

MANITOBA MAY CHANGE TAX SYSTEM

Outcome of Meeting Between Winnipeg Civic Committee and Provincial Government

THE Winnipeg special civic committee on taxation and equalization recently asked the provincial government to name a committee, consisting of its equalization board, to meet with the civic committee and discuss the question of equitable equalization, as mentioned in *The Monetary Times* last week.

Two concrete proposals were the outcome of the meeting. These proposals, which the government undertook to take into serious consideration, were:—

1. That legislation should be enacted so as to secure uniformity in rural municipal assessments on the basis of 100 per cent. market value.

2. That an entirely new equalized assessment should be secured for 1920, and that authority for securing it should be taken at this session of the legislature.

The city solicitor maintained that Winnipeg was about \$92,000,000 over-assessed, and that the right of municipalities to appeal against the equalized assessment should be restored. The right of appeal was fought against by Dr. Armstrong and members of the equalization board.

The board claimed that Winnipeg was assessed on \$45,000,000 worth of buildings and \$178,000,000 worth of land, and it was pointed out that in that event Winnipeg's land alone was over-assessed by approximately \$20,000,000 over the civic assessment.

No decision was arrived at, since the meeting was for discussion only, but a second meeting will be held to discuss civic taxation in general and remedies for any 1918 injustice in particular. It was represented that in connection with administrative functions performed and paid for in Winnipeg by Winnipeg itself, the province takes a revenue of some \$981,000 a year. This policy is what is forcing the city into the income tax, according to the city solicitor, who gave the figures in the course of a very pointed dispute with Hon. Edward Brown.

Admits Farm Buildings Assessed

Robert Forke, chairman of the equalization board, stated that the kicking did not all lie with the city of Winnipeg, as several outside and rural municipalities were complaining that their equalized assessment was too high.

Mr. Forke explained that all assessments by assessors in rural municipalities were taken by the board and raised to 100 per cent. unimproved valuation. In Winnipeg the equalization was made on the basis of land at market value and one-third of the value of buildings, as based on Winnipeg's local assessment of 1916. In the rural districts 20 per cent. has been added to the land values for buildings and improvements, except in isolated municipalities, where there were few buildings. He was satisfied that in some cases the 20 per cent. was rather an over-valuation of the buildings. It was more than equivalent to the full cash value of the buildings. Mr. Forke maintained that the ratepayers of Winnipeg did not understand the difference between the local assessment and the equalized assessment. He maintained that the MacMillan farm had a local assessment of \$3 per acre but an equalized assessment of \$27 per acre.

Mr. MacMillan denied that he had said that the equalized assessment was \$3 per acre. He was sure that he had merely shown that no equalized assessment could be equitable while the basis was so uneven.

Several delegates argued in favor of having a reassessment.

The Erie Co-operative Co., with headquarters in Leamington, Ont., sold \$437,924.31 worth of fruits and vegetables for its shareholders during the past year, smashing all previous records by \$27,291.13.

LONDON AND CANADIAN LOAN AND AGENCY CO.

The earnings of this company for the year 1918 were slightly less than for the preceding year. The expenditures were practically the same, \$50,000 being transferred to reserve account, which now stands at \$900,000. The company's mortgage loans fell off somewhat, but holdings of municipal debentures, war bonds, etc., increased from \$329,000 to \$443,000. Cash on hand has decreased from \$223,418 to \$131,901. The liabilities statement shows debentures and certificates outstanding to the amount of \$2,185,817, as compared with \$2,231,307 last year.

This is one of the old companies which has been instrumental in bringing a large amount of old country funds to Canada. In addition to the ordinary board of directors, meeting in the head office in Toronto, there is also a Scottish advisory board meeting in Edinburgh. The directorate consists of Thomas Long, C. S. Gzowski, A. H. Campbell, C. C. Dalton, G. L. Smith, C. M. Black, and W. C. Noxon. Mr. V. B. Wadsworth is general manager.

\$65,000,000 FROM BUSINESS PROFITS TAX

Under the Business Profits War Tax Act, assessments have been made aggregating \$65,000,000, of which about \$59,000,000 has been collected. The balance will probably be received within the next two months. An official statement from the department of finance has been received to this effect.

The returns to date from the Income War Tax Act of 1917, which applies only to incomes in excess of \$3,000 in the case of married persons and \$2,000 in the case of unmarried persons, show that about 30,000 assessments have been made of which 19,000 are paid. The total amount of assessments made by the department and approved to date, aggregate \$5,500,000. Three and a half millions have been collected. The difference is represented mainly by assessments made last month. The assessments still to be made for the current year are estimated at about \$4,000,000.

The returns from both these measures will exceed the estimate made to parliament as to the amounts expected to be realized.

WANT RATING OFFICE IN SASKATCHEWAN

The annual convention of the Saskatchewan Fire Insurance Agents' Association was held in Regina last week, with a substantial attendance of members from all parts of the province. A proposal to widen the scope of the association to include agents for hail and accident insurance was considered and notice of motion was given to change the name of the organization to the Saskatchewan Insurance Agents' Association.

The convention decided to request the underwriters to establish a rating office in this province. Steps were suggested for the improvement of the standing of the agents in the smaller towns, and plans were laid for the distribution of information of interest to the agents with the object of improving their capacity for service to the public.

Election of officers resulted as follows: Chairman, A. W. Irwin, Moose Jaw; vice-chairman, N. Andre, Regina; secretary-treasurer, S. E. Bushe, Saskatoon, with an executive of two each from the three large cities. The next annual meeting will be held in Moose Jaw.

During the business sessions matters of interest to the agents, looking to the improvement of legislation under the Saskatchewan Insurance Act, and more particularly with reference to the resident agents feature of the act, were considered, and will be taken up with the provincial government in the expectation of securing amendments at the next session.

Addresses on topics of interest were given by A. E. Fisher, superintendent of insurance for Saskatchewan, and by proxy on behalf of A. H. H. Stead, of Winnipeg, secretary W.C.F.U.A., who was unable to be present.