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reporting to the public on civic affairs.

# CIVIC AFFAIRS

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## BOARD OF CONTROL CANDIDATES - THE KEY QUESTION

Fellow Citizens:

Even with six acclamations to the Board of Education, Toronto voters must pass judgment on 77 candidates for civic office this coming Saturday. And, once again, the electors will vote on the proposed two-year term for office-holders. On the longer term, the Bureau's affirmative views have been put forward frequently; our November letter carried a detailed discussion of this question.

The present proposal for a two-year term has been getting top press publicity. The strong controversy in the press and at campaign meetings has stepped up the pre-election tempo and will contribute to a large poll on election day. That is all to the good; but possibly the heavy emphasis given to this one issue has siphoned too much attention away from the choice of candidates. For municipal government itself is Toronto's largest corporate undertaking and on January 1st the voters must select the members of Council and the Trustees to operate this organization for them--whether the plebiscite puts the chosen men in power for two years or not. It seems clear, then, that we ought to keep a sense of balance. To choose the most competent men for office from among the available candidates is still the top priority.

The liveliest contest this year revolves about nine candidates competing for four places on the Board of Control. All contenders should be well known to the electorate for eight have already held Council office and the ninth has been an irrepressible Board candidate for twenty years. There are no surprise entries.

It is not the Bureau's role to make a personal appraisal of the candidates--that is for the press and other proper agencies. But the Bureau, as a non-partisan body, can make a contribution at this time by detailing the part that the Board plays in the civic government. This is done with the definite aim in mind that it should help the electors when they vote to relate carefully their preference among the men to the job requirements of a Controller.

Here are some of the more important responsibilities of the Board of Control:

1. - The Board, not the Mayor alone, is Toronto's chief executive. The Mayor is a member of the Board of Control and its presiding officer.

2. - The Board is directly responsible for general administration of the City's affairs (except education, policing and the operation of public utilities).

3. - The 5 Board members and 18 Aldermen sit together as the City Council--Toronto's legislature.

4. - The Board of Control

(a) prepares the annual estimates\*

(b) regulates and supervises all expenditures, revenues and investment

(c) may propose by-laws and consider and revise all draft by-laws and agreements authorized by Council

(d) calls tenders and awards contracts\*

(e) nominates all heads of departments and sub-departments

(f) may dismiss or suspend department heads, provided such action is at once reported to Council\*

(g) may amalgamate departments or sub-departments

This work is subject to approval by a majority of Council. Any recommendation the Council dislikes can be referred back to the Board by a bare majority vote. But in the case of those above items that have been starred it requires a two-thirds majority in Council: (i) to spend money not certified in Board of Control estimates; (ii) to increase the amount of a contract or to award the contract to another tenderer; (iii) to reinstate a department head. In the Council the 5 members of the Board each have a vote and so constitute a significant group in deciding the fate of their own recommendations. Following the requirements of the two-thirds rule it will be seen that if the Mayor and the 4 Controllers are unanimous in a recommendation 16 out of the 18 Aldermen must vote together to upset it.

5. (a) The Board of Control acts as the committee to deal with all matters not coming under the five standing committees of Council--Works, Property, Parks, Legislation and Public Welfare.

(b) Additionally, the Board must be represented on these five committees by the Mayor and one Controller.

(c) The Board of Control reviews the reports of all standing committees and transmits these to Council with its own recommendations.

6. - For two solid months, July and August, practically all the regular work of Council is administered by the Board of Control.

To the five men elected to the Board of Control go sweeping administrative powers. Their choice, then, is not a matter to be taken lightly. Of this key group, the one member whose job is least likely to be underrated is the Mayor, the only one paid for full time service. But actually much of his energies must be given over to ceremonial duties and other work beyond the immediate scope of the Board's assignments. The four Controllers are required to serve only on a part time basis and are paid accordingly, yet they are expected to carry a full share of the administrative load. It is a lot to ask and not everyone can fill the bill.

Although they are quick to see the need for popular control over policy, most authorities readily agree that election is a risky method of filling places on a board whose work is heavily administrative. That, in a word, is the chief doubt about the Board of Control. However, the system is certainly not going to be changed overnight and we must make what we have do its best.

Let the selection this year not be a popularity contest--there is too much at stake. It is up to all electors to vote and to give only the men who are best qualified the heavy responsibilities of a Controller in the City of Toronto.

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