

ture of the plants, Potato Bugs might be dispensed with, but we are confronted by a condition, not a theory.

"We, therefore, who have given our lives to the study of this question, cannot but deplore the pernicious activity of such reformers as advocate the extensive use of Paris Green and other noxious exterminants. For proof of these statements and conclusions, we refer the reader to almost any old chapter in Adam Smith."

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REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENT.

Abstract of an Address Delivered by Lawson Purdy,
President of the Department of Taxes and Assessments
of New York City, at the International
Conference on State and Local Taxation,
Held at Toronto, October 6 to 9.

A city block is a parcel of land entirely surrounded by streets, and the nature of the street frontage determines the value. The unit value is the value per front foot for normal depth of an interior lot. The value of corner lots and lots of irregular depth must be ascertained in accordance with scales based on the best evidence experience furnishes. When unit values are established, the value of each lot is quickly determined if regular in size by one multiplication, and if irregular in accordance with the scales established. When the land values are all ascertained and noted, the assessor will record the value of improvements, using for the purpose factors of value preferably for each square foot of floor surface which will be determined after consultation with architects and builders. The factors will show the cost of reproduction, and a reduction must be made for depreciation and unsuitability for the site.

To determine the value of land with the greatest accuracy it is necessary to secure as nearly as possible the opinion of value of the largest number of persons who help to make the market, either by being themselves buyers and sellers, or the advisers of buyers and sellers. The greatest problem therefore before the assessing department is as to the best way in a given time and place to secure the benefit of community opinion of value. The first essential is to popularize the terms used in expressing the value of land; hence the necessity for the unit value previously described. In any city of not more than half a million of people, probably the best way to secure the widest expression of community opinion as to land value is the method pursued by Mr. William A. Somers in St. Paul. All persons interested were invited to inspect maps and criticize the unit values exhibited on those maps. After discussion, criticism and correction, the unit values represented the consensus of opinions of those who had well-informed ideas as to the value of land in the city. In a very large city this method is probably imprac-

ticable, but the same result may be achieved by the publication of maps of convenient size showing the unit values and the distribution of these maps to those best informed in the several sections of the city, with the request that the units be corrected and the map returned.

The more generally assessments are regarded as accurate, the more would these assessments tend in themselves to establish the values they were designed to record. If confidence is established in the work of the assessors, and interest in their work is extended to a larger and larger number of people, the work of the assessors will constantly improve by more nearly reflecting the consensus of community opinion, and the assessments themselves will tend to establish and determine the opinion of the community.

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WHERE INDIRECT TAXATION FALLS.

For The Public.

Where is the point at which increased prices diminish demand sufficiently to affect business—measured in dollars and cents? A vivid sidelight was thrown on this subject in a conversation with a Portland grocer some years ago.

"How do tariffs and indirect taxes affect your business?" I asked.

"Very little," he answered.

"Does not increased price diminish consumption, thereby lessening your sales?"

"Yes and no," he said. "A business man measures his trade in dollars and cents and not in weights and measures. Take this rice, for instance," and he scooped up and poured out a mass of that material to illustrate. "I sell this at ten cents a pound. I hand a purchaser ten pounds and he hands me one dollar. I have handled ten pounds in weight and bulk—paper, string and service. If he has a small family he is gone a long while, for ten pounds will last for some time and, as a rice-purchaser, he is away and I am out of business. The dollar that he gave me has returned to me my original investment—including all the taxes that entered into the cost of producing it here—plus my profit on that investment, part of which investment was an investment in taxes. Thus, he has paid me my investment in rice, plus a profit, and my investment in taxes, plus a profit.

"Now, if you placed a tax on rice so high that I could sell only one pound for a dollar, what would be the condition? I would hand him one pound of rice—correspondingly less paper, string and service, and thereby, perhaps, more profit to myself—and he would give me one dollar. My expenditure would be about the same. My income and profit about the same—perhaps a little