

I?m the tax man

by BRIAN LOCKHART

?If you drive a car, I'll tax the street,

If you try to sit, I'll tax your seat,

If you get too cold, I'll tax the heat,

If you take a walk, I'll tax your feet.?

In case you don't recognize those lyrics, they are from the song Taxman, written by George Harrison and released on the Beatles album '?Revolver' in 1966.

At the time, the Beatles were making a lot of money, and most of it was disappearing in taxes thanks to the progressive tax system in the U.K. at the time.

I've never understood why people who make more money must pay more of a percentage of their money in taxes. Why is a person penalized for being successful?

The thought process by the government is, if you make more, you can afford to pay more of a percentage of your earnings.

If there is going to be an income tax, it should be a fair, across-the-board rate.

Several years ago, a poverty group in Toronto staged a protest in the Forest Hill neighbourhood. For some reason, they decided to protest against affluent people who had a lot of money and blame them for others not having as much.

The protest pretty much fell flat, because it made no sense to blame others for being successful.

One homeowner, who wasn't too happy about having protesters in front of his house blaming him for their situation, had a good response.

He stated, that he and his neighbours, were wealthy because they worked hard for 30 years building a business, and also employed a lot of people who relied on them to feed their families.

Taxes are necessary to keep our society functioning and pay for things like roads, parks, infrastructure, defence, and government programs.

However, there comes a point where you are just crushing your citizens under the tax burden.

You are taxed before you even collect your pay cheque when your basic income is reduced by taxes before the money is even in your bank account. And that's just the start of it.

Everything you do, just to live, is taxed in some way or another.

Buy a car to get to work? You'll pay 13 percent extra on that vehicle, then pay taxes on the required insurance, tax on auto repairs to keep it running, and a huge amount of tax just to put gas in the tank ? and you haven't even driven to work yet.

You're taxed on the home you live in, the insurance you pay to protect it, and all necessary repairs to keep a roof over your head. You are even taxed on a lot of food items. Why is there a tax on a hamburger just because someone else prepared it for you? You still have to eat regardless of where the food comes from. Then the business that sold the hamburger is taxed on the few dollars they made for putting a slice of tomato and some lettuce on that burger.

Then there are the hidden taxes you probably don't even know about.

During race season, I enjoy going to Woodbine Race Track to watch the thoroughbreds compete. I don't bet a lot, but I know enough about it to come out even or a few bucks ahead every week.

Every time a bet is placed at a racetrack, the government gets a piece of the action through the provincial Race Track Tax. Every bet has a percentage deducted by the race track and paid in tax. You're being taxed on something that may or may not happen in your favour, and produces no real product. You're being taxed for having some fun.

Then there are the huge taxes on things like liquor, beer, and tobacco, called 'sin-taxes.' That's why a bottle of Jack Daniels is so expensive. It seems your rate of punishment is determined by how much you enjoy something.

Canada is a wealthy nation with much of the government's income coming directly from its residents.

For the most part, those taxes are spent responsibly and there are enough checks and balances to make sure those dollars are well spent.

However, it is still the responsibility of all of us to be aware of government spending and how all of our money is used.

When we are paying as much tax as we are, it is every citizens' responsibility to be aware of where that money goes.