

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 CITY BUDGET FOR 1941

Every child knows that there are twelve months in a year. Every man and woman who has a home knows that every month will have its responsibilities which must be carefully planned for in advance. No matter how fast and well the Board of Control and City Council work, the City's plan of current expenditure for the twelve months in 1941, if adequate study is given to it, cannot be passed until at least two of the twelve months have elapsed, which means that January and February expenditures as far as the 1941 City budget is concerned will be unplanned.

Should Plans be made before or after action?

If it is not important to plan for January and February, it is not important to plan for March and April, May and June, July and August, September and October or November and December. Anyone who has gone through November and December last in this City knows what the result of lack of

Planning expenditure for one month as important as planning that of another.

planning for those months means. It was proposed in January to plan for possible November and December snow removal, but when March came, it looked silly to most members of Council to buy machinery in March to lie idle or possibly rust through April, May, June, July, August, September, October and possibly through November and December. "Never trouble trouble till trouble troubles you". There is no real reason if the hearty co-operation of the so-called "outside" departments is secured, why the estimates could not be passed tentatively in November, distributed before the civic election, discussed therein and finally passed early in January—nothing but the inertia of custom and a determination not to discuss civic business too particularly in civic elections. One would think that this was the time above all others when the citizens and taxpayers should have an opportunity to discuss the city's business in some detail.

The 1940 civic budget provided for an estimated current expenditure of almost \$38 1/3 millions. Whether the 1941 budget will call for an expenditure of \$40 1/3 millions or of \$36 1/3 millions is probably now entirely beyond the effective influence of the citizens and taxpayers who pay the civic bills. There seems to be a probability that the Board of Control will this year for the first time in recent years hold its budget sessions in public. This should give voters an unusual opportunity to make their wishes effective.

If the City Council is in real earnest as to furthering the war, it will make a vigorous effort to reduce taxes. If it is in real earnest to attract industries to Toronto,

it will try very hard to bonus all industries by reducing the tax levy. This method would be not only legal, but effective.

Just as the time to pass a budget of expenditure is before any expenditure is incurred, so the time to start selecting those who will pass the 1942 budget is now. It is idle to wait till voting day to select an alderman from candidates nominated by others. To-day is not too early to begin to make certain that nomination day, 1941, will have a real meaning.

Civic Questions which Should be Settled by Board of Control and Council in 1941.

1. Should all accounting be centralized in an accounting division of the Finance Department with a professional accountant at the head of the division?
2. Should accounting machines be installed in all accounting sections?
3. Should Public Health and Welfare be co-ordinated in one department under a Board of Public Health and Welfare?
4. Should all engineering, construction and maintenance departments be co-ordinated in one department?
5. Should the 1942 budget be passed tentatively in 1941 and finally in January 1942?
6. Should the 1942 budget be made an issue in the 1942 elections?
7. Should a merit **system** of appointment and promotion be established for all public local services?

If the 1941 budget had been passed tentatively in 1940 and discussed thoroughly in the recent civic election, there would not only have been in all probability a larger vote, but the budget finally adopted would have been more representative of community needs.

About 90,000 individuals voted at the civic election for 1941. Although the day was ideal voting weather, and although the life of the whole Empire, including Toronto, is threatened, the number of actual voters was the lowest since 1929. More than 90,000 persons should be interested in the seven questions listed above.

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. Co-operative effort supplies the key to effective action.