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# FRASER VALLEY

DEVOTED TO: explaining the  
social nature of ground-rent and  
the injustice of taxation.  
ADVOCATING: the complete  
abolition of taxation. The public  
collection of the freely offered  
and automatically adequate  
ground-dues.

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We are publishing extracts from Vancouver City accounts showing the approximate amount of income derived from ground-rent. The picture is fairly clear; assessments are reasonably accurate and few areas are exempt. Lands of senior government fall into this category for what is known as "general purposes", but some of these are not exempt from school tax assessment.

The full tax picture includes for general purposes, taxes on improvements at 75% of value, land at 100%. The ratio is the same for school purposes, but there is an additional tax on machinery and equipment at 75% of value. Income in excess of tax yield includes "profit" on water undertaking, subventions from senior governments most notably for education and "welfare", also fees, fines, etc. All this is treated on a separate sheet attached.

In direct contrast with the Vancouver scene, is the tax picture in the Fraser Valley. Assessments are wildly unrealistic. Where alleged farmers are in power, they grant themselves all kinds of exemptions and assess anything over five acres at around 5% of value. The mayor of one municipality has nearly one hundred acres in a growing area and intersected by important routes. He has constantly tried to keep "farm" assessments down, even to spawning the brilliant idea of valuing according to "fertility" and disregarding community growth. At a conservative estimate the value of the land mentioned is one quarter of a million dollars. On this there are two houses and barns. His tax bill to the municipality is \$1,009.90, towards which he will receive a provincial grant of \$170. For being a "farmer" he will receive other exemptions.

In the contiguous valley city, there is the amazing sight of greenhouses across the street from the city hall. This area is currently assessed at \$7,800 although a real estate company is at present asking \$1.5 million for the site. Needless to say, all this area shows the symptoms of land speculation, - farms in the middle of a city, decrepit buildings in all stages of decay, subdivisions of half-acre lots away in the bush, houses that were finished to the stage when the tax-load became too great to bear.

C.B.C. News - "Israel refuses to withdraw". Garbage!! Only the individual can make a decision. Israel as a geographic area cannot think or decide. Israel as a community can't think or decide either. Only the individual Israelis can decide and their decisions are many.

RENT OF BARE LAND ADEQUATE FOR SOCIAL NEEDS?

VANCOUVER EXAMPLE

Vancouver's land assessments are reasonably accurate. They reflect perhaps 80% of the current value of land titles. The following figures are for 1969.

Total assessment, Land for 1969	\$1,197,752,015
General purposes mill rate, 15.1	
General Purpose revenue from Land.	<u>\$18,000,000</u>
Land assessment for Schools (one-half value)	\$552,820,078
Schools revenue from land.	<u>\$16,500,000</u>
TOTAL 1969 REVENUE FROM LAND:	<u>\$34,500,000</u> - A

This revenue represents a partial confiscation of ground-rent in Vancouver City.

Since around \$1.2 Billions of land value are still in the hands of title-holders, (this is the meaning of assessed value) we can estimate what rental this sum would bring in by assuming it to be a "capital" sum at interest. Supposing the rate of interest to be 6%, we calculate:

TOTAL OF GROUND-RENT REMAINING IN THE HANDS OF TITLE-HOLDERS    \$72 Millions - B  
TOTAL OF GROUND-RENT AVAILABLE ( A plus B)    \$106.5 Millions

THIS SUM IS IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO THE CITY, BUT TWO-THIRDS OF THIS NOW GOES INTO PRIVATE POCKETS ( SPECULATORS WHO DO NO USEFUL WORK AS WELL AS GOOD CITIZENS WHO USE THEIR OWN SITES.)

Vancouver's Expenditure for 1969 (pop.  $\frac{1}{2}$  Million)    \$113,928,200

This sum includes many payments resultant upon the social evils of taxation of improvements, taxation of labour, taxation of sales, and upon the social symptoms of crime, drug addiction, and ignorance. The following payments were subtracted from the above total being deemed non-essential; Churches' taxes excused, Redevelopment downtown Redevelopment #4231, Redevelopment West End Centre, Purchase of sites, loss on land deals, Payment for debt service, Social Assistance, One-half of expenditure on protection of persons and property.

TOTAL OF 1969 NON-ESSENTIAL EXPENDITURE:    \$31,528,965  
ESSENTIAL EXPENDITURE:    \$82,399,235  
PRESENT GROUND-RENT    \$106,500,000  
GROUND-RENT SURPLUS TO THE NEEDS OF VANCOUVER:    \$24,100,765

Note that when the City collects the full rental value of all the sites, the price of the land title disappears. Holders must develop sites or relinquish them to someone who is able to develop. Urban renewal becomes costless. The City does not have to buy land at a value caused by its active citizens. Unemployment is no longer a problem. Twenty thousand dollars is immediately cut off the price of a house. The construction industry gets into gear and sparks prosperity.

KEEP TRYING

Sometimes it seems that discussion and letter-writing produce little result so all-pervading is the propaganda of those who utter meaningless words and with them justify demands for socially harmful action, - like the B.C. Tel. who once informed the public that a great increase in the number of subscribers meant that telephone rates had to increase. Nevertheless, now and then, success does come.

A letter to Sun columnist Alan Fotheringham resulted in the following quotation appearing Feb 12th in a very prominent position in that paper, - Winston Churchill, in the People's Rights, 1909, "roads are made, streets are made, railway services are improved, electric light turns night into day, electric trams glide swiftly to and fro, water is brought from reservoirs a hundred miles off in the mountains - and all the while the landlord sits still. Every one of those improvements is effected by labour and at the cost of the people. To not one of those improvements does the land monopolist as a land monopolist contribute and, by every one of them the value of his land is sensibly enhanced. He renders no service to the community, he contributes nothing to the general welfare; he contributes nothing even to the process from which his own enrichment is derived."

A few days later, this quote was requoted by Municipal Assessor James Gardner of West Vancouver when British Pacific Properties Ltd. appealed against assessment of 2,785.2 acres of undeveloped land. Gardner said, "Churchill's words are just as applicable today in British Properties."

Come along friends take up the pen and call someone's attention to social injustice. Look what others do! - The Feb. 1971 issue of the "Northwest Technocrat" reproduces a page of headlines earned by some misguided soul who has been writing letters to the editor, trying to persuade people to give up their liberty in favour of an existence planned by these demi-gods who know no more about economics than a hog knows about egg-laying. Surely if one person can advocate slavery so constantly, some of us can do more to fight for freedom.

Here are some hints on writing. Choose an issue that, to the fore and which will not have blown over in a week. Take your time if you are not very experienced. First know the policy and alignment of the paper. The letter must appear to side with this. It is better if some compliment is paid to the direction, then they give themselves a pat on the back by publishing your letter.

The message to come across must be loud and clear, and a little unobtrusive repetition improves the chance of success. The temptation to be expansive or comprehensive must be resisted. One point well made is better than a dozen confused ideas. A little humour helps, but not the smart-alec type. The prose should be carefully composed, and after a preliminary draft has been made it should be put away for 24 hours and then re-read. It is surprising how different it seems after a short period. It is a good plan to ask an acquaintance to check it for punch and literacy. He feels flattered and the message gets across to at least one person. Finally the whole thing is amended and retyped. After mailing, the best thing to do is to forget it, otherwise theres likely to be some disappointment.

If you write to newspapers, you are showing your concern with social topics. So, if you read the letters column you will be getting the thoughts of concerned individuals. It is a good plan to write personally to these contributors discussing their thoughts and making suggestions for further consideration. Success has been achieved this way in the past. However select those to whom you write very carefully. Certain groups are merely repeating catch-phrases, and won't ever learn.