

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

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Letter

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Men and Women:

Analysis of Voting Record at the Civic Election of 1947

Considering the doleful record of Toronto voters in recent years, it is evident that mere exhortation or even the presentation of facts as to total vote does not induce very many to change their voting habits.

Possibly an analysis of the total votes would develop some facts which might have more influence on chronic non-voters. With this in mind, the Bureau has made such an analysis of the 1947 vote, on the basis of an allowance of 10% in the aldermanic vote for sickness and unavoidable absence of voters and of an allowance of 20% for sickness, absence of voters and duplication in the lists in the case of mayor and controllers. These facts among others emerge:

1. On the above basis, 36 votes out of 100 possible were cast for Mayor.
2. In 1934, 1,146 fewer votes were cast for Mayor than in 1947, but there were 52,786 more names on the voters' lists in 1947 than in 1934. The number of votes cast for the position of Mayor was higher than in December, 1936, 1941 or 1945 but was lower than those cast in 1934, 1936 (December), 1937 (December), 1938, 1940 and 1944. A campaign between two or more fairly evenly matched strong candidates seems to stimulate the vote for Mayor.
3. More votes were cast for Controller candidates in 1947 than in 1946 by 56,408. In both years about one in four of the possible number were cast.
4. Allowing a deduction of 10%, on the average, only 26.3% of the possible vote was cast for Aldermen. (This is an improvement over last year when on the same basis the percentage was 21.1%).
5. The vote for members of the Board of Education was fractionally lighter on the percentage basis than for Aldermen in seven of the eight wards where contests were held. This was in a city which spends much money on and is supposed to be interested in education.

6. The highest voting record for Aldermen was made in Ward 9 (36.9%) and the poorest in Ward 3 (17.5%), i. e. comparing actual votes cast with the possible vote. In only four wards did the proportion exceed one in four.
7. That is, the best voting record was made in a ward largely residential in character, while the poorest was made in a ward which is largely non-residential.
8. The voting of those who, as it is often expressed, "have a stake" in the corporation would seem to indicate that on the whole those entitled to vote on money by-laws do not care much what happens to their "stake". Such nonchalance may be magnificent, but is it sensible? The vote on the civic square was 32.7% and on the Regent Park Project 33.5% of the possible vote.

It may be that many were so confused by lack of sufficient definite information that they could not bring themselves to vote on money by-laws. If so, no future by-law should be submitted to the vote of those entitled to vote on money by-laws until all information necessary to form a considered judgment is available to those entitled to vote.

Physical Rehabilitation of the City and Virile

Citizenship Vitally Connected

It seems certain that the stagnation or creeping paralysis which has already affected so many sections of the city, has begun to undermine even the foundations of citizenship. Every family which leaves its home in Toronto to found a home in the suburban "fringe", means not only a loss of population, but a loss of potential or actual voters whose prime economic interest is in the City of Toronto. Every home which should be established in the City and is established elsewhere - on account of high taxation in the City, inability to get satisfactory housing accommodation in the City, polluted City air, more room for children in suburban surroundings - means a further disturbance of the balance between residence, business and industry which every urban center must maintain to preserve its own economic health.

A start is being made at rehabilitation of one of the most deteriorated parts of the City. If the City in implementing the plan follows, as it frequently does, a policy of "making haste slowly", the opportunity of permanently re-establishing Toronto as a city of homes may be lost. The increase in home ownership in recent years is due largely to artificial and temporary conditions and cannot be counted on to effect an adequate or permanent solution.

One of the best ways to get more taxable assessment is to establish conditions which will not only arrest the exodus but will attract population. Toronto needs more business and industry, but it needs also more of the people who are supported by business and industry. In the long run it will be better for the City's business and industry to have a large and growing residential population within the City.

Programmes of Improved Transportation and Rehabilitation

Must Go Hand in Hand

The spending of millions on rapid transit to take city workers outside the City, will not in itself solve the problem. Good transportation is essential, but a programme of transportation must be matched by a programme of rehabilitation. Otherwise the forces of disintegration will be strengthened rather than weakened, the exodus from the City will grow, important - not merely neighbourhood - shopping districts will be developed in the suburbs, and worst of all thousands of intelligent voters will be permanently lost to the City.

Planning and zoning on the metropolitan basis and the establishment of a Toronto-York County would tend to establish and preserve a balance between residential, industrial and commercial life in the Toronto area.

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