

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

TORONTO'S CITIZENS CAN CONTROL TORONTO'S AFFAIRS ONLY
THROUGH FREQUENT, PROMPT, ACCURATE AND PERTINENT INFOR-
MATION WITH REGARD TO TORONTO'S BUSINESS.

137 WELLINGTON ST. W.
TELEPHONE EL. 1904



TORONTO
CANADA

White Paper No. 224

September 23, 1937

The 1936 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Finance

with summaries of the activities of the Canadian National Exhibition, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, the Toronto Harbour Commissioners, the Toronto Hydro-Electric System, the Toronto Transportation Commission, the Toronto Municipal Abattoir, the Civic Water Works, the Island Ferry Service, and the Toronto Housing Commission.

This report, the Annual Civic Estimates and the Toronto Municipal Handbook issued by the City Clerk, are, from the standpoint of the citizen, the three most important official reports on Civic Affairs issued each year.

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of Finance for 1936 in form and matter maintains its excellent standard and in its letter of transmittal to the Mayor and Council contains summary information of which no citizen can afford to be in ignorance.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL.

1. The surplus on the year's business as shown by the official accounts was \$375,107.
2. The net cost to the city of direct unemployment relief \$3,139,293, of which \$2,183,552 was or was to be funded, was the lowest since 1933.
3. The estimated net cost to the city for 1937 of direct unemployment relief is lower than the 1936 total by over a third of a million dollars.
4. The amount of current unemployment relief costs paid out of revenue in 1937 is the greatest relatively, and, on the basis of percentage of total costs (other than overhead), absolutely, of any year since 1932.
5. The funding of direct relief will probably cease in 1940.
6. The serial instalment form of municipal debentures, since its introduction in the term of office as Finance Commissioner of Mr. Thomas Bradshaw, instead of the sinking fund form previously obtaining, has been in vogue for 21 years with good results.
7. The surplus earnings of the Sinking Fund, together with unexpended capital balances and funds realized by the sale of capital assets were credited to the sinking fund and facilitated the cancellation of city debt before maturity in the period 1919-1936 of \$31,835,000. This means an average reduction in annual debt charges of over \$650,000 a year during the period 1920-1936. A continuation of this policy will benefit not only the city itself but all Civic Boards and Commissions.

(NOTE: The record in this respect gives an inkling of the current saving which would be effected by the adoption of a pay-as-you-go policy as outlined in the Commissioner's Report for 1935.)

HOUSING.

An important discussion of an important topic (pp. 11 and 12 of the Annual Report of the Toronto Commissioner of Finance).

"The Housing Problem"

"City By-law Establishing a Standard of Housing—With the advent of the world-wide economic depression which followed the financial crash of October, 1929, unprecedented general unemployment conditions developed which necessitated huge governmental and municipal expenditures to provide food, fuel and shelter for the unemployed. Urban centres in Canada—as in all other countries—bore the brunt of taxation incidental to these expenditures.

"The disappearance of earned incomes and the resultant loss of purchasing power of the masses on relief aggravated the insanitary and uninhabitable conditions of the smaller type dwellings to a point which impelled the civic authorities to take action by passing By-law No. 14466 on February 10th, 1936, which in minute detail prescribes a standard of housing for the City of Toronto and provides for a thorough survey of existing conditions and the rehabilitation of buildings at a minimum of expense to both the owners and the city.

"The administration of the By-law, which was ratified by an Act of the Ontario Legislature, is in the hands of a Committee of Depart-

mental Heads consisting of the Commissioners of Buildings (Chairman), City Planning, Assessment, Finance, City Solicitor and Medical Officer of Health, and the work is carried out by a special staff of Housing Inspectors under the direct supervision of the Chairman.

"The City of Toronto is the first municipality to formulate and enforce a By-law of the above nature, the principle of which has been recognized and commended by the National Employment Commission and the Dominion Government as a practical and efficacious method of relieving unemployment and insuring satisfactory housing conditions. The most congested sub-standard areas in the eastern, central and western sections of the city were selected by the inspectors for their initial operations in June, 1936. A summary of results attained during the first year to June 30th, 1937, shows that 3,300 dwellings have been inspected, of which over 50% met the requirements of the Rehabilitation By-law with a few minor exceptions. Approximately 400 houses have been renovated to the prescribed standard, and work is now proceeding upon the rehabilitation of 1,300 dwellings recommended by the inspectors. The cost of the work performed to date totals approximately \$200,000, which will be borne entirely by the owners of the properties, and it is estimated that at the present time over 500 men are directly employed in the rehabilitation work.

"In addition to the foregoing, approximately 200 dwellings have been demolished because the owners did not consider the cost of the necessary repairs to be justified.

"The By-law also provides an occupancy standard, and it is interesting to note that of the 3,300 houses inspected only 127 were overcrowded beyond the limit permitted by the By-law. In cases where the owners were financially unable to make the necessary repairs, the By-law provides that the city may advance funds for this purpose, repayable with interest not exceeding 5% over a maximum period of ten years. So far, the City Council has approved advances totalling \$5,300 to provide for the rehabilitation of 20 dwellings, and the cost to the city of inspection and administration to date approximates \$14,000.

"The work of rehabilitation is perhaps not outwardly impressive, as much of it consists of interior work such as new plumbing, repairs to floors and demolition of fences and out-houses, and the results accomplished so far forcefully demonstrate the practicability and efficacy of the City's Rehabilitation By-law. The work of the Housing Inspectors is progressing vigorously and when their labours are completed the city will undoubtedly have made a substantial contribution to the solution of its housing problem."

LIGHT FROM ANOTHER SOURCE.

City Planning Held Vital to Success of New Housing Programme.

News Bulletin, Public Administration Service, Aug. 30, 1937.

"Cities which have City Plan Commissions or which have power under their . . . laws to establish such bodies, have a valuable tool immediately at hand to assist in launching housing programmes . . . These planning Commissions, indeed, are considered absolutely indispensable to properly conceived housing projects by some administrators."

COMPARATIVE STATISTICS OF POPULATION, ASSESSMENT AND NET DEBT 1926-1936

(From table on page 46 of 1936 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Finance)

Year	Population		(1) Average Assessment		(2) Net General and Education Debt		(3) Total Net Debt	
	Number		Amount	Per Capita	Amount	Per Capita	Amount	Per Capita
1926	556,691		\$ 846,958,784	\$1,521	\$52,985,675	\$ 95.18	\$141,716,440	\$254.57
1927	569,899		867,916,920	1,523	55,004,381	96.52	148,956,409	261.37
1928	585,628		881,437,704	1,505	54,817,713	93.61	145,419,810	248.31
1929	606,370		926,653,650	1,528	55,856,405	92.12	145,258,837	239.55
1930	621,596		971,137,295	1,562	63,357,141	101.93	158,394,534	254.82
1931	627,231		1,005,924,880	1,604	67,251,485	107.22	165,072,053	263.18
1932	626,674		1,018,585,250	1,625	72,070,203	115.00	172,000,062	274.46
1933	623,562		1,006,588,832	1,614	72,371,922	116.06	168,019,344	269.45 ⁽⁴⁾
1934	629,285		984,462,696	1,564	73,172,223	116.28	163,896,196	260.45 ⁽⁴⁾
1935	638,271		972,908,726	1,524	70,566,477	110.56	154,887,143	242.67 ⁽⁴⁾
1936	645,462		936,417,790	1,451	71,371,055	110.57	149,716,860	231.95 ⁽⁴⁾
1926-36		Increase 15.95%		Increase 10.56%	Increase 34.70%	Increase 16.17%	Increase 5.65%	Decrease 8.89%

(1) Average Assessment is the assessment which at the combined General and School tax rate applicable to Public School Supporters, will yield the total amount of money required to be raised by taxation.

(2) Net General and Education Debt is computed by deducting from Gross Funded Debt (a) The net debt of Specially-rated and Revenue-producing Services and (b) All Sinking Funds.

(3) Total Net Debt is computed by deducting all Sinking Funds from Total Funded Debt.

(4) The steady decrease in per capita total net debt since 1932 is to be noted.