PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

REPORT

For the Year Ended December 31st

1955

VICTORIA, B.C.
Printed by DON MCDIARMID, Printer to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty
1956

To His Honour FRANK MACKENZIE ROSS, C.M.G., M.C.,
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of British Columbia.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Department of Municipal Affairs for the year ended December 31st, 1955.

W. D. BLACK,
Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Victoria, B.C.

Report of the Department of Municipal Affairs

VICTORIA, B.C., January 25th, 1956.

The Honourable W. D. Black,
Minister of Municipal Affairs.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit herewith the Annual Report of this Department for the year ended December 31st, 1955.

The equalization of assessments throughout the Province and the addition of landlord and tenant machinery and equipment to the assessment rolls, as well as the normal increases expected from year to year, have added approximately $425,000,000 to the 1955 assessment rolls of cities, districts, and villages within the Province. This represents an increase of about 25 per cent over the 1954 gross assessment values.

Approximately one-third of the increase in assessed values is attributable to the addition of the value of landlord and tenant machinery and equipment to the assessment rolls of city and district municipalities. One-third of the increase is the result of the equalization of assessments throughout the municipalities. The remaining one-third is considered to be the normal increase expected over the previous year's assessed values.

This increase in gross assessed values resulted in increases of approximately $360,000,000 in values taxable and $165,000,000 in values actually taxed for municipal purposes during 1955. The values taxed for school purposes exceed the values taxed for municipal purposes by approximately $344,000,000. Figures are shown in the following tables:—

TOTAL ASSESSED VALUE OF LAND AND IMPROVEMENTS, 1955

	1954 Total	Land	Improvements		1955 Total
			Other than Landlord and Tenant Machinery and Equipment	Landlord and Tenant Machinery and Equipment	
Cities	$391,863,512	$93,366,910	$414,853,506	$31,488,919	$539,709,335
Districts	455,853,772	122,102,431	521,345,057	63,685,491	707,132,979
Villages	71,847,732	2,244,142	12,757,158	----------	15,001,300
Totals	$919,565,016	$217,713,483	$948,955,721	$95,174,410	$1,261,843,614
Vancouver	706,403,564	203,469,860	535,283,762	51,274,887	790,028,509
Grand totals	$1,625,968,580	$421,183,343	$1,484,239,483	$146,449,297	$2,051,872,123

VALUES TAXABLE

Cities	$303,202,479	$73,214,413	$311,717,678	$30,887,536	$415,819,627
Districts	377,106,007	107,112,454	434,594,914	59,249,095	600,956,463
Villages	58,124,451	2,044,371	9,841,717	----------	11,886,088
Totals	$738,432,937	$182,371,238	$756,154,309	$90,136,631	$1,028,662,178
Vancouver	583,378,389	162,767,520	445,228,837[1]	47,784,780	655,781,137
Grand totals	$1,321,811,326	$345,138,758	$1,201,383,146	$137,921,411	$1,684,443,315

[1] $489,751,720 gross value taxable for school purposes.

VALUES ACTUALLY TAXED, 1955

Municipal Purposes

	1954 Total	Land	Improvements	1955 Total
Cities	$182,543,676	$72,902,463	$156,633,587	$229,536,050
Districts	250,507,086	107,110,644	277,244,217	384,354,861
Villages	37,697,039	2,044,371	5,546,318	7,590,689
Totals	$470,747,801	$182,067,478	$439,424,122	$621,481,600
Vancouver	371,345,529	162,767,520	222,614,418	385,381,938
Grand totals	$842,093,330	$344,834,998	$662,038,540	$1,006,863,538

School Purposes

	Land	Improvements	1955 Total
Cities	$73,203,593	$251,374,772	$324,578,365
Districts	107,413,509	352,945,106	460,358,615
Totals	$180,617,102	$604,319,878	$784,936,980
Vancouver	162,767,520	403,152,375	565,919,895
Grand totals	$343,384,622	$1,007,472,253	$1,350,856,875

During the year approximately $8,750,000 in new debentures were approved, which is a decrease of nearly $200,000 compared with 1954. The amount and purpose for which new debentures were approved are set out below (Vancouver does not require approval):—

Purpose	Cities	Districts	Villages	Total
Civic projects	$75,000	$152,000	----------	$227,000
Drainage	----------	36,000	----------	36,000
Electric light	78,000	----------	----------	78,000
Hospitals	270,000	----------	----------	270,000
Local improvements	258,798	209,594	----------	468,392
Protection to persons and property	101,000	305,000	----------	406,000
Roads and streets	471,100[1]	980,200	----------	1,451,300
Sewers	86,000	924,700[2]	$641,000	1,651,700
Waterworks	813,000	2,458,635[3]	575,000	3,846,635
Miscellaneous	273,000	51,000	----------	324,000
Totals	$2,425,898	$5,117,129	$1,216,000	$8,759,027

[1] $419,100 issued under "Local Improvement Act."
[2] $595,000 issued under "Local Improvement Act."
[3] $219,635 issued under "Local Improvement Act."

The latest figures available for total debenture debt as at December 31st, 1954, are summarized as follows:—

TOTAL DEBENTURE DEBT

	Issued, Sold, and Outstanding	Unissued and Unsold	Total
Cities	$39,455,679	$519,352	$39,975,031
Districts	28,655,636	100,590	28,756,226
Villages	2,748,919	47,500	2,796,419
Totals	$70,860,234	$667,442	$71,527,676
Vancouver	115,000,447	3,866,000	118,866,447
Grand totals	$185,860,681	$4,533,442	$190,394,123

This Department has been advised by the Department of Finance of the Federal Government that all semi-annual repayments have been made on loans which were obtained under the provisions of the "Municipalities Improvements Assistance Act, 1938." The following table shows the outstanding amounts as at January 1st, 1956:—

LOANS MADE UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE "MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS ASSISTANCE ACT, 1938," GUARANTEED BY THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, AS AT JANUARY 1ST, 1956.

Municipality	Loan No.	Amount Advanced	Balance Outstanding
Greater Vancouver Water District	1	$750,000.00	$313,773.46
City of Vancouver	2	390,000.00	101,744.44
District of Saanich	21	39,224.15	10,232.93
City of Nanaimo	22	200,000.00	20,492.77
City of Prince George	31	18,750.00	719.33
City of Grand Forks	32	11,000.00	----------
District of Summerland	33	140,192.50	61,612.15
City of Trail	54	130,000.00	30,294.74
City of Port Alberni	56	66,000.00	17,218.30
City of Alberni	57	10,000.00	----------
City of Prince Rupert	59	40,000.00	22,302.97
Westview Light, Power, and Waterworks District	60	40,000.00	----------
District of Coquitlam	67	8,400.00	641.33
District of Penticton[1]	68	41,000.00	9,554.51
District of Surrey	69	12,500.00	----------
Annable-Warfield Waterworks District[2]	81	44,000.00	12,691.97
Connaught Heights Waterworks District	84	39,200.00	21,856.91
District of West Vancouver	85	100,000.00	48,109.32
Grandview Waterworks District	89	8,000.00	2,087.05
City of Salmon Arm	94	15,000.00	8,363.60
City of Armstrong	95	11,491.05	440.85
Totals	----	$2,114,757.70	$682,136.63

[1] Changed from district to city status, April 30th, 1948.
[2] This liability now assumed by The Corporation of the Village of Warfield.
Amortized payments due December 31st, 1955, and January 1st, 1956, made by all municipalities.

All money by-laws, before being approved for submission to the electors, were carefully examined as to necessity, the estimated cost, the financial ability of the municipality to repay the loan, and the relation of the life of the works to the maturity date of the debentures. Care was also taken to see that the debt burden resulting from combining the existing and proposed debt charges was not unduly excessive for any particular year. When local improvement debentures were submitted for certification, evidence was required that proper assessments had been levied and all statutory requirements complied with.

At the end of 1954, reserve funds amounted to $6,898,758, being an increase over the previous year of $1,827,188. These funds are available for general or specific capital expenditures, such as construction, renewal, or purchase of utilities and public works projects, as well as the purchase of equipment. The practice of setting up reserve funds appears to be growing, and the municipalities which have adopted this policy are to be commended.

The Board of Examiners appointed pursuant to the provisions of Part XXIV of the "Municipal Act" held two meetings during the year. The most significant action was a resolution to recommend to the Government that, commencing with the year 1965, it be a condition of employment that all municipal officers be certified by the Board of Examiners, with the proviso that the Chairman of the Board be authorized to issue temporary certificates in special cases. This proposal was placed before the Union of British Columbia Municipalities in convention at Prince George in October, 1955, and received endorsation.

The course in municipal administration being offered by the University of British Columbia under the sponsorship of the Department is now well into its third year. Total enrolment for the 1955–56 year is made up of: First year, 51; second year, 29; and third year, 40.

Four-day institutes were held at the University in June 1955, for both of last year's classes and the results of the examinations were as follows: Completing first year, 33, and completing second year, 37.

Junior diplomas were granted by the University to all students successfully completing the second year of the course.

The Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Municipal Officers' Association was held in Victoria on June 14th and 15th, 1955. The greater use of panel discussion proved very acceptable and helpful. More people had an opportunity to participate, and there was a wider variety of topics of interest to the membership. The attendance surpassed all previous records, both as to numbers present and municipalities represented.

The presentation, in broad outline, of proposed changes and innovations in the projected municipal legislation to the Convention of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities was a new and unique experience for the members of the Department who participated. Your policy of setting up a consulting office at the Convention was again most successful, and many problems were discussed with the elected officials throughout the holding of the Convention.

The Corporation of the City of Langley was formed on March 15th, 1955, and comprises the former portion of The Corporation of the Township of Langley known as Langley Prairie. The area of the city is 2,516 acres and has a population of 2,022.

On September 15th, 1955, a plebiscite was held to ascertain whether the voters of the Cranberry Lake, Powell River Townsite, Westview, and Wildwood areas as defined in the " Powell River Incorporation Act " wished to form a district municipality. The result was favourable in each of the areas, and on October 15th, 1955, there came into existence a new district municipality called " The Corporation of the District of Powell River " having an area of 10,049 acres and a population of 9,077. At the same time The Corporation of the Village of Cranberry Lake, The Corporation of the Village of Westview, the Cranberry Waterworks District, the Westview Light, Power, and Waterworks District, and the Wildwood Light, Water, and Sewerage District, whose territorial limits were included within the new district municipality, were dissolved.

The Corporation of the Village of Lumby was incorporated on December 20th, 1955, with an area of 881 acres and a population of 778.

In 1955, extensions of boundaries were granted to the Villages of Comox, Dawson Creek, Qualicum Beach, Quesnel, and Squamish. The following table shows the increase in area as well as population:—

Village	Area (in Acres)			Population		
	Before Extension of Boundaries	Contained in Area Added	After Extension of Boundaries	Before Extension of Boundaries	Contained in Area Added	After Extension of Boundaries
Comox	873	170	1,043	772	105	877
Dawson Creek	957	1,649	2,606	3,825	1,075	4,900
Qualicum Beach	1,060	150	1,210	771	18	789
Quesnel	778	797	1,575	1,608	2,167	3,775
Squamish	425	230	655	1,144	.....	1,144

The population is the 1951 census plus additions brought about by extensions of boundaries since then to December 31st, 1955.

The most significant changes or additions enacted by the 1955 Session of the Legislature which affected municipalities are as follows:—

"Assessment Equalization Act, 1953."—One of the changes provided that, commencing with the 1955 school budgets, Provincial educational grants and apportionment of school budgets between municipal corporations and rural areas will be based on current year assessed values as confirmed by the Court of Revision and by the Assessment Commissioner. Other changes made were chiefly of a technical nature.

" Public Schools Act."—A number of changes were made to this Act, amongst which is a new formula resulting in a basic mill rate for school purposes commencing with the year 1955.

" Taxation Act."—In so far as municipalities are concerned, the principal amendment permits the Minister of Finance, at his discretion, to authorize the use of Provincial Assessors in carrying out reassessments in municipalities when required and provides for the payment of the cost by the municipality.

" Local Improvement Act."—One of the principal amendments permits the Council to lower the rate of interest for the debentures to be issued after the Court of Revision has confirmed the assessment for local improvement rates. In such an event the tax rates are reduced accordingly. Councils were also empowered to charge interest on moneys borrowed from the Local Improvement Fund to pay the owners' share of the cost of the work. Another amendment gives the Council of a district municipality discretionary power to assess rates either on land or land and improvements for certain works. Other amendments were of a minor nature.

" Municipal Assessment Validation Act, 1955."—A number of municipalities experienced difficulty in the meeting the time-limits set out in the " Municipal Act " and the "Assessment Equalization Act, 1953," for the completion of the 1955 assessment roll and the sending-out of the assessment notices. There was also some doubt regarding procedures relating to the Courts of Revision. This Act validates the 1955 assessment rolls and valuations thereon as well as the acts of the Courts of Revision.

" Municipal Act."—Several changes were made regarding assessment and taxation to bring this Act into conformity with the " Public Schools Act " and the "Assessment Equalization Act, 1953." Registered charges and judgments are no longer deducted from the assessed value of property in determining the qualifications for the office of Mayor and Alderman in cities and Reeve and Councillor in district municipalities. The fee which may be charged for furnishing copies of by-laws was increased. The maximum regional library tax which may be charged against property-holders was raised from $2 to $3. Power was given to permit municipalities to purchase and sell any and all types of gas products. Certain other changes were made, most of which were of a technical nature.

" Municipalities Aid Act, 1955."—This Act replaces the former " Municipalities Aid Act " and provides a new formula for grants to municipalities. The new local government grant is on a *per capita* basis, the *per capita* amount decreasing with increased population.

" Village Municipalities Act."—The most important amendment provided that, commencing with and for the year 1956, section 2 and Division (1) of Part VIII of the " Municipal Act " dealing with assessment and taxation shall apply to village municipalities with certain exceptions. Amongst the exceptions is that the Provincial Assessor of the assessment district within which the village is situate shall be its assessor and return the completed and authenticated assessment roll to the Clerk not later than March 15th. This is done without cost to the village. The fee which may be charged for furnishing copies of by-laws was increased. Registered charges and judgments are no longer deducted from assessed value of property in determining qualifications for the office of Commissioner. Power to enter into agreements for providing fire protection outside the village limits was granted. The definition of revenue was clarified and conforms with that in the " Municipal Act." Other amendments of a minor and technical nature were made.

"Village Municipalities Assistance Act."—Provision was made for the guarantee of the Province to be signed by persons appointed by the Minister of Finance.

"Elderly Citizens' Housing Aid Act."—For some years the Provincial Government has assisted municipalities and non-profit corporations in the construction of homes for elderly persons of low income. It was felt desirable to enact legislation governing such assistance.

"Township of Chilliwhack Drainage Act."—Among the changes made to this Act is a proviso that where the estimated cost of the construction of a ditch is in excess of $5,000, approval of three-fifths of the owners must be obtained prior to undertaking the work. Another is that appeals are to be heard by a Judge of the County Court instead of the Council sitting as a Court of Revision.

"City of Greenwood Debt Refunding Act, 1941–42."—One of the restrictions of this Act is that until the refunding debentures are fully paid, the city may not pay any salary or remuneration to any member of the Council. This restriction has been eased to permit payment to each member of the Council remuneration up to a maximum of $300 per year.

"Kitimat Incorporation Act, 1953."—This Act was amended to give The Corporation of the District of Kitimat additional special borrowing power to keep pace with the demands made upon it caused by the rapid development of the community due to the further increased industrial expansion in the area.

"Powell River Incorporation Act."—This Act empowered the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to incorporate as a district municipality those parts of the unorganized area of Powell River and the improvement districts and villages which vote in favour of being incorporated into the district. As stated earlier in this Report, all parts voted in favour of incorporation, and The Corporation of the District of Powell River was incorporated on October 15th, 1955.

"Richmond Drainage and Dyking Act, 1936."—Power was conferred to enable the municipality to alter or join all or any of the works undertaken pursuant to this Act.

"Greater Nanaimo Water District Act."—Several minor amendments of a technical nature were made to this Act. An additional section was added to provide that the "Public Utilities Act" does not apply to the district except for the distribution of water in the area outside the district.

"Greater Victoria Water District Act."—The amendment empowers the Board to locate its head office at the most convenient place, providing it is within 8 miles of the Victoria City Hall.

Regulations were made pursuant to both clauses (*c*) and (*f*) of section 9 of the "Village Municipalities Act." The "Pool-rooms Act" was made applicable to all village municipalities. Other regulations provided for certain portions of the "Municipal Act" to be applicable to all village municipalities. Amongst these latter was the power to assess and tax the holder or occupier of tax-exempt railway lands, to pay the premiums of benefit, accident, sickness, or life insurance policies, and to pay the premium of any contract for medical services provided on an employee group basis for employees and their dependents. It was also necessary to pass regulations making portions of the "Municipal Act" applicable to specific village municipalities.

In order to clarify the duties and functions of the members of the staff, to designate the lines of authority, and to provide for an organization which can be expanded to meet the growing demands made on the Department, a plan of organization together with a job classification was presented to and accepted by the Civil Service Commission.

An in-service committee recommended that personnel and Departmental accounting records be centralized. In accordance with this recommendation, payroll and personnel records for the Planning Division were taken over and combined with those of the Municipal Branch. The filing systems have also been brought together. This should greatly increase the efficiency and output of the Planning Division.

An Assistant Planner was added to the staff of the Planning Division.

Legislation passed in 1955 transferred the responsibility for the administration of the estates of the insane from the Inspector of Municipalities to an Official Committee functioning under the Department of the Attorney-General.

I am happy to report that all members of the staff have worked conscientiously and energetically throughout the year. Only through their loyal service has the Department been able to keep up with the volume of work that has been performed during the past year.

I would like also to record my sincere appreciation for their unfailing courtesy and assistance, to the municipal officials (both elected and appointed), to the executive and staff of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities, to the departmental heads and staff of the other departments of Government, and, last but not least, to you, Sir, for your direction, support, and encouragement.

J. E. BROWN,
Deputy Minister.

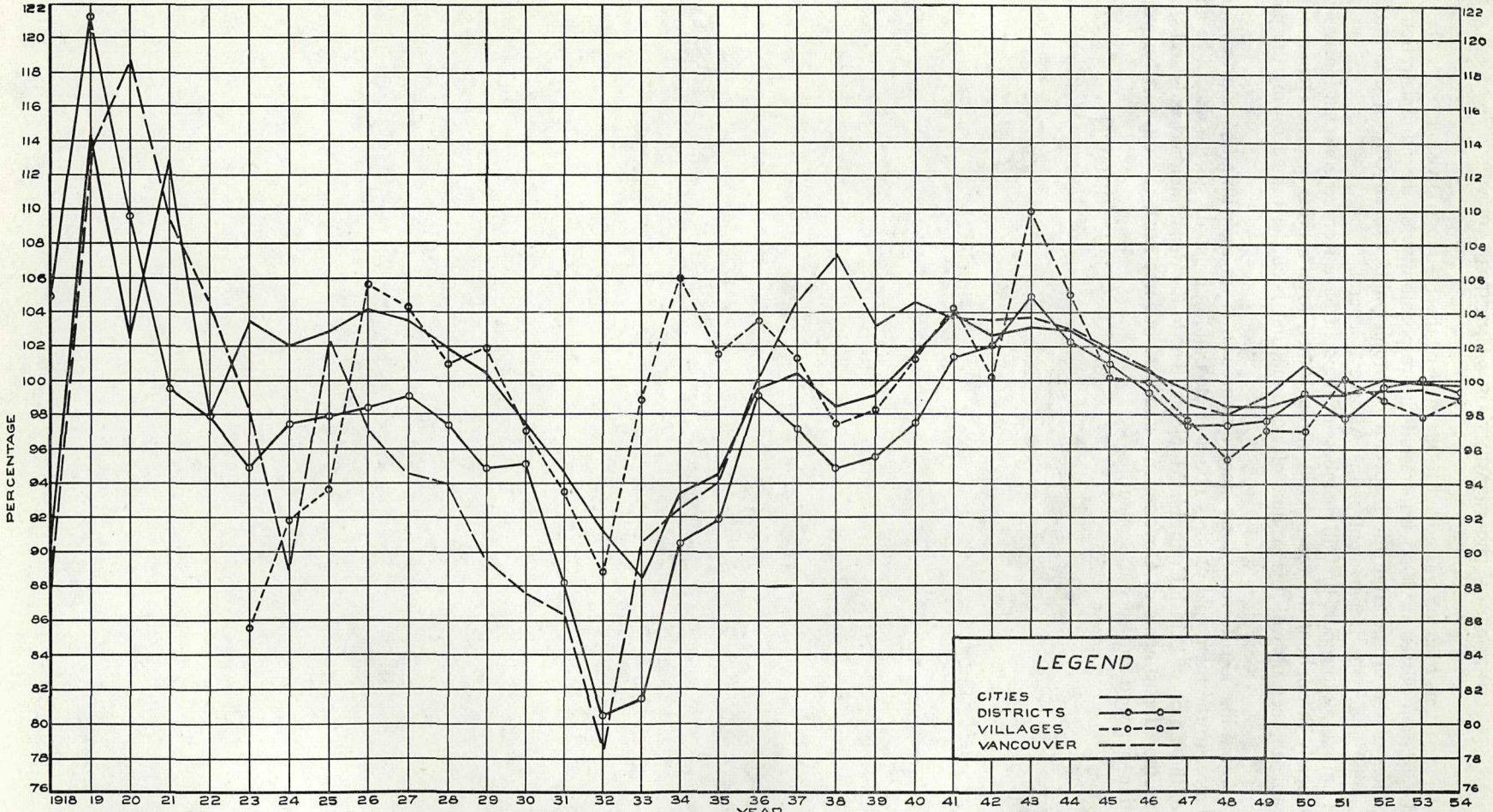

CHART #1 .TOTAL COLLECTIONS SHOWN AS A PERCENTAGE OF TAX LEVY.

REPORT OF THE SUPERVISOR OF MUNICIPALITIES

VICTORIA, B.C., January 24th, 1956.

J. E. Brown, Esq.,
Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs.

SIR,—This is the fourth Report published separately from Municipal Statistics. The only major change in the latter has been the inclusion of a centre-spread map showing the approximate location of the various cities, districts, and villages in the Province. Continued efforts have been made stressing the importance of the early publication of information relating to our municipalities. However, it is regretted that I must report that the printing of the 1954 Municipal Statistics was materially delayed, as others have been in the past, because of the lack of co-operation of a very small number of municipal officials. These latter did not submit returns until a very late date in the year. Consideration might be given toward setting a definite "cut-off" date for compilation of statistics. If this were done, the previous year's figures could be used for the delinquent municipalities, as in this way the over-all statistical comparison would be relatively unaffected. Only by submitting our material to the Queen's Printer by a certain date can we be assured of the early printing of the statistics.

Further work has been done toward the setting-up of standardized accounting records for small municipalities. At least one printing firm has seen fit to adopt, print, and stock those approved by the Department.

We acknowledge with thanks the assistance given by Mr. H. G. Craven, C.A., in the design of these forms. In addition, the various municipal officials who sent in suggestions and samples were of great help. Assessment and tax collection accounting forms, for small municipalities, were to be designed, but due to the various administrative changes still in process, it is felt advisable to finalize this matter at a later date.

In co-operation with the Department of Finance, it has been found possible to inaugurate a system of preparing the tax collector's roll and the tax notices for village municipalities. This is possible only where the village authorities are prepared to tax improvements on the same basis for municipal purposes as is the statutory requirement for school purposes. To date, over 90 per cent of the villages have signified their desire to avail themselves of this service.

With the continued co-operation between the Provincial and municipal authorities, it is hoped that administrative assistance to the smaller municipalities can be further improved in the future.

Due to the continued urban growth in the Province and the increasing complexity of local administration, our staff is finding it increasingly difficult to cope with the demands made upon the Department. A comparison of the following with corresponding summaries of previous years should prove of interest.

During 1955—

(1) One hundred and eighteen visits were made to municipalities. The number of municipalities actually visited was ninety-five, since a few received more than one visit.
(2) Two hundred and twenty-three Orders in Council were prepared and approved.
(3) Fifty-six certificates of approval for municipal loan by-laws were issued.
(4) Fifty-nine debenture issues were certified by the Inspector of Municipalities, while 8,994 debentures, with coupons attached, were examined, checked, sealed, and certified.
(5) Six hundred and eighty-three village by-laws were examined and filed.

No account is made of the greatly increased volume of correspondence and work as a result of the expanded consultive and advisory function of the Department. In a matter of approximately two years the number of village by-laws processed by the staff has

almost doubled. In 1953 there were 363 such by-laws finalized, whereas, as noted above, 1955 saw 683 certified and filed.

In my opinion the over-all administrative work load of the Department has increased by 25 per cent in the past eighteen months, and in addition, of course, the field work has been extended and increased. The above summary does not include staff representation at conferences, conventions, public meetings, or of special visits relating to audit and investigations.

I am happy to report that three members of the staff are enrolled in the municipal administration course.

It is recommended that consideration be given toward a plan for reciprocal temporary placement of personnel between the Department and selected municipalities on an in-training exchange basis. It is felt that both parties would benefit considerably. Any scheme must, however, recognize the economic aspects concerning personnel with families. Legislation may be required to legalize any such proposal.

Previous reports included brief analytical studies relating to municipal administration. It is proposed to continue these series, focusing our attention in this Report on aspects pertaining to the tax levy. Time has not permitted the preparation of as much data as desired for other studies.

Local government has more restricted sources of revenue compared to other governments, the main source being the income from the taxation of real property. It is because of this that borrowing power is related directly to the assessed value of taxable land and improvements. Any change, then, in the pattern of tax collection must be carefully examined. One might say that the revenue represented by the tax levy is the only criterion to be concerned about, but in considering the payment of debt charges the careful administrator is concerned with cash on hand.

Chart No. 1 shows the total tax collections related percentagewise to the annual tax levies of our municipalities from the years 1918 to 1954. It will be noted that there is a definite and positive relationship to the periods of rise and fall in the economy of our country. The chart shows quite extreme peaks and valleys which should probably be levelled out a little when relating it to the economic history. When things get difficult, people tend to omit a tax payment on the assumption conditions will improve next year. However, when taxes have gone well into arrears and the economic situation improves for the individual, he is inclined to concentrate on getting his property taxes paid up as quickly as possible.

A point worthy of consideration in viewing Chart No. 1 is the extreme differences in revenue represented over the years. Municipal borrowing power in this Province is related to the average values of the three preceding assessment rolls. With rising values of real estate and local assessing practice, this is a good feature. However, the latter aspect is now relatively unimportant since the passage of the "Assessment Equalization Act, 1953," as there is now, from a practical view-point, a central control of values. Using previous years as a basis, borrowing power can, and does, present a danger if real-property values decline. If, in addition, tax collections take a drop, the problem is accentuated. On a declining market under the present system, borrowing power is based on values much higher than subsequent values upon which the rates for debt charges can be imposed.

It has been observed that the three-year average of assessed values, generally speaking, in municipalities is equal to the second preceding year.

Consideration might be given to revert to the last revised assessment roll as the basis for contracting debt, now that we have central control of assessing. Another point is that the addition of the depreciated values of utilities to the assessed values is not necessarily realistic. The potential earning power of a utility, in so far as security of debt is concerned, would probably be the better basis.

The following table shows the percentage of the mill rate used for the retirement of debt in the years 1921, 1931, 1941, and 1951 for cities and districts. Under each year is shown the numbers of municipalities in the various percentage brackets. For example, in 1921 six cities out of thirty-four were spending over 50 per cent of the tax levy on debt charges, whereas in 1951 no city had such a high proportion of the mill rate used for this purpose. This table, when related to Chart No. 1, indicates that during periods of low collections, debt charges, being contractual, must affect expenditures Councils would normally use for other services. One might suggest that such comparison supports the view that actual municipal revenue is a most important consideration when judging the real borrowing capacity of a municipality.

PERCENTAGE OF TAX LEVY USED FOR DEBT CHARGES

Cities

Per Cent	Years			
	1921	1931	1941	1951
0–10	3	5	7	4
11–20	6	4	4	9
21–30	4	6	5	11
31–40	9	8	10	6
41–50	6	6	4	5
Over 50	6	5	4	----
Totals	34	34	34	35

Districts

0–10	12	14	17	7
11–20	3	5	3	12
21–30	5	2	3	6
31–40	4	2	1	2
41–50	1	3	2	1
Over 50	----	1	1	----
Totals	25	27	27	28

J. D. BAIRD,
Supervisor of Municipalities.

REPORT OF DIRECTOR, REGIONAL PLANNING DIVISION

VICTORIA, B.C., January 25th, 1956.

J. E. Brown, Esq.,
Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs.

SIR,—The activities of the Regional Planning Division may be divided broadly into two main phases—(1) Planning and (2) Regulated Areas.

1. PLANNING

Under this heading comes the assistance given to local communities and includes (*a*) general planning advice ranging from a complete and detailed report with accompanying drawings to advising by mail on particular planning problems; (*b*) consultation with municipal authorities on the preparation of their zoning by-laws and the drafting of zoning by-laws for the consideration of municipal authorities requesting this service; and (*c*) the preparing of physical development controls, which includes building, subdivision, bill-board, town planning commission, and other by-laws establishing future street-width lines, commonly known as building-line by-laws. These controls are originally directed to a particular application, but the occasional one is found suitable to be made into model by-law form to be available to any municipality on request to this Department. This phase of the work also involves, in some cases, visits for inspection and consultation, correspondence with the National Research Council, the preparation of drafts for discussion and their final amendment for adoption. In other cases the preparation of a short, easily administered draft by-law is all that is required.

Plans and draft by-laws as explained above were undertaken and provided to six cities, seven municipal districts, and twelve villages in 1955. To do this it was often necessary to make a complete planning survey, as in Creston and North Cowichan, to name only two, where a detailed study is made on the ground as well as research into records, such as the Canadian Census, and vital statistics. More than half the incorporated municipalities have now requested and obtained this service.

The Division is concerned in the promotion of planning orderly developments, and it is a pleasure to report that the Lower Mainland Planning Board covers an area including twenty-six municipalities which can look to it for good planning assistance. The Capital Region Planning Board likewise includes five municipalities with similar assistance.

Vancouver, West Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, and Burnaby have planning staffs in their municipal organization, and others have this arrangement under consideration, while still others engage private planning consultants. It is the small municipalities over and above these that the Division assists, and it has recently increased its staff to meet demands for this assistance.

A gratifying and recent development is that nine municipalities, having received major planning assistance in the past, continue to look to the Division for help in dealing with any planning questions that arise from time to time, and in fact regard it as a permanent planning consultant.

Requests for information and planning assistance from an increasing number of departments and department branches, as well as the Public Utilities Commission and the Pacific Great Eastern Railway, were answered during the year. These requests included research into population and population trends, the preparation of subdivision designs, and reports on townsites.

Direct planning of land use was carried out in connection with regulated areas and is dealt with under that heading.

It should be pointed out in connection with the planning services mentioned that in no case are plans or recommendations forced on to a municipality. Nothing in the nature

of a plan or by-law is recommended to a municipality except by request, and then it is left to the municipality to adopt or not, as it sees fit.

General

Among other matters dealt with have been the designing of master plans for three communities whereby proper integration of future unrelated subdivisions could be secured.

Various proposals prepared by the Lower Mainland Planning Board and the Capital Region Planning Board were forwarded to this Division for review and comments before being transmitted to the pertinent authorities. Co-operative action has been and continues to be taken with the Capital Region Planning Board and the Department of Highways in the matter of controlling developments along the Island Highway out of Victoria.

It should also be mentioned that as a result of the revision of the Municipal Acts now proceeding, the Regional Planning Division has been required to review all planning legislation to determine which should be incorporated into the new code and which should be made the subject of separate legislation.

Along the same lines, various studies and proposals made by the National Research Council connected with the National Building Code are referred to this office for comment and suggestions.

The work of the Division has been integrated much more closely into the Department in that it is consulted on boundaries, boundary extensions, and by-laws submitted by villages which deal with building, zoning, and other physical developments.

2. REGULATED AREAS

There is further evidence of the upsurge in settlement and development in the Province in the building statistics of the regulated areas, as shown in the following table:—

Regulated Area	Year Established	Value of Construction, 1955	Number of Residence Permits
Kelowna	1947	$565,959	50
Vernon	1947	140,590	13
Connaught Heights	1948	33,451	3
View Royal	1948	236,250	16
North Saanich	1948	309,350	31
Prince George District	1949	231,200	27
Nanaimo District	1949	1,814,922	105
Kamloops District	1950	1,146,700	87
Golden District	1952	183,825	10
Quesnel District	1952	271,955	20
Alberni	1953	7,000	1
Woodhaven District	1954	4,675	1
Dawson Creek District	1954	1,560,027	120
Campbell River	1955	8,000	1
Nakusp	1955	24,170	3
Thetis	1955	------	------
Totals for year 1955	------	$6,538,074	488

(Note.—Nakusp Regulated Area was established in 1955 but was not found satisfactory, and the regulations were rescinded. The two other areas of Thetis and Campbell River were established as shown, while the Dawson Creek District Regulated Area was reduced by the extension of village boundaries. The actual land area taken was only about one-third of the total, but it comprised almost all the area of building activity. Quesnel District Regulated Area was similarly decreased by having the area of most active development taken into the village. These two instances, Dawson Creek and Quesnel, demonstrated the value of having regulated areas surrounding organized urban areas. When the time came to extend the boundaries of the villages concerned, the area taken in conformed to a planned over-all scheme of proper land use.)

The 488 permits for residences covered the construction of 535 dwelling units, bringing the total of units constructed to date to 3,143.

The total value of construction to date done under permit and inspection is $29,060,196, of which over $6,000,000 is for 1955; that is, the building done in 1955 was almost twice the yearly average of the values of the preceding years.

This growth, as might be expected, has brought about changed needs for residential, commercial, and industrial accommodation. Therefore, requests for rezoning of various parts of the regulated areas are being received constantly. The Boards of Appeal in the respective areas review such applications, refusing some and passing others on for attention. Each one is then individually investigated, particularly with respect to its being compatible with the other developments that are taking place or with existing conditions. For example, the establishment of an outdoor theatre requires consideration of, and provision for, particular traffic demands. A race-track development involves a study of the provisions needed for drainage demands as well as normal and abnormal traffic movement and routing.

Also, comprehensive rezoning is needed to bring the land-use pattern up to to-day's needs, and this has been undertaken, with particular attention being given to industrial potentialities in Nanaimo and Vernon and to residential requirements in North Saanich, Kelowna, and Kamloops Regulated Areas.

The Provincial approving officer requires that all subdivision plans in regulated areas be checked and passed by our inspector before being submitted to him for approval. The ordinary routine kind require no more than a visit and personal inspection that can be made in the course of making building inspections. However, an occasional one demands a more careful scrutiny which sometimes results in the head office being asked for instructions before it can be returned to the approving officer's agent.

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