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Some Vagaries of the Ward System in Toronto

The Ward System is supposed to facilitate the equitable representation in the City Council of District Communities and to give them proportional control of Municipal Affairs.

Does a resident of one part of Toronto count as much as a resident of any other part in representation in the City Council? No. The population of the wards in 1926 were as follows:

Ward	Population 1926	Representation by Aldermen	Per cent. of whole Population	Per cent. of total representation by Aldermen
1	69,102	3	12.4	12.5
2	75,963	3	13.7	12.5
3	53,532	3	9.6	12.5
4	63,097	3	11.3	12.5
5	79,769	3	14.3	12.5
6	106,535	3	19.2	12.5
7	41,785	3	7.5	12.5
8	66,908	3	12.0	12.5
Total	556,691	24	100.	100.

This means that the following numbers of inhabitants in each ward have equivalent value for representation purposes:

Ward 1	165	Ward 5	191
Ward 2	182	Ward 6	255
Ward 3	128	Ward 7	100
Ward 4	151	Ward 8	160

Is there any shifting in these equivalent values? Yes. Some of the Wards are decreasing in population or increasing at slower rates than others. Others are increasing at a comparatively rapid rate. The results for the last four years are shown in the table below.

Numbers of Inhabitants in each Ward with equivalent value for representative purposes in the City Council (Aldermen only).

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1923	180	183	131	176	220	288	100	148
1924	172	180	128	164	203	271	100	153
1925	170	179	127	158	197	263	100	159
1926	165	182	128	151	191	255	100	160

This table shows that Wards 1, 4, 5 and 6 are very slowly increasing in equivalent value in representation and that Ward 8 is slowly losing weight in representation.

Do the potential votes in each Ward have equal weight in selecting the Aldermen in City Council? No.

The following table shows the facts regarding the relative weight of the Wards so far as the possible votes are concerned:

Ward	Possible Votes, January 1, 1926	Representation by Aldermen	Per cent. of Total Possible Votes	Per cent. of representation by Aldermen
1	33,651	3	12.1	12.5
2	35,140	3	12.6	12.5
3	40,512	3	14.5	12.5
4	27,404	3	9.8	12.5
5	35,457	3	12.7	12.5
6	51,517	3	18.5	12.5
7	20,496	3	7.4	12.5
8	34,402	3	12.4	12.5
Total	278,579	24	100.	100.

The numbers of possible votes for each Ward which have equivalent value in selecting Aldermen are as follows:

Ward 1	164	Ward 5	173
Ward 2	171	Ward 6	251
Ward 3	198	Ward 7	100
Ward 4	134	Ward 8	168

Do the actual votes in each Ward have equivalent weight in selecting Aldermen? No.

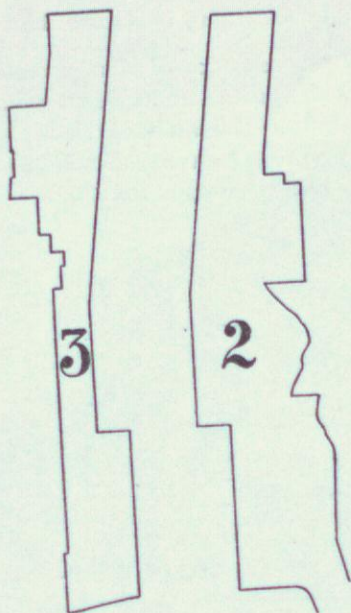
The number of actual votes which have equivalent weight in selecting Aldermen is as follows:

Ward 1	154	Ward 5	141
Ward 2	129	Ward 6	226
Ward 3	118	Ward 7	100
Ward 4	93	Ward 8	162

The voting weight of actual votes in the various Wards does not correspond to that of possible votes, owing to the fact that some of the Wards with a comparatively large possible vote have a comparatively small actual vote.

Do the Wards correspond to actual local communities? No.

Below are outlines of Wards 2 and 3:

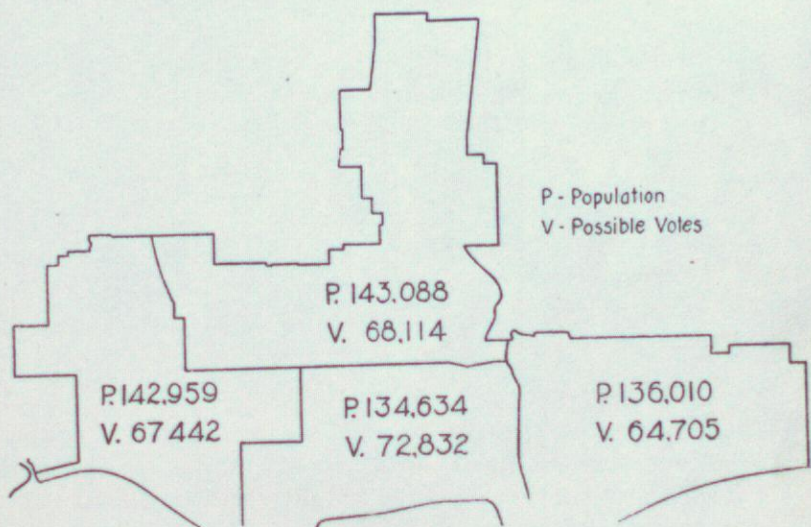


It is largely a matter of chance whether the different natural centres in each Ward are represented in Council or not. In view of the artificial nature of existing Ward boundaries the fact that there are at least as great differences between different parts of the same Ward as between the different Wards, the fact that if the voting strength is to be kept fairly equal boundaries would need to be frequently changed, and the further fact that natural districts within Wards are represented or unrepresented in Council according to chance, would it be better to increase the number of Wards (and perhaps the size of Council), thus giving further weight to local interests in civic policies, or would it be better to abolish Wards or reduce their number greatly, thus giving the needs of the City as a whole greater weight in the decision of policies affecting the taxation of the citizens as a whole?

Could anyone look at this map and still maintain that there is sufficient community of interest between the northern and southern parts of these Wards as to make them natural Ward divisions? Are not the northern parts of these Wards more nearly allied to one another than the northern parts of the southern parts of each Ward? Could anyone imagine a condition in the same city where there would be less community of interest than between different parts of either Ward 2 or Ward 3? There are other Wards in the City where possibly there is no more natural community of interest than between the northern and southern parts of Wards 2 and 3.

Some who might not be willing to go the whole way and abolish Wards, through fear of the effects of a possible selection of all members of Council from a small area, might be willing to reduce the number of Wards.

In order to give a concrete idea of what a reduction in the number of Wards might accomplish without unduly decreasing the representation of natural sub-communities, the Bureau has divided the city into four possible Wards as follows, using the population of 1926 and the possible number of votes for Aldermen in 1925.* The divisional figures are estimated.



It will be seen that by this plan the City is divided into four Wards as follows:

	(Estimated)	
Ward 1—Eastern Ward	Pop. 136,010	Votes 64,705
Ward 2—The Central Business Ward....	Pop. 134,634	Votes 72,832
Ward 3—Northern Ward	Pop. 143,088	Votes 68,114
Ward 4—Western Ward	Pop. 142,959	Votes 67,442

There are certain obvious advantages of this division:

1. The population of the Wards are fairly equivalent.
2. The voting powers of the Wards are fairly equivalent.
3. Ward boundaries could be readily shifted when changes in population made it imperative without necessitating the creation of additional Wards.

*As the 1925 allocation had already been worked out in detail and as the total increase in voting strength in 1926 was so small and the relative changes in one year would be so slight, it was felt that no useful purpose would be served in making a re-analysis for 1926.

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4. Three of the Wards are prevailingly residential and the other prevailingly business.
5. If not more than 3 Aldermen were elected from each Ward this would cut down the whole City Council to 17, and if only 2 from each Ward the whole Council would be reduced to 13.
6. If the terms of Aldermen were lengthened and made overlapping, and if the term of Controller were lengthened to two years and made overlapping, and if the Mayor were elected each year, the number of representatives to be elected each year would be reduced to seven. Each voter would only have to choose 4 candidates for municipal honours each year instead of 8 as at present.
7. The decrease in the total number of candidates would enable the electors to get better acquainted with them and their platforms.
8. The larger Wards would require that candidates should be known to a larger number of people.
9. Purely local issues would not bulk so large in municipal campaigns.

It is held by many that the Ward System for Aldermen tends to carry the ward psychology through the whole city government and to strengthen greatly the natural tendency toward sectionalism. Many also believe that the Ward System tends to pile up local improvement and other debt.