

## TASMANIA

Tasmania imposes a tax for State purposes on the capital value of land and of the improvements thereon. In 1887 an Assessment Act was passed, providing the machinery for the collection of a land tax. This was followed by the passing of "The Land Tax Act of 1889" imposing a uniform tax of one-half pence in the £ of capital value. In 1902 was passed "The Land Tax Amendment Act 1902," which substituted graduated taxation for the uniform rate, as follows:

Up to £5000 of improved value,  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £; over £5000, inclusive of £15,000,  $\frac{5}{8}$ d. in the £; over £15,000, including £40,000,  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the £; over £40,000, including £80,000,  $\frac{7}{8}$ d. in the £; over £80,000, 1d. in the £.

The capital value of the land and improvements assessed under this Act was, in 1907, £24,016,747, and the assessed revenue was £60,562 for the year ending June 30th, 1908. Abatements, however, had been granted to mortgagors on account of mortgages, which aggregated £2969, reducing the revenue collected to £57,593.

Though numerous attempts have been made to obtain legislation permitting the separate valuation of land and improvements and the exemption of the latter from taxation, they have not yet been successful. These attempts began even before the passing of the Act of 1887, for in 1885 Mr. (since Sir) Edward Braddon proposed and carried a resolution in the Legislative Assembly that "the real estate duty should be so assessed as to secure owners of property against an undue impost upon their improvements." Again, in 1886, Mr. G. P. Fitzgerald moved a more outspoken resolution, which, however, was shelved after discussion, viz: "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable for the purpose of adjusting the incidence of taxation on real estate, to ascertain the capital value of land throughout the colony, with and without the improvements thereon, and that it be an instruction to the Attorney-General to take measures to effect this end."

The Assessment Act of 1887 was drafted by the Stafford-Bird Ministry, and passed through the Legislative Assembly in conformity with Mr. Fitzgerald's resolution, but the Legislative Council struck out all the provisions relating to the separate

assessment of land and improvements, and substituted for them "the actual value of property," as the corpus to be assessed, which amendment the House accepted.

In 1894 a similar Bill, providing for the separate assessment of land and buildings, met a similar fate. It passed the Assembly, and was rejected by the Council.

In the following year (1895) a similar Bill was introduced into the House of Assembly and discharged.

In 1896 a similar Bill passed the Assembly, and was rejected by the Council.

In 1903 a Bill for ascertaining the capital value of the land apart from the improvements, and of the improvements alone, was passed by the Assembly, but was never heard of again.

Finally, in 1906, the Evans Government passed a Bill through the Assembly to ascertain the capital value of land, the value of the improvements, and the unimproved value. The Bill got as far as the Council, where it was allowed to lapse in committee, a motion to revive it being negatived.

Still another attempt to effect this reform is to be made during the present year, the Government having announced that it has drafted a new Bill with the object of freeing improvements from taxation, and imposing rates on land values alone which will practically yield the same revenue as obtained under the existing Act. There is good reason to expect that it will become law this time, for the demand for the reform has been varied with increasing urgency outside of Parliament, as well as in both its Houses. A strong agitation has also been started to exempt improvements from and assess land values alone for local rating. The "Daily Post" of Hobart is the principal, and a very able and enthusiastic champion of these measures in the press of the Island.

PAPUA - "Papua Act, 1905": Sale of land freehold forbidden and rent of household to be assessed on unimproved value, subject to reassessment. Land Ordinance passed by local council in 1906, providing for leases up to 99 years' tenure, all subject to improvement conditions, non-fulfilment entailing forfeiture. In case of leases of more than 30 years of rural land, no rent for first 10 years. Reassessment takes place every 20 years, and in short leases every 10 years. If assessment increased by more than one-third, in some cases one-fourth, lessee can throw up lease and can claim for improvements.

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*\*Notes and references found amongst the author's manuscript indicate that it was his intention to deal more fully with this country.*