

MODEST WORTH.

It Seeks to Avoid the Attention of the Tax Collector.

The Supervisors, sitting as a County Board of Equalization, met yesterday to hear reasons why the assessed valuation for taxes in certain cases should be reduced and in others raised—principally the former. As a kind of a moral precent on which to conduct their deliberations, Consul Bee stated that it was not in accordance with the Constitution of the United States and law, justice, or his ideas of right, that the sworn statement of every rich man and corporation should be accepted by the Assessor, while that official accepted only his deputies' estimate of the wealth of Chinese firms. After these introductory remarks the Board proceeded to listen with much fortitude to the statements made by various citizens and Citizens of how it happened that the Assessor and his deputies had discovered so much more taxable property than they, the presumed owners, knew anything about.

It was discovered that many of the applications for a reduction were made by men who had refused to make a sworn statement of their taxable property, and had therefore been assessed in accordance with the Assessor's judgment, and that in such instances the Board was powerless to order the prayed-for reduction. The Board acted accordingly in numerous cases and until Chairman Stetson remarked that he thought the Board was sitting for the purpose of doing justice. This novel proposition startled the Board into reducing an assessment in one of the cases where it had already decided it could not reduce.

When the application of the Bank of California for a reduction in two items of \$898,409.44, was reached, the bank's attorney stated that that amount was represented in the bank's vaults by a draft on the United States Treasury, and by two certificates of deposit of bullion in the United States Mint. Neither of these could be taxed, said the attorney, and gave his reasons therefor in such a convincing manner that the two items were stricken off the bank's assessment.

While the bank's case was being considered John H. Burke stepped forward and asked to be heard on his application for an increase of the assessment of the Bank of California.

"When we are to be called upon to respond to any such application we will be properly cited to appear before the Board for that express purpose, I assume," said the attorney, looking fixedly several feet above Mr. Burke's head.

Chairman Stetson thought something to that effect, too, and Mr. Burke retired.

When it was proposed to adjourn until this morning John Lord Love asked the privilege of being heard in regard to his application for an increase in the assessment of the Spring Valley Water Company and the San Francisco Gas Company. "Not to-day," remarked a member of the Board; "not to-day; some other day; good-day."

Mr. Burke then asked that the Board cite the Bank of California and some other corporations to appear and explain why they should not be additionally assessed. He was asked to call again, and the Board adjourned until this morning at 10 o'clock.

John H. Burke yesterday filed a petition with the Board of Supervisors in which he represents that Assessor Hadlam has assessed Mrs. M. F. S. Hopkins for \$631,130, Leland Stanford for \$581,600, Charles Crocker for \$598,800. He claims that they should be assessed for \$12,000,000, and says that it appears from an examination of the papers in the Mark Hopkins estate that \$16,000,000 has been distributed. He farther states that Mrs. Hopkins and Leland Stanford did not make a statement to the Assessor, and asks that they and Charles Crocker be cited to appear before the Board and show cause why they should not be assessed for \$12,000,000, and that G. Frank Smith, S. W. Esderson and W. A. Stuart be cited to appear as witnesses in the matter.