

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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Civic Departmentalization

STORY NO. 2

Toronto has sixteen administrative departments. Some cities have more, some less. Some have a general manager over all departments. Most have not.

The effect of a large number of departments without a general manager is quite different from that of a large number of departments with a general manager.

Where there is no general manager, the fewer the administrative departments, especially service departments, the easier co-ordination will be.

MUCH CAN BE DONE TOWARD DEPARTMENTAL CO-ORDINATION WITHOUT CHANGING THE SYSTEM

Private corporations must have a general manager because they are expected to show profits. And, short of monopoly, profits cannot be earned where there is not full co-ordination of all administrative units. Municipal corporations can be operated without a general manager or without full co-ordination of service units because—

- a. They are monopolies.
- b. They have the power of taxation which can be used to fill up the holes caused by waste and inefficiency where these occur.
- c. The profits, if any, are hidden, and are difficult to measure.

But even if a municipal general manager is quite out of the question, a great deal can be done toward the co-ordination of departments without changing the principle of the present "set-up" and without legislation as the Board of Control has full power to combine departments. In general there are overhead departments, service departments and protective departments. The chief benefits of co-ordination might be expected in the large spending departments. These are mostly the service departments and the protective departments. Co-ordination could most readily be effected in the former group.

Some Possibilities

For example, the present Works Department has a roadway section. Why should not the street cleaning be a part of this section, which already has an appropriation for snow removal? Or, a separate section of a Works or Service Department? The Street Cleaning Department has no separate appropriation for snow removal, but that such an appropriation is included under some other head is shown by the 1939 item "Two Snow Plow Attachments."

The Parks Department has items which apparently require work similar to items in the Works Department. The Parks Department is mostly concerned with the supervision of men and use of materials. Why should it not be a section of an enlarged Works or Service Department?

It is quite obvious that at least some of the functions of the Property Department involving care of and repair of buildings are analogous to some of the functions of the Parks Department. Why should they not be sections of the same Department?

Modern building, particularly commercial building, is closely allied to engineering. Why should not the Building Department be a section of an enlarged Works or Service Department?

The City Planning and Surveying Department, the head of which is also the Traffic Engineer, is obviously also an engineering department. Why should it not be incorporated, as a section, with an enlarged Works or Service Department?

Such arrangement would place in one department under a single commissioner, with, say, seven section heads, all the departments dealing with construction, repairs, physical planning, etc., would tend to standardize a large part of the civic budgeting, and would modify the departmental competition for funds. This department would contain most of the services rendered directly to the citizens. The appropriations on current account for the administrative units involved exceed $4\frac{1}{3}$ million dollars and they are responsible directly or indirectly in active times with varying but large amounts of capital expenditure usually out of borrowed funds.

Before the depression, the Welfare Branch of the Health Department handled much of the Welfare work of the city. Especially if the Dominion, as it should, takes over direct unemployment relief of employables and their families, why should not the civic departments of Health and Welfare, both protective services, be combined in one department? They have very closely allied functions.

Why should not the functions of the various departmental accounting divisions be incorporated with those of the accounting section of the Treasury Department, that department being held responsible not only for the receiving and paying out of all moneys, but for ALL the accounting having to do with the receiving and paying out of money or money's worth? These are closely allied functions and cannot be separated without danger of loss. With modern auditing, the use of departments as checks against one another is obsolete or obsolescent and unnecessary.

Some years ago the taxpayers of the city supported, in effect, two Health departments, one under the City and one under the Board of Education. When they were combined there were dire prophecies of failure from interested parties. Later when the two Legal departments were combined into one, the general public benefited. What is there to show that further amalgamations are not in the public interest? A competent inquiry would elicit the facts. Why not have one?

Possible or Probable Results

In fine, if civic departments were reduced from 16 to 9 it is likely that some or all of the following results would be obtained:

1. Personnel would be more efficiently used.
2. Material would be more effectively used.
3. Inter-department, inter-committee and inter-ward struggles for funds would be less strenuous.
4. Control of accounting and expenditure would be facilitated.
5. Control of purchasing would be strengthened.
6. Time would be saved for citizens having business with Service Departments at the City Hall.
7. It would save operating space.

For over a quarter of a century the Bureau of Municipal Research has maintained a watch tower in the interests of citizens and taxpayers. Its services have been limited by the extent of the financial and moral support given to it. Its services were never more needed. Each citizen may think that alone he or she cannot do much. Why not try what can be done through co-operative effort? The Bureau presents such an opportunity.