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WOULD TAX LANDS OF SPECULATORS

CONVENTION DELEGATES WOULD EQUALIZE BURDEN OF STATE BUILDING.

HOME BUILDER PENALIZED

Are Thousands of Acres of Unimproved Cultivable Lands Held By Land Owners for Speculative Purposes.

Donaldsonville, La.—Ways and means to bring about the taxation on a fair and reasonable basis of unimproved cultivable lands held for speculative purposes should receive the attention of the Constitutional convention, in the opinion of C. C. Weber, delegate to the convention from Ascension parish.

Mr. Weber believes this is one of the most important questions that will come before the convention. If a tax system is devised whereby speculative land owners of this type will be forced to either improve the land or sell it to home-builders, he thinks it will bring about an era of development in the State. His idea is to tax improved cultivable lands on a ratio of the same class of improved cultivable lands.

There are thousands of acres of improved cultivable lands in this State, Mr. Weber said, that are being held by land owners for speculative purposes. Much of this land is being held at exorbitant prices, and when the assessments are placed on the owners appear either in person or by counsel and plead for low assessments on the ground that their land is unimproved and is not producing anything. Almost invariably they have been able to get off with a low assessment, which means low taxes.

When these lands adjoin farms that are among the best in the State, the owners are assessed to their full value because the land is in a high state of cultivation through the skill and energy of the farmers who own them.

The unimproved and is just as rich as that which is in cultivation. Improved and placed in cultivation would produce crops as bountifully as the adjacent farms. The owners are making no improvements and are holding it for speculative purposes. The more farms that are placed in cultivation adjacent to these large tracts just more valuable they become. This has brought about a situation whereby the home-builder and the speculator are penalized. He is forced to pay taxes on a high valuation because he has done something for himself and his State, while the speculator gets off with a small tax bill. It is in favor of going after these lands by the taxation route. Taxation of such lands should be on a par with the same class of lands in cultivation. Then the land-hogs would be compelled to do one of two things: improve their property so as to make it productive, or sell it.

If they improve the land, they should be placed on the same footing as owners of adjacent cultivated land. If they decided to sell it rather than improve it or pay the increased taxes, the land would pass into the hands of homebuilders and home-owners. That would bring prosperity and employment to the State, for if these tracts of lands are thrown on the market it will attract thousands of homebuilders from other parts of the country.

FOR HURRIED READERS.

Kentwood.—More than 200 acres of watermelons, 100 in cucumbers, in addition to many of English peas, beans, potatoes and other truck, are being raised in this neighborhood.

Lake Charles.—Lake Charles is to have two Masonic blue lodges. An application and petition for the new lodge was presented last night to Lake Charles Lodge No. 165, F. & A. M. Application will now go to the Grand Lodge and it is expected that a dispensation, under which the new lodge will work for a short time, will be granted.

Thibodaux.—At the meeting of the Lefebvre-Lafourche Association of Commerce, Secretary-Manager Dr. H. Smith gave notice that at the termination of the present year, June 30, he would stand for re-election. The association road came in for considerable discussion, during which it was stated that it will be necessary to obtain out a part of the route so the assistance of the State Highway Department may be received.

Denham Springs.—Charles Harelson seriously hurt by a blow on the head by a piece of timber, which fell on him while at work at the plant of Constant Sand and Gravel Company on the Amite river near here.

Rouge.—Rev. Father M. A. of Mobile was a visitor at the House. Father Grace is an officer of the Springhill College at Mobile was formerly food administrator in St. Landry parish, at that time president of St. Charles College and Cotrau.

Lake Charles.—The Joe Bren Production Company of Chicago, theatrical producers, has accepted the privilege of whipping the talent of Lake Charles into musical comedy form.

Natchitoches.—A truck loaded with seven ten-gallon cans of coal oil caught fire on the main thoroughfare here when the auto backfired. The truck was destroyed in the flames.

Denham Springs.—At the regular meeting of the directors, Odom Sullivan was elected assistant cashier of the Bank of Denham Springs. Mr. Sullivan has been with the bank for three years.

Kentwood.—Several large box factories and industrial plants have notified the local farmers that they will advance crates, hampers and fertilizers to them through the association, with their crop as security.

Plaquemine.—News was received here that the Rev. Father Gerard Bosch, after a 30-day voyage, has reached his old home, Amsterdam, and that the voyage had seemed to improve his condition somewhat.

De Ridder.—The high school auditorium at De Ridder was filled to the doors with an appreciative audience which had gathered to hear the L. S. U. Glee Club Wednesday evening. Mr. S. W. Plaquehe, president of the newly organized local chapter of the L. S. U. Alumni Federation, introduced the Glee Club. The entertainment throughout was exceptionally pleasing.

Denham Springs.—A special election will be held March 15, for the election of an assessor to fill the position made vacant by the refusal of the candidate. A. S. LeBourgeois, who was elected last April. The date of the primary has been fixed for March 1. Only two candidates have been announced, R. R. Richardson Jr. of Corbin, and I. D. Easterly of the First Ward.

Thibodaux.—The entertainment for the benefit of the Catholic church building fund netted \$138.40. Besides the orchestra proper the program was participated in by Mrs. Joseph Wink and her daughter, Miss Estelina. Frank and Richard Gibbons, Thibodaux College students, contributed a sketch and little Leslie Badaux and Gerard Cognat contributed an interesting feature.

De Ridder.—The auction sale at De Ridder January 29 was a means of disposing of considerable farm products, household goods, etc., to the farmers and others of this community. The next sale will be held on Saturday, February 26. This will be an opportunity for those who want to buy machinery for their sprays, work and those who want to dispose of such machinery as they do not need, and to stock up with hogs, cows, poultry, etc.

Lake Charles.—The Calcasieu committee for European relief met at Red Cross rooms to settle the question as to whether Lake Charles would send money or rice to the starving European children. It was decided that rice only would be sent in keeping with the promises made to the public when the subscriptions were solicited. The money collected was this morning to P. G. Chalkley, who, with the assistance of J. A. Foster and W. B. Conover, will purchase the rice at local mills immediately.

De Ridder.—Stock in the new canning factory for De Ridder is being subscribed, as the citizens are greatly interested in this factory. The charter has been prepared, and Secretary Fowler of the Chamber of Commerce is now having the same signed up by the stockholders. It is estimated this canning factory will be able to take care of 30,000 cans a day, or approximately a carload of sweet potatoes. This is only one of the several industries contemplated by the Chamber of Commerce for De Ridder.

Denham Springs.—A recent audit by a representative of the State supervising auditor's office did not give the parish any compliments for the state of its finances and the methods of handling them, and this report had some influence on the decision of the police jury in regard to cattle dipping.

Kentwood.—What promises to be one of the largest associations of its kind in Louisiana, was formed Saturday, when 66 farmers of Kentwood and its vicinity met and organized a Producers' Co-Operative Association. Much interest was displayed, and every farmer present signed for active membership.

Denham Springs.—There will be no tick eradication work done in Livingston parish for the year 1921, indications were Friday. At the regular meeting of the police jury this week a representative of the government work was present and asked what the members intended to do. He was told that as the parish is already considerably behind in its finances that it would be impossible to do anything at all.

Natchitoches.—Joseph Lorens, a Mexican, who resided in Montrose, this parish, was said to have become mentally unbalanced and wandered away from home Sunday. Search failed to find him, and Tuesday he was run down near the Bayou Pierre trestle, four miles from Natchitoches, by a Texas and Pacific passenger train.

De Ridder.—The contributions so far received in Beauregard parish by J. C. Fowler, chairman of the European Relief Committee, amount to \$728.75.

BARE HUGE RED PLOTS IN EUROPE

DOCUMENTS SEIZED IN RAID DISCLOSE PLANS FOR GREAT MAY DAY COUP.

ARE BEATEN BY EXPOSURE

Soviets Have Been Organized Throughout France, With Brest as Their Headquarters and Reported Ready To Take Over Railroads.

Paris.—The overthrow of the "bourgeois" governments of Spain, Italy and France is outlined in documents seized after a search following the discovery of a widespread Communist plot. The date fixed by the Communists for this event was May 1, 1921.

The contemplated arrest of two Communist members of the Chamber of Deputies, alleged proof against whom Judge Jouselin has delivered to M. Marraud, minister of the interior, seems to have brought the French to a realization of the importance of the attempt against the security of the state.

Discoveries made by the police of Barcelona and Milan show that the plot included the three European Latin countries. Transmission of funds was effected through an American financial organization, with European headquarters in Paris and branches in Berlin and Vienna.

Soviets have been organized throughout France with Brest as headquarters, according to the police, ready to take over the railroads, banks and transportation and all civil services. The plot appears to have been organized without the knowledge of M. Cachin, leader of the French Communist party, against whom the police say they will not demand the lifting of parliamentary immunity.

The discovery of checks emanating from Berlin and paid through an American transportation company appears to have caused a revision of feeling in French political and official circles and also among the workingmen's committee, which so long as the leaders professed to be working for "principles" were willing to support them. But a poster was issued recently in the Second ward, where an election will be held February 27, asking the voters to support the moderate Socialist element in preference to the extremists.

The French Communist press, departing from its menacing attitude of the past few months, expresses surprise that repressive measures should come from Premier Briand, "a former comrade." L'Humanite, the official organ of the French Communists, appears especially upset by the arrest of its editor, M. Dunois, a canceled check for 20,000 francs issued in his name at Berlin being held by the police.

Greeks Open Attack. Paris.—The Greeks have finished their preparations for an offensive in Asia Minor, and already have made reconnaissance in the Ismud and Brussa sectors, according to dispatches from Constantinople. The Turks have made attacks in the Ushak district.

Steamer Believed Lost. New York.—Hope for the steamer Hewett, now long overdue from Sabine, Tex., has been virtually abandoned by shipping interests here. With a crew of 42 men and cargo of sulphur she sailed from the Texas port January 20, and should have reached her destination by February 1.

In Mexican Cabinet. Mexico City.—Eduardo Hay, Mexican minister to Italy, has been recalled from Rome to assume the post of under-secretary of foreign relations according to a semi-official announcement here.

Mongolian City Taken. Peking.—Unconfirmed reports have been received of the capture of the Mongolian city of Urga by a force of Russians and Mongols, under Gen. Baron Sternberg.

Katy Cuts Hours. Denison, Tex.—Bulletins were posted in the local Missouri, Kansas and Texas car and locomotive shops announcing that for the rest of February a four-day week will be in force. About 700 men are affected.

Four Miners Trapped. Oak Creek, Col.—Four miners are trapped in the No. 2 mine of the Moffat Coal Company, one and a half miles from here, as a result of an explosion.

Reduction Move Falls. Columbia, S. C.—By a vote of 71 to 22 the South Carolina House of Representatives struck out the enacting words of a resolution which would have required the reduction of cotton acreage this year to the 1920 average.

Stolen Bonds Found. Reading, Pa.—Bonds worth \$27,000, which were part of the \$180,000 loot in the robbery of the People's Trust Company of Wyoming February 4 were recovered in a rooming house here.

Everybody Dig



CONGRESS PROMISES VETERANS RELIEF

SENATOR PENROSE PREDICTS THE PASSAGE OF A BONUS BILL.

Washington.—After listening to criticism of the government bureau dealing with war veterans, the Executive Committee of the American Legion concluded a three-day meeting here by going to the capitol to interview members of Congress concerning legislation favored by the legion.

F. W. Galbraith, national commander, reported that he had been assured by Senator Penrose of Pennsylvania, chairman of the Finance Committee, that the bonus bill would be reported out of committee and probably would be passed at this session. Members of the Legion Committee also expressed belief that all measures for the relief of disabled veterans would be enacted, including an increase from \$3,000,000 to \$45,000,000 for maintenance of hospitals provided in the sundry civil bill.

Criticism of government bureaus, launched by Abel Davis of Chicago, chairman of the legion's Hospitalization Committee, followed a committee report urging the consolidation of the War Risk Insurance Bureau, the Vocational Education Board and a part of the Public Health Service. He declared that the chiefs of these agencies do not work together, and resent the activities of the legion in attempting to obtain relief for disabled veterans and had "packed" committees of the legion with employees of the bureaus, who were legion members, in efforts to handicap the work of the committees.

As a result of his charges, the Executive Committee adopted a resolution recommending to state organizations that no bureau employees be appointed to legion committees.

Disabled men are being kept in private and state hospitals that are "indescribably filthy and where conditions are terrible," Mr. Davis said. All hospitals are crowded, and men often are taken in by private and state hospitals because they are disabled service men and often are forced to sleep on cots in hallways or in crowded wards, he said.

Exports Are Held Up.

Buenos Aires, Argentina.—The exportation of cattle hides, sheep skin and wool from Buenos Aires has been at a standstill for more than two weeks, owing to the produce market union and the port workers' labor organization having refused to give "permits" to load ships.

Jap Miners Strike.

Hakodate, Japan.—Ten thousand coal miners employed by the Hokkaido Colliery and Steamship Company have struck, refusing to accept a 20 per cent cut in wages.

Robbers Loot Mail.

Louisville, Ky.—Registered mail, including \$30,000 to \$50,000 in currency, was stolen from the railroad station at Corbin, Ky. The money was shipped by a Cincinnati bank to the Wisconsin Steel Company at Benham.

Steel Plants Cut Pay.

Youngstown, O.—A 20 per cent reduction in wages for independent steel plants of the Mahoning Valley, Ohio, and the Shenango valley, Pennsylvania, was announced which affects more than 40,000 men.

Robbers Get \$25,000.

Norfolk, Va.—Burglars blew the vault of the Bank of Sussex and Surrey at Wakefield, 30 miles west of Norfolk, and stole between \$25,000 and \$30,000 in securities.

Aviator Saves Swimmer.

Daytona, Fla.—L. C. Merrill crashed his airplane into the ocean recently in trying to save J. Eigear of Daytona, who had been caught in an undertow at the beach here. Life guards finally rescued both men, who clung to the machine.

Church is Wrecked.

Hughes Springs.—The Presbyterian Church hand several dwellings were destroyed by a tornado here. So far as known there were no casualties.

MANY ARE KILLED IN GEORGIA STORM

APPROXIMATELY FORTY HOUSES WERE BLOWN DOWN IN DISTRICT.

Oconee, Ga.—A tornado that struck the Gardner settlement, a mile from here, brought death to two white persons and nearly 30 negroes and serious injury to five white persons and more than a score of negroes.

A stretch of land extending from Oconee almost to Toombsboro, in Washington county, nearly five miles long and about half a mile wide, is as barren as a prairie, not a building nor a tree being left standing.

Among the dead is Benjamin Franklin Orr, 14-year-old youth, who was decapitated. The only other white person who met death in the tornado is the 3-year-old daughter of E. L. Minor, manager of Shepherd's commissary at the plant of the Cleveland's Oconee Lumber Company.

Eighty-two children and three teachers were in a school building on the edge of the Gardner settlement when the tornado struck. The building was literally twisted to pieces, and the fragments were scattered for miles around. Children were picked up by the wind and carried for some distance, but it is officially announced that only one child was injured seriously.

Approximately 40 houses were blown down in the Gardner settlement. The Shepherd Bros. commissary at the big lumber plant was reduced to kindling wood, Orr and four negroes meeting death there.

The 15-acre plant of the lumber company was not seriously damaged by the wind, although millions of feet of lumber piled in the yards were scattered. The tornado spent its force locally immediately beyond the plant of the company, in the settlement of 40 houses and four stores.

Laborers' Wages Cut.

New York.—Wages of laborers employed in the New York region of the Erie Railroad between Hackensack Bridge and Susquehanna were reduced from 48 to 35 cents an hour, and those east of Hackensack Bridge to 37 cents an hour. The reduction affects all freight house employes and other classes of common labor.

Belgium To Be Lenient.

London.—The Belgian minister at Berlin has informed Dr. Simons, the German foreign secretary, that Belgium does not intend to use her right under the treaty to confiscate the property of German nationals, should Germany intentionally default her obligations, according to the correspondent of the London Times.

Daylight Saving Again.

New York.—Organization of the Eastern Time Daylight Saving Association to urge passage of national legislation creating a daylight saving law, was effected at a meeting here of representatives of 57 commercial organizations in Eastern states.

Naval Flyers Killed.

Washington.—Lieuts. John Henry Heitz Menken and John Frederick Wolfer, United States Navy, were killed near Guantanamo, Cuba, by the wrecking of their airplane while on a practice flight for radio instruction.

Big Bridge Is Opened.

Anchorage, Alaska.—Traffic has been opened over the Susitana river bridge, second longest single span bridge in the world. The span is 504 feet.

Pullman Shops Burn.

Chicago.—The freight car erecting shops of the Pullman Car Company, seven freight cars and 12 coaches were destroyed by fire. The loss was estimated by \$450,000, and the cause probably was spontaneous combustion.

Bill To Limit Smoking.

Bismarck, N. D.—The North Dakota House has passed a bill forbidding smoking of tobacco in dining rooms or other eating places frequented by women.

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