

# CHICAGO: Oh, See the Pretty Gold Fish."

From The Tribune.

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## Press Comment On Tax Publicity

### CHICAGO.

"Oh, See the Pretty Gold Fish."  
From The Tribune.

New York's list of income tax payers, with amounts paid, was made available for public inspection Thursday. Newspapers, including The Tribune, printed part of the list. Some printed it in early editions, got cold feet and took it out of later ones. Others left it alone. The newspapers which printed it may be asked by bureaucracy to explain how they got that way.

The statesmanship which devised the law began with the idea that privacy in American life was undesirable. The American home, properly considered, was a gold fish bowl. The Government already had every means of going back of income tax returns, but publicity required that the neighborhood should see Citizen Smith taking his bath. Even in the United States there was some opposition to this idea, and Congress compromised by making the lists available to a citizen's business rivals, wife's relations, cadgers, and any one particularly interested in finding out what the citizen was making, but added that publication was not to be had.

The Tribune was convinced the law was wrong in principle, but the purpose was publicity; and until advised that full publicity is unlawful The Tribune will accept the situation and give such facts as are most interesting. Probably the most interesting fact would be the discovery that publicity was unlawful under a publicity law and that the whole effect was to expose a citizen only to the eyes of people who wanted to do something to him after finding out how much he was worth doing.

Such people would feel repaid for the effort of going to the place where the lists were available for public inspection. If public inspection means that the public cannot be given the lists by the easiest means of publicity known—newspaper publication—we shall have only another instance of American virtue starting for the stars by putting its foot on a banana peel. Life for Americans, is full of this inadvertent charm.

A look at the New York list reveals that some of the rich are very poor and some of the rich are very rich. Probably only a grocer really knows a millionaire. A doctor operates on a rich man and has a pauper as a convalescent. Frequently the grocer knows who is paying for the gas in the Rolls-Royce. He is.

The gold fish do not seem to mind being gold fish. Probably we'll all be ready presently for a law prohibiting the manufacture, sale, distribution and use of window blinds of more than one-half of 1 per cent. opaqueness. Let's really rally around and get acquainted with each other.