

CITY DUMPS AND SLUMS

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(A letter in the Montreal Gazette)

With regard to the dumps in the big cities, condemnation and eradication of slums, etc: -- the only sure and effective way to do that would be to exempt all improvements from taxation and collect the wherewithal to meet the city budget by collection of the economic land rent instead. We need no other laws to interfere with enterprising citizens' freedom; they will look after the beautifying and developing of their surroundings to the fullest extent themselves in quick order as it will be to their own advantage as well as the city's as a whole. -- With regard to Mr. Desmond Iveson's suggestion of obtaining private subscriptions to buy properties, raze dumps and erect modern dwellings in co-operation with the Dominion Government: -- the question rises, who in this case would collect the revenue?

If the city authorities will only amend the by-laws to permit them reducing all taxation on buildings and improvements by 10% for ten consecutive years and distribute that deduction on the aggregate over the assessable land, built-up or vacant, according to its value, you will see an improvement in the housing situation and the beautifying and improvement of the looks of any city in the same year.

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We are not rich enough to tolerate the luxury of slums. They produce little or no municipal revenue and any share they pay is out of all proportion to the direct and indirect expenses of maintaining them. We are in fact subsidizing slum areas and I think we would be in pocket by tearing them down and erecting modern housing. -- George S. Mooney, executive director, Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, in an address to the Toronto Property-Owners' Association, reported in The Globe and Mail.

In Indianapolis it was found that \$27.29 per capita was spent in the congested districts for fire, police and public health protection as compared with \$4 per capita in other areas. -- Jay Franklin, in "Remaking America".

Under the present economic setup, slum clearance fails for the simple reason that it always falls foul of an invisible barrier erected through the combined forces of inflated ground values and overtaxation of improvements.-- Louis Wallis, in "Burning Question".