

MUNICIPAL FINANCE

Heavy Tax Arrears in West—Public Utility Deficits—Some Tax Rates Down

Outremont, Que.—Outremont tenants will have to pay 2½ per cent. habitation tax, as last year. The council at a meeting this week decided, without dissent, to collect it for the ensuing year.

Sudbury, Ont.—The balance sheet at the close of the financial year ended December 15th, 1918, shows capital assets totalling \$1,168,332, being an excess of \$239,004 over capital liabilities. Assets on current account are \$223,667, or slightly more than current liabilities.

Burnaby District, B.C.—The financial statement for the year ended December 31st, 1918, shows that arrears of taxes totalled \$496,024, extending back to the year 1911 inclusive. Total receipts for the year amounted to \$1,050,225, including taxes to the amount of \$477,071 and temporary loans to the amount of \$350,000.

Vancouver, B.C.—The city council has endorsed the principle of increasing the taxation on buildings from 25 per cent. of their value to 50 per cent. Mayor Gale has made an estimate of the changed system of taxation and stated the rate should be approximately 23 mills net. Had it been decided to raise the proposed sum upon the land and 25 per cent. of the value of buildings as last year, the rate would have been approximately 26½ mills net.

St. Thomas, Ont.—According to the latest statement of the city, the present debenture debt is \$1,050,860 (exclusive of \$50,000 of debentures of the street railway guaranteed by the city), and against which the city has on hand sinking funds to the amount of \$21,698. The local improvement debt of the city is \$144,022, as against which the city has on hand sinking funds to the amount of \$16,211. The whole rateable property of the municipality, according to the last revised assessment roll, being for 1918, is the sum of \$11,115,050.

New Westminster, B.C.—The efforts of the council to cut the estimates and if possible to reduce the tax rate below 32 mills are blocked by the Canadian national assessment appeal. City solicitor Martin informed the council that it was practically assured that judgment would be rendered against the city as the contention of the court was that the onus was on the city to prove that the assessment represented the actual value of the land. This decision will have a far reaching effect, not only in New Westminster but throughout the whole of British Columbia. In this city, where it was pointed out, the estimates have been pared down to the finest point, and where the suggested tax rate of 32 mills was based on the revenue to be secured on the present assessment, the blow will be a heavy one, as the assessment of the railway in this city alone is set at about \$950,000.

Calgary, Alta.—The annual statement for the financial year ended December 31st, 1918, shows that tax arrears

amount to \$4,000,434. The revenue and expenditure account shows a debit balance of \$960,061, which will have to be provided for in the current year. The revenue account for 1918 was charged with a special levy carried to reserve of \$172,008, amount written off doubtful taxes \$15,000, and special levy re sinking fund \$27,084. These items were, however, specifically levied for. The influenza epidemic was a cause for adverse balance to the amount of \$42,314. The city utilities showed a net loss due to the increases in cost of labor and materials and in the case of street railway, a large reduction in traffic during the critical period of the influenza epidemic. The net results were as follows:—

	Loss.	Profit.
Electric light and power	\$29,179	
Street railway	7,118	
Waterworks		\$24,406
Market and weigh scales	6,704	
Paving plant	19,835	

The paving plant loss is partly offset by the transfer to net revenue account of \$10,182, being the surplus of 1912 and 1913 up-keep reserves over what was required to cover guarantees.

The auditors point to the disparity in the sinking fund due to the large amount of uncollected taxes. The forthcoming tax sale should, however, result in a substantial reduction. The auditors also state that every known liability is fully provided for and that full reserve has been set aside to protect the levies of the next fifteen or sixteen years from charges not properly belonging thereto.

Saskatoon, Sask.—The current account of the city shows a surplus of \$21,582, according to the auditor's report for the first three months of the year. The public utilities show the following profits after allowing for interest, sinking fund and depreciation:—

Electric light and power	\$12,240
Waterworks	591
Street railway	58

Total profit

.....\$12,889

The above result has been obtained without increasing rates for electric light and power or for water; in fact these rates are less now than before the war, in spite of the fact that wages and the price of material have increased considerably, the city council in January last granting a substantial increase in wages to the employees of all departments. The tax collections for the first four months of the year were \$79,193, compared with \$61,496 for the same period last year.

A delegation of the city council will wait on the local government board in Regina with regard to the proposed capital expenditures. This was decided upon at a council meeting, last week, when the city clerk read out the latest letter from the board in which they stated that it was impossible for them to leave Regina at the present time because of pressure of business. Alderman McConnell moved that the delegation consist of Mayor F. R. MacMillan, Commissioner C. J. Yorath, Alderman F. G. Lewin, chairman of the finance committee and Alderman G. W. Norman, chairman of the legislation and by-laws committee. This motion carried unanimously.

The following is a statement showing the amount of taxes and penalties collected for the first four months of this year compared with the same period last year: January 1st to April 30th—1918, \$79,109.39; 1919, \$102,333.68; increase, \$23,224.29. The amount of arrears of taxes outstanding at the 30th of April, 1919, is \$726,201.21, made up as follows:—

1912 arrears	\$ 13,812.19
1913 arrears	57,486.99
1914 arrears	79,343.78
1915 arrears	77,846.25
1916 arrears	86,151.25
1917 arrears	115,531.60
1918 arrears	296,029.15
Total	\$726,201.21

DEBENTURES FOR SALE

TOWN OF VERMILION

SALE OF DEBENTURES

Sealed tenders, endorsed "Tender for Debentures," will be received by the undersigned up to and including June 7th, 1919, for \$6,000.00 debentures for extension to the Electric Light and Power System. These debentures bear interest at the rate of seven (7%) per cent., repayable in twenty equal annual payments of principal and interest. The highest or any tender not necessarily accepted. H. P. Long, Secretary-Treasurer, Town of Vermilion, Alberta.