

# 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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## In June, 1926

A Commission of three citizens was appointed by the Civic Government "to investigate the inequalities in the different Civic Departments (if any) and report their findings to the Council forthwith." By July 14th, 1926, the Commission reported that it had organized, and it has been hard at work ever since. Notwithstanding the difficulties involved, the Commission was able to complete its report by February 15th, 1927, along with a proposed classification of positions.

Every citizen organization should have at least one copy of this report, and the public libraries should be supplied with sufficient copies so that the general public can have access to it.

## IF USED

strengthened where necessary, and made the basis of a definite, co-ordinated and comprehensive system of employing, promoting and retiring civic employees, this report will be one of the most valuable documents ever presented to the City Council.

If pigeon-holed or debated until the material is partly out of date and the first interest is dissipated, not only will the Commission have largely wasted its time and the taxpayers their money, but the last state of the Civic Service will be worse than the first. The following paragraph from its letter of transmittal contains the only italics used in the report, thus showing the vital importance attached by the Commission to the setting up of some permanent machinery for "personnel control":—

"We are submitting our report in the full confidence that we have been fair in our conclusions, certainly that we have been unbiased, that we have been uninfluenced, and have full confidence that it will receive careful consideration. We believe that it will be of value, but we would point out that, almost without exception, any information given us by letter from any of the cities we have been in touch with has been coupled with the suggestion that a report, such as ours, if not made the ground work for a permanent Classification, so that it may be kept up-to-date, will, in a very short time, have its value reduced to a minimum. Changes are taking place constantly and, indeed, changes have taken place since the date under which our forms were returned from the departments. We would strongly urge that not only will our report receive present consideration as pointing out the inequalities and need of adjustments, but that some means will be devised of keeping up a permanent Classification and, as time goes on, to improve upon our initial attempt at the work."

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### SOME "HIGH LIGHTS" IN THE REPORT.

"We are strongly of the opinion that the principal cause underlying inequalities in the Service is the lack of a Pension Fund, or of any Superannuation Plan."

"We have prepared figures showing that there were, as at August 1st last, 233 employees from age 65 to 83 on the payroll with a total salary of \$454,875.00. It will be noted that the average salary for these positions is \$1,952.00, or \$300.00 higher than the average for all the employees in the Service. We find that there are 169 employees at present between the ages of 60 and 65, so that each year will see the number of those over age 65 being added to."

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"We would point out that, in our opinion, the City is, at the present time, really paying pensions, but in a form which is not readily apparent. If we would argue that these incumbents are only able to give 50 per cent. of efficiency, then half the salary mentioned above, or about \$227,000.00, is really being paid as pensions."

"It is obvious that with so many positions, with comparatively high salaries attached, the channels of promotion must be, to a considerable extent, blocked off throughout all the Service. If we argue that only 50 per cent. of efficiency can be given by incumbents at ages over 65, we would have to admit that, if all these men retired on a pension, that their positions could be filled by half the number of men."

"It would not be a reasonable argument that the institution of a Pension Fund, towards which the City would contribute a considerable initial amount, would, therefore, be an immediate burden on the taxpayers to that extent. True, on the one hand, there would be a heavy payment to start the Pension Fund on which those retiring on pension would immediately begin to draw, but, on the other hand, there would be an immediate and a considerable relief to the payroll, and even if the retirement, of say 100 men, to the Pension Fund would mean the promotion of other men all along the line to fill the vacancies created, and that these promotions would call for advance in salary, there is no doubt that the net result of the above would be not only a considerably reduced payroll, but a much improved spirit of service throughout all the departments."

"We have received information from the various Departments showing that there are now, approximately, 104 employees receiving an annual gratuity, or allowance, to the extent of \$52,083.34. These employees would fall in on regular pension if such a fund were established."

"We believe that another cause leading to inequalities has been the entrance to the Service of adults at the minimum wage and, we would strongly recommend that consideration be given to the question of transfers from one department to another, and that, instead of a new employee entering the Service in a Department, the position should be filled by an employee in another department, who would thus receive an opportunity for advancement."

"Of course, a number of new appointments must be made from time to time where qualifications of a special nature are required but, all things being equal, we think, the advancement in salary and in the importance of the position should go to the employee already in the Service rather than that he should be held back in his advancement and a new position created."

"Our proposed grading and the salary range will enable the junior entering the Service to be assured, with proper conduct and training, of reaching the City's minimum salary rate by the time he comes to the stage of early manhood."

### A SUGGESTION.

The Bureau believes that with slight additions the City Council has already available in the Civic Service, the machinery for the administration of a permanent classification. As suggested repeatedly by the Bureau, an "advisory Administrative Board" made up of the heads of departments, sitting regularly, with a permanent secretary, could be given the authority usually given to a Civil Service Commission, without entailing the expense or some other disadvantages which frequently attach to such a Commission, and would put in charge of "personnel control" those primarily interested in departmental efficiency and in the best position to give immediate effect to their decisions.

It is true that the large number of department heads, under the present organization, would militate against the most complete success of such an arrangement. This difficulty could be met completely by combining departments and thus reducing the number of department heads. It could be met partially by appointing a committee of five or six heads of the largest employing departments to take charge of the classification. The former is the thoroughgoing method and would produce other results which should appeal strongly to the taxpayers. If considerations of municipal politics or special interests make this impossible, the latter suggestion is surely worth consideration.

*Procrastination is the Thief of Taxes.*