

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.

ISSUED BY THE

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OPEN LETTER

To the Citizens and Taxpayers of Toronto

The City Budget for 1924 provided for an expenditure of about

\$15,400,000

on salaries and wages, including those of the Civic Abattoir and the Municipal Water Works but not including those of municipal utilities operating under Commissions. This sum is almost 50% of the total expenditure out of general taxation and revenues other than taxation, but affecting taxation. It represents over \$28 per resident—man, woman, infant—and over \$140 per average family of five.

Omitting education, which is not under the administrative control of the City Council, the salary and wage bill of the City is about \$9,000,000, representing about \$16 per capita and \$80 per average family of five.

Size of salary and wage bill indicates the desirability of a thorough examination.

The size of the salary and wage bill is no proof that the City is spending too much on salaries and wages. This can be determined only by examination of the facts. It does prove the necessity of such examination not only occasionally but continuously, not only by each department from the standpoint of the department, but by some authority from the standpoint of the city government as a whole.

Surely out of \$15,400,000 or even \$9,000,000 something could be saved.

Does it not seem reasonable that, if such an examination were made, it might be found that some saving could be effected without decreasing the existing standards of pay and, not only without decreasing the services rendered, but possibly with an increase and improvement in these services. \$15,400,000 or even \$9,000,000 is a lot of money. Would it not be almost miraculous if, in private business, it were found that it was quite impossible to effect a saving on such a bill for personal services without lowering pay or reducing service? Yet, apparently, we are asked to believe that the City's system of employing, promoting, transferring and retiring its employees is so perfect that an attempt to improve it would be waste effort.

Why an Inquiry into Civic Purchasing.

During 1924 the City of Toronto proposes to spend out of taxation and revenue other than taxation, but affecting taxation, about

\$5,250,000

on heat, light and power, on supplies other than heat, light and power and on various contractual services. This sum is almost 17% of the total expenditure from funds above mentioned and represents an expenditure of over \$9.50 per person or \$47 per average family of five. In addition the City spends a varying amount from year to year on capital account out of borrowed funds, either through contracts or in the purchase of supplies and material (as well as of

personal services) by its various departments. The civic authorities have appointed a committee of three to inquire into the methods of purchasing. This is well and marks a step in advance. Is it not equally vital to have made a thorough study of the civic service?

A study of purchasing might well include through co-operation, the purchasing of all the outside Boards and Commissions; but, even in such a case, the problem of purchasing control can hardly exceed in importance that of employing, promoting, transferring and retiring civic employees.

Having taken the first step, why not take this second step, at least equally important, although perhaps less expedient from the standpoint of municipal politics?

If there is any possibility of the establishment of a civic pension fund in the near future, would it not seem that a thorough study beforehand of the civic services is absolutely indispensable?

Have you any convictions in this respect? If so, have you yet stated your opinion to any of the City Fathers?

Respectfully submitted,

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH.

John Macdonald, President

Horace L. Brittain, Managing Director

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Studying the facts;

Analyzing the facts;

Reporting the facts in clear and simple language;

Making constructive suggestions based on the facts.

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