

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

189 CHURCH STREET



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OPEN LETTER

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TO THE

Citizens and Taxpayers of Toronto

re the danger of patronage
in the civic service

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of Bureau subscribers

OPEN LETTER

At a recent meeting of the Board of Control the following resolution was passed:

Proposal to require advance information of vacancies and promotions.

"That heads of departments, exclusive of the police department, are hereby instructed to forward to the Board of Control, for information, a list of any promotions or expected vacancies in their departments, two weeks in advance of these contemplated changes or additions, with a full description of change or vacancy. This rule to be adhered to from April 10th, 1925."

Resolution said to be inspired by failure to influence appointments.

This resolution, in the judgment of the Bureau, is not merely the thin edge of the wedge, but establishes at once all the necessary machinery for a fully developed system of patronage in our civic service. It has been suggested that the introduction of the resolution resulted from the inability of certain Controllers to secure positions for worthy applicants who apply for them. It may be taken for granted that a man who votes right from the standpoint of a Controller who supports such a resolution, will rarely receive a black mark therefor in determining his worthiness. The taxpayers of this city can hardly afford to tolerate a system which will infallibly tend to the establishment of such a definition of worthiness in the civic service. Again why should candidates apply to Controllers for positions? That is just the thing which the existing procedure was planned to avoid. The Controllers' duty is to pass on the work of the heads of departments, who, if they are as competent as they should be, are in a much better position to judge of worthiness for promotion and appointment than the Board of Control and, moreover, have much more to lose if those promoted and appointed prove to be failures in the civic service.

If heads of departments are not competent to nominate for appointment to vacancies the remedy is dismissal not a patronage system.

If the Board believes that any heads of departments are unsound guides, it is its duty to remove them in the interests of the taxpayers, as an incompetent department head is an expensive luxury, hardly less so than an incompetent Controller, Alderman or School Trustee.

Information wanted: but why advance information?

It has also been stated that this resolution only asks for information and that information can do no harm. It is to be presumed that no department head now recommends an appointment without giving the Board all necessary information. But why always "two weeks in advance", unless to give Board members an opportunity to bring the necessary influence to bear to secure the appointment of "worthy" candidates? Are the people of this city willing to run the risk of having the civic service used to compass the election of candidates for the Board of Control or City Council? Is it realized what such a system would cost in additional taxation? What would be the cost of establishing a pension fund for a civic service built up on a patronage basis?

Patronage certain to undermine morale in all departments affected.

While undoubtedly improvements might be made in the present civic service, the Bureau believes that the present system which has been built up by years of effort is certain to suffer in loss of morale and in destruction of efficiency by the introduction of political methods of appointment and promotion. By the way, why was the police department protected by law from the ill-effects of such a resolution? It would seem to the average citizen that patronage in other departments, while perhaps not so dangerous as it would be in the police department, is quite as bad in principle and quite as apt to be expensive to the taxpayers.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACDONALD,
President.

HORACE L. BRITTAIN,
Managing Director.

The Bureau understands that the City Council has requested the Board of Control to reconsider its action and the Bureau presumes that this will be done and that the step proposed in the Board's resolution will not be taken. It is encouraging to note that not all members of the Board of Control voted in favour of the resolution in the first place.

The only guarantee of continued good government, or of advance in government, is the continued vigilance of all citizens.