

sations with
and dissatis-
satisfaction
was inequit-
and by the
s inadequate
evident that
the nature of
felt that no
axes on real
burden was
ther appeal
wners, while
ssment by
ssue on the
sserting that
ared that to
ew examples

information
cerning the
ie proposed
th the first
hile Part II
which, it is

PART ONE

THE OPERATION OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF TAXATION.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRESENT SYSTEM.

The peculiar characteristic of taxation in the urban municipalities of Saskatchewan is the dependence placed upon special land taxes. It has always been the practice in this province to differentiate between land and buildings when assessing for tax purposes, the land being entered on the rolls at full value and the improvements at less than full value, 60 per cent. being the normal figure fixed by law for cities, towns and villages. However, provision was made a number of years ago whereby municipalities could reduce the assessment of improvements still further. Villages, by petition of two-thirds of the resident electors were permitted to levy their taxes on land values alone, exclusive of improvements.¹ In 1916, of the 304 villages, 81 had taken advantage of this provision and were operating on the "single-tax" basis. At the Legislative Session of 1910-11, towns and cities were granted the privilege of reducing the assessment of improvements below 60 per cent., being restricted, however, to a reduction of not more than 15 per cent. in any one year.² A substantial number of towns³ and all of the seven cities in the province have taken action under this section. In 1917 improvements were assessed in the various cities at the following percentages of full value:

	Percentage assessed		Percentage assessed
Moose Jaw	45	Saskatoon	25
Regina	30	Prince Albert	15
North Battleford	30	Swift Current	15
Weyburn	30		

In addition to taxes on real estate, villages tax personal property and incomes⁴ and towns and cities tax businesses, incomes and special franchises.⁵ Businesses are taxed on the floor space basis but yield only a small revenue. Special franchises, because of the prevalence of municipal ownership, are almost nonexistent. Taxes on incomes, largely through the presence of the peculiar practice of permitting deductions from income because of property subject to assessment, play only an insignificant rôle in financing the municipalities.

The degree of dependence placed upon the various elements in the tax base in the seven cities is set forth in Graph I and the detailed figures are given in Table I. It appears that taxes were levied⁶ in the seven cities of Saskatchewan in 1917 to the amount of \$3,890,273, and of this amount \$3,356,507, or 86 per cent., was levied on land alone.⁷ Improvements accounted for \$419,675, or 11 per cent. additional, so that realty in general comprised 97 per cent. of the total tax base in the cities in 1917. Land alone bore the smallest share of the burden in Moose Jaw (78 per cent.) and the largest share in Swift Current (96 per cent.).

¹ The Village Act, sec. 199.

² The Town Act, sec. 371; An Act respecting Cities, sec. 387.

³ In 1914 thirteen towns out of fifty-five from which reports were available had reduced the assessment of buildings below 60 per cent.

⁴ The Village Act, sec. 197.

⁵ The Town Act, sec. 369; An Act respecting Cities, sec. 385.

⁶ Including special assessments.

⁷ Counting special assessments as taxes on land.