

## Something of Taxes In Richardson County

The following special dated from this city appeared in last Sunday's State Journal and will be of interest to all taxpayers in this county:

For lack of other issues the fusionists in Richardson county in the state where there is less reason to cry about high taxes, or where the issue is raised in such spirit of bad faith and political chicanery. For the most part the little clique of professional tax-dodgers who canvassed the wealthy farmers last fall to induce them to withdraw their money from the banks, are the same ones who this summer have stirred up the hue and cry against the revenue law. In this they are ably seconded by the democratic county board, and the chorus is formed by some professional democratic assessors who this year found their occupation gone.

Richardson county is one of the oldest in the state and is located in the most favored section. Unaffected by the presence of large local market its farms are the high priced of any in Nebraska. When any part of the state has any sort of a crop Richardson has plenty, and in the drouth days has often been the Mecca toward which seed corn hunters turned. It is more sure of seasonable rains than any more western county, and its growing seasons are longer than any other river county. Prosperity and content are here in their fullest measure. The published statement of the banking board last November showed on deposit in Richardson county banks a total of \$1,618,246, or an average of \$82.50 for every man, woman and child in the county. And a large part of this money was deposited by the tillers of the soil.

It is plain to be seen that no excuse of poverty is behind the talk against taxation. Richardson county people will boast that have finer farms, finer horses, better blooded cattle, and a better strain of hogs than any other locality, and they will stand ready to make good. It is not reasonable that such people should raise a poverty wail, or that they should for a moment seek to avoid paying their just share of the public taxes. Behind it and forming most of it is the howl of the professional political agitators.

### STATE ASSESSMENTS.

Last year the assessed valuation of all property in Richardson county was certified up to the

state board at \$3,536,625, and the county paid in state taxes \$33,600 the state levy being nine and a half mills. This year the total valuation was \$5,674,407, and the amount due for state taxes on that at 6 mills is \$34,046, an increase over last year of \$446. Of this increase the railroads traversing the county come in for \$301.28 so that as certified to the board the people of Richardson county had increased their state taxes just \$145. There was nothing to object so in this, although it must be acknowledged that so small a raise in one of the very best counties in the state would not be an encouraging start toward paying off the state debt. The increase was about half a cent apiece for the people who had nearly two million dollars in the banks.

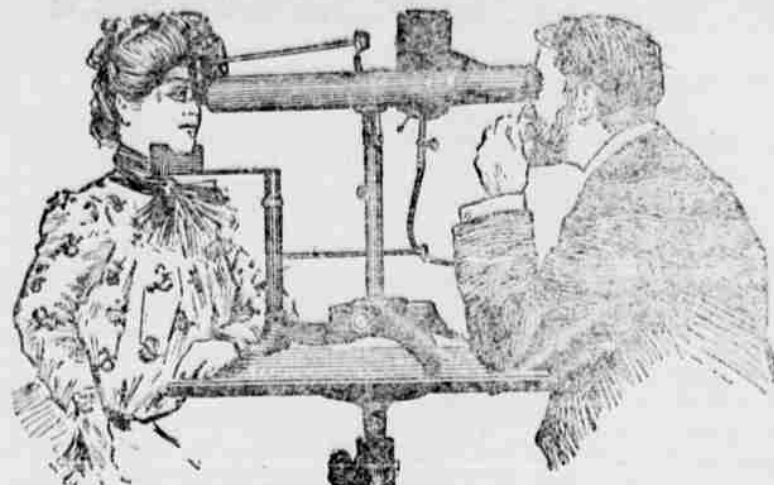
The deputy assessors of Richardson county were honest men and good citizens. Their appointments were confirmed by the democratic board of supervisors, and part of them were selected by the democratic members. Being familiar with land values in the county, as shown by the frequent sales, they presented to the county board what they considered just valuations. Of course some errors were made, and there was the usual effort on part of some to have their values reduced.

### ADJUSTABLE VALUES.

One man whose farm of less than a hundred acres adjoins the town site of Falls City on the growing side, and which will eventually be divided up into high priced city lots, asked for a reduction of \$25 per acre. While he was making his argument another man offered him in spot cash \$200 more than the assessor's valuation for his place. Of course he refused. His farm is for sale but at a price \$8,000 higher than the value placed by the assessor. Another man owning 120 acres adjoining town asked for a reduction, although he had often said that he had refused an amount double the assessed valuation. Those are two samples of men who appeared to ask for a lower rate. Generally the land owners were satisfied.

But the county board being democratic, must inject politics into the matter. They retired into a dark room and came to this agreement: "We will make a flat reduction of 10 per cent of all land values. For this our party will get the credit among the farmers. Then the state board

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raise us back to the old figure, and the farmers will find fault with them." So they did it and among their friends commenced to boast of the cute political trick they had played.

The state board, unwittingly or otherwise, walked into the trap, and increased the real and personal assessments of Richardson county 10 per cent. While there is much honest difference of opinion as to the wisdom and legality of this action of the board, and the matter is one which is to be settled in the courts, the first blame can not be placed upon the revenue law, but upon the democratic members of the county board, who regarded political trickery higher than duty to their constituents.

### WHERE THE BURDEN LIES.

Here is a comprehensive summary of the figures.

Total valuation, 1903.....	\$3,536,925
Total valuation, 1904.....	5,754,407
State taxes, 1903.....	33,600
State taxes, 1904.....	34,046
Increase over 1903.....	446
State board increase.....	5,404

So it is apparent that the amount "saddled upon the people for state taxes by the iniquitous revenue law" is a small matter after all. It is almost nothing as compared to the local school and township taxes for which the people are directly responsible year by year when they vote the burden upon themselves.

For instance: If one precinct in this county only three or four

people were interested enough to attend a school meeting. Those present, through ignorance or through politics, voted a twenty mill tax on the district. A man in that district with a half section of land tells me that his tax this year will be \$135 because he failed to attend school meeting and look after the matter. His state taxes are comparatively light, and he has no complaint against the revenue law. There are here and in other parts of the county hundreds of instances of men who justly complain of high taxes, but who imagine it is the fault of the law, when it really is the fault of themselves and their neighbors. An average Richardson county family is not harmed by the 75 cents increase in state taxes, when it is remembered that the family has its average of \$412.50 in cash in the bank. But the twenty mills for local school and 9 mills for other local purposes makes them squirm and makes some of them willing to listen to howlers against the "state tax robbery."

### THE SMALL INCREASE.

Here are some figures on state personal taxes, taking the first name on the records for the various precincts:

	Val. 1903	State Tax 1903	Val. 1904	State Tax 1904
E Aust.....	\$ 54	\$ .50	\$ 104	\$ .62
S Blair.....	283	2.68	330	1.98
F Atwood.....	502	4.76	923	5.53
A Amos.....	865	8.20	1,188	7.12
J Anderson.....	116	1.09	331	1.98
M Anderson.....	110	1.04	203	1.21
I Allison.....	82	.77	411	2.46
G Allen.....	107	1.01	136	.81
L Ablutz.....	211	2.00	461	2.76
W Allen.....	25	.23	35	.21
V Arnold.....	46	.43	366	2.19
J Ahern.....	2,089	19.84	4,425	26.55
G Abbott.....	150	1.42	92	.54
H Apel.....	54	.50	111	.66
T Anderson.....	7	.06	23	.15

\$4,701 \$44.53 \$9,141 \$54.77  
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