

# 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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TORONTO  
CANADA

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## OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF TORONTO ON SNOW REMOVAL AND OTHER THINGS

Apparently it takes a heavy snow fall to prove to our City Fathers that—

1. Snow removal should be centralized in one Department,
2. The time to purchase snow removal and related equipment is before winter comes and before the season arrives in which snow may fall in quantity,
3. The City Estimates should be based on past experience—not on a gamble to show a reduced tax-rate for one year.
4. The City does not get the full value of the Police Department and Fire Department appropriations if the Departments are seriously impeded by snow and ice.

If a gamble is to be taken, should it be at other people's expense? Failing to take in time the precautions necessary in our climate may have postponed an increase in the tax-rate for one year. Postponement in the end is extremely expensive as all citizens know. When there has been a large and sudden snow fall, even

under the best conditions, there will always be considerable discomfort and loss of time, etc., to the citizens, but the conditions should be controlled as adequately as possible, within reason. What does a small temporary cut in the tax-rate amount to when measured against the huge personal costs to citizens of—

1. The loss of time of thousands of workers in business and industry,
2. Heavy colds due to protracted waits on street corners in severe weather or caught in overcrowded street cars,
3. The loss of business due to the laying up of motor cars and inability of motor cars to park,
4. Broken springs, twisted chassis, smashed guards and fenders?

The possibility of a sudden thaw before the snow and ice can otherwise be removed, cannot be ignored. Before normal conditions can be restored, there may be an aggregate loss to the citizens equivalent to a substantial increase in the tax-rate. Many feel that the tax revenue of the City is sufficiently large at present, if properly applied, to pay for adequate service. It is not so much the cost of snow removal as the cost of failing to remove the snow which concerns the citizens and taxpayers.

As to other matters, will it take other visitations to convince the City Fathers that—

1. The number of civic departments should be reduced by amalgamation,
2. All civic accounting should be centralized in the Finance Department and so far as possible mechanized,
3. The purchasing of the City and all so-called "outside" civic bodies should be centralized,
4. The financial ability of civic taxpayers is strictly limited,

5. The Civic Estimates should be prepared in draft form and published in advance of the civic election so that it might turn on real definite civic issues which could not be dodged.

The citizens do not need to wait for a visitation. They can create their own explosion. Even if in the coming civic elections the same persons or the same kinds of person are elected, the results obtained from them will tend to vary directly with the size of the vote. A vote of 250,000 instead of 125,000 would galvanize many representatives into action who now are nursing their blood pressures. If the people who pay the bills are not concerned, why should it be expected that those who spend and supervise the expenditure of the people's money should be concerned?

At election time we shall not know whether we are electing the City Council and Board of Education for one year or two years. When we learn the result of polling on the two-year by-law, we shall know which we have done. It is all the more important that the citizens should, before election, assure themselves that there will be candidates who can be trusted to get things done whether elected for one or two years, and not simply help to pave another jurisdiction with good intentions.

Yours respectfully,

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

"THOMAS G. ROGERS"  
*President*

"HORACE L. BRITTAIN"  
*Managing Director*

NOMINATION DAY IS DECEMBER 20th.  
WHY NOT GET BUSY NOW?

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.