

JACOB HIMMELSTEIN
SYCAMORE COURT APTS
MERION PA 19066

"Better Assessments"

A **S**PLENDID illustrated 8" x 11" reprint of 31 pages from the May 1970 Nation's Cities Magazine is being offered by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 50 East 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, at 25¢ a copy or five for \$1.

This second big Nation's Cities reprint, "Better Assessments for Better Cities," reflects honest confessions from assessors, mayors, governors, city managers and representatives of various planning institutes and foundations. Perry Prentice was the moderator of the roundtable co-sponsored by Time, Life, Fortune, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation and seven other organizations.

The captions and quotes give dramatic clues as to the contents. Assessments necessary for property tax improvement are getting better but they have a long way to go. Good assessment administration should cost cities less than the amount now lost from doing the job too cheaply. Assessors

are aware of what's wrong, but almost nobody else realizes or seems to care. Anyone who doubts that assessments are affected by local politics should read page 30. Panelists speaking unofficially, told some of the things that would have to be done to correct present procedures.

An example of better assessment, besides Southfield, Michigan, is the Rosslyn area of Virginia, across the Key Bridge from Washington D.C., where a complete reassessment has made it too costly for landowners to continue to underuse their land. The city has been rebuilt and is still "going strong."

A Users' (computer) Manual developed by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, with pointers on classification, ratios, map making, etc., is being made available to universities and other non-commercial research centers for use in making assessment studies. One of the first groups to take advantage of this was in Kent County, Ohio (see pages 7-8).