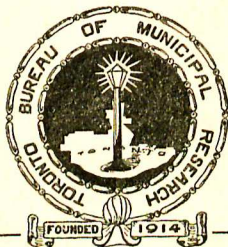


Citizen Control of the Citizen's Business

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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Toronto, May 26th, 1930.

OPEN LETTER

To the Citizens and Taxpayers of Toronto:

Re Appointments of Commissioners for the Management of Municipally-owned Public Utilities.

As stockholders in the Municipal Corporation of Toronto your investments total over \$205,000,000.

Of this amount, more than \$65,000,000 is invested in the Toronto Hydro-Electric System and the Toronto Transportation System. There are, of course, other assets over and above this amount, running into millions. The wise and efficient management of these departments of the city's business is not a matter of indifference to the citizens, in that the revenue of these undertakings, which comes almost entirely from citizens, amount to over \$25,000,000 annually, an amount about 84% of the annual general taxation.

Fortunately these two undertakings have in the past carried all their own charges, and have been no direct burden on the taxpayer as such. It must be borne in mind, however, that a

dollar paid by a citizen in rates or fares, for the use of the services of the Hydro and Transportation Commission, is just as important to him as a dollar paid in taxes for services rendered under the direct supervision of the City Council and represents the same deduction from his net income. Moreover, if the city has a deficiency it can raise the tax rate and get the money by due process of law, but a public utility cannot always secure additional revenue by raising its rates and any deficiency it incurs and cannot meet must be met by the taxpayers.

The success of these business undertakings is therefore of peculiar importance to the citizens and taxpayers. The two main requirements for success are:—

I. A Commission composed of able men.

II. An able General Manager.

A discussion of the second is unnecessary, both because municipally-owned public utilities in Toronto have not suffered from inefficient general managers, and because an able Commission will secure, support and give sound directions to a General Manager.

The crux of the matter is, therefore, the selection of able Commissioners. Failing such selections, huge assets are jeopardized and the taxpayers are menaced by the possibility of increased burdens. The taxpayers already have to meet annual deficits on special services of over a million and a half dollars.

What qualifications are required by a Commissioner of our municipally-owned public utilities? There are undoubtedly wide differences of opinion on this question, but possibly there would be fairly general agreement on the following list:

- a. Probity.
- b. Independence of judgment and character.
- c. Devotion to the public interest.
- d. Freedom from partisan political entanglements.
- e. Experience and acumen in affairs and handling of operations requiring the co-operation of a large number of other men.

The following is a list of questions which has been suggested as a test for the citizen of any proposed appointment:

1. Is he a man who will make up his own mind and stick to his principles?

2. Does he put public service first or is he apt to use his influence for the furtherance of interests not connected with those of the general public?
3. Is he used to working through a General Manager, or is he apt to interfere with appointments and other executive matters for political or other special reasons not connected with the good of the service?
4. Would you like to have him on the Board of Directors of your own business or that with which you are connected?

There are several misconceptions current with regard to requirements of personnel on these Commissions. Among these are:

1. That a member should be a technical expert in transportation or power distribution. (The staff should provide such experts.)
2. That a member must give up his business to serve on a Commission. (If properly arranged, if the work is limited to direction and if executive details are left to executive officers as they should be, this would, usually at least, be quite unnecessary.)
3. That a member must be a business man. (Not all business men, even successful business men, are capable, and not all other men are incapable in the direction of important affairs.)

Toronto is faced by a grave emergency in the present situation in connection with impending appointments to the Toronto Transportation Commission. A mistake might be serious to the City and have grave consequences to public ownership. All citizens would do well to keep in as close touch as possible with developments, and let their views be known if anything is proposed which is in conflict with these views.

Respectfully submitted,
BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH,
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President.
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Managing Director.

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