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PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF TAXATION

By G. ARMITAGE-SMITH, M.A., D.Lit.

LATE PRINCIPAL OF BIRKBECK COLLEGE, LONDON

WITH ADDITIONAL CHAPTER, ETC.

BY

R. G. HAWTREY

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PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THE object of this work is to present in a concise and simple form an account of the British system of taxation and the principles on which it is based, together with some of the leading historical facts in its evolution. Taxation is a complex subject, and one on which there is no perfect consensus of opinion. Though in practice it compels the attention of every one in some degree, yet its principles are by no means universally understood; familiarity with the concrete facts does not impart principles of method, while the trouble of acquiring them is a barrier to many. One reason perhaps is that the subject has for the most part been discussed in general treatises on economics, or, when separately treated, has been handled with much elaboration and detail, so that few except economic students have followed up its intricacies and subtleties; the average citizen with little leisure has small acquaintance with the more learned and exhaustive analyses.

There is room, and indeed need, for a brief and logical statement of the bases of taxation and an exposition of the incidence of the tax system of this country. No topic has occupied more of public attention in recent years, nor is any likely to exercise a greater influence

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PREFACE

on the immediate future of the nation in its application. It is desirable in the highest degree that all citizens should be able to think out the economic consequences of taxation for themselves; to this end some assistance, analytic and historic, is necessary. To satisfy the need in a succinct form is the aim of this book; it offers no new theories, but seeks to aid clear perception in a difficult and somewhat controversial field of enquiry. The task necessarily implies considerable condensation. It is hoped that the work will be found helpful, and that it may induce many readers to prosecute the enquiry in the larger classical writings on taxation, a list of which is supplied in the short bibliography at the end of the volume.

G. A.-S.

PREFACE TO THE TENTH EDITION

THIS edition, the first since the death of Dr Armitage-Smith, reproduces his text in Chapters I-IX exactly as he left it in the previous edition, that of 1924, except that half a dozen oversights and inaccuracies have been corrected.

As successive editions of the book were called for, Dr Armitage-Smith had added appendices summarising year by year the changes in taxation. When the War came the changes in taxation were so exceptional that he judged it better not to deal with them in detail "until a position of greater stability has

PREFACE

been attained." Unhappily he never had the opportunity to add to the book his own considered account of the war-time and post-war developments.

The appendices have now been dispensed with, and in order to supplement the descriptive side of the book, and to link it up with the situation at the present day, a new chapter has been added, supplying a very brief narrative of the principal fiscal measures taken in this country from 1914 to 1929. It also contains a short note on the subject of French taxation in the same period.

R. G. HAWTREY.

October 1929.

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