

# 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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CANADA

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## SIGNS OF THE TIMES

(For Civic Electors)

1. Deficits brought forward from one year to another reappeared for the first time in over fifteen years in the Estimates of the year 1932, at an amount of \$880,288, which grew to \$1,258,328 in the 1933 Estimates.
2. The civic year 1934 will begin with accumulated tax arrears of about \$12,000,000 as compared with \$5,420,980 at the beginning of 1929.
3. For four years the amount collected during the year of current taxes and arrears of taxes for all preceding years has fallen short of the net amount appropriated each year through the current tax levy after providing for uncollectible taxes. That is, we have spent, or proposed to spend, money which we did not collect. In 1932 we appropriated over \$1,600,000 through the net tax levy more than we collected in taxes and arrears, while in 1933 the appropriations out of the net tax levy will probably exceed cash revenue from taxes by \$1,900,000.
4. For the first time since the retirement of certain "war" issues, in 1934 Toronto taxpayers will be paying taxes to retire debentures and pay debenture interest on debentures issued to meet current expenses which will leave behind no balance sheet asset. (About \$1,750,000 five year debentures for unemployment relief costs other than overhead.)



5. The total assessment for 1934 taxation will probably be less than that for 1933 taxation by about \$22,000,000, increasing correspondingly the tax rate and diminishing correspondingly the legal debt limit.
6. The taxpayers face the New Year with a taxpaying ability greatly reduced below that of 1929 as indicated by the reduction in total amount of taxable incomes, in the number of income taxpayers, in the numbers of people whose incomes have entirely disappeared and by other well known facts.

### HOW LONG WILL THIS CONTINUE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

It will not continue and much can be done about it, if the people who pay the bills say so, choose candidates who show their views and vote accordingly. If the absent treatment method only is tried, or if citizens and taxpayers hum "Who's afraid of the Big, Bad Wolf?" or if the expression of the views of citizens and taxpayers is subdued and apologetic,

- (a) Tax arrears may continue to grow,
- (b) Deficits brought forward may continue to occur,
- (c) Current tax levies may continue to fall short of collections of taxes and arrears,
- (d) Interest charges on money borrowed to meet grocers' bills for bread, milk, butter, vegetables, meat, etc., and other unemployment relief bills may continue to grow,
- (e) The civic debt margin may shrink to an even smaller size,
- (f) A greater proportion of the citizens' incomes may be consumed by civic taxation,
- (g) And business and industry may find it more difficult, on account of increased civic taxation, to carry on and employ workers.

### ISSUES

It has been said that people will vote in elections when there is any real issue. The year 1923, the year of the so-called radial election is cited as a proof. In that year 64.6% of the estimated possible votes were cast for Mayor, 49.1% for Controllers and 35.4% for Aldermen. In 1928, the corresponding figures were 44.9%, 31.7% and 22%. While none of the issues of 1934 may be as spectacular as the "radial" issue of 1923, the issues before the electors of January 1st, 1934, are of tremendous importance. Among these are—

1. Whom shall we elect to supervise the expenditure of, say \$38,000,000 on current account and an unknown amount on capital account? Is this an important issue or can anyone fill the job?
2. Shall we balance our budget, by including in our expenditure all expense items, and cutting costs so that appropriations will not exceed the estimated cash revenues from taxation, etc.? Is this an important issue or can the City afford to spend at this time more than it can collect?
3. Shall the City continue to protect its borrowing power by refraining from all avoidable capital expenditures in preparation for a time when it will be compelled to undertake large capital expenditure of vital importance to the City as a whole? Is this an important issue or is the increase of debenture debt at this time a negligible matter?
4. Now that the number of Aldermen is about to be reduced to two for each ward, should the tenure of office be increased from one year to two years, with overlapping terms, in order to secure greater independence and responsibility on the part of the City Council and greater assured continuity of policy with regard to assets of over \$200,000,000? Is this an important issue?
5. With an assured continuity of membership, should the annual estimates be prepared in draft form and considered by Council during the last two months in each year for the ensuing year, in order that the final estimates may be passed in January, thus making possible the receiving of the full effect of all economies which may be incorporated in the estimates and the operation of the City on a plan for practically the whole year instead of for nine and a half or ten months of the year? Is this an important issue?

### 1934 APPROACHES

What the citizens do between now and January Second, 1934, will go far to determine whether the municipal year 1934 will be one of efficiency, economy and progress, or of slackness, waste and drift. After the new Council is elected the opportunity for direct Citizen participation in Toronto's civic affairs other than by paying taxes, will be comparatively few.



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