

LETTER TO EDITOR

by John Fisher, Rodney, Ontario, Canada,
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The problem: Senior and local governments are caught in a debt, revenue and spending squeeze.

The origin of this problem lies in the failure of governments, at all levels, to collect legitimate public revenue instead of taxing private wealth. When governments tax the wrong things society gets the wrong things like high unemployment, urban sprawl, lack of affordable housing, periods of high inflation, deteriorating downturns, poverty and crime.

The following restructuring scenerios are government attempts to correct these things:

1. Amalgamations: local municipalities; school boards; utilities; and semi-government agencies.
2. Co-operation: Bulk purchasing, mutual funded services such as fire departments and waste management.
3. Downsizing: A shift to services from upper to lower governments, (b) Shift of services from public to private section, (c) eliminating services; doing more with less.
4. Monetary: some direct tax relief but many more user fees and surcharges.

Some of these scenerios will achieve short term efficiency. However, government propaganda has convinced a majority of citizens they must suffer through these changes. Yet if history is any guide, all the social and economic problems listed above will be around long after debts are paid and better times temporarily return.

In fact, the process of layoffs, poverty, loss of political representation and individual freedoms in the name of debt reduction only transfers more income and political power from the disadvantaged to the privileged or the monopolists.

The Remedy: The key to a just

distribution of wealth whereby citizens have "reasonable" income to pay for needed government services (including debt repayment) is to break the hold of monopolists. Sir Winston Churchill once described "the greatest monopolies" as the "unearned increments in land" which are derived from processes detrimental to the general public.

Shifting municipal taxes from buildings and businesses to site assessments will capture increased publicly created revenues for local governments and reduce wasteful speculative tendencies.

Shifting provincial taxes from income and sales to royalty payments on all natural resources would deter the monopolization and misuse of our common heritage.

A taxation system which gets more revenue from natural resources and less from the products society needs would encourage efficiency in productive activities, more economic growth and reduce negative social behavior.

Amalgamations on the scale we are seeing today would not be necessary.

The Public: Why does the public remain mainly silent about shifting taxes from good things like jobs to things that harm society like land speculation?

Report after report, including the soon to be released "Aldborough Two Tier Property Tax Report," shows that a majority of homeowners, businesses, renters and farmers get some tax reduction (assuming same total taxes collected) with the two tiered approach. Yet few seem to be interested!

Governments put thousands out of work, tax everything in sight (except gambling) and the only reaction from most people is a shrug of the shoulders because "there is nothing we can do about it."

The decline of social standards usually happen so slowly that citizens accept the signs of decline, like food banks and security systems as normal. Most

would deny any connection between taxing a house and unemployment. Perhaps the drastic changes being introduced by the current provincial government will cause a few more people to question the justice of a taxation system which can lead to so much disruption in our lives.