

CHRONICLE DESPATCH

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BEDFORD TRUCKS
HIGHEST REPUTE
LOWEST PRICES
Ovens Motors Pty.
FAITHFUL STREET—PHONE 340

BUILDING 'WAVE' ENVELOPS WHOLE OF TOWN

Seven New Shops For Yarrunga

Seven new shops are being constructed in Yarrunga shopping area.

The shops are being built in two blocks on either side of Wills Street, west of Vincent Road.

They will bring the total number of business houses in the area to 20.

—And Each
Building is
Tax Free!

£30,000 Facelift Will Modernise The Commercial

A £30,000 facelift is planned to make Wangaratta's Commercial Hotel one of the most modern in provincial Victoria.

One of Wangaratta's oldest buildings, the Commercial Hotel, is being modernised.

AND RIGHT IN TOWN—

Plans which Messrs Orr, Barry and Dore are building for Motor Spares Pty. Ltd. in Faithful Street will be completed in early August.

This single storey brick structure will have a frontage of 100 feet.

A "Single Tax" Town in Australia

WANGARATTA is a borough (charter granted 1863) lying some 145 miles to the N.E. of Melbourne. It is an important town at the junction of Ovens and King rivers, in a good agricultural and dairying district. Grain, tobacco, flax, broome, and hops are the chief crops. In the town there are two flour mills, a foundry, a rayon factory, woollen, saw and flax mills, butter and cordial factories, a bacon-curing works, and so on.

In August, 1956, ratepayers were invited to vote on a simple issue. Should rates be taken off buildings and improvements and levied on land values only? By more than four to one the answer given was, "YES!"

It was a wise decision. Already the first benefits are being reaped. Our facsimile reproduction of a part of the front page of the *Wangaratta Chronicle-Despatch* shows what is happening. New buildings are being erected: old ones are being modernised. That means a better town, more jobs, increased business turnover. *And this is taking place during a fairly general recession in the building industry in Victoria.*

Of course there is nothing new or surprising about all this. It is the inevitable and invariable experience of towns which adopt a scientific local taxation, instead of playing catch-as-catch-can and beggar-my-neighbour. Similar reports appear with clockwork regularity in place after place, year after year. Just recently, for instance, the *Sunraysia* carried a headline: "RECORD BUILDING TREND CONTINUES." That referred to Mildura City—351 miles N.W. of Melbourne—where ratepayers gave a 3½ to 1 vote in favour of adopting land-value rating in August 1956. Building in 1957 broke all records. And at the present rate, the 1957 record will be broken this year.

But to get back to Wangaratta. The borough levies all its rates on land values as follows: General 8d., water 3½d., sewerage 3d., making a total of 1s. 2½d. in the £ of the

assessed capital value of land. That gives a tax rate of 6 per cent. (Metropolitan municipalities are permitted to levy only their general rates on land values.) As our Melbourne contemporary, *Progress*, recently remarked: Wangaratta provides the answer to speculation—outside Australia—whether sudden change of all rates to site-value at one step would be too drastic.

The *Chronicle-Despatch*, June 5, commented editorially: "This seems to be one of Wangaratta's most energetic years. Announcements of new commercial building and rebuilding indicate just how rapidly the town is going ahead. The expansion of Yarrunga's shopping centre is particularly significant and could set a pattern for suburban centres of the future in the western and southern sections of Wangaratta.

"Plans for remodelling the Commercial Hotel will also be widely applauded. A new face on this century-old building should bring it into line with the growing number of modern fronts in Murphy Street and greatly improve the main street's appearance.

"Overwhelming success of the cancer appeal, the enthusiasm with which the showground's cricket pavilion project is being tackled . . . and plans for a new Manchester Unity Hall suggest a healthy community spirit. . . ."

New developments now in hand include shops, offices, a modern engineering workshop, a motor showroom, and a service block for the hospital. Valuable blocks of idle land have been sold by auction at "very satisfactory" prices, and some derelict buildings have been demolished to make way for new ones. Mr. H. Bell, who bought the Commercial Hotel last August, said that ever since he was a child he had looked at it and thought it was about time it was improved. "I never dreamed I would do it," he told a reporter.