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The preliminary reports of the conclusions arrived at by the special legislative committee appointed to consider the proposed changes in the assessment law are brief. They show, however, that the principle of the business tax is approved. Instead of a fixed rate on rental value an addition to the real estate value of business properties to be taxed in the ordinary way is suggested. For this purpose businesses are classified, each class to pay on a different percentage of added value; distillers, 125 per cent.; brewers, 100 per cent.; wholesale merchant, insurance company, loan company or a trust company, as defined by the Act; express company, land company, bank, banker or any other financial business, 75 per cent. Departmental store or retail merchant dealing in more than five branches of retail trade or business in the same premises or in separate premises under the same roof or connected premises, where the assessed value of the premises exceeds \$20,000; manufacturer, lithographer, printer or publisher, or hotel or club, 50 per cent. of the assessed value.; barrister, solicitor, notary public, conveyancer, physician, surgeon, oculist, aurist, medical electrician, dentist, veterinarian, civil or mining or consulting or mechanical or electrical engineer, surveyor or architect, 50 per cent. of the assessed value.; retail merchants, photographers, theatre, concert hall, curling or skating rink, or other places of amusement, boarding stable, livery or letter of vehicles or other property for hire, and restaurant, eating-house, or other place of public entertainment, or any trade or commercial business not before specially mentioned, 25 per cent. of the assessed value.

The taxation of special franchises as such, or the appointment of a Provincial Board for the valuation of railways, etc., is not approved. The assessment of telegraph and telephone companies is recommended on a basis in townships of \$200 for every mile of one wire and \$7.50 per mile for each additional wire, and in cities,

towns and villages on a percentage of gross receipts and the assessment of plant and real estate with a 25 per cent. addition for business tax. The exemption of machinery is approved when used for manufacturing purposes only. This does not include the machinery of public corporations for the supply of water, light, heat, power, transportation, telegraphic, telephonic, or other service. Additional taxation of railways for Provincial purposes only is promised. Income taxation will no doubt remain as at present with the additional exemption of income derived from business. Some difficulty is anticipated in taxing the dividends on shares in business corporations, which is the same as income derived from business in ordinary cases. The house tax is to be abandoned, notwithstanding the Attorney General's suggestion that "a man's house was a pretty good index of his income."

The popular house tax of England was proposed two hundred years before it was finally adopted. This should encourage tax reformers to continue the good work.

The Commission's proposal to have tax sales conducted by the sheriff was not approved, the present law being thought preferable.

The Assessment Bill should be considered as out of politics and a general effort made to pass a law that will provide an equitable system of municipal taxation.

The proposed change in the manner of levying the business tax is an improvement on the recommendation of the Commission. The percentage addition of 25% in a municipality where the rate is 20 mills makes the tax equivalent to 5 mills. The Commission recommended a fixed rate equal to from 5.25 to 7 mills—in all cases. The separate rates making up an aggregate of 20 mills will each receive a proportionate benefit if the committee's recommendation is adopted. This was especially necessary for separate school purposes.

The grading of the business tax rates is no doubt a recognition of the requirements of the larger cities, and the agitation of the Retail Dealers' Association for the higher taxation of departmental stores, etc.; equality or uniformity of taxation does not favor this. A further consideration of the question will no doubt bring about many changes.

When the council of a town passes a by-law in accordance with section 24 of the Municipal Act, to withdraw the town from the jurisdiction of the council of the county in which such town is situated, it becomes necessary for the town to enter into an agreement with the county in reference to administration of justice and other expenses. Towns have vested interests in the county court house, registry office, house of industry, etc., which they should retain, and the agreement should provide for payment of a proportion of the annual cost of keeping these buildings in repair, and other expenses. The amounts towns may be called upon to pay for the use of these buildings will increase in proportion to population without any additional expenditure on the part of the county. Towns should retain their vested rights and thereby keep the annual payment to county at a minimum.