

Citizen Control of the Citizen's Business

TORONTO'S CITIZENS CAN CONTROL TORONTO'S AFFAIRS ONLY THROUGH FREQUENT, PROMPT, ACCURATE AND PERTINENT INFORMATION WITH REGARD TO TORONTO'S BUSINESS.

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IN THE LAST THREE DECADES

the history of cities has been marked by two well defined tendencies:

GROWTH OF POPULATION;
GROWTH OF EXPENDITURE FASTER
THAN POPULATION.

The table below illustrates the two tendencies referred to

Year	Population		Per Capita Tax	
	Minneapolis	Toronto	Minneapolis	Toronto
1895	184,045	174,309	15.93	13.26
1900	202,718	192,907	13.26	12.52
1905	253,520	226,365	16.02	12.46
1910	301,408	325,302	19.38	14.30
1914	335,727	470,151	20.91	20.98
1915	343,882	463,705	23.05	28.00
1916	352,037	460,526	23.13	28.40
1917	360,192	473,829	29.08	31.44
1918	368,348	489,681	27.79	37.46
1919	376,504	499,278	38.83	35.37
1920	380,582	527,812	42.62	37.97
1921	392,815	522,666	42.86	44.15
1922	400,970	529,083	44.00	45.37

The figures for the two cities are, of course, not strictly comparable, although the elements in the expenditure are fairly similar. It is to be noted that the per capita expenditure of both cities remained in the "teens" until 1914, that both passed the \$20 mark at about the same time; that Toronto passed the \$30 mark two years earlier than Minneapolis; that Minneapolis passed the \$40 mark one year earlier than Toronto but that Toronto is again in the lead by a small margin.

A similar increase in per capita expenditures is noticeable even in some cities which have not had a uniformly expanding population. In fact a scale of civic living having once been established, a decreasing population naturally tends to increase the per capita costs although the reverse does not seem to be true.

NOTE: Unlike Toronto, the Minneapolis levy for each year is for expenditure in the succeeding year. The 1894 figures for Minneapolis are: pop. 180,247, p.c. tax \$11.75. The 1923 figures for Toronto are: pop. 535,000, p.c. tax, \$45.48.

The following table for Winnipeg shows a gradual increase in expenditure remarkably similar to that in the other cities. The three cities started with similar per capitas and closed 1922 with almost identical per capitas.

WINNIPEG		
Year	Population	Per Capita
1895	37,124	12.06
1900	42,534	13.46
1905	79,975	15.46
1910	132,720	14.52
1914	203,255	22.62
1915	212,889	20.78
1916	201,981	23.33
1917	182,848	25.44
1918	183,595	32.71
1919	183,378	35.07
1920	192,571	34.20
1921	196,947	43.83
1922	199,129	44.67

It will be noted that Winnipeg's population for 1922 was not far different from that of Toronto or Minneapolis in 1895.

The causes of the phenomenal growth of cities are fairly well known.

The causes of the still faster growth of civic expenditure are less evident. Perhaps the main causes are the following:

Increased cost of everything cities have to buy, corresponding to the increased cost of living.

Increase in the number of services carried on by cities in response to popular demand.

The failure to develop improved methods of administrative and financial control, to keep pace with the increasing complexity of civic functions and increasing size of civic budgets.

Tendencies similar to the first two have operated in private business. But under the pressure of competition and economic necessity private business has been compelled, in order to survive, to keep pace more nearly with the demands for improved organization and more rigid control of costs.

It may be claimed by some that the total increase is due to increased costs of things and services which must be purchased by a city, the other tendencies to increase being offset by improved methods of administration. Even if this were so, the result would still be serious, as it can hardly be claimed that at least in the last five years, the incomes of taxpayers have increased as fast as the demands on their incomes. The trouble is that once a city has established a scale of civic expenditures, it is extremely difficult to lower the scale. As a large part of civic taxation constitutes an unproductive overhead on business and industry from which taxpayers draw their incomes, is it not the part of wisdom, during this trying period to

- I. Concentrate on efficient administration?
- II. Devise more effective means for control of the expenditures of civic departments and outside boards?
- III. Limit civic expenditures as far as possible to the satisfaction of proved needs?
- IV. Call a halt, at least temporarily until the country has got its feet, to the taking on of any additional functions by civic bodies?