

But great though the progress of Saskatchewan has been that of Alberta has been much greater still, thanks to the latter's adoption of more nearly correct systems of land value taxation.

ALBERTA

Edmonton is the capital of Alberta. It is located on the site of an old trading post of the two monopolies, the Hudson's Bay and the North-West Companies. The former owned a tract of three thousand acres around which Edmonton had developed, but which the company had obstinately refused to open for development, to the great chagrin and mortification of the citizens.

Another grievance, the wrong perpetrated by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company against Edmonton by ignoring that town in the laying of its line and by establishing a rival to it on the other side of the river, had further served to drive the lesson of the arbitrariness of monopolistic powers home to the people of Edmonton.

In the first charter, which they prepared upon the occasion of its incorporation in 1904—a year before Alberta became a Province—care was taken to provide means for curbing monopolies of all kinds.

The new charter provided for a general tax on land values to the exclusion of improvements, but modified by business and income taxes. These last two have since been abandoned, leaving the land value tax to alone provide the necessary revenue.

The well nigh immediate effect of this was that the Hudson's Bay Company got to work breaking up its age-old Reserve and the new city commenced a career of what may almost be called unprecedented prosperity. This was attested to by the rapidly increasing population, which was at first forced to live in tents, as houses could not be built quickly enough. The building industry therefore became highly profitable. Its increase from year to year was rapid as may be judged from the following record during the first two years after the incorporation of the city:

1905—\$750,000; 1906—\$1,868,069; 1907 to August 28th—\$2,027,375.

In 1908 when the rest of Canada was in the throes of an industrial depression Edmonton's prosperity continued to increase.

What more is needed to prove the wisdom of Edmonton's remedies against industrial stagnation—small though its application is from the view-point of the Single Taxer who rightly wishes to have the entire value of land taken for public purposes.

Edmonton's success was quickly observed by the neighboring cities and towns, and they soon began to take steps in the same direction. Strathcona, Edmonton's old rival across the river (which the C. P. R. had now bridged in self-defense against the Canadian Northern Railway), was now in self-defense obliged to copy Edmonton's system of taxation. Calgary, the largest city in the Province, began to exempt improvements from taxation in a gradual way; and has been reducing them year by year until they are at the present time assessed at 25 per cent. of their value; land forming ninety per cent. of the tax base.

The remaining two cities of Alberta, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge have followed Edmonton's example in entirely exempting improvements and business and in levying their taxes almost entirely upon land values.

The effect of these taxes was generally considered to be excellent during the most prosperous period, and while it may be regarded bad by speculators at the present time it may be confidently expected that these same land value taxes will cause an earlier return of prosperity by compelling them to place their land at the disposal of labor and capital.

So much for the cities. But the towns, villages, and municipalities have also been brought under the single land value tax system, thanks largely to the broad statesmanship of a constructively democratic government.

On the 12th day of December, 1911, Premier Sifton introduced a bill for the progressive adoption of a municipal Single Tax in all existing municipalities and an immediate adoption of it in those thereafter organized.

(1) A Town Act which compelled all towns to exempt all buildings and personal property and levy municipal and school taxes upon land "exclusive of the value of any buildings thereon or any

other increase in the value thereof caused by any other expenditure of labor or capital thereon."

The act limits the rate of taxation to "twenty mills on the dollar, exclusive of the debenture rates and local improvement rates."

But owing to a large amount of untaxable lands due to railway and other exemptions in some of the towns and municipalities the twenty mill rate proved too low to provide the necessary revenue. An Act has therefore been passed permitting such towns to levy a tax on business and incomes; but up to the present no news has come to hand as to its application, neither is it likely, as it will hardly be tolerated during the present depression.

(2) A Village Act which ordains that "all village taxes shall be levied equally upon all rateable land in the village according to the assessed value of such land."

(3) A Rural Municipalities Act which made the single land-value tax mandatory in the rural municipalities.

Mr. John Perrie, deputy minister of municipal affairs, is quoted as saying that "there would be a storm" of protest "if any change were made" in the tax system of the rural municipalities.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

British Columbia became a Province during the rush of gold seekers from California to the Fraser River fields. Gold had been discovered on the Fraser in 1857 and to preserve order a government had been established in 1858. Vancouver Island, which had been granted to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1849 and was still under the company's domination in 1858, did not join the mainland colony until at the end of the gold rush when a depression had commenced and forced the two colonies to unite. In 1871 British Columbia joined the Canadian federation. Since then the following tax reforms have been enacted.

(1) In 1874 the first step was taken in this Province to exempt improvements entirely from taxation. It was in Nanaimo, the chief coaling station on the Pacific, which is located on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island. This provision was made in a