

Why Not Self-Supporting Cities?

Science Shows Practical Ways To Reduce City And County Taxes

Now is the time to talk about reduction of municipal taxes!

Why wait for the full import of what the war is costing us, and will cost us for many years to come, to strike home before planning to do something about the burdens nearest us—namely, municipal and county taxes?

If intelligent study were given to such taxes, it would be evident that over half the sum we are now paying could be easily eliminated. Obviously, this would afford partial relief to American taxpayers who are facing—in addition to many other federal taxes—a war bill of 274 million dollars a day.

But, you ask: How can half our city taxes be eliminated?

Many an industry, facing bankruptcy, has turned losses into *profits* by utilization of former waste products, and has found in the final analysis that the monetary value of such by-products has often proved greater than that of the articles originally manufactured. It was not only a matter of trimming expenses to the bone—it involved also the application of elementary science and technology to the problems of the business, with results that were astounding.

Why not apply these same principles to municipal management? Why not employ science to turn city wastes into profits? Why should our cities be always danger-

ously balancing on the edge of bankruptcy—with consequent demoralization and undermining of the local democratic processes?

Every individual in the nation, from the moment of his birth to his last breath, is a taxpayer. He helps pay not only the debts incurred by his government during his lifetime but also those saddled upon him by previous generations.

Property taxes strike him in every purchase or activity of his daily existence, and inheritance taxes follow him even after he has ceased to exist.

These property taxes are your individual concern—whether you own a twenty-room mansion on a large estate, or live in a two-by-four hall bedroom in a boarding house. In every cent you spend, you pay your proportionate share of governmental expense.

Hidden Taxes

The Illinois Chamber of Commerce, in its booklet on *Taxes in 1942*, says: "Let us consider six commodities which are purchased by the average citizen. On a pair of shoes, there are 126 different types of taxes; on a quart of milk, 78 taxes; on a wire fence, 191 taxes; on a bar of soap, 154 taxes; on a dress, 125 taxes, and on a gallon of gasoline, 201 taxes. These are called 'hidden taxes', but rest assured they are included in the cost of the goods you buy."

These figures arouse more than an apathetic interest in taxes. But you do not yet realize what the total cost of municipal government with its hidden taxes, along with state and federal grants to cities, does to your pocketbook. Thirty dollars per person per year, or \$20 per average family, is a fair estimate of the individual municipal tax burden placed upon the people of the nation in direct assessments. And to this must be added approximately 50% to take care of hidden taxes, thus giving a shocking total of \$180 per family per year for *local* taxation.

To illustrate the hidden tax feature of local tax burdens—New York City has been paying for only 60% of its expenditures—the state and federal governments take care of the remaining 40%; Chicago is being similarly helped by the state. Other large cities are dependent upon outside assistance for the care of their needy and for the operation of municipal services.

This means that city tax figures, alarming as they are, still do not give the full story. Farmers and rural communities contribute to the maintenance of metropolitan services, with no equivalent return.

Where The Money Goes

Where does all the municipal tax money go? A group of Kansas cities of 25,000 or more inhabitants showed an annual tax expenditure

of \$20.52 per person as follows:

Administrative	\$5.31
Streets and repairs	1.33
Fire department	2.68
Parks60
Sewage disposal50
Bonds and interest	6.74
Street lighting58
Entertainment63
Miscellaneous	2.36
Libraries39

Schools and charities were not listed because part of their maintenance was borne by state, county and federal agencies.

From this list of expense figures for various Kansas municipalities, it is not difficult to visualize the necessary expenditures which a citizen has a right to expect from his community—for his comfort and well-being. But what is disconcerting is the array of services listed as *essential* by such municipalities as New York, Chicago, Boston, Detroit, and other large cities—to the number of approximately 300. In other words, officials of large cities claim as essentials 300 different services! Doubtless if a special tax were levied to support each of these 300 services, most of them would be quickly abolished.

Therefore, the two most constructive steps toward relieving the burden of municipal taxation are (a) determining what services are essential, and (b) how to reduce the expense of administering these services.

A start in the right direction would be to examine the various progressive steps taken by those cities throughout the country

which have blazed the trail for *self-supporting cities*.

In some cities, for instance, the cost of street cleaning and repairs, as well as of the park system, is maintained entirely by the sale of salvage from garbage collections. In other cities, sewage disposal is made profitable through recovery of methane gas from sewage sludge, thus wiping out the cost of sewage disposal and, with it, the entire cost of city lighting.

Fire and police departments can also be made more efficient at reduced cost to the taxpayer, under the systems suggested in the March and April issues of *PROGRESS GUIDE*.

Miscellaneous expenses can be paid out of profits from municipally owned parking lots and parking meters, a plan proved highly practical by many cities.

From a financial standpoint, these meters have been a success, the returns depending upon local arrangements. The average range is from \$5 to \$12 per meter per month. Returns from 31,812 meters in 61 cities show an average annual income of \$75 per meter. The maintenance cost of each meter is approximately \$10, leaving a net profit per meter of \$65.

Expenses for administration, and for schools and libraries, could be met by profits realized from proper utilization of garbage, sewage sludge, coal ashes, and from salvage of other city refuse. The combined profits from these sources

should approximate \$25,000 per thousand population per year.¹

Inasmuch as *administrative expense* is an indefinite term and its scope difficult to determine, it would be wise and timely for taxpayers everywhere to resolve that all appropriations for administrative or "general" expense for 1944 be reduced by one-half of the 1943 taxes for this purpose. The balance of the city's necessary expenses could be met through utilizing the opportunity for profitable municipal enterprises and through the cultivation of idle city and county lands.

It Can Be Done

An Illinois county employee who drew a salary of \$4,000 showed the way to justify the expense of his job. He looked over the vacant land belonging to the community and had it plowed and planted to various crops, using the labor of those who were dependent upon the county for financial aid. After paying the workers and other expenses, the returns from this one effort not only offset the official's salary but also increased the county coffers by \$5,000!

The explanation of this unusual performance was, in effect: If these idle lands were in private hands, they would be expected to support the owners as well as pay taxes to the county. Why should not intelligent handling by the county administration make them pay equally as well?

These various means of making
(Continued on Page 444)

DEFERRING OLD AGE

(Continued from Page 412)

present in sufficient amounts, the beneficial effects of vitamin —A are also lost, and the cholesterol content of the blood rises to damaging levels.

Choline and inositol are associated together in soybean flour and in dried brewer's yeast. It is obvious then that a youthful condition of the arteries may be encouraged by adhering completely to the following suggestions: (1) reduction of fats in the diet; (2) use of natural rather than refined fats; (3) increased consumption of soybean products or dried brewer's yeast.

Diabetes, kidney disease, brain hemorrhages and cancer are other maladies generally associated with advanced age. While these diseases are common, their character is so complex that each will be discussed in special articles in forthcoming issues of **PROGRESS GUIDE**.

Bodily Resistance To Aging

It is comforting to those persons past the meridian of life to know that the constructive or building forces of the body can be maintained at a level almost equal to the forces that tend to destroy or age it. Blood corpuscles are not merely *demolished* at the rate of millions per minute—they are also *replaced* in practically the same proportion. The human body is unlike the engine that proceeds only to run down.

The hormones play an important part in the approach of senility, but inasmuch as they are influenced in production and effectiveness by intake of the vitamins and by the mental condition, little thought need be given to hormones if other necessary health controls are applied, and if one is otherwise normal.

The resistance of the body to senility is naturally a vital matter. Whatever the strength of the forces working toward decrepitude, their effectiveness depends upon the bodily resistance. And this power of resistance is under the control of the **WILL**. The principal forces at its command are **HEALTH, KNOWLEDGE, DIET, EMOTIONAL CONTROL AND EXERCISE**.

"The enforced retirement of the aged is biologically cruel," declares Dr. A. J. Carlson, Emeritus Professor of Physiology of the University of Chicago. And "the person who looks forward to years of leisure already is dead."

Old age can be deferred. With an alert mind in a healthy, active body, "age cannot wither nor custom stale." Science and will power can direct aging humanity into a more useful way of life!

- 1—Progress Guide, Vol. 4: p. 11.
- 2—News Ed. Am. Chem. Soc. VI. 19: p. 1081.
- 3—J. Am. Chem. Soc., Vol. 64: p. 868.
- 4—Progress Guide, Vol. 5: p. 268.
- 5—Nut. Rev., Vol. 1: p. 139.
- 6—Yale J. Biol. Med., Vol. 1940: p. 345.
- 7—Am. Jour. Path., Vol. 18: p. 29.
- 8—Lancet, 1942.
- 9—Chem. Abs., Vol. 36: p. 2602.
- 10—Progress Guide, Vol. 5: p. 321.
- 11—Arch. Path., Vol. 32: p. 507.
- 12—Fed. Proc. Soc. Biol. Chem. VI. 1: p. 124.