

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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THE COUNCIL-MANAGER PLAN OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Story No. 6

*Not all Cities are Ready
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 Plan of Municipal Government.
It is published in response to repeated
requests for definite information.

These kinds of City are not ready for the Council-Manager System of Municipal Government.

1. The City which is entirely satisfied with its present form of municipal government and the results obtained therefrom.
2. The City whose citizens, although not entirely satisfied with present conditions, are not determined or even willing to invest the necessary time and energy to secure the change.
3. The City whose citizens are willing to take the necessary steps to secure the change but are unwilling once the change is made to continue their interest and guarantee a fair trial of the new system.

To proceed with inaugurating such a thorough-going change as that involved in passing from the complicated Mayor-Board of Control-Council System to the comparatively direct Council-Manager System, would be extremely unwise in any city falling within the above three classes. But this does not mean that nothing can be done under existing conditions to improve the quality of civic administration.

Steps in advance which might be taken without greatly changing the present system:

1. The size of Council might be reduced, thus promoting a more effective and speedy delimitation of policies.
2. Members of Council might be elected for overlapping terms of two or three years in order to promote continuity of policy.
3. Wards might be abolished or reduced in number, so as to make it easier to settle city-wide questions on the basis of city-wide needs.

4. The large spending operating departments might be combined under one commissioner, thus reducing the number of administrative departments, promoting the coordination of departmental work and bringing centralized purchasing and accounting with the resulting savings, somewhat nearer.
5. The standing committee system might be abolished having as the only committees the Board of Control, the committee of the whole and the Board of Health, thus eliminating delays and unnecessary discussions.
6. An administrative board, made up of the chief department heads, could be constituted which would act:
 - (a) As a bureau of personnel control, under the regulations of the Board of Control and Council, the appointment, promotion, demotion, discharge and retirement of the civic employment after the reorganization of the civic service.
 - (b) As a budget committee to advise the Board of Control as to the annual civic estimates and their preparation on a standardized basis.
 - (c) As a purchasing board to control the method of purchasing supplies, equipment, material and services authorized by the Board of Control and City Council.

Some of these changes could be brought about by city by-laws. Others would require amendments to provincial legislation. All could be secured if the citizens and taxpayers were as a whole heartily in favor of them. Why not make a start?

The Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research is an independent, non-partisan citizen organization, for the promotion of informed citizenship, and through it, of efficient municipal government. Its methods are:

1. The ascertaining of the facts regarding municipal government.
2. The study and analysis of these facts.
3. The publication of these facts in clear, concise form, with constructive suggestions based on the facts.

In twelve years the Bureau has made no criticism of any undesirable condition without offering constructive suggestions as to means of removing or minimizing the condition.

The Bureau is conducted in the interests of all citizens and taxpayers of the City of Toronto. Its work is not spectacular, but persistent, and cannot fail to exercise a wholesome influence on municipal affairs.

The Bureau receives no municipal grant, but is supported by the contributions of public-spirited citizens. The Board of the Bureau welcomes the cooperation of an even larger number of citizens and taxpayers in supporting the work.