

Applying the rule that each site should pay on improvements equal to the land value, these 672 inadequately improved sites in these twelve blocks are underpaying the City for the year 1934 the sum of \$238,-383.79 at the 1934 tax rate.

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE

In Block No. 1060, between Ninth and Tenth Avenues and 50th and 51st Streets, the New York Telephone Company owns twelve lots in the middle of the block assessed for \$230,000, on which it has built a magnificent building assessed for \$3,220,000, total \$3,450,000. This is an over-assessment in comparison with the general average of the City of \$2,990,000.

The New York Telephone Company paid its tax bill of \$93,840 on these twelve lots, which is \$81,328 per year more than its share compared with the general average. The rest of the block is disgracefully under-improved and correspondingly under-assessed, except a parcel of four lots at No. 438-442 West 51st Street owned by Parker & Stewart, which has a building assessed for \$70,000 on land assessed for \$50,000—a \$20,000 over-assessment. Excluding these two parcels the remaining 50 parcels in this block are assessed on a total land value of \$1,119,550, with total improvements assessed for \$422,000. Their aggregate tax bill is \$41,930.16. They underpay the City \$18,972 on the present application of the budget for benefits received from the 1934 budget.

Industry, represented in this block particularly by the New York Telephone Company, on twelve lots only, pays more than twice as much as the remaining fifty lots—an over-payment of \$81,328, or seven and one-half times its share.

It is idle to say, because the New York Telephone Company is a monopoly and can afford to pay it, that this does not hurt industry. These excessive and unjust taxes are included by the Telephone Company in its bill of costs upon which its rates to consumers are made. These excess tax payments are passed on to the consumer. No department store, hotel, office building or apartment house can keep up an excess payment of taxes unless it can either take it out of cost by reducing wages and prices paid for goods or pass the burden on to the consumer by increasing the price of goods purchased or offices and apartments rented. Purchasing power is accordingly reduced under either alternative. To the extent that industry is unjustly taxed, it is destroyed or driven away from the City.

The adequate improver of land creates employment by erecting a building and by operating and maintaining it.

The holder of land out of adequate use destroys the opportunity to build, thereby directly causing unemployment of labor, for the benefit of which the industrious are overtaxed.

Ability to pay taxes, in the long run, must be measured by just payment for benefits received from taxation. Otherwise the tax base is weakened or destroyed.

SUBSTITUTE PROPOSAL

SPECIAL EXCISE TAX UPON INADEQUATELY IMPROVED LAND

It is urged, therefore, that to meet the problem of relief for unemployment, a special excise law be levied on each site of land in New York City which is not improved to a value equal to the site value. The rate of the special excise tax should be the current rate of taxation, to be added to the regular tax only in the proportion that the land value of the site exceeds the assessed improvement value.

As a result of this tax, inadequately improved sites will be improved to meet the tax, thus increasing the revenue of the City and at the same time creating jobs for builders, masons, plumbers, carpenters, and others, and eliminating the problem of unemployment which now burdens the City.

We present the following as a suggestion for the text of such a law:

The owner of each separately assessed plot of land within the City of New York which is not adequately improved shall pay, in addition to the current local tax, a special excise tax equal to the amount of such local tax assessed on the value of the land.

For the purposes of this special excise tax, a plot shall be deemed to be not adequately improved where the assessment for buildings and improvements is less than the assessment for land alone.

Any plot which is partially improved shall be liable for this special excise tax only to the extent of the difference between the current assessment for land and the current assessment for buildings and improvements.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR SCIENTIFIC TAXATION.

WALTER FAIRCHILD,

Chairman Legislative Committee.

Manhattan Club Activities

PRESIDENT CHARLES H. INGERSOLL'S public meetings since our last report were as follows:

Ladies' Auxiliary of the Kenny Memorial Hospital. Separate Battalion (Colored) Armory, Newark, N. J., June 22.—Thomas Wallace Swann introduced Mr. Ingersoll to the audience who were more than cordial and will work for him; 300 present.

Binghamton, N. Y. Chamber of Commerce, June 25.—Luncheon; Mr. Woodcott, President and Reporter Evans introduced him; meeting exceptional; crowd of young business men; 75 present; fine quiz of one hour; talk 35 minutes.

Cortland Exchange Club, N. Y., June 25.—Dinner;

drove from Binghamton, arrived just in time. Received by President Burgess at beautiful country club; 50 present; talk 30 minutes; quiz one hour.

Rochester Rotary Club, June 26.—Luncheon; reporters from three papers and photographers took most of Mr. Ingersoll's time. Second largest Rotary Club in the United States. Audience over 400; talk broadcast over WHAM; 30 minutes; questions came in profusion; quiz lasted till 4:30.

Lockport Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, June 27.—Luncheon; unusual crowd at Y. M. C. A., more than former ever had before; 125 of two clubs; meeting turned over to Mr. Ingersoll; original talk of 30 minutes; quiz two hours. Mr. Lingham who arranged these meetings expressed himself much pleased. Entertained Mr. Ingersoll at his club and showed him his 200 ft. high flour mill that ships 1,000 barrels a day.

Meeting at C. D. Blackhall's printing office, 35 N. Division Street, Buffalo, N. Y., June 27.—Ten or twelve old timers; spent evening reminiscing; F. P. Jones, W. J. Leary, D. F. Boechat, W. S. Rann, C. A. Lingham and others present. Mr. Seelbach reported Rochester Radio as being very fine, and Boechat and Blackhall joined in saying, "You cover the whole story and your scheme of forcing questions multiplies the effect."

Fifth Avenue High School, Pittsburgh, June 28.—Arrived 9:30 after swift drive from Buffalo, 240 miles in six hours. Mayor McNair introduced Mr. Ingersoll and he talked 15 minutes in the open air. Toll charge for auto tubes through mountain was the subject.

Henry George Club, Pittsburgh, June 29.—Luncheon; 50 present; P. R. Williams, introduction; original talk 35 minutes; quiz one hour; very fine meeting.

Real Estate Association, Olympia Park, McKeesport, June 29.—Fifty present; talk 35 minutes; quiz one hour; responsive and intelligent crowd; P. R. Williams, also spoke.

Knoxville Civic League, Knoxville Jr. High School, June 29; evening.—Fine meeting of protest on tubes; talk of 30 minutes.

Northside City Hall, protest meeting; June 20; evening.—One hundred, well mixed crowd. Several preceded Mr. Ingersoll, who talked 20 minutes and in light vein; no quiz. Mayor's Secretary, Moritz, also spoke.

M. E. Buena Vista Street Church, July 1, afternoon.—Only 30 present; talked one-half hour.

First Baptist Church, Pittsburgh, July 1, afternoon.—W. J. Wasson pastor; 50 present; original 40 minute talk—rapid, simple and pointed; seemed to satisfy everybody; few questions. Bonta, who also talked said they got it, and believes many were converted.

New Jersey Tax Protective League, July 31, evening.—President Becker gave very fine introduction to audience of 100, half women. Mr. Ingersoll talked for 45 minutes taking the cue from Becker, who said that he talked over the heads of some of his people; and he must

have succeeded in his determination not to do it again because of Becker's closing talk and particularly Mr. Smith who said this: "I have been listening to talks on taxation all my life but I have never heard the subject really talked plainly until Mr. Ingersoll's talk to-night. This is the first time it has ever been made clear to me, and if there is one person here who has not understood him, I would like to examine his head and see why it had not gone over."

Pilgrimage to grave of Thaddeus Stevens, Lancaster, Pa., Aug. 4.—Thirty people attending. Mr. Ingersoll spoke 10 minutes; Gladwin Bouton accompanied him. Outstanding feature was broadcast at WGAL where he gave selected Single Tax items from his Current Events. This is a very good station affiliated with WILM.

Farchers Grove, Union Hill, N. J., Aug. 5, afternoon.—This was an outing sponsored by the New Jersey Tax Protective League. Typical political barbecue; 300 present; talked for one-half hour. First political speech; Mr. Ingersoll handled the issue attractively and tied them in effectively with Single Tax.

Mr. Ingersoll's broadcasting proceeds with about the same force in addition to the personal lectures above and his political activities in New Jersey. He has however concentrated his broadcasts largely on Monday and Wednesday leaving the balance of the week relatively free; following is his schedule:

Monday—WARD, 9:15 a. m.; WBNX, 10:45 a. m.; WCNW, 2:45 p. m.

Wednesday—WBNX, 10:45 a. m.; WCNW, 2:45 p. m.; WBBC, 3:30 p. m.; WWRL, 10 p. m.

Friday—WDAS, 5:15 p. m. Saturday—WDAS, 10:15 a. m. Sunday—WWRL, 2:30 p. m.

The New Jersey campaign is getting more of the president's time and is a great source of Georgist publicity.

Mr. Ingersoll is methodically calling on every editor of the State and as a result, getting some very fine publicity almost exclusively on taxation. He is also calling on every tax organization to secure their favor and arrange meetings; as there are between 200 and 300 each of papers and taxpayers leagues, the size of this task is apparent and makes the Chevrolet, in which he has now travelled 60,000 miles, a real asset.

The aim is to have a release each week and here are some extracts from our current release which has had reprint in many of the largest papers.

"New Jersey is Tax Conscious! And it deserves a chief administrator who knows what to do for a Tax Conscious People." * * *

"But all this provision for economy, is only a part of the full programme of tax reduction: neither of the associations mentioned have yet given any attention to the source of taxation: they assume it makes no difference what is taxed, since the people pay all, but the source is the most vital of all questions: upon your choice of source depends whether you tax industry into depression