

# Citizen Control of the Citizen's Business

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## Three Questions Will Be Answered By The Citizens of Toronto

on

JANUARY 1st, 1923.

1. Whom will they select to spend their taxes, amounting, say, to \$24,000,000, together with millions of dollars likely to be borrowed on their joint credit during 1923?
2. Shall the Hydro Radial Agreement (providing for radial entrance), as passed by the City Council Sept. 6th, 1922, be validated?
3. Shall the issuance of bonds be authorized amounting to \$263,000, to produce the sum of \$255,000 for the construction of a Stadium to be dedicated to the memory of Toronto athletes who fell in the Great War?

Do you care who spends your money and uses your credit? If so, you will go to the polls on January 1st, 1923.

**1. WHO WILL SPEND THE CITIZENS' TAX MONEY, ETC., IN 1923? ON JANUARY 1ST THOSE ELECTORS WHO GO TO THE POLLS WILL CHOOSE:—**

A Mayor;  
Four Controllors;  
Twenty-four Aldermen, and  
Sixteen members of the Board of Education.

If the right men and women are not elected, that will be the main responsibility of the electors who might have voted and did not. Those who vote will at least discharge one duty of citizenship. The "slacker" elector is worse than useless from the political standpoint. The multiplication of his kind is the greatest menace of our municipal institutions.

The total number of votes which might be cast for aldermen is about 560,000. Seventy-five per cent. of this total is 420,000. Is a vote of this magnitude too much to expect? Why? At the last election only 109,670 votes were actually cast for aldermen out of a possible total of 547,000. The percentage of voting efficiency was about 20%, although the percentage of voters who voted for one or two aldermen, together with those who voted for the possible three, was greater than this.

There are, of course, cases where elections by acclamation are due rewards for meritorious public services. But are most of the elections by acclamation in Toronto due to satisfaction or to indolence? Do numerous acclamations indicate civic health or are they symptomatic of civic anaemia?

**2. SHALL THE HYDRO RADIAL AGREEMENT (PROVIDING FOR RADIAL ENTRANCE) AS OF SEPTEMBER, 1922, BE VALIDATED BY THE ELECTORS ENTITLED TO VOTE ON MONEY BY-LAWS?**

The history of the radial movement is or should be known to all citizens who read the daily press. The pros and cons of whether the 1922 Agreement is the same or different from the 1916 Agreement are or should be known to all those who have read both sides of the question in the press, or who have attended the public meetings where both sides have been presented.

The essential problem before the ratepayers now is neither one of history nor of comparative anatomy. The electors are called upon to decide, in voting on the validation of the 1922 Agreement, some questions vital to the future of the community. Among them are the following:—

(a) Shall the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, as trustees for the municipality in the operation of radial lines, be furnished with a free right-of-way for the railway and power lines of that Commission over any property of the Corporation of the City of Toronto, or the Harbor Commission, from the Humber on the West to Morley Avenue on the East?

The 1916 Agreement, authorized by the people at the polls, provided for a free right-of-way over Corporation property from the Humber to the foot of Yonge Street. The right-of-way from the foot of Yonge Street to Morley Avenue was not mentioned in the 1916 Agreement, as it was not necessary for the proposed Toronto-Port Credit-London line.

The question is, therefore, should this right-of-way be provided for until the time comes to take definite action with regard to an eastern radial entrance? Those in favor say that it is not safe to leave the matter open and that if the right-of-way is not needed, the City's property will revert to it. Those against say that provision for an eastern entrance should not appear in a bill dealing with the Toronto-Port Credit line and that the City should not obligate itself further than is necessary at this time.

(b) Should the City grant to the Hydro-Radial Power Commission of Ontario the right to construct a subway or subways for electric railway purposes up Bay Street to a point at or near the City Hall?

Those opposed to the Agreement in its present form say that in view of the omission of mention of this subway in the 1916 Agreement, of the admitted unlikelihood of the subway being constructed for some years, of the probability that the City's own Transportation Commission may need to build subways of its own within 20 years, and of the City's prolonged fight for the control of its streets, this provision should be left in abeyance until a later date when the City's policy and financial position will be clearer.

Those in favor of immediate decision say that the Commission will be handicapped in its plans if it does not know from the beginning.

Those opposed reply that when the time comes the City will, as it has always done in the past, grant whatever is necessary for the proper operation of its publicly-owned enterprises. They say further that later on the City will know better just what co-operative arrangements should be made as to the use and construction of subways by the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario. They say also that the \$4,240,196 of bonds deposited by the City does not cover the cost of the subway, and that the City should not be asked to vote on the subway until the estimated costs are submitted. To the reply that the construction of the subway cannot be proceeded with until the City Council has passed the necessary by-law, they answer that such large bond issues should be validated by the ratepayers direct.

(c) Should the Commission be allowed to collect local fares within the City limits?

The people in 1916 voted for an Agreement which authorized the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario to regulate and fix the fares and rates of toll on all their lines. The people also authorized the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario to utilize the routes and property of its railway for all purposes from which it is possible to obtain a profit. No distinction was made in either case between the Commission's lines inside the City and those outside the City.

While, therefore, the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario possibly may not within its territory inside the limits of the City, go into the semi-rapid transit business, there appears to be nothing to prevent its doing so and charging whatever fares it may please.

The opponents of the Agreement in its present form say that its provisions give to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario a monopoly of rapid and semi-rapid transit within the waterfront area and that as a result of the fares lost to the Toronto Transportation Commission, the possible volume of business in proportion to overhead costs will be so limited as to make it impossible for the Transportation

Commission to cut down fares and may even result in increases over the present fares. They urge also that if the same policy is to be adopted with regard to existing publicly-owned Northern and Northwestern radials and a possible Eastern radial, the result might make it financially impossible for the Toronto Transportation Commission to operate the City lines.

The advocates of the Agreement reply that the revenue from local fares within the areas concerned would not be all profit and that the loss would be so infinitesimal as to have no effect on the amount of the fares collected by the Toronto Transportation Commission. They say further that it is too late now to discuss this question and that to deprive the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario of the right of collecting purely city fares would be a breach of faith with the other municipalities within which local fares are to be collected. It is also claimed that there is ample opportunity in the waterfront area for the Toronto Transportation Commission to lay down its surface transit lines. The ability of such lines to compete is emphatically denied by the opponents of the Agreement in its present form. It is further claimed that the radials will bring in such large numbers of people that the local traffic will be greatly increased, to which the reply is made that this will be the case no matter what the terms of radial entrance to the City.

It has been urged that as the Toronto Transportation Commission is to operate without a profit there would be no advantage to it in operating on the waterfront. To this the reply is made by opponents of the Agreement in its present form that, if this be true, there would be no advantage to the Toronto Transportation Commission in operating on Yonge Street, Bloor Street or Avenue Road or in fact on any of the local lines. They state further that the Toronto Transportation Commission must make a profit on some parts of its business in order to offset necessary losses in others and that the heavy overhead charges can only be met by a large volume of business.

(d) Should the Toronto Transportation Commission build and control the radial entrances including the subway up Bay Street, giving ample running rights to the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, or, should the latter Commission build and control the entrances and give ample running rights to the Toronto Transportation Commission?

The opponents of the Agreement in its present form say, that as the City has spent much time, energy and treasure during the last quarter of a century, to secure control of electric transportation within its limits, it cannot afford to jeopardize its position or its investments by allowing a Commission, over whose actions or appointment it has no control, to own and operate lines within the City, a function which should be reserved for the Toronto Transportation Commission.

The supporters of the Agreement reply that the operation of an inter-municipal radial would be impossible if each municipality insisted on building and controlling the radial lines within its borders, and that if the stand is persisted in, the whole project will be irrevocably wrecked. They state, moreover, that the assumption of such a position involves a breach of faith. Toronto, they say, might be willing to lose all or part of the money already expended in obtaining right-of-way, etc., but it has no right to cause a loss to the other contracting municipalities.

They hold, further, that the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario is not an outside authority in any real sense, and that the record of the Commission in supplying cheap light and power may be confidently expected to be duplicated in the rapid transit field.

The opponents of the Agreement in its present form say that there is no breach of faith because the present agreement is not the one on which the partnership was formed in 1916, but one, they claim, prejudicial to Toronto's interests, which has not been submitted to the other municipal partners. They say there is no reason why the radials could not operate successfully if they were guaranteed running rights over the lines within the City, and point to cities where similar arrangements are successful. To this it is answered that in such cases radials are not owned co-operatively by several municipalities, but by a company which controls absolutely its right-of-way and equipment outside of the City limits, and is not dependent on the co-operation of outside municipalities. To this the answer is made that the terms of co-operative relations between the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, Toronto and the other municipalities, necessary for satisfactory operation, could easily be reached by negotiation.

(e) Will delay in ratification of the Agreement destroy all hope of obtaining publicly-owned Hydro-radials in this generation?

The advocates of the measure say that the present Agreement is the product of much thought and expert advice and that it would be quite impossible to secure again unanimity of opinion in a field where there are so many conflicting interests.

The opponents of the Agreement in its present form state that everyone wants the best arrangement possible for the citizens of Toronto and the other municipalities concerned, and that, this being the case, it is possible that an arrangement more desirable than any previously advanced might be arrived at if all parties got together to discuss the matter in the light of additional facts not available in 1915. They state also that it is a libel on the character of the public men and citizens of Toronto and the other municipalities either to say that if the Agreement in its present form is not validated at once, Hydro-radials will be killed as far as this generation is concerned, on account of the impossibility of getting the contracting parties together again, or to intimate that they are men of the sort which can be influenced by the argument so frequently used in selling stocks that "you must buy now or never."

At least 95,000 votes may be cast by the electors who are legally qualified to vote on the radial entrance by-law. In one sense the question will be settled by those who turn out and register their opinion. In another sense, it may be settled by those who refuse or neglect to go to the polls. Are 75,000 votes on this question too many to expect? Why?

### 3. SHALL THE ELECTORS ENTITLED TO VOTE ON MONEY BY-LAWS AUTHORIZE THE ISSUE OF DEBENTURES TO THE AMOUNT OF \$263,000 TO PRODUCE THE SUM OF \$255,000 TO ERECT A STADIUM FOR AMATEUR ATHLETICS?

The location suggested is on City land near the southern end of Strachan Avenue, between that Avenue and Bathurst Street and south of the road to Stanley Barracks, although there seems to be nothing binding to prevent the adoption of a different site. The stadium will provide seating for about 12,000. This capacity may later be increased to 25,000.

The Bureau is informed that there is a general understanding that the City will receive a good percentage of the gross receipts to apply on the debt charges, and that if no other stadia are erected, the resulting revenue would be sufficient to meet the debt charges.

Amateur sport, the Bureau is informed, has long been handicapped by insufficient stadium accommodation for events at which entrance fees may be charged, so that the general public may participate in the support of amateur sport.

It would also seem, if the policy of memorials to different groups of those who fell in the Great War is to be adopted, that a stadium would be a fitting memorial for soldier athletes.

Those in favor of the erection of a municipal stadium at this time say that the percentage of the gross receipts which will be guaranteed to the City (30% has been mentioned in this connection), will more than take care of the debt charges and that the City, therefore, will not be placed under any financial burden.

Those opposed say that while at the beginning the percentage might be placed at 30%, there is nothing to prevent future City Councils from reducing this percentage to a point where it would not carry debt charges. They state further that if the proposed baseball stadium, to seat 30,000, is erected by private interests, at or near the foot of Bathurst Street, the competition resulting might seriously affect the earning capacity of the City Stadium. They suggest that, through the good offices of the City, co-operative arrangements might be made with the manager of the proposed baseball stadium whereby facilities might be provided for many of the main amateur games.

Those in favor of the by-law reply that they do not believe that there is anything in the rumor of the erection of a baseball stadium. They believe, moreover, that even if there were a privately-controlled baseball stadium the needs of amateur sport would not be met, in that it would have to take whatever time was left after professional sport had been satisfied.

Those against the immediate erection of a stadium for amateur sports say that the City should not undertake at this time the capital outlay necessary and point to the recommendation of the Finance Commissioner given to Council on May 10th, 1922, that the erection of a stadium be indefinitely postponed. They state, moreover, that the \$255,000 proposed is only a beginning and that a large sum will have to be added to this when the seating capacity is increased from 12,000 to 25,000.

To this the advocates of the by-law reply that if the debt charges can be carried on a seating capacity of 12,000, certainly the additional debt charges caused by enlargement can be carried by the revenue to be received from the added seating capacity.

To this the opponents of the by-law reply that it is the part of wisdom to wait until it is determined what private enterprise will do, particularly in view of the practical impossibility of drawing up a binding agreement to protect the City. They also hold that the erection of a "Stadium dedicated to the memory of the Toronto athletes who fell in the Great War" should be postponed until a general policy with regard to war memorials has been adopted.