

Pittsburgh Leaders Prefer Continuance of Graded Tax Plan

Many of the members of the City Council and other civic leaders of Pittsburgh, Pa., feel that their city has profited so greatly from its Graded Tax Law that a further extension of that law is desirable, according to an article in "The American City" (May, 1945).

Under this law, which was enacted in 1913, Pennsylvania's cities of the second class (Pittsburgh and Scranton) are permitted to make a separate assessment of land values and of improvement values, and they were authorized to reduce gradually the millage on improvement values until 1925, when this millage became one-half of that assessed against land values.

If House Bill No. 452, now before the Pennsylvania Legislature, becomes law, it would be the duty of the City Councils of Pittsburgh and Scranton each year hereafter to assess the tax upon buildings at three-tenths, instead of five-tenths as at present, of the rate of tax assessed against land values.

At a meeting of the Pittsburgh City Council, at which suggestions for the tax base were discussed, Councilman Demmler said:

"Should any relief be granted to what is generally known as 'real estate,' I would want that relief granted on the improvement. Building owners should be granted relief from taxes on their building or improvement. The home owner especially should have this benefit. Home building construction and improvement would be encouraged and stimulated."

Councilman Demmler then quoted from his statement printed in the Municipal Record of the Proceedings of Council of the City of Pittsburgh for December 11, 1944: "As an individual I shall oppose the levying of any tax until the community has taken for its revenue the entire value created by the service which it renders . . . I will not advocate the placing of more taxes on industry or the imposition of nuisance taxes."