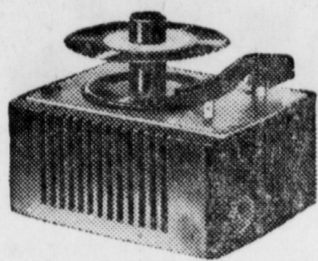


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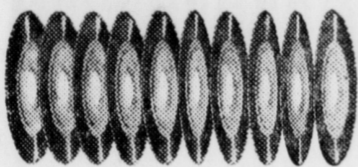
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State Real Estate Tax Law Affects All Property Owners

Harrisburg, Pa.—In 59 of the Pennsylvania's 67 counties, those having a population of 250,000 or less, all property owners are going to have their assessments changed by the new state assessment system. This program has a deadline of Jan. 1, 1957, but, to date, several counties, including Armstrong, Bradford, Crawford, Fayette, Lebanon and Montour are well under way in establishing this new system.

Enacted into law in its present form in 1951 by the State Legislature it has required several years of planning on the part of taxing officials. Forty-three counties are in some stage of progress and 16 more are "talking about it" according to the Pennsylvania Local Government Conference.

This voluntary Conference, which represents the six tax taking governmental agencies, namely, cities, boroughs, school districts, first class townships, and counties assumed among its responsibilities the implementing of this state-wide program. Only in Philadelphia, Allegheny and the six third-class counties is the new real estate assessment program not applicable. Companion programs with similar intent are in effect in these counties.

A series of explanatory articles, written by the Local Government Conference, are made available to this newspaper.

The 1951 session of the State Legislature by amending the 1943 Tax Assessment Law provided county government officials in fourth to eighth class counties with the means of equalizing their tax assessments and thus provide a fair measure of taxation for all property owners. The Legislature upon the urging of the Pennsylvania Local Government Commission realized the need for the mod-

ernization of assessment practices in the Commonwealth and set-about in conjunction with the local Government Commission on a remedial course of action which led eventually to the enactment of the "New Real Estate Assessment Law" of that session.

Back in 1943 the members of the Legislature realized the chaos in the Real Estate Assessment System in Pennsylvania. This realization was not a sudden awakening to a problem. It was realized and had been discussed for many years prior, but in 1943 the legislature first attempted to do something about it.

In the 1943 Assessment Law, the Legislature permitted the Counties to "Adopt rules and regulations not inconsistent with this Act which shall govern the Chief Assessor, his assistant and local Assessors in the making of assessments. Such rules may include, but not by way of limitation, the use of tax maps, land value maps, other maps and materials, assessors' manuals, property record cards indicating the nature of improvements, and the application of unit values to the information shown in such maps and records."

This being merely a "may provision," the Commissioners of Pennsylvania counties, as a whole, did not take advantage of the particular section in the Law. The Legislature did not compel the Counties under the 1943 Act to do this. Obviously the reason that the Counties did not proceed under this law was due to the large expenditure involved in installing this type of system. Only seven counties of the 59 affected under the 1943 Act so far have installed the gain as a result of studies of system.

In 1947, the Legislature, a-

gain as a result of the studies of several years, realized that, inequalities and the chaos that permeated the real estate assessment system in the several counties, made manifestly unfair the distribution of the state school subsidies to the school districts. The Legislature realized it must have accurate figures on which to base the school subsidies, and in 1947 created the State Tax Equalization Board whose function was to determine the actual value of real estate within a given county, and the percentage that its assessments represented.

With the creating of the Tax Equalization Board, it became necessary and mandatory for the Commissioners of each county to report to the Board a record of transfers of real estate within the county, together with the value of the documentary stamps attached to the deed which gave the Tax Equalization Board the approximate sale value, and along side of this, the Commissioners had to place the present assessed value of the property.

When these statistics were compiled, for the first time in the history of Pennsylvania, it was demonstrated graphically how chaotic the real estate assessment really was. Some counties were assessing as low as 15 percent, some as high as 55 percent, but the problem did not stop there. With the release of these statistics by the Tax Equalities discovered at the State level were even more pronounced within the districts in the county. They found that the imbalance, or lack of uniformity, of assessments were even more pronounced in county political sub-divisions. Some of the districts were assessing as low as 15% and as high as 68% of real value.

Obviously, with the disclosure of such conditions corrective measures were necessary, and the Local Government Commission began its research that led to the 1951 Legislature's remedial action.

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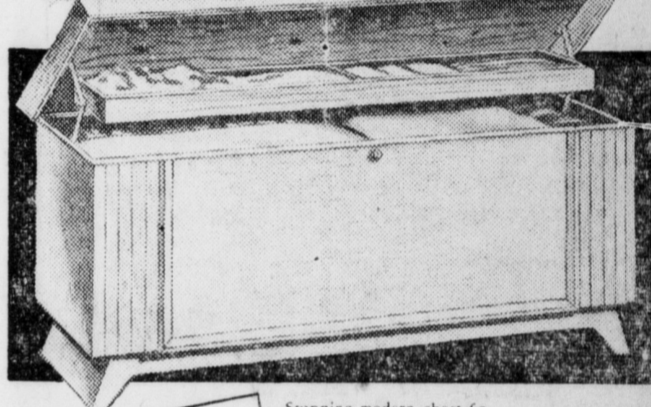
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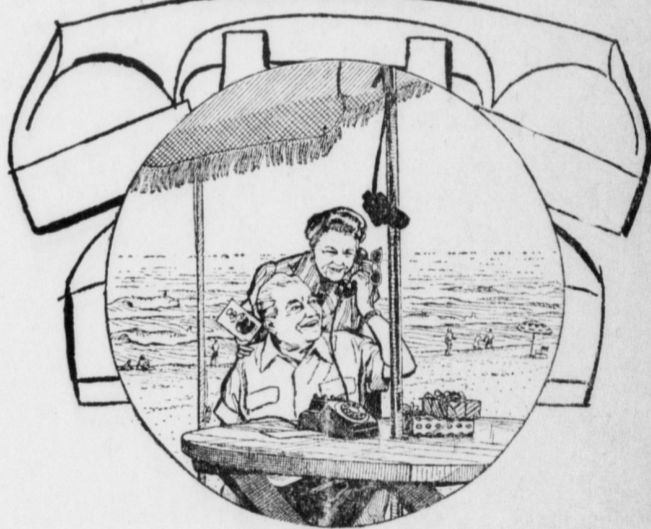
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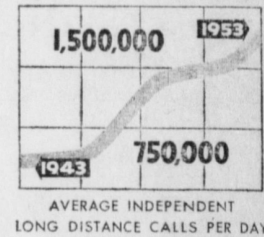
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THE FARM QUESTION BOX

by BILL GIVENS
KYW Farm Director

From Mr. J. P. Barto, Pa. — What can I do with clay soil to keep it from baking?
Ans. — The best plan is to mix plenty of organic matter, which includes well rotted leaves, manure, and peat moss, into the soil.

From — Mrs. J. S. Tamaqua, Pa. — How can I make my poinsettia plant bloom next year?
Ans. — Your poinsettia plant can bloom next season and here is the procedure to follow. Wait until the present bloom comes off, and then put the plant in a dark, cool, place until about June 1st. At that time prune the plant back level with the ground and then report it. Now, your poinsettia is ready to begin growing and blooming again.

From — Mr. D. G. Secane, Pa. — How can I get rid of a field of turnips?
Ans. — The most practical method would be to plow the turnips under in the Spring for fertilizer. Also sheep could be folded there. The turnips could also be lifted from the ground and fed to the livestock.

From — Mrs. D. M. Pottsville, Pa. — Could you tell me whether or not rotted sawdust is of any value when added to soil?
Ans. If the rotted sawdust you add to your soil is not supplemented with extra nitrogen it will do more harm than good. The nitrogen deficiency can be overcome by adding sulphate of ammonia along with the sawdust.

Hear Bill Givens Daily on the "KYW Farm Hour" 5:30-6:30 A.M.

HIGHWAY ZOO



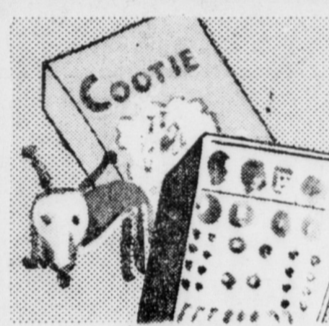
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