

# BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

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under heading  
"Why a Municipal  
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Men and Women:

## Why a City Corporation?

When the establishment of an ordinary corporation is authorized, a list of what it can legally do is set forth in the articles of incorporation and its field of activity is limited accordingly.

When a municipal corporation is set up in Ontario it operates under the provisions of Provincial legislation. The Ontario Municipal Act, for example, lists minutely what municipal corporations may do. It does not list what they may not do, but it is generally held that a municipal Council may do only what it is specifically authorized to do by the Ontario Municipal Act or other Provincial legislation. In Ontario, municipal corporations are set up to meet certain definite community needs and to provide certain definite community services. Similarly, provincial governments have or should have a definite field in which to operate.

All functions not assigned to, and all power not held by provinces and through them to their municipalities, are in the federal field.

In order that the people who directly or indirectly pay the bills and receive directly or indirectly the public services rendered at the three levels of their government, may hold their representatives accountable, it is essential that each level of government shall "stick to its last". Otherwise, matters may be introduced which will confuse the citizens by inducing them to look somewhere else rather than at the efficiency of their representatives in discharging their proper functions.

There are, of course, overlapping zones in which co-operation between two or more levels of government is necessary. There are also cases in which amendments to provincial legislation is desirable. All such cases are obviously in the municipal field.

It is fairly certain however, that municipal corporations were not intended by the provincial legislature to be responsible for legislation in the field of social relations except where particularly mentioned. Neither did it envision local elected bodies as sounding boards for those interested in extra-municipal problems.



This does not mean that City Councils have no welfare field within which they may operate. Aside from educational appropriations, and including only those departments which are under City Council, over half the estimated expenditures are for services to persons, including children and youth. The development of these services should give adequate scope to those most interested in human welfare.

Every City Council has enough to do within its own field without straying into provincial or federal fields. If it is giving efficient service in its own field, its members will not need to attract citizen attention to extraneous matters. Their municipal record, if good enough, will guarantee their political advancement at the hands of grateful citizens.

It is said that talk is cheap. As a matter of fact talk is very expensive and, if "loose", may be extremely so. The citizens of Toronto elect the Mayor, Controllers and Aldermen to talk and think about the business and interests of the City Corporation. Any talk and thought devoted on city time to extraneous matters is not only waste time or worse, but compels members not interested to waste time and diminishes the time which can be devoted to affairs undoubtedly within the civic field - all at the expense of the municipal business of the citizens. It is usually feasible to hire a hall if a member of Council wishes to discuss a non-municipal topic, instead of using the City Hall which is provided at public expense.

If members of local elected bodies are more interested in provincial or federal matters than in municipal matters they probably would give better service in the provincial legislature or the federal parliament and should take action accordingly.

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President

Managing Director

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