

# *The Government of the City of Ottawa.*

IT is said by those in a position to know that the growth of the city of Ottawa which has been almost phenomenal during the past fifteen years has been arrested. The real estate dealers, builders, financial men, and others seem to say that there is something the matter in the situation, in view of the expansion of business throughout the country generally, and in view of the many advantages enjoyed by the Capital of Canada both in natural facilities for commercial undertakings and a liberal arrangement with the government, and the work of the Improvement Commission.

From what can be gathered the fault is largely placed on the municipal institution. The city council is said to be mis-managing affairs and to be increasing the taxes beyond all reasonableness. There is no inducement to men occupying permanent positions to establish permanent homes. If a man builds a home for himself and family he is immediately pounced upon by the assessment department and the city tax collector and is made to pay in taxes more than he would pay in rent for the same property, and if he is rash enough to improve his property they come in and tax his improvements. If a man starts in business and buys a plant and employs artisans and pays out considerable sums weekly in wages the tax collector comes round and soaks him for all he is worth, and does anything possible to hinder him from getting a start and building up a business that would add to the prosperity of the city.

The outcry against exorbitant taxation was so great that all the prominent candidates asking the suffrages of the electors at the polls last January pledged themselves to reduce the taxes and the Mayor of the

city himself made it a prominent plank in his platform, with the result that every man of them is forsworn. The taxes instead of being decreased are from 25 to 30 per cent in excess of what they were the previous year.

Some effort is evidently being made by interested persons to persuade the public that the city is still growing by leaps and bounds, so much so that it is difficult for tenants to rent houses. They procured the publication in April in one or more of the local daily papers of the statement that houses were so scarce that landlords were putting up rents. As a matter of fact the statement was untrue to the knowledge of the persons responsible for it. People in the business state that never were things so dull in real estate and the renting of houses as they are at the present time in the city of Ottawa. Landlords were offering houses \$5 a month less than they were receiving and they were going begging at that. The list of unrented houses was never so large, and this in face of the fact that the city council and its administration make it almost impossible for men to build houses for themselves.

The immense amount of untaxable property in the city, and it is continually growing, belonging or leased to the Crown, is the excuse given by municipal legislators for the position of affairs, but while this may be arguable we believe there is nothing in it. The advantage to the city of the presence here of parliament and the public service is vastly greater than anything in the shape of taxes that could be levied on government property.

The government has, however, practically taken hold of municipal matters in the appointment of the Improvement Com-