

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

21 KING STREET EAST



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IT IS OFTEN FORGOTTEN

by electors and taxpayers that the expenditures of the Board of Education and Separate School Board are responsible for about 35% of general taxation of 1926, and that \$8,783,866.26 of the total gross tax levy of \$25,069,980.45 goes to the support of the Public Schools, Separate Schools, Collegiate Institutes and High Schools, Technical Schools and Commercial High Schools. Of this total \$8,133,335.92 is the gross levy on Public School supporters, or 32.4% of the total gross levy, and \$650,530.24 is the gross levy on Separate School supporters, or 2.6% of the gross total. As far as the City Council is concerned this taxation is uncontrollable. But the greater part of it is controllable by the Board of Education, which is the body that the Public School supporters and taxpayers must look to for results in public, elementary and secondary education.

When civic election day comes around, therefore, Public School supporters and taxpayers should not forget the importance of choosing between candidates for the Board of Education, which is, in effect, a second municipal council operating in a field restricted to public education. Separate School supporters occupy a similar relation to candidates for the Separate School Board. Financially, education is of tremendous importance to the citizens and taxpayers. In services rendered, it is of the first importance.

A City's Schools a Gauge of the City.

It is generally recognized that a good index of the quality of a community is provided by its expenditure on Education. Because more difficult to measure, there is not an equally general recognition of the importance of the quality of education. The Toronto Board of Education is the Toronto body which can be held responsible by the electors of the city for the greater part of the current expenditure on education and the quality of the product. If this be so, there is nothing more important in local affairs than the selection of the men and women who constitute the Board of Managers of our great Public and Secondary schools.

On January 1st, 1927, the qualified voters will elect 16 men and women to the Board of Education who will

1. Supervise the expenditure on revenue account of over \$8,400,000, including some \$1,700,000 debt and collection charges.
2. Administer a school plant worth over \$25,000,000.
3. Supervise through their officials nearly 2,700 principals and teachers, besides other employees.
4. Administer the education of over 100,000* registered students and pupils of whom 90,000* are in the day schools.

What Qualifications Should These Men and Women Have for Membership in the Board of Education?

It would be hard to enumerate all; but the Bureau believes that among the qualifications should be the following:

1. A genuine interest in the education of children and youth as a first consideration.
2. A genuine respect for the right of parents who turn over to their care their most prized possessions.
3. A genuine respect for the rights of taxpayers who turn over their money to the Board with the expectation that good value will be received by the children, the parents and the community.
4. A respectable capacity for affairs as evidenced in previous public service or in their private activities.
5. A thorough belief in the value of good citizenship as evidenced by the quality of their own citizenship in the past.

A candidate's denominational, fraternal or political affiliations have no bearing on his or her capacity to render good service on the Board of Education. In fact, such considerations in the minds of electors may obscure the essential qualifications of candidates.

*Registration as of Dec. 31st, 1925.

Some Facts That Every Citizen Should Know Concerning Board of Education Administration in Toronto.

1. In sharp contrast to the conditions of 1913 and previously the Board has a modern system of accounting, including cost accounts—entirely absent in 1913—with information for the Board, Business Administrator and Educational Officials in a form valuable for administrative purposes. The annual financial statement should be scanned by every citizen and taxpayer. These and the Board's Annual Report should be readily accessible in every public library in the city.
2. The machinery of business administration has been greatly simplified.
3. Facts available indicate that actual administrative performance has progressed in efficiency at least to a considerable extent, along with the increase in efficiency of accounting and organization.
4. The gross per pupil costs in the day classes of each of the four types of school under the Board, i.e., the Public Schools, Collegiate Institutes, Technical Schools and Commercial High Schools, was actually somewhat lower in 1925 than in 1920, and in the case of Commercial High Schools than in 1918, and seem to have reached a stable new level.
5. The cost of these schools per person in Toronto has increased 84% since 1918, but less than 12% since 1920, and was actually less in 1925 than in 1924.
6. The growth in recent years of special types of education—such as Standard Auxiliary Classes, teaching of crippled children by visiting teachers, special hard-of-hearing classes and special sight-saving classes—is bringing education within measurable reach of the whole child constituency of Toronto which should be served by the Board of Education.
7. The attention given the school progress of normal children has increased greatly in 10 years. In 1914 the annual report of the Board gave over many pages to the condition of the desks, and only incidental references were made to the problems connected with the retardation or rapid progress, the non-promotion or promotion of the children occupying the seats. In the 1924 report the facts are quite the reverse. The progress of the children is treated exhaustively. The following passages from the 1924 report of the Chief Inspector are illuminating:

"These tables do not deal with the character and the quality of the work done in the schools, though they may suggest questions as to entire suitability. But, next in importance, they reveal the rate of progress of pupils, classes and schools in the work. If it is important that there should be a strict accounting of the spending of the ratepayers' money it seems no less important that there should be a strict accounting of the spending of their children's time. Yet there is ample provision for an audit of money-thrift but no provision for an audit of time-thrift, which is a large part of the be-all and the end-all of money-thrift in the education of the young.

"Within six years the percentage of pupils in the upper half of the schools, as a whole, has increased from 38 per cent. to 47 per cent. of the total enrolment. This represents a gain of almost 24 per cent. on the conditions of 1918. Apparently the average pupil is now no longer in the third and fourth forms than he should be. Neither is there retardation, to any appreciable extent, in the second forms as the course now stands."

No parent who has children in Public, Elementary or Secondary schools should neglect the opportunity to scan the Boards annual report, which is full of human interest. The 1914 report weighed on the scales is about one-third more than the 1924 report, but educationally it weighed many times less.

Some Questions Which Might be Asked Candidates for the Board
of Education by Citizens and Taxpayers.

1. Have you read the report of the Board of Education for 1924? If not, why not?
2. Have you read the report for 1925? If not, why not?
3. Have you read the annual financial statements for 1924 and 1925? If not, why not?
4. Is the Board of Education too large or not large enough?
5. Should its members be elected for one or for two-year terms?
6. Would a decrease in the size of the Board lead to a diminution of the cost of automobile service for Board members, and if not, how would you undertake to control this expense?
7. Does the present organization of the Board promote dispatch in business?
8. All the business side of the Board's work being centralized under one professional business administrator, why should not the educational side of the Board's work be centralized under one professional educational administrator?
9. Do you believe that all persons engaged to work about the schools should be employed and controlled by the Board directly?
10. What suggestions have you for the improvement of the system, not simply for expenditures on the schools in your ward?

In Memoriam

MR. JOHN MACDONALD, President of the Bureau of Municipal Research since its foundation, March 1st, 1914, Died on December 15th, 1926. His colleagues on the Council and the members of the staff mourn his loss