



An independent fact-finding organization  
reporting to the public on civic affairs.

# CIVIC AFFAIRS

## FOR A TWO-YEAR TERM

### THE SITUATION TODAY

1. Within the city proper current expenditures for school and municipal purposes now run close to \$100 million annually. The figure *excludes* all expenditures from the revenue earnings of separate utilities and similar enterprises.
2. We exercise control over this large budget through our elected councillors and school trustees.
3. Half of our elected representatives now sit on both the city and metropolitan councils or school boards. All must serve as well on the standing committees where the preparatory work is done.
4. Municipal councillors also sit on six associated boards operating other local government services. They represent us, in addition, on the boards of public hospitals, welfare agencies, community centres, conservation authorities, etc.
5. In spite of the fact that the province has long permitted a two-year term, Toronto electors have repeatedly refused to give their representatives an *assured* term of more than a single year.
6. Appointed members on all our civic boards, commissions and authorities enjoy longer terms than our elected representatives, who in some cases sit with them on the self-same bodies:
  - 2 yrs. — Toronto Electric Commissioners
  - 3 yrs. — Harbour Commission, Housing Authority, Library Board, Parking Authority, City and Metro Planning Boards.
  - 5 yrs. — Toronto and York Roads Commission, Toronto Transit Commission.
  - indefinite — Police Commission.

Furthermore, all of these bodies perform local government services for which our municipal councils are primarily responsible.

7. Four of the suburban municipalities have adopted the two-year term—Etobicoke, East York, Forest Hill and Mimico. Their representatives hold an advantage over those from the remaining municipalities in the conduct of metropolitan government.

### EXPERIENCE ELSEWHERE

1. In England all councillors are elected for three years; aldermen are appointed for six.
2. Over 99% of U.S. cities over 5,000 population elect councillors for two years or longer. Close to half the group provide terms of four or more years.
3. In only two Canadian provinces—Ontario and New Brunswick—is the one-year term at all common. Elsewhere councillors are elected for two, three or four years. Moncton is the only city outside Ontario to retain the one-year term.
4. Even in Ontario the situation is improving. Local electors have voted to bring in the two-year term in 58 Ontario municipalities—mostly larger urban centres. Seven years ago, the number was only 38. Sixteen of the province's 29 cities now use the two-year term. London, Hamilton and St. Thomas have been the most recent places to make the switch. Ottawa and Windsor did so much earlier.

### THE QUESTION

1. For the seventh time in fifteen years, Toronto electors are being asked to vote on the two-year term. In spite of repeated defeats at the polls, the change continues to have the conscientious support of the large majority of our elected representatives.
2. On previous occasions, the question was so worded that a favourable vote would have given successful candidates running in the same election an extended term. This time, the result will not apply until the nominations and elections one year hence. The change in wording removes a possible objection to voting in the two-year term.

### THE ISSUE

As civic responsibilities grow more complicated, Toronto's elected representatives are being increasingly hampered in their efforts to serve the citizens by the necessity of preparing for and contesting annual elections. Beyond removing this handicap, the longer term should encourage more good candidates to stand for office and, at the same time, enable the voters to judge more directly on performance the merits of those seeking re-election.

### SOME ORGANIZATIONS WHICH HAVE ENDORSED THE LONGER TERM

Association of Women Electors  
Bureau of Municipal Research  
Board of Trade

Inter-Club Council for Women in Public Affairs  
Local Council of Women  
Toronto and Lakeshore Labour Council