Saskatchewan's Vacant Land Tax

THE vacant land tax in Saskatchewan is expected to yield a revenue of $800,000 this year. It has averaged $700,000 for the past four years. The tax was changed at last session of the legislature from $10.00 per quarter-section to one per cent. on the value of the land, which is a great improvement in principle. The vacant land tax is not only a good revenue producer, but we have the testimony of government officials of Alberta and Saskatchewan that it is operating to force speculators to sell their lands to users. It is thus an aid to the extension of production. Recent reports of high prices obtained for agricultural lands in the western provinces would indicate that it is time to impose a higher tax on vacant land, or settlement and production will be checked by high land values.

Suggestions on Making a Will

The making of a will is an act of prudence, which if performed wisely and carefully, both as to terms and appointment of executor, will save one's heirs much trouble, worry and possible injustice.

In case one omits to leave a will, the courts are called upon to name an administrator who will divide the estate in strict accordance with the law. The legal division of the assets may result in great injustice to certain members of the family, who deserve different treatment. In such cases, family quarrels are sure to follow, and the blame rests with the man who died without leaving a will, or whose will was thrown out by the courts because it was not properly drawn.

A will should be so prepared that no question can ever be raised as to the testator's wishes, as when the time comes for the will to be consulted, it is then too late to have any of its terms explained. In many cases improperly prepared wills have to be submitted to the courts for interpretation at great cost and inconvenience to the beneficiaries, due to carelessness or perhaps ignorance on the part of those who prepared them. No matter whether the estate is large or small, for the sake of one's dependents and loved ones, the greatest possible care should be taken in the preparation of the will, and the selection of an executor. The result of a generation of patient toil should not be lightly left at the command of the courts, reduced by heavy legal costs, and eventually distributed, perhaps by inexperienced individuals.

What should be the first step towards the preparation of a will? Consultation with a good lawyer, so that the will may be drawn in strict accordance with the requirements of the law, in order that its provisions may stand no danger of failing. The next step, and it is one of very great importance, is the selection of an executor, one who will live to carry out the provisions of the will. There is much to be said for the wisdom of chosing a reliable, solidly established trust company to undertake this responsibility.

Most people seriously intend making a will "some day," but procrastination has robbed so many of their legal right to provide for the proper distribution of their property that there is an important duty still unfulfilled for those who have no will, or whose will does not satisfy present conditions.

Miscellaneous Insurance

Insurance business other than fire or life was carried on in Canada during the past year by 84 companies: 26 Canadian, 17 British and 41 foreign companies. Forty-nine of these companies likewise transacted fire insurance, and one transacted life insurance.

In addition to these 84 companies, there were six fraternal orders or societies which carried on sickness, insurance and also life insurance.

Of these 26 Canadian companies which carried on business other than fire or life, 18 transacted miscellaneous classes of business only. Of these, eight transacted sickness insurance; seven, accident insurance; four, combined accident and sickness; seven, plate glass insurance; six, guarantee insurance; seven, automobile insurance; two, steam boiler insurance; three, burglary insurance; one, tornado insurance;