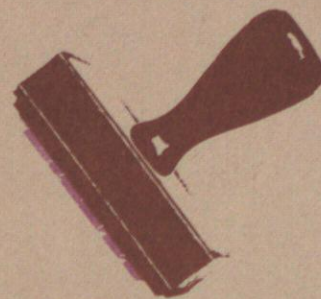




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QUESTIONS FOR ELECTORS, 1976

In this Comment, the Bureau of Municipal Research continues a pre-election "tradition" and raises what we see as the most important issues facing voters in the upcoming municipal elections. In drawing attention to these issues, the Bureau seeks to assist voters in choosing their representatives. At the risk of oversimplification, we have tried to be as brief and to the point as possible. We have limited our questions to the following seven areas:-

- Housing
- Transportation
- Land Use Planning
- Human Services
- Structure of Metro Government
- Financing Services
- Education

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HOUSING

1. Should the Boroughs be required to adopt targets for the provision of low-income housing? Metro has the power to force compliance, but how should the targets actually be set and implemented?
2. Should the Boroughs get directly into the housing business, as the City has done?
3. Do you like the approach that the City is taking in the field of housing? Do you agree that the City's housing programme should continue to focus on the provision of moderately-priced rental housing, or should it also try to make ownership housing available? If the City were to provide ownership housing, should it sell the units and land outright, or just lease the land, and perhaps retain first option to purchase on resale of the unit?
4. What is the fairest way to allocate the City-owned stock of rent-supplemented housing? Should the current practice of first-come-first-served be continued, or would a waiting list ranked according to priorities be better (e.g. current living conditions, health, income)? What should these priorities be, and who should set them?
5. Do you agree with the recent decision taken by City Council on adults-only housing: that where adults-only buildings now exist, they may remain so, but that children cannot be barred by any further conversion of buildings to adults-only or from newly constructed rental apartments?

TRANSPORTATION

1. Do you agree with the idea advanced in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Review's report that we should build public transit facilities as a means to create high density development and not just to respond to existing demand? As an illustration, should we build a major east-west transit facility in order to achieve decentralization, which would direct future growth away from the downtown?
2. If you favour the building of a major east-west transit facility, where should it go? On Eglinton Avenue or Sheppard Avenue?

3. Should residents have the right to restrict car traffic in their neighbourhoods by such devices as traffic mazes, stop signs, speed "bumps" and street barriers; or should such measures be curtailed? (Bear in mind that the suburbs have been designed so as to discourage cars from using residential streets for through traffic.)
4. Should Highway 400 be extended as an arterial road? (The MTTPR Report of 1974 recommended that the Spadina Expressway should only be paved as an arterial road, if the same was done for Highway 400.) And, if so, to where? (e.g. to Eglinton? to St. Clair?).
5. Should we aim at trying to improve the attractiveness of transit as an alternative to the automobile where it is economically possible (i.e. in high density areas)? Should we be subsidizing public transit to a greater extent? Should we restrict auto traffic in the core, perhaps by taxing cars coming downtown? Or should we try instead to satisfy the automobile user through expanded roads in high density areas?
6. Should we give priority to designing a programme aimed at improving the efficiency of the existing transportation system by such methods as car-pooling, improved subway parking, staggered hours, etc.?

LAND USE PLANNING

1. Do you support the Metroplan objective of decentralizing job opportunities, thereby reducing dependence on downtown Toronto? If so, will the City's amendments to its own official plan be enough to ensure this, or are additional changes required? What must the Boroughs do?
2. The concept of Metroplan calls for increased residential densities in the Boroughs (to accommodate future population and to increase economic, cultural and social opportunities across Metro). How can the Boroughs do this? Does resistance so far stem from the fact that in some areas social and community facilities are already undersupplied, or does it hinge on public attitudes such as the unwillingness to consume less space?
3. How can we ensure the continued development of land for public purposes such as open space and recreation? (Previously private developers were willing to provide some public facilities in exchange for higher densities; now they are reluctant to build even when "without-strings" density incentives are offered. And the Boroughs and City can do little on their own because of the tight financial constraints they are now facing.)

4. Do you agree that priority should be given to the planning and development of Toronto's waterfront area, or are there other areas (such as downtown parking lots) which could be redeveloped first, and possibly at less cost? Would building offices over the tracks along the waterfront only encourage commuter traffic via the Go-train, and therefore reinforce the centralized development pattern we now have?
5. If the decision is made to go ahead on STOL, what effects will it have on future waterfront area planning? On attempts to decentralize?

HUMAN SERVICES

1. It is generally agreed that the means of providing human services (i.e. social, health and education services) is too fragmented to meet the needs of the people. How can co-ordination and integration of these services best be achieved? Should the responsibility and authority for co-ordination rest with Metro? Or the area municipalities? Or should it be shared between Metro's two tiers?
2. How can we permit participation at the neighbourhood or community level? Do we need some plan for decentralization of priority-setting and decision-making? One plan proposed by a City Hall Work Group last year called for the creation of elected political bodies in city neighbourhoods to set priorities in the delivery of services and be in charge of administering them. Do you agree with this approach? Would you favour instead an advisory board, appointed or elected, which could advise the appropriate council as to the neighbourhood's priorities with regard to all local government services?
3. Is it worthwhile to proceed with any decentralization pilot projects before co-ordination is achieved at the senior levels of government and before the provincial government gives up some of its control of social and health services to Metro and its area municipalities?
4. Should voluntary and private agencies be made more accountable to the communities in which they operate? How can this accountability be arranged? (We need to bear in mind that these agencies may be very effective in providing services to people; yet they do rely to a major extent on public dollars.)

STRUCTURE OF METRO GOVERNMENT

[The Robart's Commission is currently completing its two year full-scale review of the metropolitan system of government and is expected to report its findings after the December elections. Interim publications and speeches by Mr. Robarts indicate that the two-tier system will be retained, and that possible areas of change include reform of the existing representation system and the role of special purpose bodies. The Commissioner has pointed to the following special concerns: how local and regional governments relate to each other, how Metro relates to its neighbouring regional governments, how human service delivery at the municipal level can be co-ordinated and integrated, and how citizen access to and participation in the system can be encouraged.]

1. Given a two-tier system, what respective roles should Metro and the area municipalities play in the setting of overall policy, the delivering and the financing of local government services? Should the current division of responsibilities be retained? Should Metro's role be strengthened or should the area municipal role be expanded?
2. In the area of human services, how can the system provide for a fair and equitable distribution of less popular community services in Metro (e.g. group homes, low income family housing) and at the same time have decision-making responsive to local (i.e. neighbourhood) claims?
3. How can direct citizen participation in local government decision-making be encouraged? Do you favour the establishment of formal neighbourhood boards?
4. Would you like to see City Hall services decentralized and provided through mini-City Halls? Would it make them more visible and accessible?
5. Should special purpose bodies, such as Boards of Education and Public Health Boards be eliminated and replaced by civic departments? Would abolition of special purpose boards simplify the system? Would it compromise efficiency and effectiveness? Would it increase accountability to the public?

FINANCING SERVICES

1. If new sources of revenue cannot be found, at least in the short-term, should the City and Boroughs help to pay for essential services by raising property taxes? Or should essential services be cut back?
2. If services have to be cut back, what should be cut, and how do we decide? What kinds of choices do we make? Do we build major facilities for recreation, as have been proposed (e.g. more regional tennis court complexes); should public transit costs be further subsidized? should we provide more day care, home care and nursing services, etc.? should we spend more of our money on programmes to support the most needy groups in Toronto?
3. Should Metro municipalities be seeking new ways to finance expenditures? What alternatives are open to them: more unconditional grants from the Province? a percentage of the federal income tax? a municipal income tax? a municipal sales tax? user taxes?

EDUCATION

1. To what extent should parents be involved in school decision making? For example, should parents participate in curriculum development and staffing decisions? If so, should they be involved as "partners" (via such methods as community councils) or should they be "consulted" and allowed to react to specific proposals?
2. What kinds of curriculum and programme changes are needed? Do you feel that schools are neglecting basics and need to return to a more structured system (e.g. more core requirements, province-wide examinations)?
3. Are the schools in Metro doing enough to help our ethnic pupils? Is there too much stress on helping ethnic groups maintain their own language and culture. (A recent OISE study showed that some Toronto teachers and principals feel this way.)
4. How can we maximize the use of Board of Education facilities by the community? What kind of methods should be used (e.g. parallel use committees, community councils, a permit system managed by the area municipal Board of Education)?
5. Do you feel that the steps the school boards have taken to solve the problem of vandalism in schools are sufficient? (e.g. intrusion and surveillance alarm systems.)

6. Are Trustees managing their staffs, both teachers and administrators, in a satisfactory way? With regard to teacher contract settlements, what issues should the Trustees consider negotiable? (For example, should Trustees stipulate that extra-curricular activities cannot be used as a bargaining tool?)
7. Are Trustees dealing adequately with incidents of racial tension in the schools? Do these incidents constitute a serious racial problem and, if so, how should it be handled?

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