The San Francisco Call

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Brief History of State Taxation and Valuation

AN important and interesting phase of the history of California is told in the annual report of the state board of equalization, showing the onward march of property values in this commonwealth since the time when it first came under American rule.

Back in 1850, when the pioneers took charge, the total valuation of all property in California was $57,670,689. There are three cities in the state this year whose several assessment rolls exceed the state total for 1850. Growth was not very rapid for the first thirty years after the American occupation, and the dependence of our mining and agricultural industries on an uncertain rainfall appears from the fact that the roll declined in value in more than one year following a drought. Old residents of California remember the pall of doubt and fear of enterprise that annually visited California in the early winter months, while the amount of rainfall for the season was uncertain. This cause for industrial and commercial unsettlement is now minimized by the wide adoption of irrigation and water storage. In fact, farming in the early days of California was a complete gamble of a very hazardous sort. Some big fortunes were made, but the great majority of farmers who stayed with it year after year were poor.

In 1880 the state assessment roll had risen to $666,399,985, and after that progress was steady and rapid. The state first passed the billion mark in 1888 with a total of $1,107,952,700, and from that time the roll advanced by leaps and bounds until in 1909 the two billion mark was left far behind with a total of $2,438,658,544. The figures for the present year are somewhat less. The report contains a brief table showing the steady increase of the roll since 1906, as follows:

	Assessment by County Assessors.	Assessment by State Board of Equalization.	Total Assessment of All Property.
1906	$1,513,220,756	$81,010,821	$1,594,231,577
1907	1,766,128,476	113,822,216	1,879,950,692
1908	1,873,514,439	116,698,162	1,990,212,601
1909	2,316,524,271	122,082,273	2,438,656,544
1910	2,244,145,379	129,751,713	2,373,897,092

This increase of the roll has been attended by a corresponding lowering of the state tax rate, which has declined from .561 in 1903 to .353 in 1909. The board adds, however, that owing to the strong tendency to increase county and municipal taxation the people are more heavily taxed now than they were eight years ago.

Comparisons of this sort will not be available under the new revenue system, which will collect all taxes for state purposes from the income of public service corporations, banks and insurance companies. It will be possible, however, to ascertain the total cost of the state government under the new plan, and we may expect that it will be increased owing to the requirements for the interest and sinking fund on the $18,000,000 bond issue for highways and the tax to raise the $5,000,000 for the Panama-Pacific exposition.

May Be Compromise With New Orleans

THE purpose of the California delegation in Washington to cause the withdrawal of the Kahn bill, relating to the Panama-Pacific exposition, is timely and necessary in view of the pledge given that San Francisco will ask for no subsidy of any sort from the federal government in aid of the exposition. This bill was introduced before the plans of San Francisco had taken shape, and it asked for an appropriation of $5,000,000. The proposition has been practically dead for months and served no purpose save that of the New Orleans politicians, who used it by way of trick and device to make capital against the San Francisco fight. They knew quite well that it was not intended to press the bill, but as long as it remained on the files it might be used as political capital by people in their last ditch and not at all particular about the character of weapons within reach. When the bill is withdrawn the answer to this variety of politics will be conclusive.

Washington advices place beyond doubt the fact that a clear majority of the senate is prepared to vote for San Francisco. The only doubt remaining concerns the status of the house, and it is certain that San Francisco is gaining votes every day. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, in view of the fact that this city asks no sort of subsidy from the nation and has further provided, in conjunction with the state of California, a fund to finance the exposition amounting to nearly three times as much as that scraped up by New Orleans.

We need not be surprised if between now and January 17, when the matter comes to a vote in the house, there should come from New Orleans a proposition to compromise on the basis of giving the 1915 date to San Francisco. This is the sine qua non of any negotiations. What concessions New Orleans may seek would be matter for discussion.

Extension of Electric Traction in California

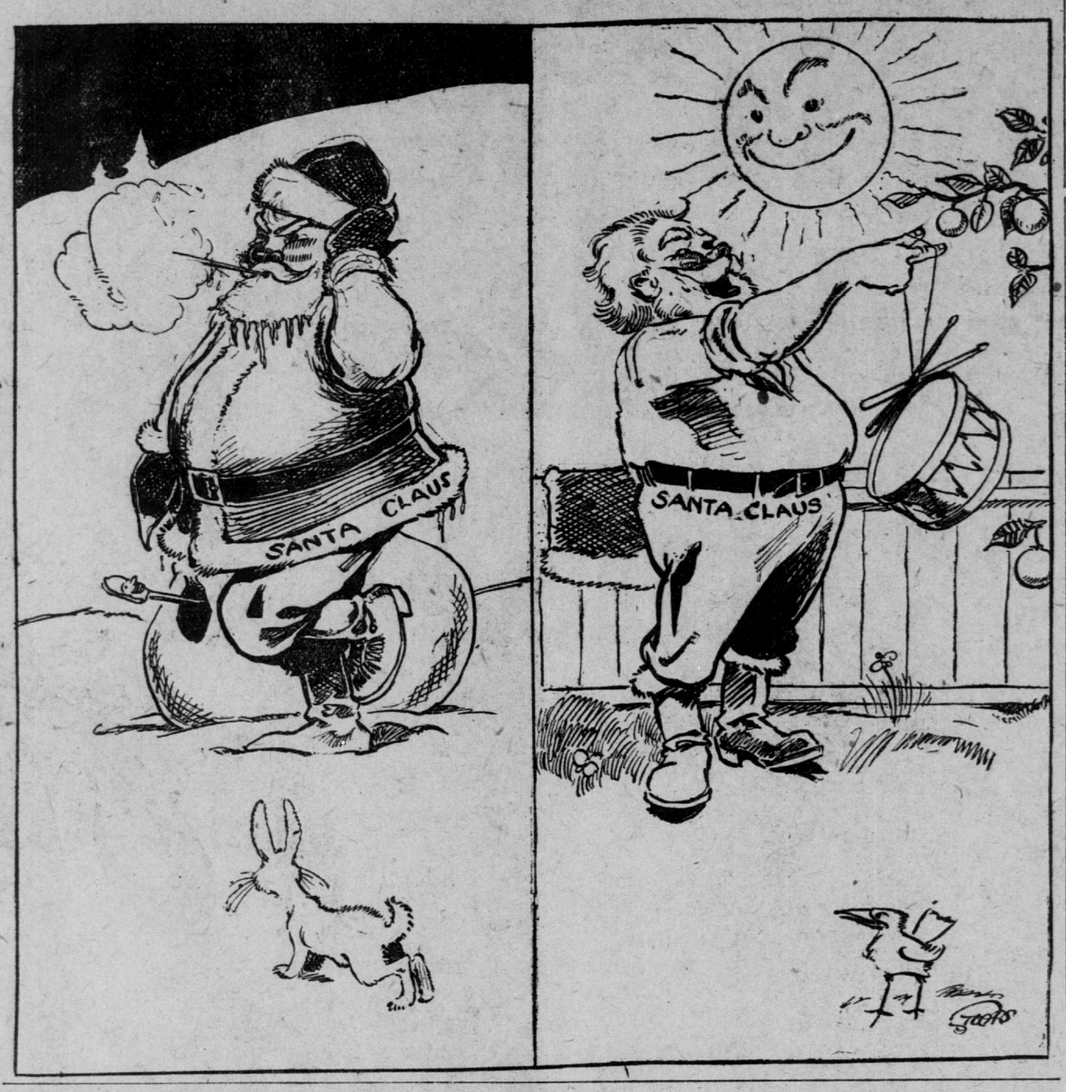
THE trolley car is doing a more important work for the country districts than for the cities. It was announced the other day that the Southern Pacific, having acquired control of the Los Angeles county electric roads, would proceed to electrify its steam lines, likewise creating a system of 1,500 miles of electric road in that region. A similar development of electric traction is proceeding in the great interior valley of California, and this system will in time greatly exceed in mileage that which now exists south of Tehachapi.

The other day when the new road was opened from Sacramento to Stockton and other San Joaquin county points, George W. Peltier, vice president of the company, told the Stockton Mail some history to this effect:

The farmers did not want the road. They owned their farms, were making money and did not want their valuations increased. It was a shortsighted view, but it was their view, and from their standpoint it was all right. Think of it; I found only three mortgages between Lodi and Sacramento; farmers all owned their places. Now you couldn't take this road away from them without a fight. Transportation to the markets has been a great thing for them and a great thing for this vast area of heretofore undeveloped country. Four to eight miles was the haul before we came; now they load their stuff on at sidings. We have put them in touch with the markets. And we have come through a virgin country, developing a new empire, and interfering with nobody. We built this road for the people. We have no stations; stop anywhere anybody wants to get off. Just have to flag us with a wave of the hand. We put in graded crossings, fenced and cattle guarded wherever anybody wants 'em; culverts also. We figure that by doing these things for the people we will get the people's business. There is nothing cheap or shoddy about this road. We put work on it. Look at that roadbed. It is perfect. Graveled and oiled. No dust. Harriman's heaviest trains can travel over it right now. Eighty-five pound rails. And, remember, this isn't an old road. It is a new road; been running but ninety days. We've broken a record.

This is only the beginning. Already plans are in preparation to extend the system to the Fresno country, and it will not be long before Kern county and the oil regions are brought in touch with trolley traction. At first the electric road was supposed to be useful only for transportation of passengers, but it is equally available for the concentration of freight at manufacturing points or centers of distribution.

THERE HERE



NOTE AND COMMENT

Give "her" a smoking jacket.

The flying Mercury now has a rival in Mars.

The lambs should feel at home on the Harriman estate.

The police will stand for a lot of public speaking, but the expect-oration must cease.

The reformed cannibal who is idolized by the ladies must look good enough to eat.

Isn't General Lauck too modest when he says that the coast is unprepared for war—and while he reigns?

Maybe New Orleans wants to be a good fellow and let us have the $5,000,000 national appropriation as well as the exposition.

All our reckonings have gone awry. The postoffice department has decided that Hillsborough is only a "fourth class town." And think of who lives there!

A press dispatch says that a wolf in a Brooklyn playhouse bit the calves of six women and two men. Serves them right for taking their livestock to the theater.

GOSSIP OF RAILWAY MEN

JACK INGLIS, contracting freight agent of the Union Pacific, became reminiscent yesterday afternoon and told of the early days of railroading.

"I remember when I was traveling out of Salt Lake," he said, "and in those days traveling was hard work. The porter was the waiter in the dining car and also in the buffet car and he earned his money. But he received the money, all right. It was in the days when every one was going to Virginia City and it was nothing for a porter to make $200 on a one way trip.

"There was a famous old porter, Towne. He is still alive. He made more money than any of them. One afternoon he brought in my small black coffee and spilled half of it in the saucer. I asked him to bring a new cup and keep the saucer clean and I promised to double my tip. He brought the saucer in clean all right, but spilled half the coffee on the floor by holding the clean saucer in the other hand."

* * *

T. H. Koerner, commercial agent of the Hawley lines, with office at Spokane, was in the city yesterday for a few hours on his way to Los Angeles.

* * *

Halvor Jacobson & Co. have been appointed general agents for the Scandinavian-American line in the territory of California, Arizona and Nevada, effective January 1, 1911.

* * *

E. L. Lomax, passenger traffic manager of the Western Pacific, who has been in the east for several weeks completing several important traffic agreements, is due to return to this city Thursday evening.

* * *

Nelson Fleming, contracting freight agent of the Canadian Pacific, with office at Portland, was in the city yesterday on his way to Los Angeles.

* * *

L. May, ticket agent of the Southern Pacific at Stockton, is in the city for a few days on business.

* * *

A. W. Golden, traveling passenger agent of the Sunset route, with headquarters at Los Angeles, is in the city.

* * *

With the completion next August of a cutoff between Texico on the Belen line and Coleman on the Gulf line, about 300 miles, the Santa Fe will reduce the distance between Los Angeles and Galveston 500 miles, making the entire distance 1,845 miles.

While the route of the Southern Pacific is shorter by 148 miles, the Santa Fe will have the advantage of low grades and become a strong competitor for Pacific coast business, now monopolized by the Harriman system.

* * *

S. A. Bray, connected with the passenger department of the Canadian Pacific at Vancouver, passed through the city Monday on the way to Los Angeles.

* * *

W. H. Jenkins, traveling passenger agent of the Southern Pacific lines in Oregon, with office at Portland, is in the city for a few days spending a part of his vacation with his brother, Horace Jenkins, private secretary to E. E. Calvin.

* * *

Having made a trip over the Western Pacific for a careful examination of the new Gould road, F. W. Rollins of E. H. Rollins & Sons says he was surprised at the excellence of its physical condition and makes this prediction:

"Within five years the Western Pacific will be carrying more freight and passengers than any other transcontinental line. Its equipments of comforts, food and service are already the equal of anything to be found on any other road, including the oldest and best equipped. This may sound boastful, but it is true, as all know who have been over the road."

* * *

The following changes have been made on the Oregon Short Line with official assurance to men in the service that they may expect promotion in future and not be sidetracked when the opportunity to advance them is presented: Henry J. Plumhoff, from chief clerk to the general superintendent to assistant superintendent of the Idaho division; S. E. Canaday, assistant superintendent of the Utah division, transferred to the Salt Lake division of the Southern Pacific at Imlay, Nev.; M. A. Pond, senior clerk of the Oregon Short Line to succeed Canaday; C. E. Brooks, to be assistant superintendent of the Idaho division at Pocatello.

SHREWD HUMOR IN MASON'S BOOK

"Uncle Walt", Editor Poet of Kansas, Publishes Volume Of Quaint Verse

"Uncle Walt" has come out in book form. "Uncle Walt" is the bard whose verse looks like prose up in the northeast corner of the editorial page of The Call, but which, if you read it carefully, will disclose frequent rhymes and continuous meter. That proves that it is poetry. But "Uncle Walt," realizing that there is little market for poetry these days, has had the diabolical cunning to conceal his verse in the shape of prose. In fact he perpetrates verse "sub prosa."

No less an authority on American democracy than William Allen White, the writer and editor, has said: "Walt Mason ('Uncle Walt') is the poet laureate of the American democracy. He is the voice of the people."

It is impossible to refute William Allen White.

The prose verse of Walt Mason is published, as befits the themes, in a homely little volume and illustrated with the quaint imitations of woodcuts that reflect the humor of the Kansas poet. Walt Mason is the editorial writer and telegraph editor on the Emporia Gazette, and after his work in preparing for publication an afternoon paper is over he sits down and writes his verse on the typewriter. The writings are published broadly in newspapers throughout the country and Walt Mason is said to have a following such as no other living verse writer enjoys.

The secret of his appeal is the homeliness of his writings. He has a shrewd humor which tickles the fancy and hits at the foibles of people we don't like. His muse is versatile enough. On page 102 he writes some conventional ridiculous stuff about the baseball pitcher and on page 104 is a little lyric on "The Nameless Dead," which quivers with pathos.

The title of the book is "Uncle Walt." It will be on sale at the bookstores while it lasts.

The Aviator

He ranges new dominions
On silken, sun kissed wings,
The flutt'ring engine sings;
He mounts on tireless pinions.

From cloud to cloud ascending
He soars in golden light,
While yet below is night,
A night that seems unending.

Upon the wings of morning
He sees on twilit earth
Afar the New Day's birth,
Its promise and its warning.

The dove o'er floods returning
Was watched, as we watch now,
For sprays of olive bough;
Hark, all mankind is yearning.

"What bring you, navigator,
From shoreless seas of air,
What token do you bear,
What message, aviator?

"Bright wings, come you with blessing
Or fraught with death and woe,
The harried race below
With new, red fears oppressing?"

No answer. Just the singing
Of engines. That is all.
While earth bound gropers call,
Dumb Fate o'erhead goes winging.
Charlton L. Edholm in Popular Mechanics.

Abe Martin

Miss Tawney Apple talks some o' goin' on th' stage in a film so she won't have t' walk back. Who remembers th' good ole days when th' only time you smelled bacon wuz when you passed a workin'man's home?

Uncle Walt

The Poet Philosopher

WALT MASON

THE HUGHES WHISKERS

It gives my wearied heart a wrench to see such whiskers on the bench. The highest court in all the land should the respect of all command, and nothing should disturb the awe with which we view that home of law. But how can people, calling here, regard that wide expanse of hair and think of anything but soap and razor strops and barber's dope? The lawyer, when he pleads a case, will see the greens on Hughes's face, and straightway all his thoughts will fly to where the fields of spinach lie. A man can't think of law, alas, when facing such a stretch of grass. The other judges, sitting near, with faces shaven, calm, severe, will find those whiskers in the way about five hundred times a day. If it should chance that Justice B. should turn to speak with Justice D., concerning matters most profound, he'll find that six or seven pound of weeping willows intervene, and hide the judge as with a screen. Will law be purified or cleared when filtered through that widespread beard? Will court decisions seem more fair delivered through a lot of hair? I can not think it, and I hope that Justice Hughes will get some soap, a brush, some water and a saw, and whack those tassels from his jaw.

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The Morning Chit-Chat

RUTH CAMERON

FIVE nice looking girls, evidently college or high school girls on a "toot," filed into the matinee car the other day and sat down opposite me.

They were all apparently girls in about the same circumstances and they were evidently all in their best bibs and tuckers.

And yet, one of these girls instantly impressed me as distinctively well dressed, and at no one of the others, had she been alone instead of in an attention compelling group, would I have glanced twice.

Presumably this girl was better off and had spent more money on her gown than the rest, you suggest.

If that were so, would there have been anything that I should write about in the incident?

No, I don't believe her costume cost one cent more money than the other girls.

Indeed, as she wore a simple blue broadcloth and one girl wore corduroy and another velvet and another a fur coat, I would say that her gown was among the least expensive.

That she was the best dressed was the instant impression that I received and yet, for a moment, I couldn't have told myself why I felt that way.

And then I studied it out and this was the way of it—

No, instead of telling you why she was the best dressed, I think I'll tell you why the other girls weren't.

I'll take them one by one.

First the girl in the brown corduroy. Her suit was handsome and she had a nice hat to match, but one of the wings in the hat was broken and there was a big hole in her veil.

The girl in the blue velvet was stunningly gowned, but her shoes needed polishing terribly and were painfully run over at the heels, that as you looked at her, you could think of nothing else.

The girl in the fur coat and blue house gown had several bad spots on the hem of the gown and a breadth of ragged petticoat showing below.

The girl in the amethyst broadcloth had a hole in her gloves, very soiled ruching and her hat was painfully in need of brushing.

While the girl in the blue broadcloth had not a single flaw about her.

Her shoes and gloves were perfect (I'm sure she used shoe trees). Her dress and hat had not a speck of dust or a spot upon them. Her shirt waist was immaculate. There was nowhere the vaguest suggestion of a loose end about her.

Did you ever hear Michael Angelo's epigram on perfection?

"Trifles," said this great artist, "make perfection; but perfection is no trifle."

He probably wasn't thinking of gowning when he said it, but it fits that as well as painting, don't you think?

The finest costume may be spoiled by carelessness about details.

The simplest costume may be made attractive by perfection in detail.

Suppose when you have dressed yourself tomorrow, and you are ready to go out, you stand in front of your mirror and repeat Michael Angelo's words and see if you can stand the test.

"Trifles make perfection; but perfection is no trifle."

Ruth Cameron

ANSWERS TO QUERIES

HAIRPIN—F. B., City. What gave rise to the expression "That's the kind of a hairpin I am"?

Is a humorous Americanism. Shakespeare makes Falstaff in "King Henry" say in speaking of a thin man that he is "like a forked radish with a head fantastically carved upon it." So the Americans fancied that there is a resemblance of a doubled tined hairpin to the human figure. The phrase became popular in 1880, but there is no record of who "brought it out."

* * *

WHEELER—H. A. M., Berkeley. What is the annual salary paid Benjamin Ide Wheeler of the state university?

Ten thousand dollars.

* * *

CENSUS FIGURES—P. L., City. The population of 12 cities and towns in this state as shown by the census of this year which you ask for have not yet been announced. When the figures for these places are given they will appear in The Call.

* * *

MARKS—H. E. N., City. What is the origin of the exclamation and the interrogation marks used in writing and printing?

Both are arbitrary signs that were first adopted in Alexandria when punctuation was introduced, but the books do not tell who originated them.

* * *

PENNIES—R. B. N., Oakland. Why was a certain issue of the Lincoln pennies recalled?

Because the die from which they were minted produced the figure of such a character that the coins would not stack. They were "wobbly."

PERSONS IN THE NEWS

CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL, the author, is at the Union Square with Mrs. Russell. The writer is a socialist, and at the last gubernatorial election in New York, running on the socialist ticket, obtained more votes than William Randolph Hearst did running for lieutenant governor on the independence league ticket. Russell will remain here for some time.

* * *

Z. T. MOODY, former governor of Oregon, is at the Palace with Mrs. Moody. They intend to spend the holidays in California.

* * *

BERT R. AND F. N. CHAPLIN, proprietors of a general merchandise store at Suisun, are guests at the Argonaut.

* * *

REAR ADMIRAL E. P. REESE, retired, and Mrs. Reese of Erie, Pa., are spending a few days at the Fairmont.

* * *

J. O. HOYT, general manager of a construction company at Portland, is among the recent arrivals at the Palace.

* * *

R. M. MORTON, engineer of the highways commission of San Joaquin county, is at the Stewart with his bride.

* * *

MR. AND MRS. JAMES ARMSTRONG JR. of Greensburg, Pa., are guests at the Fairmont.

* * *

WILLIAM PIERCE, a cattleman of Suisun, is among the recent arrivals at the St. Francis.

* * *

ALEXANDER BROWN, president of the state board of equalization, is at the Stewart.

* * *

JOHN BOYD, an oil operator in the Santa Maria district, is registered at the Argonaut.

* * *

ELMER E. JONES, an oil operator of Bakersfield, is a guest at the St. Francis.

* * *

F. W. PETTYGROVE, a commission merchant of Seattle, is a guest at the Palace.

* * *

E. W. CHURCHILL, a banker of Napa, is at the St. Francis with Mrs. Churchill.

F. V. BROWN, general counsel of the Great Northern railroad for Oregon, Idaho, Washington and British Columbia, is at the Palace with Mrs. Brown. Their home is in Seattle.

* * *

J. F. NASH of Chico, F. R. Hayward of San Jose and Mr. and Mrs. C. H. McIsaac of Santa Cruz are among the recent arrivals at the Manx.

* * *

H. L. DAY, a capitalist of Wallace, Idaho, returned from Honolulu yesterday with Mrs. Day. They are at the St. Francis.

* * *

MR. AND MRS. A. JOHNSON are visiting at the Bellevue from Oregon.

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W. D. HOFIUS, a steel manufacturer of Seattle, is registered at the Palace.

* * *

J. S. COOPER and E. L. Stewart, merchants of Suisun, are at the Turpin.

* * *

JUDGE M. T. DOOLING of Hollister is spending a few days at the Stewart.

* * *

E. W. QUINN, formerly a territorial senator in Hawaii, is at the Stewart.

* * *

I. I. IRWIN, a merchant of San Diego, is a guest at the Palace.

* * *

W. W. WILSON, a mining man from Nevada, is at the Stanford.

* * *

L. O. STEPHENS, a merchant of Fresno, is at the Union Square.

* * *

A. COTTON of San Diego and Mrs. Cotton are at the Bellevue.

* * *

T. McCANN, a Los Angeles automobileman, is at the Colonial.

* * *

G. GINSON, a traveling man from New York, is at the Colonial.

* * *

A. W. SMITH, a lumberman from Redding, is at the Turpin.

* * *

J. McINTYRE, a Sacramento mining man, is at the Stanford.