

TAX SCHEDULE EQUALIZED

THE state board of equalization forced on the people of North Dakota a personal property schedule, drawn by State Auditor Carl O. Jorgenson, which grossly discriminated against farmers and favored 36 or more classes of stores and businesses. The Leader exposed this deal and stamped it as an outrage. This aroused county auditors and taxpayers, whose protests were successful in causing the board to call a convention of auditors for advice on the administration of this schedule.

As a result the board has agreed to a new interpretation of the schedule which practically eliminates the lump assessment plan for the favored businesses, one of the chief objections to the schedule as first drafted. In addition the board has consented to placing the administration of the schedule in the hands of the state tax commission, which is pledged to make further interpretations which likely will obviate some of the other injustices and inconsistencies of the board's taxing plan.

The Leader may be pardoned for feeling considerable satisfaction over this outcome of its fight. The schedule as it will be enforced will not be scientific or ideal or as good as if the board charged with its framing had used a little expert taxing judgment and common sense at the start, but one of its chief discriminations will be eliminated—farmers will not have to submit to a rigid inquiry regarding personal property which business men will not. All will now be treated alike in this respect.

It is true the schedule will still probe deeper than in the past into farmers' holdings and likely will get more tax out of them, but they will not be alone in having to pay this added tax, as first planned. The wisdom of increasing the personal property assessment this year is questioned by taxing experts and very likely by the people generally. There are so many other classes of property escaping taxation to a much greater extent that the increased valuation, if needed, should have been obtained from them.

But the schedule had already been adopted and over half the counties of the state had got their assessment blanks and field slips printed, including the classifications of the new schedule. So it remained for the tax commission and county auditors who opposed the monstrous taxing plan adopted to do the best they could to have its rankest injustices obviated without having to reprint all the assessment books and add this expense to the various counties.

This is only one of the victories the Leader is going to win for the people of the state and the farmers in particular.

SPEAKING OF NEWS AND SCOOPS

AT the December term of the State Supreme court a decision was handed down declaring unconstitutional the law which proposed to place a tax of three mills on the dollar upon all intangible values, such as moneys and credits of corporations.

A full review of the case and the court's decision will be found in this issue of the Leader.

There are two points, however, to which we desire to call particular attention.

Here was a case of very vital importance to the public. If this law should be held constitutional it meant at least \$600,000 increased revenue for the state annually—revenues paid by corporations which otherwise would escape a just taxation.

The court goes out of the records and shows that the amendment which rendered this law unconstitutional was purposely put into the measure and rushed through the legislature on the last day of the session.

As a matter of news this decision and the court's roast of the legislature, was the most sensational happening in many months. That is one point.

The other point is that not a newspaper in the state featured this big piece of news. It remained for the Leader to make a complete scoop of it and give it to the reading public. That's the other point.

Read the article and see if you can tell why these papers refused to publish this story.

CONCERNING THE FARGO FORUM'S STATEMENT

PROBABLY the most sweeping, comprehensive and all-embracing compliment the Nonpartisan League has received was that printed by the Fargo Forum in its issue of Monday, January 24. The Forum announces that after full consideration and after learning the facts concerning the League, it "believes that great things may come out of this movement for the state of North Dakota."

Knowing this organization as we do, knowing the men who compose it, the injustices they have suffered in the past and the honest objects and purposes they have in view, the Forum's praises are decidedly timely, fitting and deserving. We believe that every member of the League will join with the Leader in

Business Manager's Corner

Again for our business chat:

The Leader has had the greatest satisfaction recently in receiving from advertisers the information that they have received splendid results from their ads in this paper; also from readers and patrons of such advertisers that they have received first-class service and good prices.

This proves that our ads are informative and that our members are true to their pledge to patronize the advertisers in the Leader above others, where prices and service are equal.

This proves the Leader is rendering real service through its advertising columns to both advertiser and patrons, which is our chief aim.

Now, again as to the cut rate for classified advertising:

We told you in our last issue that the Leader was going to cut its classified advertising rate to members of the Nonpartisan League. Beginning with this issue the rate to members is 10 cents per line of six words for the first insertion and 5 cents per line for each succeeding insertion of the same ad.

Now we should have more than a page of interesting classified ads at this rate every week. There are many farmers who have things to sell and to trade, and there are many who want to buy and trade. The best medium through which to transact this business is the Leader, for all the farmers belong to the League and get the Leader each week.

Don't overlook this opportunity to get big returns for your advertising.

full appreciation of this cooperation and approval of the Fargo Forum.

At this time we are frank to say that we accept the Forum's possession of conversion at its face value. Even though we are suspicious of all untried neophytes, we shall hold in abeyance any verdict until such time as a change in conclusion is justified by the facts.

We truly hope that the Forum is sincere in all it says. As to that, however, its own future conduct will tell.

A LAW MADE BY BANKERS FOR BANKERS

IN this issue of the Leader you will read a story of how the banks of North Dakota are shielded and protected from taxation by the laws of this state. You will read how 19 banks of the state escape all personal tax and many others get off with a nominal tax.

When you, the overtaxed farmer, first read this you will probably want to fight. You will feel outraged. Indeed you are outraged and indeed you should want to fight—with your organization.

As for the bankers who are thus protected they deserve your congratulations—not your curses. They have an organization and pay liberally to support it and by means of that organization they send bankers to Bismarck, also lobbies. Most of you also voted for the banker candidates. That's how it happens that they have such nice, friendly, favorable laws—they make them.

While they were doing that you farmers were hopping clods and chasing gophers and breaking your backs trying to make both ends meet. Between times you were listening to the siren songs of the politicians who beamingly congratulated you on your fat calves and pretty babies and confidentially assuring you that they would look out for your interests at Bismarck. Well, they did it. They put your interests on the blink. But you can't blame them.

Hereafter you will have to get on the job yourselves, do the job yourselves and then it will be done to suit you.

A FREE PRESS IN THE NORTHWEST

IF you believe in a free press, free speech and the supremacy of truth and reason, let your mind dwell for a few moments on these facts:

Pearson's Magazine for January contained a remarkable article revealing for the first time the hidden strings that connect the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce with the greatest Railroad and Financial Interests in the United States.

It was an article of intense interest to everyone in the northwest and particularly to the people of Minneapolis.

You can hardly dig up a single copy of the magazine in all that city. At stands where it is usually to be had not a copy was on sale. Although the article was sensational local news, not a newspaper would mention it.

Friends of the magazine started to have it vended in the streets. They were stopped with a cunningly worded ordinance.

Then they tried to get newsdealers to offer it for sale, placarding their windows. Newsdealers said they did not dare touch it. If they did they would be put out of business.

So far as the power of the railroads, the great banks and the Chamber of Commerce was effective that magazine was suppressed everywhere in the northwest.

Is it not time we united when this power, so subtle, secret and still tremendous can work what it pleases in our affairs?