

AN HONEST ASSESSMENT DEMANDED

The Southern Pacific Company Again Seeks to Evade Taxation.

FIGURES WITH A MORAL.

For Ten Years Past the Octopus Has Cheated the State of Its Dues.

THE "CALL" SPEAKS FOR ALL.

Will the State Board of Equalization Obey the Law This Year?

The State Board of Equalization is in session and is about to place a valuation upon and to assess the railroad properties within the State for purposes of taxation and in accordance with the duty imposed upon them by law.

On the 11th of August, 1884, the Hon. D. M. Delmas, representing the people of the State of California, appeared before the State Board of Equalization, and there M. Delmas delivered one of the greatest Great Speeches of his notable career.

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It is eleven long years since any representative of the people has appeared before the State Board of Equalization to argue in favor of a just assessment of the vast railroad properties within the State.

During each of these eleven years the board has held its annual session in Sacramento, and every year as regularly as the time came round the skilled and the subtle attorneys and agents of the Southern Pacific Company have been before the board with elaborate statistics and cunningly devised arguments, urging and pleading for a reduction of the assessment of that corporation, and declaring that the making of such reduction would result in the cheerful payment by the Southern Pacific Company of its taxes for each fiscal year.

It is high time, therefore, that a champion of the rights of the people of the State of California should again speak out in convincing protest against the plea of the railroad company for a still further decrease in their assessment and should more present before the State Board of Equalization the indisputable facts and figures showing conclusively that railroad properties are already assessed at a value far below the proportionate rate of private valuations, and also far below the rate required by law, and that instead of being lowered the valuation of railroad properties throughout the State should be increased to a figure approximating at least the valuation which the corporations put upon their own property and upon which they have borrowed millions of money and earned millions of millions.

The State Board of Equalization is at present in session and is about to make its assessment of railroad property for the present fiscal year. The CALL assumes as of right to represent the people of the State of California once more before that board and to demonstrate by facts and figures to which the passage of years has given greater potency, that the valuations of the properties of the railroad companies should not only not be lowered but should in fact be largely increased.

In the table which occupies the center of this page we have given a statement of the cost of the four principal railroads controlled and operated by the Southern Pacific Company in California. By the rail we have omitted from this road Com-table the Central Pacific Railroad, because it passes beyond the boundary of the State, and also because of the difficulty of arriving at the value, cost and earning capacity of that portion of it which is within the State of California. But look at the other four roads and at their cost as set forth in the table.

The figures there shown are not drawn from uncertain sources nor based upon the wild estimates of anti-railroad cranks. They are the figures furnished by the railroad companies themselves. They are the estimates of cost furnished year after year to the State Board of Railroad Commissioners and to the Interstate Commerce Commission and to the stockholders and bondholders of the railroads by C. P. Huntington. It is true that these figures were not furnished for purposes of taxation, but they are all the more valuable for that reason. Choose from the table any one of the

four selected railroads for an example. Take the largest of them, the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of California. In 1883 Charles T. Crocker verified the report of this corporation to the California Railroad Commission, which showed that the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of California had 870.74 miles of road in California, and that its cost of construction was \$39,459,853.37, or a trifle less than \$80,000 per mile. In 1894 Charles T. Crocker again verified the report of the same railroad company to the Railroad Commission, showing that in that year the company had 1824.81 miles of track, and that the cost of the road was \$123,945,055.58, or \$67,921.94 per mile. In 1894 C. P. Huntington, in his elaborate report to the stockholders of the various Southern Pacific Railroad properties, gives the same figures of the cost and valuation of the road.

California to give to this table of authentic statistics their careful study in order that they may know how faithful their public servants are performing their official duties in the assessment of railroad properties. We shall advert to this table from time to time during the course of this article.

In order, however, that its argument may be developed in logical steps, let us first examine the State constitution to determine what the duties of the State Board of Equalization are in the assessment of railroad property. Section 10 of article XIII of the said constitution reads as follows:

All property, except as hereinafter in this section provided, shall be assessed in the county, city, city and county, town, township or district in which it is situated in the manner prescribed by law. The franchise, roadway, roadbed, rails and rolling-stock of all railroads operated in more than one county in this State shall be assessed by the State Board of Equalization at their actual value, and the same shall be apportioned to the counties, cities and counties, towns, townships and districts in which such railroads are located in proportion to the number of miles of railway laid in each county, city and county, town, township and district.

It is thus seen that the duty of the State Board of Equalization is to assess the properties of the railroads at their actual value. The first issue to be determined is, therefore, What is the "actual value" of the railroad properties subject to assessment by the State Board of Equalization? In the ordinary course of business affairs there are three ways of arriving at the actual value of property. These are to be found in the answers to the following three inquiries: First, What did the property cost? Second, What will it sell for? Third, What will it earn? Let us attempt to apply each

of these three queries to the railroad properties.

What Did the Railroad Cost? It is a well known fact that the secret of the actual cost of construction and equipment of the railroads built by the "Big Four" railroad magnates of California and now controlled by the Southern Pacific Company, has been kept carefully concealed from the public eye. What it actually cost to construct the Central Pacific railroad to the Nevada State line probably no one now living knows exactly, except possibly C. P. Huntington, for the reason that the books of account of the old and odorous "Contract and Finance Company" were, in a time of peril, opportunity destroyed.

The truth with reference to the cost of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of California and of the other lines which are operated entirely within California is hardly less accessible. The books of the Western Development Company and of the Pacific Improvement Company are kept about as closely sealed from public inspection as possible. We must therefore accept the statement of the corporations themselves as to the cost of their railroad lines.

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Are these sworn and reiterated statements of the cost of this railroad to be taken seriously and as meaning anything? Evidently not, at least by the State Board of Equalization—for witness the following facts: In 1883, after the officers of the Southern Pacific Railroad Company had sworn that their railroad of 870.74 miles in length had cost \$39,459,853.37, or \$80,000 per mile, the State Board of Equalization assessed it for \$13,000,000, or \$14,920.82 per mile.

In 1894, although the officials of the corporation swore that their road had a length of 1824.81 miles and had cost \$123,945,055.58, or over \$67,000 per mile, the State Board of Equalization assessed the Southern Pacific Railroad Company of California for \$15,800,000, or \$8659.91 per mile.

There is one railroad now controlled by the Southern Pacific Company, of the actual cost of which a more accurate record remains than even the sworn reports of its present owners. That is the South Pacific Coast Railroad Company. This railroad was acquired by the "Big Four" in 1887, and was made up as to its length by the consolidation of several short roads which had been built by other and inde-

pendent corporations, and which extended from Alameda to Santa Cruz, a distance measured in single track of about 100 miles. The annual report of the State Board of Railroad Commissioners for the year 1887 shows by detailed figures that the actual cost of construction of these several lines aggregated a little over \$4,000,000. In 1887 James G. Fair sold these railroad properties to the owners of the Southern Pacific Company for \$5,500,000 in the bonds of the road, the payment of the principal and interest of which was guaranteed by the Southern Pacific Company. These bonds are now a portion of the Fair estate and are worth their par value.

From these figures it appears that the South Pacific Coast Railroad actually cost to construct it in round numbers \$4,000,000, or \$40,000 a mile. It cost the magnates of the Southern Pacific Company \$5,500,000 in 4 per cent bonds, which are worth their full par value to-day, and which represent a value of \$55,000 a mile. Notwithstanding these facts the State Board of Equalization assessed the proprietors of the South Pacific Coast Railroad Company for the year 1894 at \$1,300,000, or \$13,519 a mile, and this year, only last Wednesday, the attorney and agent of the Southern Pacific Company had the infinite assurance to appear before the State Board of Equalization and ask that this assessment be reduced to \$800 a mile, which would be about one-seventh of what this railroad cost the Southern Pacific Company only eight years ago.

the net income of the several railroads into account in fixing their valuation. For the purpose of this calculation we are within reach of a source of information and set of statistics which no member of the Southern Pacific Company will undertake to call in question. We refer to the report of the president of the Southern Pacific Railroad to its stockholders for the year 1894. It is, in fact, one of the few authentic sources for finding out what the leased lines of this great corporation do annually earn for it in net income from the travel and traffic of the people of California. Let us turn to this report and see what each of the four railroads embraced in our table netted in income for the year 1894. On page 70 of said report the whole subject is tabulated with the following result:

Table with 4 columns: Southern Pacific of California, Southern Pacific Coast Railway, Northern Railway, California Pacific Railway. Rows include Net income for 1894, Net income per mile, and Net income for 1894.

What do these respective incomes teach us as to the value of the railroad properties from which they flow? Upon what principle do they show an earning of interest at ordinary rates? Let us compute it in order to see whether or not the State Board of Equalization has ever done so. Take the Southern Pacific Railroad of California. Its net income is \$3,343,893.94. That is 10 per cent interest on \$33,438,939.40. It is 5 per cent interest on twice that amount, or \$66,877,878.80. Bearing in mind that the year 1894, by reason of the occurrence of the great strike and also of the general depression in business, was not a good year for incomes, is it not fair to conclude that these figures show a fair valuation of the Southern Pacific Railroad of California?

Did the State Board of Equalization adopt this method of making its estimate of its value for purposes of Assessment for taxation? Evidently not, for Less Than it assessed the said railroad One-fourth for that year at \$15,800,000, or 46 per cent less than the fourth of the Valuation. A net income of 5 per cent. A computation of the value of

the other three railroads comprised in our table show similar results, and in each case the railroad is assessed for a sum about three times what the net income of the road is for a single year.

A Decreasing Valuation. We shall indulge in one more set of black-let statistics for the purpose of showing the decreasing valuation which the State Board of Equalization has placed upon railroad property during the past ten years. We select for our example of this decrease the Southern Pacific Railroad of California, and we invite special attention to the manner in which the lowering of valuation has been accomplished, viz.: by leaving the annual valuation the same, while the mileage of the railroad has steadily increased. Here are the actual figures, taken from the annual reports of the State Board of Equalization:

Table with 2 columns: Southern Pacific Railroad of California. Rows include Miles of road in 1883, Valuation by board, Valuation per mile, and Miles of road in 1884, Valuation by board, Valuation per mile.

How would these figures appear upon the books of the State Board of Equalization as an evidence of official zeal and integrity in the assessment of railroad properties as "their actual value," as required by law? The third method with which to estimate the value of property is by the measure of its annual earning capacity. Figures What income does it yield Taken net to its owner. What From the amount will that income pay Report of interest upon? Let us apply Mr. Hunt's test to the properties in question to controlled by the Southern Pacific Company and see if perchance the State Board of Equalization may have taken

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ONE SCORE STRICKEN BY LIGHTNING.

At the Close of Benediction in Church a Bolt Came.

Pacific Company, can it be possible that the present State Board of Equalization will travel in the slinky footsteps of its predecessors and continue to assess railroads at figures which bear no reasonable approximation to their actual values, and thus rob the State and every taxpayer within of that proportion of its taxes which the great railroad corporation ought to pay, but which it never has paid into the treasury of the State of California? The State Board of Equalization is in session to-day. What response will it make to this array of truth with respect to railroad valuations and the assessment for the present fiscal year thereon?

FOUND DEAD IN DENVER.

Termination of the Career of an Actress Under Strange Circumstances. DENVER, COLO., Aug. 4.—Mrs. Carrie E. Pomeroy, at one time a prominent actress in San Francisco and other Western cities, was found dead in bed here to-day at her room at 1416 Thirteenth street. She had acted strangely for the past week, and when called to-day failed to respond. Her room was broken into and found to have been severely barricaded with furniture. Her death is supposed to have resulted from heart disease, although the Coroner is making an investigation. Found in her room were hundreds of dollars' worth of jewelry and fine costumes.

Mrs. Pomeroy, or Carrie Lipsis, as was her stage name, was decidedly handsome and about 45 years of age. She was married to Seldon Richards in Carson City, Nev., in 1882, but was divorced in this city. Her remains are at the morgue.

WITH HIS OWN PETARD. Terrible Death of an Anarchist Who Shot a Mining Superintendent. After Firing a Revolver He Produced a Bomb, Which Exploded Prematurely.

PARIS, FRANCE, Aug. 4.—News has been received here of a dastardly attempt to murder M. Vuillemin, the managing director of the coal mines at Aniche, eight miles from Douai in the department of Nord. A monster banquet had been prepared for the celebration to-day of the completion of the fiftieth year of M. Vuillemin's connection with the mines. After mass had been celebrated this morning M. Vuillemin, surrounded by a party of engineers and shipowners, was standing under the church porch, when an anarchist miner named Camille Decoux, who had been dismissed from the service of the company after the strike of 1893, approached and fired five shots from a revolver at him. Three of the bullets took effect, one striking M. Vuillemin in the cheek, another in the hand and another in the back, inflicting serious but not dangerous wounds.

After emptying his revolver Decoux was preparing to throw a bomb, which he had concealed about his person, when by some means the infernal machine exploded prematurely, dismembering the would-be murderer and hurling his writhing body a distance of seven feet from where he had been standing. Several bystanders were slightly injured by the explosion. Decoux was carried to the Mayor's office, but died immediately after his arrival there. The attempt upon M. Vuillemin's life has created intense excitement throughout the district.

After the bomb exploded De Coux's father, who was among those gathered about the entrance of the church, became greatly excited and rushed to the spot where his son lay and began to kick him, all the time screaming, "canaille," "assassin," and the combined efforts of several witnesses of the assault were necessary to restrain him.

The force of the explosion threw down several of the bystanders, but only four persons were injured. All of the windows of an inn in the vicinity were shattered. De Coux was 26 years old and unmarried, and had recently been working at Waaers, a short distance from Aniche.

M. Vuillemin was removed to his home in a carriage immediately after his wounds had been dressed and is now making favorable progress toward recovery.

EAGLE PASS, TEX., Aug. 4.—Dr. Evans reports twenty-four new cases of smallpox Friday and one death yesterday, making fifty-two cases and two deaths. George W. Eli, passenger agent of the Southern Pacific, arrived Friday with instructions to secure employment for the colonists among the plantations and look after their transportation to points where work is offered. Dr. Magruder of the Federal Marine Service has arrived from Galveston, and will assist the State in caring for the health and isolation of the negroes.

RIOT IN RIVERSIDE PARK. WASHINGTON, D. C., Aug. 4.—A riot occurred at Riverside Park, near Mount Vernon, this afternoon, and as a result Roy Beach and a man named Evans are under a doctor's care at Alexandria, with little hopes for their lives. Thomas Brown, Thomas Downey and three sons and two brothers by the name of Evans were also badly punished, but they managed to procure a boat and set sail for this city. No arrests have yet been made. The trouble was the outgrowth of a long-standing quarrel between the Downeys and the Browns. The fight created a panic among the people who were in the park.

THE BUILDING WRECKED. From the Cellar the Bolt Emerged and Wrought Great Havoc. SEVERAL FATALLY INJURED. Amid the Tumult of Screaming Women and Children the Horses Were Stamped Outside.

FLEMINGTON, N. J., Aug. 4.—The words of a fervent benediction had scarcely left the lips of Rev. Mr. Bowman in the Methodist church at Quakertown, seven miles above here, to-day when there came a blinding flash of lightning and a terrific burst of thunder that all but wrecked the little building. The bolt entered the church and injured a score of people, several of them probably fatally. The list of those most seriously injured follows: James Hoff, Minnie Grace, Miss K. Hoffman, Asa Bannan, the sexton; Mrs. Bowman, wife of the pastor.

The bolt seemed to enter the edifice by the basement, shooting up through the floor and bursting with the force of a huge cannon. Members of the congregation who had started to leave or were standing in groups conversing with each other, were thrown into a wild panic, while at least twenty of them received injuries more or less severe. Amid the tumult of screaming women and crying children and the groans of the injured, there was a stampede of frightened horses under the shed outside. A number of them broke their tethers and ran away, wrecking the carriages to which they were attached and dashing down sections of fencing. Pastor Bowman and scores of willing hands were soon at work among the stricken ones. A number were unconscious, and it was thought at first that they had been killed outright. They were laid upon the pew cushions. The parsonage which adjoins the church was converted into a hospital. Drs. Snyder of Quakertown and Grace of Clinton quickly responded to calls upon them to attend the sufferers.

All the while was torn from Sexton Bannan, while his shoes looked as though they had been run through the corn-sheller, being literally cut to pieces. He is suffering from the shock, and can hardly recover. The bolt struck through the door right at the feet of Minnie Grace, and she was thrown down with great violence. Her watchguard was melted, and the gimpece looks as though it had gone through a furnace. It stopped at 12:10—a grim record of the time of the cruel visitant. Miss Grace's life is despaired of. Mrs. Bowman, who stood near Miss Grace, was also thrown down by the awful explosion. Her hat was torn from her head and a steel ripped clean out of her corset. She is still unconscious from the shock.

James Hoff got the full force of the giant electric shock and he lies in a semi-conscious condition. An examination of the building after the excitement had subsided somewhat, showed that the bolt had struck an outer wall, ran down to the basement, sixty feet along the joists, and shot up through the floor like a huge bullet. The large bell tower was loosened from its hangings and only a slender strip of scantling kept it from crashing upon the heads of the scores of people at the doorway.

Prof. Webster Dead. NEW YORK, N. Y., Aug. 4.—Prof. Warren T. Webster, long connected with the Adelphi Academy in Brooklyn and one of the best known educators in the country, died on Saturday at his home in that city in his sixty-fifth year. He was a second cousin of Daniel Webster.

For Pacific Coast Telegrams see Pages 4 and 5.

In a State of Bankruptcy —is the condition of our system if the liver becomes inactive so that the germs and poisons can accumulate within the body. Keep the liver and bowels active and we're in a condition of health, prosperity and have sufficiently well invested capital to draw upon in the hour of need. The liver filters out the poisonous germs which enter the system. Just so surely as the liver regulates the system, so do Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets regulate the liver. Keep this in mind, and you solve the problem of good health and good living. The "Pleasant Pellets" have a tonic, strengthening effect upon the lining membranes of the stomach and bowels, which effectually cures Biliousness, Sick Headache, Costiveness, or Constipation, Indigestion, Loss of Appetite, Bad Taste in Mouth, Sour Risings from Stomach, and will often cure Dyspepsia. The "Pellets" are tiny, because the vegetable extracts are refined and concentrated. Easy in action, no griping, no pain, no nausea, no loss of appetite, no loss of sleep, no loss of strength, no loss of energy, no loss of vitality, no loss of health, no loss of life. I will say they are the best pill I can take, especially for an after-dinner pill. MRS. ATWATER.

RAVAGES OF SMALLPOX. Twenty-Four New Cases Have Been Reported at Eagle Pass, Tex. Dr. Magruder of the Federal Marine Service to Assist in Relief Work.

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