



BUREAU OF
MUNICIPAL
RESEARCH

A bulletin issued by the Bureau of Municipal Research

CIVIC AFFAIRS

JUNE 1963

TORONTO

32 ISABELLA STREET

*The Metro Politician —
A Profile*

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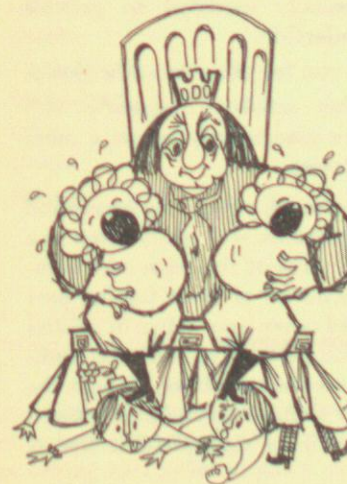
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The Metro Politician — A Profile

FINDING OUT WHO WE VOTE FOR

After the snow settled on the battleground of last December's municipal election campaign, it was decided that it would be both interesting and instructive to find out just who forms the municipal political leadership (or at least the openly active part of that leadership) in Metropolitan Toronto. In this rapidly changing urban environment where the growth of suburbs and the constant influx of newcomers has radically altered the old social order, where does the politician fit? Is he of the old or new order or somewhere in between? What led him into political life? And, to him, what are the important issues?



MR. METRO POLITICIAN

Mr. Metro Politician is a solid citizen. He is married, has a family, owns his own home, is active in his Church (Protestant), and in business, charity and citizen organizations. He is a well-educated business or professional man who is self-employed and has an income of \$10,000 a year.

Mr. Metro Politician, in fact, may not consider himself a politician at all. Often he does not even belong to a political party. But if he does belong to a Party it is the Conservative Party. It is duty rather than politics, however, which attracts him to public office.

Efficient, well-managed government is Mr. Metro's ideal, but somehow he is always thwarted by run-away-taxes, demanding voters, and unhelpful senior governments. Furthermore, he must contend with a public that doesn't seem to know or care how hard he is working. On top of all this his world is occasionally invaded by rich, poor, Italians, women, Liberals, union men and other such oddities who think they too, know how metro should be governed.

It is urged that you give this man your sympathy, understanding and support.

In January the Bureau sent questionnaires to all candidates for municipal office in metropolitan Toronto in December 1962 with the hope that answers might be found to some of these questions. The questionnaire was sent to school board as well as council candidates. In the political sphere the information requested involved political background, party affiliation, activity in community organizations, reasons for entering politics and a selection of issues most in need of attention. Personal queries concerned age, sex, marital status, number and age of children, religion, place of birth of both the candidate and his parents, length of residence in present municipality, home

ownership, occupation, income and education. General comments were also invited.

One hundred and eighty-seven replies were received from the 407 questionnaires sent out. This provided a generous sample, 46%, from which to make some general conclusions. 53% of all elected candidates, including those who won by acclamation, responded, compared with 38% of those defeated. One of the smallest responses came from the City of Toronto where only 36 out of 97 candidates replied, giving a 37% response, which fortunately is still high enough for comment here. The best response came from East York, 63%, and the poorest from New Toronto, 33%.

It is the plan of the Bureau to send out similar questionnaires after each municipal election in the future. In addition to examining the valuable information provided by these questionnaires it will also be possible to determine trends in local political activity. Furthermore, many of the general results reported in this bulletin will be given more detailed consideration in later bulletins.

The most striking general feature of the municipal politicians of 1962 is the similarity of their social and economic positions. As the portrait of Mr. Metro Politician suggests, they are a middle-class group representative of the old Metro Toronto rather than the new. Those who believe that good business methods and managerial experience are the key to good local government are the people that choose to run for office. Generally those elected to office reflect these characteristics more than those defeated, indicating, perhaps, that the electorate still prefers the image of the "manager-business man" in its leadership. The defeated candidates were not that different, however. In fact, only in the City of Toronto is there a sign of change or at least a greater tolerance for differences. In Toronto characteristics of the community are varied enough to allow for more colourful and diversified candidates.

WHY MUNICIPAL POLITICS?

Before taking a more detailed look at our local politicians, it will be helpful to know why they chose to run for office. One man "had the time". Others offered the following:

"... duty of all citizens ... A chance to repay the benefits achieved from the efforts of others."

"The excitement and drama of politics."

"The incumbent would have been returned by acclamation to which I objected."

"I felt that democracy was defeating itself and corruption was ripe ..."

"High taxes."

"The apathy of the public."

"Believe women should take every opportunity to participate in public life."

Explanations of active interest in municipal politics, in spite of diversity, fall into the six general categories below, which are listed in the order of frequency mentioned.

1. Interest in the community and political activities generally.
2. Sense of duty or desire to be of service to the community.
3. Dissatisfaction with and/or suspicion of present office holders.
4. Feel especially qualified to provide better leadership.
5. Asked to run for office by some group.
6. Some other activity (frequently with ratepayers association) led to a more active interest.

Family background, which was considered a possible explanation, was rarely given as a reason. In fact, 64% of the respondents indicated that members of their family, past and present, had never been active in politics at any level. Occupational interest and tradition were not mentioned either, though the dominance of a managerial and professional groups in the sample suggests that this is also a factor.

HOW POLITICALLY IMPORTANT IS COMMUNITY ACTIVITY?

Politicians generally are prominent participants in community activity. This group is no exception. Most respondents belonged to several community organizations as well as to a political party.

The four community organizations in which candidates are most active are, in this order, church, business, citizen, and charity. In most cases, those elected were more frequently active in these groups than those defeated; for instance, 73% of those elected were active in church organizations, compared with 54% of those defeated. On the average, Metro office holders belong to from 3 to 4 organizations and defeated candidates belong to from 2 to 3, indicating the political advantage of participation in community activities.

half of these belong to the Conservative Party. Furthermore, Conservatives did extremely well at the polls. 3 out of every 4 Conservative candidates were elected. This compares with 2 out of 3 for non-affiliated candidates, 1 out of 2 for Liberals and 1 out of 3 for the New Democratic Party.

It is impossible to say how much this one characteristic really influences success at the polls. Officially, political parties play no role in municipal politics and an understandable 88% of the respondents answered "no" when asked if they had received any support, financial or otherwise, from a political party. Other answers, however, indicated that parties were active in various ways in municipal politics. 9 candidates, 3 from each party, said that they had volunteer help from fellow party members. In addition, 1 Conservative, 3 Liberal and 6 N.D.P. members simply

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Community Organizations	% of Total Sample	% of Elected Respondents	% of Defeated Respondents
Church	66%	73%	54%
Business	51	50	54
Citizen	48	54	36
Charity	46	54	34
Youth Service	38	44	29
Professional	37	40	32
Other	26	31	18
Union	5	2	9
None	2	0	4

LOCAL POLITICIANS AND POLITICAL PARTIES

"Tory Toronto" is not yet as dead as has recently been suggested. 63% of the candidates belong to a political party and nearly

answered yes without indicating the form of support. Two candidates remarked that a political party had actively worked against them in the campaign.

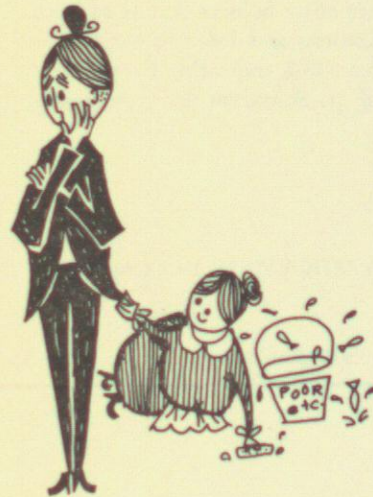
The affiliation or non-affiliation of candidates is shown on the next page.

POLITICAL AFFILIATION 1962

Party Affiliation	% of Total Sample			% of Toronto		% of Suburbs		% of School Boards	
	All	Elec.	Def.	All	Elec.	All	Elec.	All	All
No Party	37%	39%	32%	25%	10%	40%	46%	29%	46%
Conservative	29	35	19	36	53	29	33	30	29
Liberal	21	18	26	19	16	19	15	23	18
N.D.P.	11	7	21	17	20	11	4	14	7
Other and Not reporting	2	1	2	3	1	1	2	4	

There is a marked variation in affiliation between Toronto and suburbs, school boards and councils. The proportion of non-affiliated respondents running for suburban and school board positions, for example, is much higher than for the total sample. On the other hand in Toronto only 10% of those elected to office are non-affiliated. Suburban avoidance of involvement in party "politics" is typical of many metropolitan communities.

The advantages and disadvantages of party participation in local politics is frequently disputed. There is little doubt that some "behind-the-scenes" activity takes place. The merits of bringing this activity into the open will not be discussed here. However, two relatively new points deserve mention. First of all, it is clear that in large urban centres, most candidates cannot run an effective campaign without organizational help of some kind. In Metro Toronto, parties now occasionally provide this help. Secondly, urban areas are becoming increasingly important in provincial and federal thinking and the eventual redistribution of provincial and federal ridings will further emphasize this importance. Thus party policy on urban development and aid will be an issue which local politicians will be unable to ignore. They will have to decide whether their power will be stronger inside or outside the party structure.



MR. TORONTO POLITICIAN

In appearance Mr. Toronto Politician is indeed an ideal metro politician. He is a well-educated professional man; very probably a lawyer. He supports the Conservative Party and the Anglican Church, family life and home ownership. His greatest concerns politically are amalgamation and the decay of the central city. He is disappointed, at times even angered, that his confreres in the suburbs do not sympathize with these vital concerns.

Mr. Toronto Politician has greater worries

than these however, for he has recently found himself doing the most extraordinary things. Last week he almost sold his house and moved into an apartment and the week before he nearly moved to the suburbs. Only yesterday he smiled at the N.D.P. Once he found himself thinking that marriage and large families are not all they're said to be. He has even been known to associate with those with little money and no church; though they have never been seen in his office.

In spite of his growing fears that all is not as it used to be, his collar remains pure white.

(a) Religion

About 80% of the respondents are Protestant, the majority belonging to the United or Anglican Churches; 12% are Roman Catholic and 7% are Jewish. Anglican Church members are the largest group in Toronto while United Church members are the largest in the suburbs. A religious breakdown is given in the following Table. A correlation of religion with political party affiliation produced few definite results. It was found, however, that Roman Catholics tend to belong to the Liberal Party and that members

RELIGION OF RESPONDENTS*

Religion	% of Total Sample			% of Toronto		% of Suburbs	
	All	Elec.	Defeated	All	Elec.	All	Elec.
Anglican	28%	34%	18%	47%	58%	26%	32%
Baptist	4	4	3	3	0	4	5
Jewish	7	10	4	5	10	8	8
Presbyterian	8	7	10	3	0	10	8
Roman Catholic	12	7	22	5	5	6	1
United	31	32	29	19	10	37	38
Other	5	5	6	8	10	5	4
None	2	1	4	5	0	1	1
Not reported	2	2	3	3	5	2	1

*Note that data from separate school respondents has been included in total figures but has been excluded from Toronto and suburban totals because it was not possible to identify them as Toronto or suburban representatives. This applies to all figures in this bulletin.

THE MIDDLE-CLASS POLITICIAN

The average respondent is male, married, about 50 years old, with 2 or 3 teenage or adult children. He lives in a house which he owns and has lived in his present municipality for 15 years or more. His parents were born in England or Canada and he was born in Ontario (35% of the respondents were born in Toronto). Tables illustrating these points are available through the Bureau of Municipal Research.

of the Anglican and United Churches favour the Conservative Party or non-affiliation. Jewish respondents also tend to be non-affiliated.

(b) Education

Municipal politicians in Metro Toronto are a fairly well educated group. All but 2 of the reporting candidates completed public school and 72% completed high school. 52% have been to university, with 42% completing their studies. School Trustees are the best

educated group, with 63% having attended university. This contrasts with 45% for councillors. The same contrast is found for high school completion: 62% of all councillors compared with 84% of all school trustees.

the remaining 39% who are employed by someone else are in professional, managerial, and supervisory positions which, like self-employment, provide more freedom for political activities than do the majority of occupations. In these cases, time can usually be

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION OF METRO CANDIDATES

University Education	Total Sample			Councils	School Bds.
	All	Elec.	Def.	All	All
None	47%	44%	54%	55%	37%
Not completed	10	11	8	8	12
B.A.	16	18	12	12	21
M.A. or 5 years	9	9	9	6	13
Over 5 years (primarily lawyers)	17	18	17	17	17

(c) Occupation and Income

One of the most significant findings of this study is the fact that 61% of the candidates are in what may be considered a very independent position—these are the retired, the housewife and the self-employed, the latter group accounting for 43% of the entire sample. Furthermore, a good proportion of

taken from work without a severe loss of income. There is little doubt that most politicians have an astounding capacity for work; this however does not negate the fact that unless remuneration for positions on larger councils (where councillors must devote a great deal of time and attend afternoon meetings) is increased most people

OCCUPATIONS OF METRO CANDIDATES

Occupational Group	% of Total Sample			Toronto	Suburbs	Councils	School Boards
	All	Elec.	Def.	All	All	All	All
Professional	31%	33%	28%	39%	28%	31%	31%
Managers, Officials and Proprietors	35	32	40	28	36	34	36
Sales	8	7	10	8	8	11	5
Craftsmen and Foremen	6	5	9	0	8	10	2
Housewives	7	12	0	3	9	2	14
Retired	9	8	10	11	9	11	6
Other	3	2	1	3	2	0	4
Not reported	1	1	2	8	0	1	2
<i>Specific Groups</i>							
Lawyers	13	14	10	19	11	15	11
Small Business Men	19	17	23	11	21	25	12

simply have not the time and money required to run for office or to adequately fulfill their duties if elected.

The above factor does not fully explain the preponderance of a very few occupational groups in the sample. The level of education related to these occupations is

the upper income strata. Only 3% of those reporting income earned over \$25,000. Direct local political leadership from the upper financial and social strata which has been so important in many communities, apparently does not exist to any extent in Metro Toronto.

TOTAL FAMILY INCOME IN 1961*

Income Group	Total Sample			Toronto		Suburbs	
	All	Elec.	Def.	All	Elec.	All	Elec.
Under \$ 3,000	8%	5%	15%	19%	0%	6%	5%
\$ 3,000 - 4,999	5	5	5	3	0	6	6
5,000 - 6,999	13	11	15	12	23	14	10
7,000 - 9,999	24	26	20	22	18	24	28
10,000 - 14,999	32	30	35	31	41	31	29
15,000 - 25,000	15	19	8	9	12	16	19
Over 25,000	3	4	2	3	6	3	3

*Percent of those reporting.

probably a factor, as is occupational tradition (i.e. lawyers), and a strong interest in the well-being of the community (i.e. business men).

In all cases professional and managerial people comprise about two-thirds of those reporting. A count was also kept of lawyers and small business men* because these two occupations are traditionally related to local politics. Several respondents complained that there were too many lawyers in local office, but no one complained about the small business men who form the largest group in the sample and represent 25% of all councillors.

Candidates were asked to indicate total family income in 1961 and this was the only question where a number of people (12%) refused to answer. Of those reporting 56% are in the middle-class income category of \$7,000 to \$15,000 per annum; and 50% earned \$10,000 or more in 1961. Of great importance is the near-absence of those in

*Self-employed manager or proprietor with less than 20 employees.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT ISSUES TODAY?

Candidates were asked to select, from a given list, those issues which they considered most in need of immediate attention. Some objected that many important issues were omitted, others complained that all were important. In spite of these limitations the results proved very interesting and a little surprising.

The most frequently chosen issue is "public apathy" (particularly popular among defeated candidates). Nearly half the candidates replying consider this an issue deserving immediate attention and many comments reflect this concern. The 40% turnout at the polls last December fully justifies this concern; as does the fact that 27% of the office holders in Metro Toronto achieved office by acclamation.*

*60 out of 224 elected candidates went in by acclamation, 49 of those elected by acclamation were on school boards. This means that 43% of the 164 school trustees in Metro Toronto attained their position without a contest!

IMPORTANT ISSUES

Listed Issues	Total Sample % of Respondents			Tor.	Sub.	Coun.	School Boards
	All	Elec.	Def.				
Rising debt charges	36%	39%	32%	31%	37%	43%	29%
Rising tax rate	45	44	46	33	48	52	36
Decay of central city	16	18	13	39	11	15	18
Low cost housing	27	24	32	36	26	33	20
Inadequate educational facilities	24	19	29	25	19	12	37
Inequitable distribution of educational costs	43	45	38	28	43	36	51
Greater encouragement of public transport	29	33	23	33	30	36	21
Citizen apathy	47	44	51	36	52	48	46
Infringement by govt. into field of private enterprise	8	8	7	5	8	7	9
Reorganization of government in Metro.	36	34	40	42	37	41	30
Provision of Public Welfare Services	10	10	10	17	9	12	8



MR. COUNCILLOR AND
MR. SCHOOL TRUSTEE

Mr. Councillor and Mr. School Trustee have never been known to get along. Mr. Councillor, who didn't go to university, has never been overworried about education and has

had difficulty appreciating the aims of those professors, doctors, teachers and housewives who keep demanding more money and more frills. Mr. School Trustee, on the other hand, blames Mr. Councillor's continual charges of extravagance on his lack of appreciation for the finer needs of life.

Mr. Councillor qualifies best as an old-time politician. He supports a political party, runs a small business and does his best to control debt and taxes. Mr. School Trustee is not without sympathy, but he must admit that he detects a certain vulgarity in the manners of Mr. Councillor. After all, Mr. School Trustee has rarely soiled his hands by joining a political party; or for that matter by engaging in political combat. "Getting into office by acclamation is almost as easy as spending money," says Mr. School Trustee.

While concern about apathy is widespread, no reasons for its existence were offered. The generally high calibre of candidates is evident from the information pro-

vided in the questionnaires and initially it would be expected that this should promote interest. The very similarity of the candidates in terms of occupation, income, and background, however, may discourage interest in local politics. The business-minded, managerial point of view dominates and it is possible that many voters simply are not interested in the problems of government as interpreted by this group.

The issues most frequently checked, after apathy, are "rising tax rate", "inequitable distribution of education costs", and "rising debt charges". These are basically negative issues which reflect the idea that the primary role of municipal government is keeping expenditures at a minimum; rather than taking positive action to encourage and direct community development. There is no doubt that the above points are important, and that the pressure to keep costs down is great. On the other hand they are hardly the creative or inspiring issues likely to catch the voter's interest or imagination. In the last election, for example, Swansea recorded the highest vote (60%) and there, an important debate concerning the future development of the town (the introduction of high rise apartments), was hotly contested.

There is a considerable difference between categories (Toronto, suburbs, council, school board) in their emphasis on particular issues. In Toronto, where there is a greater variety in the background of candidates, several issues received equal attention. The City's support of amalgamation led many to check "reorganization of government". This issue is important to other candidates too, but frequently their interest is in a reorganization other than amalgamation. Toronto candidates also worry about decay of the central city but only 11% of the suburbanites felt this issue is large enough to concern them.

Another interesting difference arises over concern with "rising tax rates". Toronto candidates are less worried than their suburban counterparts. And school trustees

(who spend the money) find this issue far less urgent than councillors (who must raise the money).

THE LAST WORD

Throughout this bulletin Metro's over-worked politicians have been subjected to a searching examination. It is only fitting, therefore, that this bulletin should end with some of their comments:

"... general statement can still be made there is dishonour, lack of ethics, ignorance and laziness in government. But this level will never rise above the public norm. Everyone contributes to this: press, pulpit and public."

"Basic qualifications to stand for public office seem to be set too low... Time involved, lack of remuneration and desire to avoid controversial publicity seems to prevent many highly qualified citizens from standing for public office... Despite this, it never fails to amaze me personally, how great the patience, study and devotion to duty is brought to bear on educational questions by trustees throughout the province."

"It is my personal belief that too few parents have concern about the type of education their children are receiving."

"Public apathy is a cancerous thing and second to it is the reluctance of executive and able business men to run for public office."

"We cannot lower taxes in a world of ever expanding services but we must increase prosperity and assessment to meet our needs assuming that good honest government and efficient administration prevail."

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BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

Founded in 1914 by a group of public-spirited citizens — operating since then under provincial charter as a non-partisan, non-profit research agency — staffed full time by well qualified personnel — the Bureau of Municipal Research keeps local government operations in Greater Toronto under constant scrutiny.

The Bureau has gained wide recognition as an effective proponent of good government through its bulletin *Civic Affairs*, through the publicity given its statements, through its information and advisory services, and through the participation of the staff in the public discussion of municipal issues.

The Bureau is financed entirely by voluntary annual subscriptions from non-governmental sources. Its members include business and professional firms, organizations and individuals.

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