

# 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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*White Paper No. 96*

*February 10th, 1926*

## THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Story No. 3

### *Advantages Claimed for the Council-Manager Form of Municipal Government*

This series is intended to give information. It is not a brief for or against the Council-Manager form of Municipal Government. It is published in response to repeated requests for definite information.



## SOME ADVANTAGES CLAIMED FOR THE COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT WITH A SMALL COUNCIL ELECTED AT LARGE FOR OVERLAPPING TERMS\*

1. It provides more complete democratic control, in that responsibility is more definitely located and less easily evaded. The City Council is responsible for deciding policies, passing the budget, appointing the City Manager and seeing that its policies are carried out by the City Manager within the appropriations fixed by the City Council. It is difficult for a small City Council, with definite responsibilities, and elected at large successfully to "pass the buck" to one another or to some other authority and and it is impossible for the City Manager to plead an effective alibi to Council for failure, or to unload responsibility on a subordinate. In policy forming and financial control, the members of the City Council are the people. In execution, the City Manager—appointed and dismissed by Council—is the man. A complete line of responsibility and popular control is provided, thus:



2. It makes it easier to secure good candidates for Council as members of Council do not have to devote so much time to council meetings because:

- (a) A great many administrative details, formerly requiring action from Council, are now taken care of by the City's specialists in administration under regulations framed by Council.
- (b) Members of Council can get the necessary information for decisions as to policy more readily than under a decentralized system as they can and do hold one man responsible for getting all the information in co-ordinated form.
- (c) As experience has shown with great clearness that it is impossible to secure competent *administrators* by election,

\* Not all Council-Manager Cities have small Councils or have entirely abolished wards, though this is the general rule.

## SOME ADVANTAGES CLAIMED—Continued

- many men, who under the Mayor-Council system are unwilling to act owing to a sense of unfitness for *administration* of a municipal corporation, under the Council-Manager system which does not attempt to elect *administrators* are willing to act, as the Council then becomes a Board of Directors or Board of Management with the functions of which they are quite familiar in private affairs, and which they know will enable them to render good service without making it necessary for them to withdraw from their private businesses or burdened by any purely administrative details of City business.
3. It makes it easier for Council to recognize good or bad administrative service, to locate the responsibility for failure and to take the necessary action in prompt dismissal.
  4. It prevents the exercise of authority by any alderman or committee of aldermen except through voting in Council.
  5. It operates for continuity of policy by providing for greater continuity of tenure of office in Council.
  6. It provides for stability in administration by centralizing responsibility for getting administrative results.
  7. It minimizes overlapping and facilitates co-operation by providing a general manager.
  8. It makes budget making easier and more effective as the Council has the advice of one man who has a comprehensive view of all departments.
  9. It substitutes loyalty to the service for loyalty to the department and tends to destroy the interdepartmental competition for funds.
  10. It tends to the establishment of a true profession of municipal business administrator which should be one of the most important in the country.
  11. It provides automatically for standardizing accounting, reporting and budget making and for centralizing purchasing.
  12. It stimulates citizen interest, as it provides citizens automatically with condensed city-wide information; it presents but few candidates at a time, so that citizens have a better chance to learn something of them and it offers a form of organization so simple that the average citizen can understand it without taking a supplementary course in civics.

### Numbers in the Council-Manager Series

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1. *Its essential features.*
2. *Some other important but non-essential features.*
3. *Advantages claimed for the Council-Manager Plan.*
4. *Arguments advanced against the Council-Manager Plan.*
5. *The history and growth of the Council-Manager System.*
6. *Not every city is ready for the Council-Manager System.*