

PETITION.

To the Hon. Speaker and Legislature of British Columbia, in Parliament assembled :

HON. SIR AND GENTLEMEN :—

The petition of the undersigned residents, ratepayers and property owners of the Municipality of Langley, respectfully sheweth :—

The Municipality of Langley is one of the most important agricultural districts of the Province, the quality of the soil is good, and when brought under cultivation is fertile and productive.

That the lands have been settled by an industrious and progressive class of people, who, with very few exceptions, have executed substantial and permanent improvements thereon ; the very extensive natural resources of the Municipality were being rapidly developed until the last few years.

And whereas the bright promise of rapid development of a few years ago has been blighted, the lands cleared in many instances assuming their former wild aspect, the Municipality having in some portions become practically depopulated, it being most difficult to maintain the schools and roads in an efficient manner ;

And whereas this condition of affairs is largely the result of the action of certain mortgage and loan companies. The settlers, like other business men, could not carry on their improvements without the aid of capital, and having every confidence in the future of the country, they borrowed money on the security of their holdings, the result being largely on account of the extortionate and usurious rates of interest charged on the loans, the settlers are froze out and the mortgage and loan companies are to all intents and purposes masters of the situation, and development to a very large extent has ceased ;

And whereas the Municipal Council, in common with other Municipalities under authority of the Act made and provided, has been in the habit of assessing a wild land tax of two and one-half per cent. on the assessed valuation of the land ;

And whereas by withholding large sums of money due (in arrears), much needed on our roads, by threats of entering law suits, and other coercive measures against the Municipality, the said mortgage and loan companies (on the grounds of illegal assessment) are endeavoring to still further cripple the resources of the Municipality, to the great loss of the Corporation at large.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing statement of fact, your petitioners pray that action may be taken by your Honourable House to amend the Municipality Act, so that all rural Municipalities may be authorised and empowered to assess a wild land tax on all wild and unimproved lands, not to exceed five per cent. on the assessed valuation of the land, thus enabling them to reduce the rate on improved lands without loss of revenue, and at the same time remove the ground of objection raised by the mortgage and loan companies.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

A. F. McCRIMMON,
JNO. W. BERRY,
F. W. MARSH,
WILLIAM MURRAY,
and 127 others.