

amount of water is pumped into the reservoir and delivered in the City for a certain sum of money expended. This is worth so much a gallon, and there is no equity or reason why one man should pay twenty cents for a thousand gallons, while another pays but five cents. In the same way there is no reason why one man should pay twenty times as much for the privilege of sending his children to the public schools as his neighbor does, and so on with all other items of expenditure. But I am willing to submit to this inequality so far as Real Estate is concerned, on the principle (poor as it is) that if the land was not occupied by a large house or business premises it might be occupied by dwellings which would contain several families, and also because I consider all the expenditure as incidental and appurtenant to the Real Estate, and therefore the price of the commodity is based on the value of the Real Estate to which it is incidental rather than on the cost price of the article supplied. I fail to see any reason why we should go beyond that and assess the personal property of the individual for the same things. Real Estate owners may grumble, but if they honestly consider the subject I think they will admit that my theory of the fairness of an equivalent for money paid cannot be controverted, and that by assessing Real Estate only, every citizen is at any rate placed on a fair basis, that is that each pays in proportion to the Real Estate or integral portion of the whole city which he occupies. It is not in the least fair in the way of supply and demand, but still the injustice, such as it is, viz: the absence of a fair equivalent for the money paid, is more evenly divided in this way than in any other, but the bringing in of personal property entirely disturbs the uniformity of injustice, and without any additional benefit or corresponding advantage places the owner of personal property in a very unfair position.

In conclusion I advocate the assessment of Real Estate only, without any exemption other than Government and City property, and the buildings only of places of worship, assessing the land on which they are erected and connected with them; and I do this in order to encourage the building of handsome churches. It won't do to look too closely at this reason, because it would equally apply to private buildings and bring us straight down to the Henry George plan, as far as I understand it. This plan of assessment has admittedly the great merit of simplicity and the impossibility of escape.

It has also the merit of uniformity. Every one would be assessed upon the same plan; the burden of taxation being referable to the value of the Real Estate occupied, the benefit paid for being incidental to the property occupied. That while admitting the weak points which I have noticed, (that is the very different amounts paid by different individuals for the same thing) yet this being unavoidable so far as I can see at present, the plan proposed offers greater advantages than any plan yet proposed.

That we have proof of the satisfactory working of this proposed system in the raising of the \$113,000 of water rates, this amount being raised exactly as I propose to raise the other three-fourths, and while the objection exists as to the inequality in the amount paid by the ratepayers, this has not in fact created any trouble, people being willing as a general thing to pay according to their assessment, and not by meter.

If this system is adopted it will sweep out of the Assessment Act all the clauses relating to personal property, with all the extraordinary distinctions between the different classes of property, which are in my opinion so unjust. I also believe that, except in isolated cases, Real Estate owners would not find as much difference as they think. Those who would feel the change the most would be owners of Real Estate who have no personal property, and earn nothing; but as before stated we must legislate for the community, and not for individuals.

There is a very strong feeling throughout the Province that the Assessment law is far from perfect, and that a change is necessary. Few people however seem to know what they want. There crops up in their mind some institution or individual whom they think escapes too easily, and they go to work to remedy that apparent grievance without considering whether the remedy is referable to any fixed basis. This sort of thing is mere tinkering, and will do more harm than good. Whether the Cities of the Province are ready for my proposal, I do not know; probably not. Our own Finance Committee have rejected it. I am not discouraged at this, and again lay the matter before you and the public.

And remain, yours truly,

Hamilton, Ont., Dec. 5th, 1884.

GEO. S. PAPPS.