

# BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

"TO PROMOTE THE MOVEMENT TOWARD EFFICIENT CITIZENSHIP"



(Advance Copy)

## OPEN LETTER

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TORONTO 2  
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To the Citizens and Taxpayers of Toronto.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On January first next we will choose 59 men and women to control our local municipal and educational affairs -- or we will let others do the choosing for us. There were over 318,000 names on the voting list last year and approximately 130,000 persons voted. There is, of course, some duplication on the list, but it is probable that not over 47 persons actually voted out of 100 who might vote.

It may be that some abstained from voting because they had no confidence in or knowledge of the candidates offering. This may be an excuse, but, it is no reason. Any citizen of Toronto who appreciates the situation should be seized with the necessity of getting candidates to offer whom they do know and in whom they have confidence. Even choice of the least of two evils is better than nothing. A vote of 200,000 on January first might well be the beginning of better things. It would exercise a salutary influence on those elected, who might regard the unprecedented vote as an earnest of increasing citizen interest, and it would tend to encourage a larger number of good candidates to offer their services in future contests. Surely the citizens of this great city will not confess themselves entirely helpless to improve the quality of <sup>their</sup> local government.

These are some of the reasons why all citizens should be interested:

1. The city's statutory borrowing margin on Dec. 31st, 1936, will be the lowest in twelve years, in fact, hardly more than one-sixth of what it was in 1929, and if the income assessment is taken from the city, as is possible, the statutory borrowing margin may entirely disappear.



2. The net general debenture debt, that is the part of the total debenture debt which is a first charge on the general tax levy and general current revenue at the end of 1934 was larger than it has been in a decade and over 17 million dollars more than it was in 1929 at the beginning of the depression, an increase of 31% in five years.
3. The total debenture debt affecting taxation has increased by over 24 million dollars or over 26.4% in the same period. *25.6% since 1929*
4. The general tax levy for 1935 exceeded that of 1929 by more than 4 million dollars or by over 13%. If all current relief expenditure leaving behind no balance sheet assets had been budgeted for in the current budget as they were in 1932 and previous years, the real increase in estimated expenditure for 1935 would have been shown.
5. Since 1932, when the funding of net direct relief expenditures began, the current budget has been unbalanced by varying amounts due to funding net current expenditure on direct relief, other than servicing costs, non-contributing items, etc. The 1935 budget is unbalanced by at least \$2,242,876, being the estimated amount to be funded -- less relief debt charges included in the current budget.
6. The city is faced in the near future by huge capital expenditures for sewage disposal, and should consider the demand for slum clearance which may require further large capital expenditures.
7. The city is spending during 1935 on the scale of \$61.51 per person -- man, woman, youth, child, infant -- or about \$260 per family. The services which the expenditures purchase are large in extent and fundamental in importance. No family, business or undertaking in Toronto could carry on without them. From the standpoint of the size of the expenditures and the importance of the services they purchase, the citizen must be interested if he is properly to protect his interests, human and financial. Are you satisfied with these conditions? If not, why not select and vote for candidates who also think that action rather than talk is needed? If one has voted, one has at least a moral right to criticise. If one has not voted, one has the right to suffer in silence or "take it and like it".

*and educational*

Yours faithfully,

President

Managing Director