

# 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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## THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF TORONTO

(PART 1.)

Is a huge enterprise with about 280,000 voting (?) stockholders, over \$200,000,000 invested capital, over \$60,000,000 annual current revenues and expenditures, about 15,000 employees, annual payrolls amounting to about \$26,000,000, and annual purchases of supplies, equipment and material, repairs and contractual services, of about, say, \$11,000,000.

This very large business is administered by six Boards of Management,\* three elected and three appointed. Each of these Boards presides over several administrative departments. The three appointive boards administer through general managers. Two of the elected boards administer through two chief administrative officers each. The other elective board has no general administrative officer or officers but administers through 16 heads of independent departments. It is evident at once that under ideal conditions the formation of a unified community policy would be extremely difficult and that the highest efficiency in operation would be practically impossible. Without adequate city planning in the largest sense, it is quite impossible.

\* Not including the Board of Police Commissioners, the Library Board of Management, and the Board of Directors of the Canadian National Exhibition.



**The Saving Salt** Only the great resources of Toronto, the devotion to public interests of most of Toronto's public officials and employees, the excellent organization of some of its administrative units and a prevailing home-owning citizenship have made it possible in the past to maintain an administrative overhead of such huge proportions, the waste and inefficiency due to such wide administrative decentralization and lack of co-ordination, and the pay rolls of the army of public personnel employed in carrying on the business of the corporation.

**Some Taxation Constructive, Some Destructive** Insofar as the civic corporation renders services which make citizens as a whole more effective, more useful and happier at a cost commensurate with the service rendered, civic expenditures do not add to the cost of living, or to the burden on business and industry from which citizens draw their incomes. Indeed such services add to the effectiveness of those employed in business and industry. Any unnecessary cost, or any preventable inefficiency, does, however, handicap business and industry and those employed therein by increasing their overhead, by reducing the purchasing powers of local customers, and by increasing costs of operation and production in comparison with those found in other communities more economically and efficiently operated, having establishments with which they must compete.

#### SOURCES OF CIVIC REVENUE.

The City of Toronto has revenue of four kinds:

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| <b>All Civic Revenues Come from the Citizens</b> | 1. General taxation.  |
|  | 2. General revenue other than taxation.                       |
|  | 3. Special taxation.  |
|  | 4. Special revenue from public utility rates, fares and fees. |

Out of general taxation and general revenue other than taxation the city supports its general services. Out of special taxation it meets the ratepayers' share of the cost of local improvements. Out of special revenue, such as rates, fares and fees, its citizens pay for water service, power and light service, civic abattoir service, transportation service, and harbour service. If special revenue (except in the cases of the Hydro and the Transportation Commissions) is unable to meet all the costs, the balance is met out of general revenue. Any surplus special revenue,\* such as the water surplus, is devoted to the reduction of taxation. If there ever were a civic abattoir surplus, presumably it would also be so used. In proportion to total family expenditures thereon, unduly burdensome rates, fares and fees add to the cost of living in the same way as unnecessarily heavy taxation, and it is just as important that there be economy and efficiency in special services paid for out of special revenues as in general services, the cost of which is met out of general taxation and incidental revenues.

\* With the exceptions noted above.

#### METHODS OF ADMINISTRATION SHOULD BE STANDARDIZED IN ALL PARTS OF THE CITY'S BUSINESS.

The City, the Schools and the Special Services are all largely maintained by payments out of the same pockets. They are simply departments of the same business, and it stands to reason that there should be co-ordination between them wherever possible.

**Similar Pay for Similar Work** For example, is similar work for the City, the Board of Education, the Harbour Board, the Hydro, the Transportation Commission, the Civic Abattoir, and for large private concerns and corporations offering reasonable continuity of tenure and employment, paid for at the same rates, i.e., engineers' salaries, stenographers' salaries, senior and junior clerks' salaries, elevator men's salaries, caretakers' salaries, cleaners' wages, labourers' wages, etc. If not, why not? If the salary and wage scale on the whole is not reasonably uniform within the domain of these authorities, or is maintained at rates greatly in excess of those which obtain among private employees, who, in the last analysis, pay civic salaries and wages, whose money is being given away?

**Similar Supplies at Similar Costs** Are all similar supplies for these separate authorities and for each department under these authorities paid for at the same rates? If not, why not? When purchasing is not 100% efficient, whose money is being wasted? Are all tenders for equipment, supplies, structures, services, always awarded to the lowest competent bidder by all these authorities? If not, why not? When tenders are not awarded to the lowest competent bidder, whose money is being given away?

**Minimum Establishments for Maximum Services** Have all authorities departmentalized their work to the best advantage, so as to perform maximum services with a minimum personnel? If not, why not? Have all authorities grasped opportunities brought about by resignation or death of department heads to amalgamate, without disturbance of vested interests, related departments and thus cut down governmental overhead? If not, why not?

**How Many Shareholders Are There in the City Corporation?** Toronto at the last election had 318,841 names on the voting lists. On account of the income assessment, there may have been duplication to the extent of 11,000. On account of ownership of property in different wards, there was also duplication to some extent in deciding on the number of those who might have voted for Mayor and Board of Control. There was also some duplication within wards, unavoidable without unwarranted expense in a large city. It is likely, however, that 280,000 might have voted if they had cared to do so for Mayor and Board of Control. Voters to the number of 126,848 voted for Mayor and, on the average, 86,681 for Controller. Even fewer voted for Aldermen or members of Board of Education. Probably over 150,000 did not vote at all. In a sense, these non-combatant, pacifist citizens may have decided who were to be Mayor, Controller, Aldermen and members of the Board of Education. Actually they determine the policies and "tone" of the civic administration. The familiar



"alibi" of the non-voter is, "it is no use to vote". If at the next election 200,000 citizens exercised the civic franchise, even if the same City Council and Board of Education were elected as would have been the case if only 125,000 had voted, the effect on the conduct of civic affairs might be electrical. If previous to election many and persistent efforts were made to secure the candidacy of an even greater number of qualified candidates, the result might be revolutionary. There are many things which might be done to improve the efficiency and economy of local administration. These things, however, will not be done if the majority of citizens do not want them done hard

**Why  
Shareholders  
Should be  
Interested**

enough to invest a little time and thought in active citizenship. This is the first step. There will be no second step if the first is not taken. Toronto is the home of over 638,000 people. The love of that home should be active. When a Toronto citizen gets up and takes his morning drink from the tap, he is consuming water which has been processed for him at great expense by the city. His breakfast coffee, toast and bacon are prepared with "juice brought from Niagara Falls† and delivered at his door by the municipality, or by gas supplied by a company in which the City holds stock and on the Board of which the Mayor sits as one of the directors. He walks to the street car on a sidewalk laid by the municipality, rides to his office in a street car owned by the municipality, pays his fare to an employee of the municipality, goes up in an elevator licensed by the municipality, finds his office in working order owing to the protection of the municipal employees of the Fire and Police Departments, dictates his correspondence to a stenographer educated and trained in the schools of the municipality, spends his working hours under the care of municipal departments, and sleeps peacefully at night owing to the services of the police and fire departments and—in the future, owing to an all-inclusive and efficiently administered anti-noise by-law,\* which it is hoped will finally be enforced. Because his or her municipality does so much for him, because it costs so much to him or her, is not the City the most vitally important element in the secular life of every citizen apart, of course, from his home, which is also served by the municipality.

**WILLIAM BENNETT MUNRO,  
Marfleet Lectures, 1929.**

(1) "Take Toronto for example . . . The City's outstanding indebtedness, exclusive of . . . exemptions, is now almost up to the legal limitation. Its borrowing margin has almost vanished. (It was still lower at the end of 1934 than at the end of 1929 by over eight millions, and will be lower at the end of 1936, when it will be approximately \$2,700,000.) Toronto has had a steady growth in the valuation of its taxable property, and if this keeps on there will be some leeway in the matter of new indebtedness year by year. **But if the annual increase in assessed valuation should by any mischance fall off**, there is reason to suspect that it will not be long before Toronto will be asking for a lift in the legal limitation, just as scores of American cities have done", pp. 137, 138. (Such a move is almost unthinkable. Let us hope that the suspicion is unjustified, and that, if it is, a deaf ear will be turned to the request except in case of great emergency).

(2) "It is hard to understand why the one-year term (for aldermen) should be retained in Canadian cities when it is not found anywhere else the world over". p. 124.

† Cooperatively.

\* Recently by-law No. 14397 was passed against blowing of motor horns in night hours, and there are other similar by-laws. A comprehensive study is now being made by the City of anti-noise regulations, looking toward control by the Board of Health.