrant in payment of a claim passed by the board of county commissioners over the audit of County Auditor O'Grady, whereby it seems that an effort is being made to abolish and repeal the authority of the county auditor by court fiat, was heard before Judge Comer at the court house last Friday afternoon. The firm of Babcock & Ellery appeared for Mr. Dolin and County Attorney Gunther and Assistant County Attorney Cudhie appeared for Mr. Major. Arguments were made and briefs submitted we understand.

If this case is won by Mr. Dolin it will mean that the county commissioners are a law unto themselves and that there is no department of government upon which there is check of any kind. The county commissioners can then audit and allow their own claims.

CHARITY BALL A GREAT SUCCESS

The Charity Ball given at Outlook last Saturday evening for the benefit of the Outlook General Hospital was a success in every way. In connection with the dance baskets were sold to the highest bidders and considerable revenue was derived therefrom. The gross returns from the venture was about \$185. There will not be much expense as most everything was donated to an undertaking of this kind. The Outlook General Hospital is becoming more and more popular and for the past several weeks all of the rooms have been filled with people on a waiting list for a turn. The community spirit behind this institution is going to make the undertaking a success.

Figures reputed to be authentic, give the total number of cooperative organizations in Minnesota as 2360, Wisconsin comes second with 2070, and Iowa third.

HOPELESS.



PETITION UNCLE SAM TO KEEP RAILROADS

MONSTER PETITION FOR THE PERMANENT PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF RAILWAYS PRESENTED IN CONGRESS—NOT A WORD IN REACTIONARY PRESS

Washington, D. C.—Grumpy and dogged from rough travel through factories, shops, mines, lodge halls and farmer meetings, a monster petition for the permanent public ownership of the railroads, was presented in the United States House of Representatives recently, by Rep. James H. Sinclair of North Dakota.

Getting up a big petition to Congress is a difficult job. The Public Ownership League of America, having its headquarters in Chicago, recently sent out to its members and friends in 36 states, a petition calling upon Congress to provide for the permanent public ownership of the railroads, under terms which should be just to the public at large, to the railroad workers, and to the present owners. They asked for public ownership with democratic control.

This petition went everywhere along the railroad system, into remote farming districts, into the mines, through the factories and even into an occasional city office.

Then it was shipped to Representative Sinclair of North Dakota, and he presented the huge volume—it weighed nearly 20 pounds—and laid it on the Speaker's desk, on the Saturday before the holiday recess.

Mr. Sinclair printed in the Congressional Record a letter from the Public Ownership League, explaining that the petition expresses the sentiment of millions of organized labor, organized farmers, and other millions of unorganized citizens who make up the public at large.

NOT A WORD IN KEPT PRESS

This is the biggest single petition presented in Congress in years, and yet, so far as is known, not a word appeared in anyone of the big newspapers although all of them received the item from their press agents.

The text of the petition is brief. It reads:

To the Congress of the United States: "Gentlemen: We, the undersigned citizens of the United States, hereby respectfully petition and urge the introduction and passage by your honorable body of such measures as will bring about, under conditions in all respects just to the American people, the workers and present owners, the actual and permanent Public Ownership of the Railroads of the Nation, together with proper guarantees of efficient operation and democratic control."

THE PEOPLE HAVE PAID FOR THE ROADS—KEEP THEM

On the back of each sheet of the petition is the legend: "Keep the Railroads. The People have bought and paid for them twice over; the People should own and operate them."

Then following a statement setting forth that—"The people of this nation have invested over \$900,000,000 in rehabilitating the railway system that private ownership had so exploited and plundered and mismanaged that it was utterly inadequate. The People have invested another \$975,000,000 in improving labor conditions and pulling the railroads out of an impossible situation that private ownership had created. The Government has rehabilitated the delapidated system, unified it, effected numerous economies, and guaranteed the private owners their usual dividends. And yet they are not satisfied. They want the railroads back again for further exploitation and plunder."

"We protest. Now that the people

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