

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. 153

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Can the Organization
of the
Municipal Government of Toronto
be Improved?

The organization of every municipal corporation is made up of three parts:

1. Those who select the legislative body.
2. The legislative body.
3. The administrative organization set up by the legislative body.

1. Can the electoral organization be improved?

A municipal corporation is set up to render services to all the citizens which the individual citizens cannot produce better for themselves. The electoral organization's chief function is to select a Board of Directors which will manage these services so as to

- (a) Determine policies on the basis of city wide needs.
- (b) Supervise these policies so as to produce the greatest possible service at the least possible cost.

QUERIES

If the reader agrees with the above statement of fact, is he satisfied that the electoral organization cannot be improved?

Does the ward system tend to operate so as to bring about the election of a Council which naturally would decide policies on the basis of the city as a whole?

Are the wards of Toronto so arranged as to secure the election of a real representative body, in view, for example, of the bizarre shapes of wards 2 and 3 and the fact that about 45,000 people are represented by 3 aldermen in one ward, and about 110,000 by 3 aldermen in another ward?

In the event that the people of Toronto cannot be induced to consent to the election of aldermen at large, could four large wards or electoral districts be devised which would have a more logical basis than the present divisions and would tend to offset purely local issues while preventing the election of the whole Council from one area?

2. Can the organization of the legislative body be improved?

A legislative body to be effective must be organized:

- (a) For adequate discussion of public questions.
- (b) For prompt and definite action on public questions.
- (c) So that the people who pay the bills may locate responsibility.
- (d) So as to secure reasonable continuity of policy.

QUERIES

Does the Council and present organization offer an effective medium for discussion of public questions?

Is it so organized as to secure prompt and definite action?

Can the people find out, without great expense, who is responsible for anything?

Would the abolition or simplification of the standing committee system eliminate "passing the buck" and expedite public business?

Would a smaller Council tend to reduce the amount of conversation, etc.

Would longer terms increase the period of useful service for each alderman?

Would longer terms tend to make members of Council more independent in their decisions?

Would overlapping terms contribute to producing continuity of policy?

Would a reorganization of Council stimulate effective interest in real City Planning as distinguished from the discussion of special individual and local plans?

3. Can the administrative organization be improved?

The simpler the organization and the fewer the departments, the less liability to overlapping, the less the overhead in equipment, staff salaries, etc., and the greater the co-operation, for example, in accounting and purchasing. As the Bureau's White Paper No. 145 showed in its report, the City has an extremely complicated organization which makes co-ordination almost impossible and co-operation difficult.

QUERIES

Would the cutting down of the number of independent civic departments from 15 to 10, as suggested in the Bureau's White Paper No. 151, tend to increase co-operation, facilitate co-ordination and reduce cost of operation and promote City Planning.

Would centralized purchasing for the city and all "outside" Boards and Commissions be to the advantage of the taxpayer and the users of community services?

Could the educational administration of the Board of Education be more completely centralized with advantage to the public and the children in the schools?

It is said that a municipality is not a business, but that it is more than a business. Insofar as it is a business, it should be conducted as a business, and, insofar as it is more than a business, the adoption of business principles in administration can do nothing but good. Toronto as a corporation is not suffering appreciably from being too business like.