

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.

137 WELLINGTON ST. W.
TELEPHONE EL. 1904



TORONTO
CANADA

White Paper No. 254

10th December, 1940

VOTING IS NOT MERELY A CEREMONY

It is a means to an end. The end in the forthcoming civic election is to choose men and women for the City Council, Board of Education and Separate School Board—Toronto's Elective Boards of Management.

MERELY VOTING NOT ENOUGH

Should a citizen think he has fully exercised his civic franchise when he has voted on election day, he deceives himself. He may only have chosen between candidates he did not know or knew too well. He may have voted for men whom others nominated, but whom he would not have nominated himself. He may have voted for someone because the name was familiar. He may even have voted alphabetically or by position of the names on the ballot. How much better is such a voter than a man who has decided not to vote because no one is running whom he can conscientiously vote for?

As a matter of fact, the uninformed or haphazard voter and the non-voter, in other words non-combatant voters, are community liabilities not community assets. They are largely responsible for any failure in the quality of the city's government. A citizen to be fully effective—

- a. Must assure himself that there will be on the ballot a sufficient number of names of candidates for whom he can conscientiously vote.
- b. Must vote.
- c. Must keep in touch with the current record of his representatives throughout the year. If necessary, he must telephone or write to his representatives.

If he finds it difficult or impossible to get suitable persons, or persons he considers suitable, to run for civic office, he must find out why. If it is the system, he must try to secure the necessary reforms in the system.

Democracy confers rights, among which is the civic franchise. It also confers responsibilities, among which is the duty of seeing that the civic franchise produces results.

QUESTIONS THAT VOTERS MIGHT ASK OF CANDIDATES

1. Do you believe that local expenditures should be reduced during war years in order to assist the Federal Government in raising taxes for war purposes?
2. Do you believe that civic public bodies should continue to exercise stringent debt control, in order to leave the field of public credit open to the Federal authorities responsible for the prosecution of the war?
3. Do you believe that now, in addition to building up a reserve of credit, reserves of work requiring capital expenditures should be built up for immediate use after the war in order to meet so far as possible the serious dislocations which are certain to arise?
4. Should planning for this work begin now in order that it may never be necessary to use again the baneful expression, "relief" works?
5. Should a great City like Toronto have to wait until it has a huge snowfall, with appropriations exhausted, to make a beginning on modern and adequate methods of snow removal?
6. How can the city get full value from its very large expenditures for Fire and Police protection if the operations of these departments are impeded by snow and ice?
7. Should a thorough independent survey be made of the departmentalization of the City Government?
8. Is there a need for the establishment of the "Merit System" in the appointment, promotion and separation from the service, of civic employees?

CIVIC NOMINATION DAY IS DECEMBER 20th

QUESTIONS THAT THE VOTER MIGHT ASK HIMSELF

1. Would a three-year term, as in the cities of Britain where democracy flourishes, tend to bring out better candidates?
2. Would annual elections of a third of the members of elected bodies tend to continuity of policy while securing adequate contact with the voting public?
3. Would a reduction in the number of wards tend to secure candidates of more outstanding ability and would it tend to reduce the baneful effects of sectionalism?
4. Would a reduction in the size of elective bodies tend to promote their efficiency and increase public control?

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?