

# BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

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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## OPEN LETTER

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To the Taxpayers and Citizens of Toronto—

The consideration of the Civic Estimates for 1933, on which the civic tax-rate is to be based, is under way. The draft estimates for 1933, if the electors had so insisted in the past, might have been before the public in December and formed part of the basis of electoral discussion—in spite of the fact that some people say that it cannot be done. It is amazing the number of things in the world which “couldn’t be done,” but which have been done. These tentative estimates might have shown the expenditures for 1932 estimated on the actual expenditure for the first ten or eleven months, the estimated deficit (if any) for 1932, and the proposals of the 1932 Council for cutting the 1933 estimates in keeping with the reduced ability of the taxpayers to pay.

## AS IT IS—

we have elected a 1933 City Council without knowing the actual stand of all the members on possible concrete proposals for economy. If the proposed budget had been a feature in the election, no candidate, unless unusually expert, could have avoided giving his stand on such points as these:

1. The inclusion of all known and probable items of 1933 expenditure in 1933 estimates.
2. Adjusting civic salaries and wages to correspond with adjustments which have been made in incomes of citizens and taxpayers.

Choosing a man to spend one's money, when it is not any too plentiful, without knowing how much of it he is going to spend, is "sporting"; but can the great body of taxpayers afford at present to "be a sport"?

It is not too late to insist, however, (1) that this year's tax-rate shall be an "honest" tax-rate; (2) that all items which should be included in the estimates be actually so included and not ignored at the expense of next year's tax-rate in order not to be compelled to cut elsewhere this year; (3) that the total expenditure of the city be reduced to coincide with the reduced tax-paying ability of the taxpayers.

Would it not seem strange that at a time when many, if not most citizens, have greatly reduced incomes from which to pay taxes; when a large number of citizens, who have always heretofore been self-sustaining, have no incomes at all; when many are at their wits' ends to raise sufficient money to pay their taxes and interest and principal payments on mortgages on their homes; when many householders, and therefore contributors to the city's revenue, are on relief, it would not be politically possible to effect a cut of two or three million dollars in the tax budget? If \$2,000,000 were cut off the community "overhead," as could and should be done, not only would the purchasing power of the citizens in general, including those on relief, be increased, but business would

be stimulated by a decrease in its otherwise unavoidable overhead expense. If the burden of unnecessary governmental expenditure were removed from the backs of business and industry, they would be that much nearer to the time when they could reabsorb the existing army of unemployed. If the cut is not made, however, the failure to do so will not be due, as it might seem, to callousness toward the citizens and taxpayers, but to the failure of a ponderous and poorly articulated municipal machine to function. The line of least resistance is to seek out new sources of taxation, but what the long-suffering taxpayers and citizens (who are all directly or indirectly taxpayers) are hoping for is not an increase in the kinds of tax but a decrease in size of tax bills.

If and when a cut in civic rates of pay is decided upon, would it not be well to consider the advisability and justice of restoring the schedules of the civic salary survey, and after making the indicated increments, applying whatever percentage or percentages may be necessary to bring the total estimated expenditures within the determined limits? How else can equality of sacrifice be obtained?

If you are **really** interested in reduced civic expenditures in 1933 and **really** sensitive on the subject, why not telephone or write or both—now, before too late—to members of the Board of Control and City Council. It would not involve much effort, and would give Council points of view which it would like to have.

Respectfully submitted,

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President.

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Managing Director.

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