

Municipal Column

Edited by the Village Manager

IS THE VILLAGE RICH OR POOR?

Question: I note from one of the recent monthly financial statements of the Village of Winnetka that the village owns bonds amounting to over \$95,000 and has nearly \$50,000 in cash at the Corn Exchange bank in addition. If this is the case, why do we hear so much about the poverty of the village government whenever much needed improvements such as additional street lights are mentioned?

Answer: You undoubtedly refer to the statement of November 30, and the figures stated therein will be used as a basis for this answer to your very pertinent question.

The finances of the Village of Winnetka are carried under three separate and distinct heads, the General Fund, the Special Assessment Fund and the Water and Light Funds (including the depreciation funds of the water and light department). The money in the General Fund comes from general taxes, local licenses and fees for garbage and ash collection and is used to defray the cost of fire and police protection, street lighting, maintenance of pavements and sewers, garbage and ash service, health department and general public activities such as zoning, Plan commission, track depression, etc. The Special Assessment Fund represents collections made by Village and County for special assessment improvements, under authority of the County Superior Court, and can be used only to meet the costs of such improvements. The Water and Light Funds are made up of receipts of the electric and water departments of the Village and are available only for the use of these departments.

Turning now the reports referred to above, we find a cash deficit in the General Fund of \$659.46, which means that the expenditures of this fund for general municipal purposes have exceeded the income by that amount. In spite of the increase in the assessed valuation of the Village in 1919, whereby the general tax income is nearly doubled, the price of all elements entering into the cost of municipal operation has more than kept pace with the increase in taxes so that in spite of every possible economy, the Council is facing a General Fund deficit of approximately \$15,000 at the end of the current fiscal year.

It is true that the cash bank balance on November 30 was nearly \$50,000; this balance, however, consists entirely of special assessment funds, which cannot be legally used for any other purpose than to pay for special assessment improvements,

by retiring bonds which fall due at the end of the calendar year.

The investment of nearly \$100,000 referred to in the question consists mainly of Liberty bonds, purchased by the Council to help finance the war, which cannot be liquidated at this time except at a prohibitive discount. But even were this possible, these bonds belong to the Village water and electric utilities and can be used for no other purpose than to serve the needs of these departments. It has been suggested that such a large fund is more than adequate for electric and water requirements and that the Village rates should accordingly be lowered. The facts do not bear this out. During the period of high prices the Council has wisely refrained from spending any more money for permanent improvements to the electric and water properties than was absolutely necessary to meet the immediate demands of the community. The time is now approaching, however, when comparatively large expenditures will be necessary to anticipate the rapidly growing needs of the Village. Additional generating capacity at the plant, costing \$30,000, is now being installed. More boilers will be needed during the coming year. The distribution system needs heavier cables in some cases to maintain a proper voltage at the consumers premises, the output in kilowatt hours being 43 per cent greater in December this year than one year ago. Funds will also be needed to help build the water filtration plant and to provide a portion of the cost of an adequate Village hall to furnish office and shop space for the electric and water departments, allowing the display and sale of electric appliances to citizens at cost, and generally permitting the full development of the possibilities for service afforded by our municipal utilities.

It will, therefore, be seen that the financial statements of the Village cannot be taken to mean that our municipal government is burdened with an abundance of wealth, but, on the contrary, that general municipal activities must be curtailed rigidly until additional tax income is forthcoming or costs decline, and that the surplus funds of the Village utilities are no greater than are required to meet the demands of the community in a broad businesslike way.

More than 200 cases were handled by the war risk insurance officer of the Norfolk (Va.) Post of the American Legion, between January and November of last year. In addition \$446,000 worth of insurance was reinstated and \$19,000 worth converted. Compensation was allowed in 63 out of 66 cases pressed, 12 claims for allotment and allowances unpaid under the War Risk Act were prosecuted. Ten men were located for the Federal Board of Vocational Education when the board was unable to find them.

Shall North Shore Real Estate Be Dealt In On Sunday?

An Appeal to Common Sense—Has nothing to do with BLUE LAWS—

The North Shore Real Estate Board, comprising practically all of the real estate firms operating between Wilmette and Highland Park, both inclusive, desire to know whether the property owners and residents in the above territory are in favor of showing the property they own or occupy seven days a week or whether they wish to have one day a week (Sunday) to spend undisturbed with their families.

The Real Estate Board members do not wish to operate on Sundays, they think they are entitled to one day of rest each week. Many would like to attend church. They signed an agreement last fall not to operate on Sundays from November 1, 1920 to February 1, 1921 and have kept their agreement. A very few dealers, who did not join the Board, continued to operate on Sunday. Now comes the question:—

SHALL WE BE ABLE TO CONTINUE OBSERVING ONE DAY OF REST OR SHALL WE GO BACK TO THE ANTIQUATED WAY OF OPERATING AND ASKING HOUSE-HOLDERS TO SHOW PROPERTY ON SUNDAY?

The answer rests with the public. It is impossible to get an expression within the time limit from each individual resident of the villages and we are appealing to the public through the press and the various organizations of representative citizens for their expressions as to whether the public will back up the members of the Real Estate Board by refusing to show or allow to be shown to prospective buyers or renters their property on Sunday.

Evanston and Wilmette dealers have agreements not to operate on Sunday the year round and dealers of the North Shore Real Estate Board wish to enter into year-round agreements of the same nature. They know they can sell just as much property in six as in seven days a week; that once the buyers are given to understand the situation, the sale or rental of property will not be jeopardized or retarded; that it will be to the best interests of the villages not to have the quietude and peace disturbed by the hawking about of Real Estate for the curiosity of the large number of "Sunday sight-seekers" for experience has proved that buyers or renters who are in earnest will take the time to look at property during the six days ordinarily given over to the transaction of business.

But, unfortunately, there are three or four dealers in the territory north of Evanston, not members of the Real Estate Board, who seem to think that in order to make a living they must operate and ask their employes to operate every day in the week. Some of the Board members think that to refrain from operating on Sunday while others keep open will work a hardship to those who close. The time of agreement to remain closed has been extended to February 15th, meanwhile the Board members wish the public, individually or through the various organizations to advise us how you stand on the question. All communications should be addressed to MR. F. B. THOMAS, 10 SO. LA SALLE ST., CHICAGO, ILL., Chairman of Sunday Closing Committee.

Is there more reason why owners and agents of real estate should continue to be imposed upon, merely because it has been the custom in the past than there is for the butcher, baker and candle-stick maker to operate seven days a week for the benefit of possible customers?

SHALL WE STAND FOR IT? YOU CAN STOP IT! WILL YOU HELP?

Please advise us promptly your personal attitude in this matter. All answers received will be treated confidentially. The Real Estate Board must decide this question at once and upon response to this appeal will depend largely the nature of its decision.

THIS IS AN APPEAL TO COMMON SENSE—NOT FOR THE ENACTMENT OF ANY "BLUE LAWS"—

FREDERICK B. THOMAS
HOWARD H. BROWN
CHAS. E. WHEELER
Committee on Sunday Closing.

HAROLD D. HILL
MILTON E. BARKER
A. R. EDDINGTON
Publicity Committee.

Of the North Shore Real Estate Board, the members of which follow:

WILLIAM AITKEN, Hubbard W'ds.
M. E. BARKER & CO., Wilmette.
P. W. BRADSTREET, Winnetka.
H. H. BROWN, Representing Murray & Terry, Wilmette.
FRANCIS M. CASE, Glencoe.
MARGARET DIETRICH, Winnetka.
A. R. EDDINGTON, Wilmette.
F. J. FRANKLIN, Representing E. P. Maynard & Co., Hubbard Woods.
J. L. FLOYD, Highland Park.
A. D. HERRMANN, Representing Winnetka Trust and Savings Bank, Winnetka.
HILL & STONE, Wilmette and Winnetka.
HILL & WHEELER, Wilmette and Winnetka.

GILBERT D. JOHNSON & BRO., Glencoe.
R. M. JOHNSTON & CO., Wilmette and Winnetka.
JONAS H. MADSEN, Winnetka.
BERNARD MAYER, Glencoe.
W. J. MOIR, Representing McGuire & Orr, Winnetka.
M. L. MOODY & CO., Wilmette.
ALLAN A. MURRAY, Representing Murray & Terry, Glencoe.
CLAYTON MITCHELL, Kenilworth.
CLARK T. NORTHROP, Winnetka.
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F. B. THOMAS, 10 S. La Salle St., Chicago.

I am in favor of Real Estate firms closing on Sundays

I do not favor Real Estate firms closing on Sundays

Name _____

Address _____