

Increased Taxes

Since the war started municipal councils throughout Canada have been hard put to it to "carry on." What with the difficulties of collecting their taxes on the one hand and the increased cost of administration on the other municipal financing has produced many grey hairs on the local ministers of finance. In the West in particular the difficulty has been increased by the general adoption of single tax some years back. The City of Vancouver, which adopted the system in 1909 has been compelled to restore its improvement tax to the extent of twenty-five per cent. As a matter of fact single tax, or land tax, has not worked out successfully in Canada at all. Henry George's theory reads well in print, but Canada's experience is strong evidence that it is not practicable. The difficulty to-day is how can the councils revert to the older systems of taxation while still in the midst of the war? A number of them, being seemingly quite nervous to take such a step, even though they find it almost impossible to meet their fixed charges, and administrative expenses. There is only one thing for it and that is to increase the income either by increasing the rates on the present system or find other means of raising the taxes. The municipal councils have every right—in fact is their bounden duty—to see that the local public income is adequate to meet all charges, for the Canadian citizen in spite of the war, was never so well off as he

is to-day, and consequently should pay his share for the many public privileges and conveniences he enjoys every day.

It may not be generally known, but the average citizen in Canada only pays one half of the local taxes that the citizen of the Old Country does though he enjoys equal privileges and equally as good conveniences in public utilities. A number of municipalities have actually defaulted in their interest charges, not through bad financing, but because the councils have not had sufficient pluck and real public spirit to increase the local taxes. We know that to increase the taxes is never a popular move and that it affects a certain number of votes, but no man is worthy the name of citizen who is not prepared to take up his proper share of financial responsibility and no man should seek the suffrages of the people who is afraid to take the responsibility of seeing that the municipality pays its debt and administrative charges even when it necessitates the imposition of more taxes.

Municipal Canada, which means any citizen, has a duty to perform in seeing that its credit is kept up and though it is going through a severe test we have every confidence that with common sense and public spirit prevailing, it will actually come out stronger than ever; but there must be real determination on the part of the councils to tax if necessary.

The Responsibility of the Councils in Preventable Diseases

We always read the annual report of the Canadian Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis with a tremendous amount of pleasure because it represents a continuous propaganda by a small band of public spirited doctors and laymen against that most insidious of diseases — consumption. Year after year for seventeen years this band of self-sacrificing men have preached through the press and at convention the gospel of prevention, have urged the federal, provincial and municipal authorities to take up the problem seriously and intelligently, and while at times the apathy of both public and authorities must have been heartbreaking the work of the association has progressed to a degree to reassure the workers that industry, even in a good cause, has its own reward.

But it has taken the war to make the people of this country realize the scourge of tuberculosis, because of the large number of would-be soldiers that were turned down by medical boards in early days of recruiting—so many of them were affected with the disease. It was then realized that Canada was no better off in regard to consumption than the older countries of Europe with all their handicaps of dense population and positive hatred of hygienic living, and possibly at that time the citizens did first appreciate the splendid Association that for so long has been waging war on the insidious enemy within our midst. Be that as it may there is a growing feeling among the people that tuberculosis is preventable—as it is—and that it is up to the local authorities to see that the community has a fair show by taking proper measures of prevention. In the United States there is a movement on foot to

save to the nation one million babies who would otherwise die. In other words more children and young people die on this continent each year through neglect and of diseases that are preventable than do of what are termed fatal diseases. Not a very pleasant statement to make in these days of enlightenment and about a most enlightened part of the globe. The Provincial laws relating to the health of school children are excellent and on the whole well carried out, but it is before the age of five that Canada has her great losses in her children. And the responsibility lies at the doors of the local councils.

In the carrying out of the health laws one sees many differences between the methods used and different degrees of thoroughness. In some communities the councils appreciate the importance of the health of the people, while in other communities the authorities are indifferent; and the contrast is seen in the way in which the health officer does his work. As the masters so the servants.

In the anti-tuberculosis movement in Canada each municipal council has a special responsibility for its success affects each community. The Canadian Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis has outside a small grant from the Federal authorities carried on the movement through the aid of private subscriptions, and private agencies, and what a great work has been done on so little income. The annual report of 352 pages is full of records of achievement done in every part of Canada. What could be done if every municipality put its shoulder to the wheel would be beyond even the dreams of the officers of the Association.