

OTTAWA GETS SINGLE TAX

**Committee Favors Allowing
Capital to Experiment if
Electors Agree**

DECISION SURPRISE

**Measure is Explained by City
Solicitor Proctor and W.
S. Southam**

Great strides are being made in assessment reform by the Legislature this session. It was only a short time ago that the majority of the members of the Private Bills Committee scoffed at the very thought of single tax being introduced in Ontario. Yesterday, they completely right about faced, and without a dissenting voice agreed to allow Ottawa to experiment with such a system after the consent of the electors had been secured. It was a complete surprise to most of those present, and even the most sanguine of the Ottawa deputation hardly expected that the request for ratification of the bill would be granted. A similar measure had been thrown out in the past by the Committee. However, Ottawa's perseverance has at last been rewarded.

The clause provides that: "The Council of the said corporation may provide, by by-law to be passed after submitting the same to the vote of the ratepayers of the said city, that on and after a date to be fixed by such by-law that all buildings, structures, machinery and fixtures erected or placed upon, in, over, under or affixed to land, and all incomes as defined by Clause (e) of Section 2 of the Assessment Act, and all business assessments defined by Section 10 of the said act, shall be exempted for purposes of taxation except for water rates, and public and separate school purposes, for the year next following the coming into force of such by-law, for a sum

equal to 25 per cent. of the assessed value thereof; for the second year following the coming into force of such by-law for a sum equal to 50 per cent. of the assessed value thereof; and for the third year following the coming into force of such by-law for a sum equal to 75 per cent. of the assessed value thereof; and that from and after the expiration of three years after the coming into force of such by-law all taxes and rates of the said corporation, except for water rates and public and separate school purposes, shall be assessed, levied and rated upon actual land values only."

Give Right to Experiment.

The bill was explained by City Solicitor Frank Proctor of Ottawa and Mr. W. Southam. They said it would not necessitate any change in the present assessment methods of Ottawa. While the bill had been rejected on previous occasions, times were changing, and it was right that the Capital should be allowed to experiment with a reform measure of this kind. The amendments proposed to the Assessment Act did not go far enough, although they provided some relief.

Mr. William McDonald (North Bruce) remarked that it was the best measure that had been before the committee in a long while.

Mr. Charles McCrea (Sudbury) thought if Ottawa was willing to pay the price of the experiment it was only right the committee should ratify the bill. He strongly urged that this permission be given. As a result unanimous approval was given the measure by the committee. It was understood that if the people tired of the method after a year or two they would be given an opportunity to say so.

Slight changes were made in one other clause of the general bill, and one other was struck out, the remainder being passed. The bill permitting debentures for \$1,500,000 to be sold for the purpose of erecting a civic hospital was also reported.

London did not fare as luckily as Ottawa in getting radical legislation through the committee. It sought to have an act approved permitting it to have each governing board in the city represented by four men on the Council, making 20 in all. The Chairman, Hon. I. B. Lucas, declared that it was the most radical measure brought forward in a long time. The majority of the committee agreed with him, and the bill was lost. Approval to permit \$200,000 debentures being issued for the erection of a City Hall without the consent of the ratepayers was voted down. This expenditure may only be undertaken after consent has been secured.