TORONTO IN THE 1890'S:
A DECADE OF CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE

by

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ABSTRACT
Toronto in the 1890's:
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This thesis examines the response of the city of Toronto at the close of the nineteenth century, to problems associated with its status as a major metropolitan centre. As the largest and most populous city of Ontario, these problems posed a more serious challenge in Toronto than in any other city of the province. The years 1890-1900 were chosen because it was during this period that these problems first began to attract widespread public attention. Three specific problems were selected for intensive examination; aid for the poor, municipal reform, and public ownership. Each of these issues present a different aspect of Toronto's 'coming of age' and the response of citizens to challenges which accompanied this growth. This response of concerned citizens provides an opportunity of observing how a Canadian community tried to deal with these problems and the underlying attitudes which motivated the various sections of the community which took part.

The question of providing assistance for the city's poor which followed the revelation of widespread poverty in Toronto, prompted a discussion on the best means of discriminating between worthy and unworthy applicants. With the persistence of this hardship and its extension into the ranks of the middle class, public attention shifted from the charity problem to the employment problem. Through a variety of schemes, citizens
attempted to ease the employment crisis in the city and the demoralization of industrious, respectable men. It was the revival in business that accompanied the Laurier boom, rather than any specific action on the part of those interested in the problem, which helped ease the situation. However their efforts did contribute towards the development of expertise in the field of relief and helped lay the basis for a professional approach to social welfare.

At the beginning of the decade, Toronto was saddled with a cumbersome and outdated system of civic government. The importance of City Council in directing the affairs of the city prompted concerned citizens and aldermen to try and adapt the municipal system to the needs of a modern city. This reform movement was hindered by a lack of co-operation among interested groups and the lethargy of City Council. When a set of common objectives was finally agreed upon, the provincial government emasculated the scheme. This dependent position of the city was clearly demonstrated when the provincial government, on its own initiative, later introduced a new system of municipal government. This system incorporated the general reform demands for a division of executive and legislative functions. No detailed discussion is presented on the influence of party politics in civic affairs. The absence of private papers, for the mayors of this period limits the possibility of such a discussion. Also, the campaign for municipal reform was based on the premise that city government was business rather than politics.

The debate on municipal ownership presents another area
where citizens attempted to deal with the problems of a large city. The provision of inexpensive services was a basic need for businessmen and citizens alike. Discussion of municipal ownership centred on whether private companies or City Council could best fulfil this need. Support for civic operation of civic franchises was first confined to a small group of reformers who held progressive views on such issues. However, growing dissatisfaction among the business community with the private corporations operating in the city, broadened the support for municipal ownership. Although an unfavourable combination of factors prevented the successful implementation of several plans for civic operation of municipal services, growing support among all sections of the community was clearly in evidence by the end of the decade. This established a basis for future advances in this area.

Thus, during the 1890’s, Toronto attempted to respond to the problems associated with its status as an important urban community. Not all of these attempts were successful, but the discussion which these issues provoked, drew public attention to these questions and laid a firm basis for future action on them.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Approaching the last decade of the Nineteenth Century, Toronto no longer felt itself a compact little city, but a straggling big one, outgrowing its civic services as rapidly as a small boy outgrows his pantaloons.¹

In introducing his chapter on Toronto in the 1890's, Jesse Edgar Middleton dwelt on the transformation which took place in the 'Queen City' at the end of the century. Electric lights replaced gas lamps, electric street cars crowded out the horse drawn trolleys, and the telephone revolutionized communications. Residential districts in the city were provided with gas mains, paved roads, sewers, water and other services. The establishment of the Massey Manufacturing Company in Toronto introduced into the city the 'factory economy' with its large scale employment of men and production of goods.² Torontonians took great pride in their accomplishments. Chronicles of the "phenomenal growth and the marvellous development of the trade and industry of Toronto" ³ carefully documented the visible signs of the city's advance. This evidence varied from the number of business establishments in the city, to the total value of assessable property. It was even suggested that "Toronto will be in the van of Montreal from a manufacturing and trading point in a few brief years".⁴

Yet, there was another picture of Toronto which was less attractive. The squalor and misery which characterized the lives of the poor, living in shabby dwellings and struggling to keep
their families clothed and fed, revealed an underside to the comfort and prosperity of the city. For those unemployed who had no prospect of regular work, life in the city was a trying experience, particularly in the winter months. During this season, many families had to subsist on the food, fuel and clothing provided by charitable institutions. Both of these conditions, poverty and prosperity, provided a challenge to Toronto in the 1890's.

The presence of economic hardship amidst this material progress stirred the conscience of the community. A Christian sense of duty and a fear that a dispossessed class would threaten the balance of society, prompted citizens to provide assistance for the city's poor. To ensure the continued expansion and growth of the city it was deemed necessary that civic institutions operate at maximum efficiency. Similarly, the provision of high quality and inexpensive services was another requirement for the city's prosperous development.

In order to discover how Toronto responded to the challenge posed by these questions, three specific issues were selected for consideration; relief for the poor, municipal reform, and public ownership. Each of these topics was of great importance to Toronto and, as such, merit independent consideration. The diverse nature of these issues precludes a detailed comparative study of municipal reform, public ownership and aid for the poor. However, it is possible to detect a general underlying theme which motivated those who took part in the discussion of these questions. This will be set out in the conclusion.
From the information compiled by the charitable societies, and listed in the city's newspapers, it is possible to present a general impression of the degree of hardship in the city. The presence of this hardship brought a response from various sections of the community; women, labour, businessmen, lawyers, professors, and social reformers. The attitudes of these groups will be examined along with their efforts to promote discrimination between the worthy and unworthy poor in the distribution of relief, and efforts to provide employment for those out of work. The undercurrent of violence which accompanied the persistence of hardship in the city, as demonstrated by the meetings, marches, and rhetoric of the unemployed will also be examined as it added a sense of urgency to the consideration of possible solutions.

Though the Laurier boom finally eased the situation in Toronto, the efforts of concerned citizens provide an insight into early attempts to respond to problems associated with a modern city.

The most important institution in directing the affairs of Toronto was City Council. In 1890, Council consisted of 39 aldermen representing 13 wards. The waste, jobbery, and expense which was a feature of this cumbersome system, prompted citizens, especially the ratepayers, to demand a reformed system of municipal government. With a division of executive and legislative functions, the former to a small civic cabinet and the latter to a reduced Council, it was felt the conduct of civic affairs could be improved and a better class of men encouraged to run for aldermanic office.

The efforts of those who took an interest in civic reform will
be discussed as well as the difficulty they experienced in fixing on either a specific plan for the administration of civic affairs or the election of sound, capable councillors. The impact of the revelations of aldermanic corruption in the letting of civic franchises, which were brought to light by the judicial investigations of 1894, prompted a renewed effort by the advocates of municipal reform to 'cleanse the Aegean stables'. Ratepayers, City Council, and the general public all participated in this campaign to improve the city's system of government. The following year, Council endorsed a proposal calling for a Board of Administration. The proposed Board was to represent a small civic cabinet charged with letting municipal franchises and designed to gradually increase its functions with experience gained in controlling the city's affairs. The relative influence of the various groups in achieving this reform measure will be assessed to determine the source of this thrust for municipal reform.

Shortly after Toronto instituted the Board of Administration, the provincial government on the request of A. S. Hardy, Chairman of the Municipal Affairs Committee, approved a measure which required the establishment of a Board of Control in all cities with a population of 100,000 or more. After initial reluctance on the part of the provincial government to support progressive measures requested by Toronto, the decision to implement a new system of local government requires an explanation. Some possible reasons will be suggested as well as a brief evaluation of the success of the Board of Control.

The prosperity of Toronto also depended on the provision of
inexpensive services, such as water, gas, urban transit, and electrical power. The comfort of the citizens and the success of business enterprises in the city were directly influenced by the quality and price at which these services were provided. This demand for inexpensive services prompted a campaign to have the city supply these needs through a programme of municipal ownership. The termination of the city's street railway contract in 1891 with the Company of Senator Frank Smith, provided the advocates of civic operation with an opportunity to put their views before the public. Despite a vigorous campaign on the part of these individuals, City Council decided to lease the franchise to the Kiely-Everett syndicate. The influence which the supporters of civic ownership exercised on this question and the reasons for Council's decision to lease the road will be considered.

During the remainder of the decade, several other issues touching on the question of public ownership came up for Council's consideration, such as the telephone franchise, a system of municipal fire insurance, and a municipal electric plant for lighting the city's streets and buildings. In each case, the supporters and opponents of municipal ownership will be examined along with the arguments they put forward and the success which they experienced. In outlining these arguments, a growing sense of dissatisfaction with municipal regulation of these franchises among various sections of the community will be demonstrated. The frequent legal battles which the city had to initiate to force the private companies to abide by the terms of their agree-
ment with the city, turned citizens away from the municipal control through contracts and towards municipal ownership through civic operation. The opposition which manufacturers expressed over the monopoly position enjoyed by the Toronto Electric Light Company and the high rates they charged for power, added a respectability to the campaign for municipal ownership. Council responded to this support for civic ownership by formulating various proposals for having the city provide these services. The failure to have these proposals put into actual operation will be discussed and the relative strength of the public ownership movement at the end of the decade will be determined.

The thesis thus examines the early efforts of Toronto to respond to those questions which drew widespread public attention during the closing decade of the nineteenth century. The motivations behind these efforts and the relative success which they achieved will be presented.
NOTES


CHAPTER II
CHARITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF THE UNEMPLOYED

An important feature of life in Toronto during the closing decade of the century was the question of relief for the city's poor. The plight of the destitute was gradually perceived as representing more than just a case of improvident personal habits. Concerned citizens, faced with what appeared to be a long term business slump, saw the need of providing for the less fortunate members of society in an organized manner. The mounting evidence of hunger and suffering generated a serious public debate as citizens attempted to define the nature of the poverty problem and, to respond to the problem in light of that understanding. All sections of the community - business, labour, clergy, women, and social reformers - participated in this discussion. Their attitudes and their remedies provide an opportunity of observing an extensive network of relief agencies in a late Victorian Canadian community and the prevailing attitudes upon which those institutions were based.

Economic hardship was not unique to Canada in the 1890's. The economic difficulties of the 1870's had led to hard times for some. At that time, there was no public response equivalent to that of twenty years later. The newspapers, reflecting a characteristic mid-Victorian Liberalism, did not provide a forum for discussing the plight of the poor and, as a result, public attention was not focused on the problem. The Globe, the chief exponent of Ontario Liberalism, presented a harsh, Malthusian attitude to public relief. Poverty was viewed more as a moral
problem, and the poor were usually characterized as lazy or indolent. A few years later, opinion had not greatly changed. In 1884, the Christian Guardian stated: "We have no faith in the abolition of poverty by any laws that can be made in legislatures... The best anti-poverty society is an association of men who would adopt as their guiding principle in life industry, sobriety, economy and intelligence." Such an attitude can best be viewed against the background of an improving economy which Canada experienced in the early 1880's as a result of stimulation by the National Policy and an improvement in world economic conditions. Despite the buoyant optimism of this period, the seeds of despair were being sown. The economic improvement which followed the introduction of the National Policy raised expectations and many immigrants and rural residents, were drawn to Toronto in search of employment. Thus, when the economy took a downswing in the late 1880's, early 1890's, large urban centres were faced with expanding populations, a growing percentage of which lacked adequate means of support. It was the pressure on relief agencies which this increase produced that "precipitated a quickening increase in new forms of social thought and action among a growing group of Christian ministers and laymen."

This interest partly stemmed from a concern over the presence of a growing class of tramps in the city. In the late 1880's, citizens became alarmed at the apparent increase in the number of vagrants wandering into the city and making Toronto their winter home. Many residents felt that Toronto was the dumping ground for vagabonds from the surrounding country side. The
The attractiveness of Toronto stemmed from the generosity of its residents:

The tramps have begun their winter migration to the cities. They now find that the air of their country haunts is a little too bracing for their leisurely habits... He therefore hives himself to the city where the great heart of charity pulsates more strongly than in the sparsely settled rural districts.

Canada's brisk winters were not as strong deterrents to vagrancy as some had hoped. Having moved to the city, the tramp began an endless round of trips to the various relief centres where aid might be received or, he stationed himself at a suitable street corner where begging might be profitably pursued.

The increasing number of casuals who looked to private benevolence for food and lodging did not completely hide the presence of real suffering among a different group of poor. In 1886, the Globe observed at a free breakfast held by one of the city's churches on Sunday morning, that many in attendance appeared intelligent and respectable. The paper concluded: "There must be a good deal of hardship in the city which is not attributable to any fault of the sufferers." The presence of hardship and privation among residents of the city continued to attract the attention of the city's press. In December, 1889, a Telegram reporter checked with the secretary of one of the city's benevolent societies to get an idea of the amount of destitution in the city. The secretary replied:

The report of the House of Industry shows that some 1,277 families over-embracing 5,556 persons were given outdoor relief last year. Now, the population of Toronto is 180,000, of these 5,556 or 1 in 32 are receiving relief from the House of Industry. All the other charitable institutions of the city must aid at least 1,644 persons who don't get aid from the House of Industry, so that would bring the number up
to 1 in 25. I think 1 in 25 is a moderate calculation.\textsuperscript{11} Mayor E. F. Clarke, in his inaugural address to the new Council of 1890, disputed this figure, claiming the situation was not as serious as it seemed, "I think it is fair to assume that this aggregate includes many who were relieved a dozen times or oftener [sic] ."\textsuperscript{12}

Whatever the exact figure\textsuperscript{13}, it was clear that the winter months of 1889-1890 had presented a serious problem for many families in the city. The need for large quantities of food, fuel, and warm clothing made heavy demands on limited incomes and, the scarcity of employment at this time of year, meant that many families suffered. The resumption of work in the spring on the city's public works and in the building trades helped ease the 'pinch of poverty'. One charitable organization was able to report that they would discontinue their good work at the end of March "by which time those who are in need, will be better able to look after themselves."\textsuperscript{14}

With the approach of winter and the accompanying increased demand for relief, the executive committees of the various charitable organizations met to plan their programme for the upcoming charitable season, which usually ran from November to March. Another bad year was anticipated and, by mid-winter, it was apparent that the city was again faced with the problem of poverty. Members of the Associated Charities, a combined association of private philanthropic organizations, reported that a rush had come upon them in late December and there were more people in want than ever before.\textsuperscript{15} At a meeting late in January, 1891, the chairman of the Outdoor Relief Committee of the House of Industry reported that since May, 1890, more than 1,500 families had been
assisted. He added that the heavy demand on the House of Industry's resources was due, not to an increase in the casual wards, but to distress among residents of the city, which was believed to be from one-third more to double the dimension of distress in former years.  

The situation continued to deteriorate and, early in February, a growing sense of anger and frustration among those suffering from the widespread distress, led to 'direct action' by the men to demonstrate their desperate condition. In response to an anonymously published circular calling for a meeting of the unemployed, several hundred men gathered at St. Andrew's Square, unfurled a black flag bearing the motto "Work or Bread" and marched to city hall. Their ranks had increased to nearly three thousand men by the time they reached the steps of city hall. The Mayor addressed the demonstrators and, amid frequent interruptions, stated that the city was pushing ahead as quickly as possible on the city's public works. The men also heard speeches from several labour leaders, then peacefully disbanded. The following day, another group of demonstrators made their way to city hall and appointed three delegates to confer with the Mayor. The delegates later informed the men that they had obtained a promise of direct assistance by City Council. That afternoon, the aldermen passed a special appropriation of $5,000.00 for the cleaning of the city's streets by those seeking work.  

The Mayor also requested a special meeting of the Associated Charities, asking the members to determine the extent of distress and consider whether any special measures were required. The
chairman of the association conveyed the results of the meeting to Council in a letter:

It appears that there is at present a scarcity of employment and that men really desirous of work are unable to obtain it, or obtain it in only stinted measure. The chief causes of this are the suspension of activity in the building trades and the discharge of labourers from city works. 18

The members of the association urged Council to resume the city's programme of public works. Thus, the committee recognized that some of the hardship was among industrious and respectable sections of the population. They also saw the problem as a temporary one, requiring only the resumption of the city's works projects to reduce the degree of want.

Reports from other charitable organizations confirmed the opinion that destitution was increasing among the lower orders of the city's population. An officer of the Salvation Army stated that they had assisted more than 2,000 families during the winter months. 19 The House of Industry claimed that from April, 1890, to April, 1891, the Outdoor Relief Committee had provided relief for 2,033 families at a cost of $12,600.00. For the same period in 1889-1890, the House had assisted 1,149, while in 1888-1889, the figure was 1,280. 20 This led one of the directors of the House to sadly remark that one person in every twenty was receiving relief from the House of Industry. 21 And this from only one of the many charitable organizations in the city!

The pressing need of those who had suffered during the winter was soon forgotten amidst the renewed business impetus of the summer months of 1891. Even into late fall and early winter, there were indications that the situation was not as serious as the previous year. Charles Taylor, who assisted the Mayor in dealing
with the number of people coming to city hall in search of assistance, had made inquiries among contractors in the city and did not expect any large increase in the number of those seeking relief. This general impression regarding conditions within Toronto was reinforced by the findings of a group of Christian workers who reported that the numbers attending their free Sunday breakfast had declined from the previous year. Among the benevolent societies, there was a return to strict enforcement of regulations after a relaxation of the rules during the period of distress the previous year.

This easing of the problem of poverty in Toronto was a respite not the turning of a corner. The slow season in February, 1892, produced no demonstrations, but there was still no certainty that severe privation would not make itself felt again in the city. This interlude provided a breathing spell in which a careful, detailed study of the entire structure of charitable organizations in the city could have been made and some beneficial reforms introduced. However, without the prompting of increased need for their services, the associations were unable to tackle the problem. When the demand for relief increased, they were too preoccupied providing assistance to consider possible reforms.

The winter of 1892-1893, saw a return to the conditions of hardship and suffering, and again the cry of hunger was heard in the city. One of Toronto's major relief societies reported early in February, 1893, that at the height of the bad weather they had given food to over 500 families who would otherwise have been in a most pitiable condition. Statistics from the House of Industry showed that between November and January, 1,716 families had been
assisted. The average cost of this relief was $7.50 per family and the difficult months of February and March were still ahead.\textsuperscript{22} The benevolent societies also experienced an increased demand upon their resources. The St. George's Society reported that relief had been given to 120 families. From all these reports, John Bailie, secretary of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society, concluded that if the aid given by the private associations was added to that of the other organizations, one family in seventeen was receiving assistance.\textsuperscript{23} Once again, it was the winter months which proved most difficult for seasonal workers. By April, 1893, the situation had eased somewhat and the \textit{Telegram} was able to report that some thirteen hundred men had been taken on by the city, at a cost of $10,000.00 a week.\textsuperscript{24}

The following winter of 1893-1894, the extent of privation and want in the city took a marked turn for the worse. A slow period in the building and other trades combined with an 'old-fashioned Canadian winter' to leave hundreds of families in need of food, fuel, and clothing. The reports of the various charitable organizations told a grim tale of suffering among the poor of the city. The House of Industry figures showed that from the beginning of December, 1893, to February, 1894, more than 2,000 families had been assisted by the Outdoor Relief Committee. This represented an increase of over 250 families for the same period the previous year.\textsuperscript{25} The annual report for the House of Industry in May, 1894, revealed that 2,343 families, amounting to nearly 10,700 persons had been relieved. The cost to this one institution was close to $28,000.00.\textsuperscript{26} Another important charitable institution, the Toronto Relief Society, reported that
it was providing food and fuel for over 1,500 families. The situation appeared to peak in late February when conditions among the city's unfortunate groups, reached critical proportions. The Globe conducted a series of interviews and found that the hardest hit section appeared to be the building trades:

The penury and hunger in Toronto is chiefly among men engaged in outdoor labour of all sorts, but especially in the building trades, and their sad plight is the result of a succession of hard seasons that left the men in a crippled position financially during a winter when not a tenth of the work formerly available had been obtained.

This mounting evidence of widespread destitution in Toronto revealed the existence of severe, economic hardship among certain groups in the city. A seasonal lull in the building trades, and other outdoor trades, had left many labourers short of the necessities of life. The resulting increased demand for assistance prompted a response from the Christian conscience of Toronto, and citizens responded with food, money, and clothing. However, the presence of many lazy and indolent paupers among the city's poor necessitated a careful discretion in dispensing relief, to ensure that only the deserving poor received assistance.

The idea of worthy poor and unworthy poor had been elaborated by D. A. O'Sullivan, in a paper delivered before the Canadian Institute in 1885. In his discussion of "Organized Charity", O'Sullivan argued that there were three classes of poor: the sick, aged, and infirm who were unable to work; the lazy and the improvident who were unwilling to work; and finally those honest, industrious men for whom there was no work to do. The first category was a separate class and easily recognizable as requiring state aid. But what of the latter two classes? In
raising this question, O'Sullivan succinctly described the main thrust of the debate on the charity problem:

What is to be done for the honest poor who desire to better their condition and what remedies can be offered to repress the degrading process by which a poor man becomes a pauper? How in fact can the worthy poor be enabled to help themselves, and how can the pauper and the tramp be exterminated? 29

The danger of indiscriminate charity was the fostering of a spirit of dependency among those receiving alms. The philanthropic organizations which attempted to meet the pressing need for relief, were conscious of this danger, and employed a system of investigation and incentives in the distribution of their relief. The House of Industry, one of the oldest institutions providing relief for the city's poor through its Outdoor Committee, used a board of inspectors to assess the applicants' need. 30 Depending on the inspector's report, quantities of bread and fuel were given to the applicant. The House also operated a soup kitchen with dispensaries set up in several areas of the city. Vouchers for soup could be obtained from an inspector and were renewable on a weekly basis. The city annually provided a grant to the House to contribute towards the outdoor relief administered by the House. 31

The Toronto Relief Society used a work test as well as inspection to discourage imposture. The Society divided the city into fourteen units, each with a secretary, superintendent, and a number of lady visitors. Depositories were located in each district from which relief was dispensed to the needy. Applicants for assistance were required to contribute labour in some useful capacity:

The society applies the work test in two ways: (1) Work is given from the depositories for which women are paid in provisions or fuel. (2) Each season, the board appoints a committee known as the
Industrial Room Committee, who take charge of a central room where work is given to women sent by the superintendents, for which they are paid in money. 32

The work usually involved sewing, knitting and garment making. The Industrial Room was regarded as particularly beneficial both to the women assisted and to the society. It not only contributed to the alleviation of poverty and suffering but also encouraged the spirit of self-dependence among the poor of the city. Women were able to improve their talents and skills in these important domestic arts, while the society obtained garments which could be used by the numerous orphanages in the city. A similar institution was the Ontario Depository of Ladies Work. 33 The object of the society was to assist ladies in difficult circumstances by cultivating their talents and providing them with a suitable place for the exhibition and sale of their work. Besides clothing, women displayed preserves, paintings and other home-made art objects.

The city also had several missions which provided care and assistance for the urban poor. In 1885, William Howland organized the Toronto Mission Union to encourage the wealthy citizens of Toronto to provide assistance for the less fortunate members of society. The Mission gradually expanded to include several branches. The Deaconess Home Mission consisted of voluntary workers who went out to the poverty-stricken districts of the city to give comfort and assistance to the destitute. The workers helped poor families with house cleaning, preparing meals, and caring for the children. For working mothers, the Mission operated the Creeche, a day nursery which provided for as many as 50 infants at a nominal charge of ten cents a day. The
Nursing-at-Home Mission also did good work, sending trained nurses out to visit among the sick poor. Besides rendering medical attention, the nurse would often distribute tea, milk, eggs, and other nourishing food.

In addition to direct aid, the missions organized educational and practical training for the depressed population. The St. Andrew's Institute provided evening classes for the schooling of young men and women. Later cooking and sewing classes were established, so that girls would be accomplished in the domestic arts and equipped to properly care for their families. The Fred Victor Mission also provided educational opportunities through its night school programme and attempted to encourage the habits of thrift and saving with the development of its penny savings bank.

Even youth got involved in the city's mission work. The Boys Band of Mission Helpers had sixteen active workers doing good work among the city's poor. The private philanthropy which the missions administered played an important role in providing assistance for the depressed classes of Toronto. Through their charitable work directly among the poor, they helped ease the misery and suffering which was a feature of Toronto's growth in the late nineteenth century.

The spiritual needs of the poor were provided for along with the material needs. The Toronto City Mission had several roving wagons travelling through the city, dispensing the word of God and cups of soup to the destitute. The City Missionary, Robert Hall, daily visited the poor, bringing them the message of the gospel and whatever food and clothing the Mission could obtain. The Church of the Ascension, under the pastorship of
Reverend H. C. Dixon, sponsored a free Sunday breakfast for all who wished to attend. The meal of sandwiches and coffee was followed by a simple religious service of hymn singing and bible lessons. This mixture of 'salvation and sandwiches' was criticized by some who felt it contributed to the pauperization of the poor. Reverend Dixon defended the work of the free Sunday breakfast, claiming that even the lowest of the low were being reclaimed and encouraged to live respectable lives:

The tramp is after all, a human being, and no doubt someone's son or husband. The question people should ask themselves, is what would Christ do, then act accordingly. 35

The charitable workers who helped these individuals were responding to the plight of human misery whether self-inflicted or not. They were all children of Christ and therefore worthy of help.

Part of the mission effort to help the poor was its support for the campaign to stamp out the liquor evil. The debilitating effects of drunkenness were daily visible to those visiting among the depressed classes. They felt that if husbands and, in some cases, wives and mothers, could be led away from drink, more money would be available for better food and clothing, and harmony would be restored to domestic life. They did not, however, regard drink and improvident living as the single cause of destitution among the poor. It was recognized that wretched living conditions, only casual employment, and personal misfortune could drive men to drink. Poverty could lead to intemperance as well as result from it. 36

This realization that social evils could result from an iniquitous social system represented the stirrings of the social gospel among some of the city's Christian population. It prompted some Christian ministers to try and remedy the imbalance
by applying the teachings of Christ to business and personal affairs.37

Besides religious and philanthropic associations, there were several benevolent societies active in Toronto. There were three kinds of benevolent associations: the national societies, the fraternal lodges, and the occupational clubs. It is indicative of the non-British character of Toronto's population, small though it was, that there were several other associations apart from the Irish, English, and Scot. The Italians had two societies38, the Hebrews, two benevolent organizations and several other charitable bodies39, and the Germans, one40. There were small groups of Chinese and Negroes in Toronto but there are no records to determine if they had benevolent associations in existence in the 1890's. The general aim of these societies was outlined in an address by President McMaster of the Irish Protestant Benevolent Society. Though directed to his own association, the President's remarks were applicable to other national societies. He told the members that "the purposes of the society were to aid immigrants of Irish birth on their first coming to the city, to secure them positions, and to help them become good citizens and loyal subjects."41

Toronto also had several charitable institutions designed to meet certain specific needs. The numerous orphanages, rescue missions for convicts, fallen women and unwed mothers, lodging houses, and free medical dispensaries formed part of the extensive network of associations which took as their object the care of the city's poor and depressed population.42

With all these charitable institutions in the city, many
citizens expressed the fear that relief was not being administered in a discriminate and judicious manner. In an effort to reduce the number of unworthy poor receiving alms and to help check fraud and overlapping, several charitable organizations combined in 1879-1880\textsuperscript{43}, to form the Associated Charities. Regular meetings were held during the winter months, where delegates from the various charitable bodies would exchange information on conditions within the city and the names of families they were assisting.\textsuperscript{44}

With the increase in the vagrant population, and the rising incidence of destitution in the city, the association began to press for a more comprehensive approach to the problem of relieving the city's poor. At the annual meeting of the Associated Charities in 1889, President Goldwin Smith informed the delegates that the city's informal, voluntary system of relief was unsuited to meet the rising level of poverty: "What sufficed for a population of twenty, or even of fifty, thousand, will not suffice for a population of one hundred and eighty thousand with a prospect of further increase."\textsuperscript{45} Smith went on to suggest that assistance for the chronic poor could best be administered by a public body, having the authority to encourage the destitute and discipline the unworthy:

\begin{quote}
It is a great mistake to suppose that public charity regularly and justly administered demoralizes or degrades more than private charity, which through ignorance and want of time for the examination of cases, must often be dispensed with a lavish and capricious hand."\textsuperscript{46}
\end{quote}

The following year, Smith again drew the association's attention to the hardship prevalent within the city. Immigration, strikes, and an epidemic had produced much hardship among the city's poor. Distress was even reaching into the ranks of the respectable,
industrious citizenry. Assistance provided by the city's charitable agencies helped relieve some of the suffering, but could the poor always count on the generosity of the public? What about those citizens who had no sense of Christian duty? How were tramps and paupers to be discouraged?

These were some of the vexing problems which Smith set before the conference. The urgency of these questions become apparent in February, 1891, when the march to city hall took place. At the emergency meeting of the Associated Charities, the members observed that distress had increased and called for a review of the city's charitable system. In October, 1891, Mayor Clarke appointed a Charity Commission, composed of several leading figures in the charity field, for the purpose of "devising means to meet the demand for charity... and to formulate a permanent scheme for the better administration of relief funds." The commission decided to address a series of questions to select individuals, and a committee was appointed to draw up the questionnaire. The Globe drew the committee's attention to the major difficulty arising from the proliferation of private charitable organizations in the city: "At present each society fights for its own hand, there is little communication between them, and as a consequence the professional beggar flourishes exceedingly." The paper went on to suggest that the 'silent poor', who were too proud to seek charity, were not being assisted by relief agencies and it was both tragic and wasteful to grind these respectable poor between the millstones of poverty.
As a remedy for this evil, the Charity Commission considered the possibility of channelling charitable relief through one central body. The idea of a central, charitable bureau had earlier been suggested by O'Sullivan in his discussion of systematic charity. He had urged the creation of a central board which would act as "an alliance, offensive for economy, thoroughness and efficiency of all such organizations of public official relief, and of congregational and individual beneficence, into one co-operative and harmonious body, maintaining intercourse and comparison through one central agency, and pledged to united and concurrent efforts for the suppression of the pauper and the rescue of the deserving poor." Such a bureau would be responsible for keeping a register of all those receiving assistance from a private or public agency. Inspectors would be responsible for keeping a record of those who were in need, and supplying this information to churches and other charitable groups. The bureau was intended to supplement rather than supplant private agencies, thus eliminating conflicts regarding areas of jurisdiction.

The idea of a central bureau was also supported by Goldwin Smith and as chairman of the Charity Commission, he utilized the opportunity to present Council with a comprehensive plan for such an agency. The object of Smith's proposals was to ensure that charitable funds were directed to those deserving of such relief. To achieve this goal, he recommended that the Commission serve as a central bureau for the registration of all cases of destitution. The Commission would relay this information to the private organizations, and thus help reduce fraud and duplication. The Commission was to have authority to compel tramps and other
classes of mendicants to contribute to their upkeep by enforced labour. The actual dispensing of relief was to remain with the private agencies, though the Commission was to advise Council how best to allocate the city's annual grant to charitable organizations.50

The suggestion of a central body directing charitable activity was discussed at a meeting of the Associated Charities in November, 1891. Many of the members were critical of Smith's proposed bureau. Mrs. Fletcher of the Girl's Home Committee told the delegates that her association was decidedly against the idea: "The board would have the recommendation of the city grants and the local committees would be powerless."51 The various private organizations jealously guarded their jurisdictional authority and the civic grants which rested on that basis. They feared that the Commission, in its campaign against indiscriminate charity, would gradually centralize relief under one bureau and the private agencies would slowly disappear. Early in 1892, Smith addressed the Associated Charities on behalf of the Commission. "At present," he told the members, "there is hardly a pretense at system in Toronto; there is nothing but a chaos of diverse agencies, each excellent in itself, and the occasion of much hard work on the part of those connected with it, but each insufficient to deal adequately with cases of prolonged distress, and with but little co-operation or exchange of information."52 The result of such a system was that "families in grave distress, have to go from one agency to another to get through the winter and how degrading this must be is obvious enough."53

The exhortations of Smith were supported by City Council. In
May, 1892, the aldermen recommended that the Charity Commission continue its efforts on behalf of a charity board, so that "the works of the various charitable organizations to whom civic grants are made, could be clearly defined, and a better supervision exercised over the expenditures and applications for relief." The city annually contributed towards the support of charitable works, and the aldermen were anxious to see that the money was spent wisely. A central relief board would streamline the distribution of public relief, reduce fraud, and minimize the pauperization of the poor through indiscriminate charity. The idea of a bureau promoting an economical and efficient distribution of charity appealed to the business instincts of the aldermen. They felt that relief of Toronto's destitute through sound, business methods would reduce the cost to the city, while guaranteeing adequate assistance for the worthy poor.

The efforts of the Commission met the continued opposition of the private organizations. The House of Industry was particularly opposed to the idea of a central bureau, arguing that its Outdoor Relief Committee performed a valuable role in the care of the city's poor and should not be interfered with. Reverend J. Gillespie in defending the work of the institution, stated:

The House has done its work very thoroughly, and although there had been minor failings, the work was done inexpensively by gentlemen who gave their services free. Without a thorough investigation of the allegations of inefficiency, there should be no radical changes in the city's method of distributing charity.

This rivalry among the various private organizations occupied much of the Commission's time and reduced its effectiveness. In the fall of 1892, the failure of the Commission to initiate the
desired reform, drew the critical comment of City Council.\textsuperscript{57}

A limited step towards improving the city's relief system was taken in September, 1893, when Taylor was officially appointed as Toronto's Relief Officer. This appointment confirmed him as the city's 'charitable ombudsman'. It was his duty to see that applicants at city hall were directed to the proper agency, and in extreme cases to give food tickets from the House of Industry's Outdoor Relief Committee.

Taylor's appointment represents the only achievement of this early effort to systemize the distribution of relief in the city. The Charity Commission's efforts to promote a single board administering relief were supported by aldermen anxious to reduce the city's annual charitable grant but opposed by private organizations. The private associations feared that a municipal bureau would jeopardize their good work. Faced with this lack of encouragement and co-operation, the Charity Commission never emerged as the single vehicle for controlling and administering charitable funds.

The problem of relieving Toronto's poor attracted attention from other sections of the community. Since many of the city's destitute were labourers out of work, the trade unions took an active interest in the general discussion which was prompted by the statistics from the various relief societies. From the labourer's point of view, the chief cause of the depression in the city was the lax immigration policy which resulted in an influx of foreigners into the city and a flooding of the labour pool. Many workingmen felt that foreigners were taking jobs away from Toronto men because they would work for less money.\textsuperscript{58} The
hostile attitude of the trade unions towards immigration was
demonstrated by the strongly worded resolution passed at the
annual meeting of the Dominion Trades and Labour Council:

That whereas the continued systematic and enormously
increased expenditure of large sums of public money
in aiding and encouraging to [sic] this country
mechanics, labourers, paupers, indigents, orphans,
and children of vicious, tainted, and criminal
tendencies from abroad, is a gross injustice to
the people of Canada, and more especially to the
working classes. Be it resolved that it is the
imperative duty of the Federal and Provincial
Governments to abolish the same... 59

The debate on the charity question, such as who should
receive aid and what was the best method of administering the
distribution of assistance, generally centred on an attempt to
arrive at a clear, accurate understanding of the various aspects
of the problem. The idea of a logical, rational approach was
presented by James Mavor, an economics professor at the University
of Toronto. In his inaugural lecture at the university, Mavor ad­
dressed himself to the question "Of What Avail is the Study of
Economics in the Practical Work of Dealing With the Problems of
Poverty." In his lecture, he called for a scientific approach to
the study of the causes, extent, and elimination of poverty. Mavor
argued that the tools which the economist had at hand - observation,
induction, and deduction - permitted a close study of the various
factors which produced poverty, as well as the formulation of
solutions to remove those conditions.

Through systematic inquiry and the compiling of the data
obtained, Mavor suggested that a clear understanding of actual
living conditions among the depressed part of the population
could be arrived at. Much of the discussion on the extent of
distress in the city, represented a hypothetical or impressionistic
estimation. What was required was accurate, statistical data. To obtain this information, he urged the adoption of the "LePlay method" of inquiry. What Mavor advocated was a comprehensive, sociological investigation. He believed that any study of poverty, while looking to traditional reasons such as old age, sickness, hereditary destitution, drink and irresolute living, must also put poverty into a larger social setting. The industrial-commercial transformation of the economy had brought hardship to certain groups and something should be done to help these "victims of progress". The results from such an inquiry would help fill an important gap in knowledge regarding the living conditions of the poor.

A second method of investigation which Mavor recommended to his students was the approach developed by Charles Booth.

From Booth's work, he concluded:

It is clear that in studying the problems of poverty, we have to deal not only with those who claim public relief as paupers, or claim private charity as beggars, but with the great army from which these classes are constantly recruited, the army of those who live at or under the poverty line.

Armed with the information which such studies would provide, Mavor expressed the belief that some positive action could be taken to help improve the situation. For those suffering from "constitutional weakness", asylums and other institutions could be developed to meet their needs. For those suffering from weaknesses or deficiencies in the economy, work projects could be devised which would help fill in some of the gaps without further undermining the economy.

Mavor concluded that a scientific approach to the charity question offered a suitable method of coping with the increase in hardship and privation among citizens of Toronto. In an
editorial comment, the Mail praised the work of men such as Charles Booth, and suggested that the "Science of Poverty" would take its place among the new sciences of Criminology, Sociology, and Political Economy. This interest in applying 'academic solutions' to practical problems is indicative of the involvement of the university community in the practical affairs of the city.

Many citizens outside the academic community were interested in the functioning of the social system. In December, 1892, a Conference on Social Problems was arranged to provide for an open discussion on the various aspects of pressing economic and social problems and a consideration of possible remedies. The keynote address was given by Goldwin Smith in his discussion of "Charity, and Its Relation to Social Reform".

Smith told his audience that their efforts on behalf of private benevolence had a role to play in alleviating distress in the city. The sick, aged, and temporarily unemployed were worthy objects of private charity. As for the class of paupers and tramps, he recommended the recently established Charity Commission, as a means of detecting the unworthy and compelling them to contribute to their upkeep. He urged their support for the co-operation of private benevolence and public authority for the relief of the poor and the suppression of mendacity.

Other speakers dealt with different aspects of the problem. Phillips Thompson spoke on the problem of unemployment. He told the audience that the concentration of capital, the growth of monopolies, and advances in industrial technology had combined to reduce the worker's opportunity for labour and robbed those
who had jobs, of the benefits of their own labour. This discussion represents an effort to put the problem of Toronto's increasing incidence of destitution into a social context. This early probing at the industrial system was to become an important feature of the reform thrust.

The meeting was judged an overwhelming success and the interest demonstrated by the public prompted the organizers to establish a permanent Social Problems Association. In 1893, the Association held a series of weekly meetings for "the educational and practical consideration of social problems." The topics considered touched on a variety of subjects: Cumulative Voting, the Single Tax, and Christian Socialism. However, towards the end of the year and especially during the following year, a particular emphasis became evident. The continued presence of economic hardship among respectable and industrious citizens led to a discussion of suitable measures to meet the problem of unemployment.

The women of the city were particularly interested in this question. The large attendance of the 'fair sex' at the Association's meetings was noted with considerable satisfaction. The presence of women at these meetings is indicative of the more active role that women were taking in the discussion and consideration of social questions, charity and the plight of the poor being only one of their many concerns. Doctor Emily Stowe, one of the leading figures in the movement to get women to play a greater role in public affairs, was closely identified with the campaign to give women the vote. Other women were studying the effect of the new industrial system, especially the sweated trades, on
the female sex\(^6^9\), lobbying to open such professions as law, and
generally making the 'moral influence for good', which it was
believed women could exercise, felt in the community.

This campaign was given an impetus when Countess Lady
Aberdeen, wife of the Canadian Governor-General, gave her
assistance to the movement. A formal organization, the National
Council of Women, was established to promote the aims of women.
In February, 1894, Lady Aberdeen addressed the local Toronto
chapter:

> We are called together at this time because there is a
> very great amount of distress in the city... We know
> that the depression has struck at all classes and
> that it is a time when the resources of all the splendid
> charitable societies of this city are taxed to the
> utmost... These people are asking for work not charity.\(^7^0\)

This emphasis on work rather than charity, represents a
shift in focus in the debate on the problem of poverty and
destitution. In the early 1890's, much of the discussion
centred on how relief was to be given and what form this
assistance was to take. With the increase in the unemployment
situation, attention was directed towards the provision of
useful employment for those without jobs. Observers, such as
Thompson, had noted in the early 1890's that the social system
was increasing the depression of the working classes into the
ranks of the unemployed. **Ad hoc** attempts to meet this situation,
through the use of employment bureaus, had failed to produce any
significant improvement in the situation.\(^7^1\) Moreover, the 'pinch
of poverty' was starting to make inroads into other professions
besides the outdoor labour trades. The bitterness the men felt
over their enforced idleness raised the possibility that violence
might accompany the protests and demonstrations of the unemployed,
and added a sense of urgency to the whole question.

In February, 1894, a meeting of the unemployed was held in response to a call to discuss the condition of men out of work. Several speakers dwelt on the extent of privation in the city and urged the members of City Council who were present at the meeting, to give their immediate attention to temporary measures to help ease the situation. The following day, between 300 and 400 men marched to city hall and pressed on the city fathers the severity of their condition and asked for immediate employment by the city for as many men as possible.

Council responded to this emergency situation by setting aside a special $5,000.00 requisition for street cleaning. Nearly 1,500 men gathered in front of the Street Commissioner’s office to apply for temporary employment and within three days the grant was depleted. These few days of labour did not dispel the anger and frustration among those unemployed anxious to obtain work. Another meeting of the unemployed was called and a decision was taken to form an organization, the Toronto General Labourers Union, to press the men’s demands. Some officials were afraid that more drastic action was being contemplated. Gatherings of the men at city hall were threatening to become unruly and it was rumoured that a police watch was being kept on one or two of the leaders. It was even suggested that an imitation of Coxe’s Army, by a march on Ottawa of the unemployed, was being contemplated. However, no violence occurred, and the winter season passed without incident.

The following year, 1895, the employment crisis appeared to ease somewhat. City Council was not besieged by groups of
unemployed seeking work, nor did the charity organizations record an exceptionally heavy demand on their resources. This situation resulted from the departure of many of those unable to find work. The unions reported that many from their ranks had returned to Britain or had gone to the United States in search of work. The departure of these men lessened the desperate situation but did not solve the problem of unemployment. In January, 1896, large demonstrations of the unemployed were again evident at city hall, pressing the aldermen for temporary work clearing the city's streets. The Mayor addressed the demonstrators and promised to have the Street Commissioner look into their request. The situation of the men was again brought to Council's attention in the early spring, a season when a resumption in the building trades and other employments, usually picked up the slack. Council appointed a special committee to look into the feasibility of initiating an extensive programme of public works, such as building a bicycle path to the Island. Later in the summer, the city's Works Committee considered a trunk sewer project which would employ men in digging the necessary trenches. The concern for the welfare of these men during the summer months, was borne out by the serious condition of the city's depressed population early in the fall. In October, Alderman W. Preston told a reporter that the deliberations of the aldermen had yielded meager results for the city's unemployed.

There was practically no work of any kind going on in the city during the past summer, and the result is that now, with winter staring them in the face, they are without the means of purchasing the necessaries [sic] of life. 74

Mr. D. J. O'Donoghue, a prominent figure in Canadian labour
circles, confirmed the alderman's view. "These poor fellows are quite willing to work but there is none for them." Commissioner Jones agreed that the situation was desperate. The men applying for work from the city were from all walks of life. In particular he noted that the business depression had pervaded into the ranks of the middle class:

We have had during the eight or nine months more applications for work than ever before. A large number of those who come to us belong to the middle class, and were in fairly good circumstances a few years ago. Indeed, some of them might have been at one time deemed wealthy. The collapse of the real estate boom, the stringency of the times, and one cause or another, has left them without a dollar. This class are [sic] in my opinion suffering the most and their case is deserving of every consideration. 76

The fear that Toronto was faced with a serious situation was given support in late December. The Globe described how poor families had managed to get by the previous winter through generous grocers and butchers who permitted delayed payments on the accounts of many honest working men. With the shortage of summer employment, the accounts remained outstanding and they were forced to curtail service to these customers. From these and other indications, the paper concluded that demands for assistance would be on the increase. 77

The threat of poverty and destitution had thus spread from tradesmen and day labourers to the ranks of clerks and shop-keepers. No longer was the question one of confining charity to the worthy, although this assistance was still needed, but one of providing some means of coping with the growing class of urban poor who were without jobs and lacking the means to support themselves and their families.
The despair among the unemployed was tinged with elements of radicalism which further necessitated a solution. At a meeting held in August, 1895, to discuss the condition of labour problems, a small group of 'radicals' circulated handbills to the audience urging the workers to secure a decent standard of living by any means at their disposal. The *World* noted that "the handbill is printed on red paper and is intended to disseminate the desperate and detestable methods of European anarchists." Early in January, 1896, at a meeting of the unemployed, William Dunlop gave a forceful presentation of the Socialist platform as a means of solving the pressing economic ills. At another meeting in April, Dunlop was again addressing the unemployed. The fiery radical told the audience that there was only one flag for them to follow, the Socialist flag. The most dramatic evidence of the radical undercurrent which permeated the discontent of the unemployed was a speech delivered before the aldermen in the council chambers. A delegation from the unemployed was granted permission to address the Council. D. H. Watt, a lawyer, informed the councillors that the patience of the people was wearing thin. He warned them that unless something was done to relieve the suffering and misery, the aldermen's inaction would be met by rifles and rebellion. His harangue provoked an uproar among the aldermen, but he refused to retract his words. Watt's opinions were not reflected by all those seeking employment, but they do indicate the presence of an undercurrent of despair among the unemployed.

The problem of relieving the city's depressed classes did not escape the attention of the citizens, particularly the
ratepayers who annually contributed towards the upkeep and functioning of charitable organizations through their property taxes. The hope of limiting private agencies by a centrally administered system of relief was abandoned with the inability of the Charity Commission to provide this service. Still the ratepayers felt that a more efficient means of distributing relief could be obtained. In February, 1895, the Ratepayers' Association appointed a special committee to look into the whole question of civic grants to charitable organizations. City Council appointed a sub-committee to confer with the ratepayers. The Association's main grievance centred on money. Besides the annual grant from Council, the city also lost tax revenue because of the exemption applied to charitable property. The ratepayers felt that salaries and charges on mortgages were being paid in part, with money donated by the city. To members of the committee the injustice of this was perfectly clear:

Many of these institutions are endowed to the extent of \$154,552.44, and they ought not to be allowed to draw on the taxes of the poor ratepayer till the said endowments are exhausted. 80

The members realized that "any attempt at amalgamating existing charities would result in utter failure."\(^81\) Nor did they wish to interfere with the operation of the various charitable groups, other than to have them maintained on a strictly private, voluntary basis. The committee recommended the city's contribution for relief of the poor be divided into two grants, outdoor relief and institutional care. All outdoor relief was to be channelled through the Outdoor Relief Committee of the House of Industry, with due care for inspection and eligibility. Regarding
institutional care, the committee recommended:

There should be a permanent system of the relief provided by the City, and that system should be placed under one management, and for this purpose a large tract of land be purchased and buildings erected thereon, the inmates of which could be employed in cultivating the land in raising provisions for their own use. 82

The members felt the purchase of fifty acres near the city would be sufficient to initiate the project.

Relief Officer Taylor, in a report to the sub-committee, questioned the wisdom of mixing various classes of inmates from the city's homes and institutions. He reminded the aldermen that "in the class called 'fallen women', while human nature remains as it is, no one would be justified in proposing that they be cared for on the same farm although in a separate building, if male paupers are cared for on the same farm, or even on an adjoining farm." 83 The aldermen agreed with Taylor's judgement and decided to postpone action on the proposed industrial farm. Instead they adopted a few minor changes in the allocation of grants to relief agencies.

Though Council failed to act on the Association's recommendation, many citizens were attracted to the idea of a farm where the poor could engage in productive employment. The citizens were also interested in a more limited project on turning the city's vacant lots into garden plots where the poor could raise potatoes and vegetables to help keep them supplied during the winter. The plan had first been tried in Detroit with great success. 84 The "garden patch" programme was first mentioned in Toronto early in 1895, when J. R. Code offered to donate some property to the city for the purpose of having vegetables raised by the city's poor. The city's Parks and Gardens Committee
appointed a sub-committee to study the feasibility of the project. The members unanimously favoured the idea and decided to appeal to the provincial and federal governments as well as private citizens, to donate vacant land for this purpose. The committee recommended that the city supply seed and tools to those who were interested in the plan. At a meeting of the committee in May, 1895, the land which the city had obtained was announced and the plots parcellled out to the applicants. The enthusiasm for the plan rested on the great benefits which citizens felt it would produce: "It would provide work and food for large numbers of needy persons, and so lighten the responsibilities of the charitably disposed and beneficent." The results of the plan in terms of the crop yield and its cash value are not recorded but the success of the plan is indicated by its repetition the following year. In May, 1896, the Globe observed that the experience of the previous year had been sufficient to demonstrate the usefulness of the scheme. The garden patch programme not only dispelled the idea that the poor were unwilling to work but also acquainted a class of citizens with the rudiments of farming practices which might prove useful.

Widespread interest was also shown in the larger project to establish an industrial farm. The support for the industrial farm idea symbolized the 'back to the land' movement which many reformers believed held the key to the nation's future prosperity:

The problem of modern society which more than any other has been found most difficult of solution is how to give assistance to the unemployed, without pauperizing them... The only solution which has seemed to have any practical aspects, whether to the labour societies, which have so frequently discussed the question of the unemployed, or to those other philanthropists
who have taken a special interest in the question, has been that of 'deurbanization' or the return of the people to the land. 87

The interest in such a proposal stemmed from a meeting held in August, 1894, to discuss the unemployment problem. The meeting produced no practical results, but a number of citizens who attended, decided to meet on a regular basis and consider possible solutions to the situation. The men finally fixed on the idea of a co-operative association and announced their plan to the public in September, 1895. The plan called for the purchase of 500 acres of good, arable land near Toronto. Those unable to obtain employment in the city could move to the village community to be established on the property. The organizers planned a wide range of agricultural pursuits such as dairy farming, fruit farming, and poultry farming to ensure that practical experience would be obtained in the various phases of farming and also that the investment could be diversified among several productive enterprises. The project was to be financed by the sale of 5,000 non-dividend bearing stocks, which were to be sold for $10.00 each. A percentage of the colony's profits, after paying fixed charges, was to go towards the purchase of stock so that the producers would eventually become the owners of the proposed Co-operative Industrial Colony, Limited, and thus reap the full benefits of their labour. 88

An open meeting was held in January, 1896, for a discussion by interested citizens, in the various aspects of the proposed colony. J. L. Hughes, the President of the Union for Practical Progress, warmly supported the efforts of the colony's organizers, informing the audience that "co-operation was the great ideal of
the age". Early in February, the secretary of the colony presented the colony's objectives to the Trades and Labour Council and received the endorsement of Toronto workingmen.

The efforts of the organizers even drew the attention of the Ontario government. In March, 1896, E. H. Bronson addressed the legislature on the question of the increasing rate of unemployment in the cities and towns. He outlined the trend towards urbanization and the evils of crowding and unemployment which it produced. As a solution for this pressing problem, he listed several programmes in operation in the United States, England, and Europe. In particular he commended for the members' consideration, the co-operative movement and concluded by moving:

That this House view with approval and as worthy of encouragement any movement towards the organization of voluntary societies in the large cities of the Province having for their object the giving of such assistance to the unemployed as would contribute towards making them self-supporting, by setting them on the unoccupied lands of the Province or other lands within the Province.

In the fall of 1896, the proposed industrial colony was still under discussion. The Board of Management of the House of Industry was contemplating an extension of its facilities at a proposed cost of $15,000.00. The Star replied that rather than spend the money on the extension, the funds should go towards the proposed farm for the poor. The question of financing the project was a vital prerequisite for the commencement of the plan. This requirement proved too much for the colonizers, for they failed to raise the necessary $50,000.00 to start the programme. The reluctance of the City Council and the provincial government to contribute to the plan and the inability of the promoters to raise the funds through private subscriptions, combined to defeat
the scheme. No further mention of an industrial colony was made during the period under study.93

Still, the movement demonstrates that the problem of urban crowding and the resulting scramble for scarce employment was attracting the attention of concerned citizens. By moving the unemployed of the city to a farm in the surrounding country-side, they felt the employment crisis in Toronto could be eased, and the agricultural industry of the province assisted. Also, the beneficial effects of rewarding, physical labour in a pure, open environment would help to check the "physical, moral and intellectual declension, incident to the position of the unemployed in cities."94

The failure of the industrial colony plan represented only a temporary setback for the active group of reformers who had sponsored the idea. With the abandonment of one solution for the pressing social ills, they quickly launched into a new programme to promote reform. In February, 1897, reformers held a meeting in Toronto for the discussion of social problems. F. Titus, who had served as secretary of the industrial colony, spoke on the question of legal reform to allow for conciliation and co-operation between the various economic interests. This idea of achieving reform through legislative enactment attracted the attention of reformers in the city. The following year, at a convention of "social progressists", the delegates fixed on the idea of obtaining the right for citizens to initiate desired legislative reforms as a means of instituting some beneficial changes.95 This idea was the rallying point which unified the convention and the members decided to establish the Canadian Direct Legislation League "to secure for the people the right to initiate legislation by means
of the referendum, whether such legislation apply to municipal, provincial, or national affairs."  

A new direction was also evident among the group of individuals who had been actively involved in the care and relief of the city's poor. In the summer of 1897, delegates from the National Conference on Charities and Correction, an association of American charitable organizations, held their annual meeting in Toronto. Following the meeting, several Canadian delegates met to consider the possibility of forming a Canadian Conference and a committee was appointed to study the proposal. The committee arranged a meeting for November, 1898, at which delegates could consider the formation of a similar organization in Canada. At the November meeting, John Kelso, explained to the delegates that the proposed association was not to be an executive body, but an educational one. It was intended to encourage the exchange of information and ideas on different approaches to charity and correction. By a unanimous vote, the members agreed to the formation of a Canadian Conference on Charities and Correction. The organization of the conference was seen as the first step towards the development of "economical and scientific philanthropy in Canada."  

The enthusiasm generated by the meeting prompted Toronto delegates to make another attempt at improving the distribution of charity in the city. A meeting of interested workers was held at city hall to consider the revival of a charity commission. With the experience of past failures, the members were careful to set out the object of the proposed Conference of Associated Charities. Its function was the sharing of "mutual information and advice, not the distribution of alms or work now done by
any particular institution." In this manner the organizers hoped to avoid the jealousies which had frustrated earlier attempts at systemizing relief for the prevention of fraud and imposture.

This renewed effort to systemize the distribution of relief, was matched by a general revival in business activity in the city. The influences of the Laurier boom were having a salutary effect on the employment situation in Toronto. The increased tempo in business throughout the city, prompted one Toronto journal to comment:

The truest index of good times is the scarcity of a supply of labour. This desirable state of affairs has been reached in Toronto. The City Engineer has undertaken the work of repairing the track allowances on King Street and cannot get enough men to carry on the work as fast as he would like. The same condition prevails in the labour market throughout the city and, if men are so hard to get, a raise in wages in all the industrial trades will shortly result.

This improved condition took much of the sting out of the employment problem. With the reduction in unemployment, the city's charitable organizations, imbued with the beginnings of a professional approach to social welfare, were able to provide for those chronic poor and depressed classes of Toronto.

The question of providing relief for the city's poor had thus gradually moved from a concern over the efficient distribution of charity to a concern for solving the employment problem in Toronto. This shift in emphasis was prompted by the mounting evidence that unemployment was beginning to make inroads into the "middle class". The realization that clerks, shopkeepers, and business agents were willing to dig sewer trenches just to provide food and clothing for their families, stirred the public conscience to attempt a solution to this problem. Also, the potential under-
current of violence which many observers saw in the demoralization of industrious, respectable men and the threat which this posed to the stability of society, added a sense of urgency to the consideration of the problem.

The early probings of social reformers into the functioning of the commercial-industrial system led many of these men and women to suggest reform measures to achieve a wider distribution of the benefits of the new industrial order. In an effort to overcome the imbalance between employment opportunities and men looking for work, they tried to move the excess labour population to industrial colonies in the surrounding countryside. This attempt at "deurbanization" was ineffective in stemming the tide of migration towards the cities.

The business revival which accompanied the Laurier boom helped to ease the plight of the city's poor and to defuse the employment difficulty. Those chronic poor who remained in need of relief were assisted by the city's charitable institutions. The emerging professional scientific approach towards charity and correction, and the co-operation among various agencies which accompanied this development indicated that in the new century, relief would be put on a sound rational basis.
NOTES


2 "It is true mercy to say that it would be better that a few individuals should die of starvation than that a pauper class should be raised up with thousands devoted to crime and the victims of misery." Globe, February 27, 1874, quoted in R. B. Splane, Social Welfare in Ontario, 1791-1893 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p.17.


4 As yet, no clear impression of the performance of the Canadian economy during this period, has yet been established. A. Wilson suggests that the "persistent economic difficulties of the late 1880's worsened considerably in the first half of the 1890's, before the dawn of prosperity and stability in the early Laurier era." A. Wilson, John Northway, A Blue Serge Canadian (Toronto: MacEachern and Burns, 1965), p.57. P. Waite argues that "the years 1885-1887 had not been brisk commercial years", p.191, while the "prosperity of the later 1880's weakened Liberal efforts to promote unrestricted reciprocity.", p.221. P. Waite, Arduous Destiny (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971). J. Saywell, on the other hand, sees the later 1880's as rather gloomy years with a "modest improvement in Canada's economic condition between 1891 and 1893... but a downturn began in late 1893 and the middle years of the decade were bleak." J. Saywell, "The 1890's," in R. C. Brown and J. M. S. Careless, The Canadians, 1867-1967 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1967), p.113.

5 Allen, p.385.

6 The Evening Telegram, November 30, 1890. (hereafter referred to as the Telegram)

7 Telegram, December 11, 1890.


9 John Ross Robertson, publisher of the Telegram, was a favourite target for those looking for handouts. He would start out each day for work with a pocketful of change and usually have it gone by the end of the day.

10 The Globe, February 18, 1886. (hereafter referred to as the Globe)

11 Telegram, December 22, 1889.
Mayor Clarke showed that the House of Industry dispensed funds as follows:

1885-86 $13,466.00 had been spent to relieve 1,018 families  
1886-87 13,266.00 " " " " " 1,076 "  
1887-88 16,999.00 " " " " " 1,296 "  
1888-89 16,154.00 " " " " " 1,277 "  

However, Mayor Clarke made no allowance for the numbers relieved by other agencies.

In trying to calculate the actual number of cases living on public relief, some difficulty is encountered because of the scattered nature of the records. Reports for many of the charitable bodies were often printed in the Toronto papers and it is thus possible to get a general idea of how many people were receiving relief. The figures however, are more useful as a guide, rather than as an accurate reflection of the actual state of destitution within the city. Agencies receiving public funds either as civic grants or private donations, generally kept good records, though the private agencies were not nearly as complete. Most of the benevolent societies appeared to be self-contained units and while there is the occasional reference to the quantities of food given out by the organization, there appeared to be no consistent set of figures available. Finally, there existed what appeared to be a small, but significant group, who despite the severity of their situation, were reluctant to take charity and there is no way of knowing how many were missed by the benevolent or other charitable societies. Also, those who actually did receive relief may not have been legitimate cases of charity and some allowance must be made for duplication and impersonation. Toronto's population in 1890 was 181,215; in 1901 it was 208,040. P.G. Goheen, Victorian Toronto, 1850 to 1900 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p.66.

14 Mail, March 30, 1890.  
15 Globe, December 30, 1890.  
16 Globe, January 24, 1891.  
17 The account of the march and subsequent events is taken from the Globe, February 12-16, 1891.  
18 Minutes of Proceedings of the Council of the Corporation of the City of Toronto, 1891, Appendix A , p.72. (hereafter referred to as Minutes of City Council)  
19 The Toronto World, March 12, 1891. (hereafter referred to as the World)  
20 Globe, April 29, 1891.  
21 Ibid.  
22 Ibid., February 16, 1893.
"For relief purposes, the city is divided into 60 districts, each district under the charge of a gentleman or visitor... When anyone in need of assistance makes application, their name is given to the visitor in charge of the district where the applicant resides. The visitor makes a report on the case and decides what help shall be extended." Globe, December 19, 1896.

In 1893, for example, City Council gave $8,000.00 to the House of Industry as a regular grant and an extra $5,000.00 as a special grant. Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix C, p.25.

The "depository" idea was begun in New York in 1879 and appeared in Toronto the following. Globe, April 18, 1895.

The origins of the Mission are obscure. It appears that a Christian Temperance Mission was established in Toronto in 1879. In 1884, R. Hall was appointed as City Missionary, and he began his work among the poor in the Toronto area. Globe, January 16, 1886.

F. S. Spence, a prominent Toronto jewellery manufacture, progressive city alderman, and active temperance worker, told a Toronto audience that in many cases poverty could lead to drink. Mail, February 19, 1894.

Reverend Charles Shortt, pastor of St. Cyprian's Church, represents one of the best examples of this stirring of the social gospel among concerned clergymen. Shortt preached the need for Christian Socialism which he took to be "the practical application of Christianity to our everyday life." The Canada's Farmers' Sun Weekly, March 28, 1893. Shortt encouraged the organization of unions among female workers, government nationalization of monopolies, and a church "of the people". Professor R. Allen has argued that the urban experience of the clergy during the latter years of the century was not a central factor in the development of the Canadian social gospel: "Although it is possible that a Canadian social godpel might
have developed in response to domestic urban and industrial problems, it did not in fact happen that way." Allen, p.283. Yet, from the discussion among some of the clergy and the attention they devoted to social questions, it appears that in the case of Toronto, the domestic, urban, industrial experience was an important factor. The efforts of figures such as Reverend Shortt to popularize Christian Socialism, indicate that at least some of the clergy were aware of the needs of the urban poor and responded within a religious context to those needs.

38 The societies were: the Christophiore Colombo Society with M. Basso as President, and the Umberto Primo Benefit Society with D. Glionna as President.

39 The Toronto Hebrew Benevolent Society and the Montifiore Ladies Aid Society served the Hebrew community. They also had day nurseries for working mothers and other organizations.

40 The German Benevolent Society cared for Germans settling in the city.

41 Globe, September 28, 1892.

42 For a fuller discussion of these institutions see S. Speisman, "Municipificent Parsons and Municipal Parsimony," Ontario History, 65, No.1 (1973).

43 "The Associated Charities was organized some twelve or thirteen years ago." Mail, January 23, 1892. The charity organization movement was a feature of England and the United States in the latter half of the century, though it is not clear from which source Canada drew on. Neither E. Wallace nor R. Splane indicate the source of the Associated Charities idea. Judging from the experience of the Depository of Ladies Work which appeared in New York in 1879 and appeared the following year in Ontario, it is possible that the idea stemmed from the United States.

44 "The object of this combination was not the dispensation of funds, but rather the formation of a council where methods and plans are discussed and recommendations made, each society or organization being left to expend its own funds in the light of the information received at the meeting of this council." World, January 6, 1890.


46 Ibid., p.4.

47 Globe, October 7, 1891.

48 Ibid.

49 O'Sullivan, p.103.
In 1891, the city gave $83,687.09. Minutes of City Council, Appendix C, p.109. In 1892, the city gave $85,995.33. Minutes of City Council, 1893, Appendix C, p.81.

Alderman D. Lamb complained that the Commission was not doing as much good work as had been expected. Globe, November 9, 1892.

One group in particular that appeared to come in for particular condemnation was the Italians. During the 1891 demonstrations, threatening remarks were made regarding a group of Italians working for low wages.

J. Mavor, "The Relation of Economic Study to Private and Public Charity," Annuals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences, 1893, p.40. The "LePlay method" took the family as the basic unit of society and through a detailed examination of a great number of these units, some basic generalizations could then be made; the family was to be studied under three main headings: external conditions, civic state, and means of existence. The first concerned the nature of place of habitation, whether rural or urban, size of dwelling and other such factors. The second concerned the size of families, religious practices, and such factors. The final category dealt with property holdings, occupation, income, and related factors.

Booth's method, Mavor pointed out, consisted of a detailed inquiry among the poor of London. After devising a classification which could serve as a standard for measuring the degree of poverty, he was able to list the various ranks of poor, based on their ability to obtain the necessities of life.

The origin of this conference went back to the summer of 1892. At that time there occurred a considerable amount of correspondence among the members of the Single Tax League, the Nationalists, and the clergy, based largely on an effort of those involved, to explain the respective positions of each group to the others. As a result of this communication, it was suggested that a meeting should be held at which the clergy and reformers could outline their respective stands on the
issues of the day. A committee was struck to arrange the details and, early in November, a programme was announced. The following list of topics and speakers was agreed upon:

Friday—The Relation of Religion to Social and Economic Questions, Reverend C. Shortt
-How Best to Provide Employment for the Unemployed, Phillips Thompson

Saturday—The Liquor Problem, Reverend W. Fritzwell
-Crime, Its Causes and Cures, Dr. E. Stowe
-Charity, and Its Relation to Social Reform, G. Smith
-The Machinery and Function of Municipal Government, W. Houston
-How Can the Conflict between Labour and Capital be Settled, A. Jury

After the conference, it was decided to form a permanent organization, a permanent Social Problems Conference and regularly hold public lectures on pressing social questions. This was accomplished and a series of public meetings were held in 1893 and 1894. In the fall of 1894, the Conference changed its name to the Union for Practical Progress. The Union originated in Boston and was associated with The Boston Arena. The aim of the Union which the Toronto group joined, was to promote an intelligent discussion of social conditions, with a view to improving them.

64 The Week, December 16, 1892.
65 Phillips Thompson was a prominent figure in 'radical' circles in Toronto. As editor of the Labour Advocate and later President of the Nationalist Association, he was active in promoting reform questions in the city.
66 Globe, December 12, 1892.
67 Ibid., March 13, 1893.
69 J. Scott, "The Conditions of Female Labour in Ontario," Toronto University Studies in Political Science, 1, No. 3 (1892).
70 Globe, February 10, 1894.
71 Local groups such as the Helping Hand Home organized bureaus where men desiring work could register. Globe, June 29, 1896. However, the bureaus were not effective in relieving the distress resulting from lack of employment.
72 Globe, February 28, 1894.
73 Ibid., March 30, 1894.
The Daily Mail and Empire, October 10, 1896. (hereafter referred to as the Mail and Empire).

Ibid.

Ibid., November 7, 1896.

Globe, December 16, 1896.

World, August 5, 1895.

The Toronto Evening Star, October 20, 1896. (hereafter referred to as the Star).

Minutes of City Council, 1895, Appendix A, p.225.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., p.228.

In the first year of operation, 1894, 975 families had been helped and crops to the value of nearly $14,000.00 were harvested. For a full discussion of the plan see, B. O. Flower, "A Successful Experiment For the Maintenance of Successful Manhood," Arena, March(1895).

W. Clark, "Civic Gardens," The Week, March 25, 1895.


Mail and Empire, September 25, 1895.

This feature was designed to appeal to the business interests of potential supporters of the scheme. The Mail and Empire in an editorial comment on September 25, 1895 stated: "It has been the view of the committee that the scheme should be such as to appeal to the business sense of the community, whether by capitalist or by workingmen, and that the idea of charitable assistance should, as far as possible, be replaced by the idea that, given a common aim, unhampered by limitations of over-competition and uncertain employment, honest labour will by co-operation be able to engage in productive industries and make them financially successful."

World, January 15, 1896.

E. H. Bronson served as M. P. P. for Ottawa from 1886-1889. As a Minister without Portfolio he took an active interest in progressive measures. He supported a planned approach to exploiting Ontario's timber reserves, assisted cities in their battles against grasping corporations, and took a keen interest in social questions and possible solutions to these problems.

In 1897 a somewhat different 'agricultural' scheme was attempted. In September, 1897, J. Charles Spence, Chairman of the Canadian Co-operative Commonwealth, arranged for a ten day tour of Ontario by Eugene V. Debs to promote the organization's aims. "The tour is in furtherance of the topics of the association, who have a plan to relieve some of the misery of people out of work by locating a hundred good men on lands in the West, paying $2.00 a day for the work of tilling the land for cultivation." Globe, September 29, 1897. No further reference to this scheme was located.

J. J. Kelso was an active worker in the social service field. He was particularly interested in the question of state protection for minors and was the moving force in the organization of the Children's Aid Society. For a brief outline of his career, see W. Baker, "John Joseph Kelso", Canadian Welfare, 46, No. 6 (1966).

CHAPTER III
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REFORMED MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

Toronto's rapid growth and expansion in the latter decades of the nineteenth century was accompanied by an increase in attention which citizens paid to the management of civic affairs. The extension of municipal responsibilities reflected the increasing importance of the municipal sphere of activity. The actions of City Council were beginning to form an administrative 'web', touching the interests and comfort of the citizen at several major points.

With scientific advances in the fields of lighting, heating, urban transit, and communications, City Council was called upon to provide a measure of control and regulation over the manner which these services were delivered to the community. This required careful negotiation between the city and large corporations in deciding the conditions on which these companies could operate in the city. The quality of services provided, thus often depended on how effective a bargain the aldermen could strike with the company concerned.

Municipal government also had an important role to play in the business affairs of the city. Council, through its committees and administrative departments, controlled the assessment of property values, the levying of municipal taxes, the construction of paved roads and sidewalks, the provision of police and firefighting services, and thus, could materially influence the business climate of the city. Through a favourable regulation of water rates and property taxes, Council could act to induce manufacturing and other concerns to locate in the city.
Besides the comfort and prosperity of the community, City Council was also responsible for the health of the citizens. Such basic needs as pure water, removal of sewage, clean streets, and spacious parks and gardens where the city's residents might enjoy the benefits of fresh, clean air were of prime concern to all.

Another area where Council had a role to play was in the maintenance of the general Christian character of Toronto. An adequate and efficient police force could reduce crime and vice, while the enforcement of by-laws, such as those prohibiting indecent shows, requiring the use of a curfew bell, and preventing Sunday amusements, could serve to upgrade the 'moral character' of city life. The Council also felt an obligation to provide for the less fortunate of the city, and annually set aside a large charitable grant for the care of the sick and poor.

With the city's municipal government performing all of these functions, it was deemed essential for the growth and well-being of Toronto, that the system of local government perform economically and efficiently. These goals could best be achieved, it was believed, by viewing the corporation of Toronto as if it were a business operation to be run on sound, business principles. Herbert Ames, speaking before a Toronto audience, dwelt on this theme, calling attention to "the British idea as set forth by Joseph Chamberlain, namely, than the municipal corporation is a joint stock company, in which the aldermen are the directors and the citizens the shareholders." This corporate analogy remained an important feature of the municipal reform movement. However, there were other themes which formed a part of the campaign to improve the practice of municipal government. Women, labour, and
other groups attempted to interest the city fathers in extending the franchise, broadening Council's representation, and responding to reform issues.

Municipal reform then, represented a multi-faceted campaign operating at the civic level. A desire to streamline municipal practice, improve efficiency and reduce cost by adopting business principles, the desire to promote reform to ensure material growth and prosperity, and the zeal of reform groups aiming at the removal of injustice all figured in the campaign for reformed civic government.

Toronto's municipal system in 1890 consisted of a Mayor, elected from the whole city, and thirty-nine aldermen, three each being returned from the city's thirteen wards. Several standing committees prepared reports which were approved by the Executive Committee, then passed on to the whole of City Council for final acceptance. There were several departments associated with the civic government, Assessment, Legal, Water Works, Engineering, and Treasury, with each headed by an official appointed by Council and charged with overseeing the workings of the department.

This system was based on the corporation's charter of 1834. In that year, Hon. H. H. J. Bolton, Solicitor-General for Upper Canada and also a prominent resident of Toronto, succeeded in getting an Act of Incorporation passed by the Upper Canadian Assembly. Under this charter, the city had been divided into five wards, each to elect two aldermen and two common councillors. The Mayor had then been selected from among the aldermen.3 Though the duties of the Council, in comparison with more modern
urban government were of a limited nature, the recognition of 'Home Rule' for the city represented a major achievement for the forces pushing for greater local control of local affairs.

The basic rights and duties of the Corporation of Toronto were set out in the charter of 1834. While two major modifications in the municipal system of the Province of Canada were undertaken in 1841 and again in 1849, these acts were primarily concerned with establishing District Councils for counties, townships, and other unincorporated areas, and seeing that there were no discrepancies between urban and county systems. The 1849 Municipal Corporations Act, as far as cities like Toronto were concerned, was of minor importance. Robert Baldwin, as sponsor of the bill, "had very little to do in order to bring the provisions for urban authorities into line with the general principles of his Act, other than to provide a uniform basis for both towns and cities, and to remove the limitations on their power to tax."4

Growth and expansion, two key features of Toronto's history, made their mark on the city and necessitated periodic charges. In 1847 and again in 1853, new wards were created, bringing the total number of wards to seven. The city also experimented with a different system of ward representation. In 1849 each ward was to be represented by only one aldermen and two councillors but, this system was found to be impractical, and was changed back to the previous system the following year. In 1857, the municipal campaign was accompanied by some electoral difficulty and the Council lacked a full complement of members.5 Disregarding this situation, the Council went ahead
and selected a Mayor. The outcome of this difficulty was a request by the Council, for an amendment to the city's charter to permit the election of the Mayor by the people, and also to abolish the distinction between aldermen and councillors. This method of selecting the Mayor prevailed until 1866, when the Government of the United Canadas returned the selection of the Mayor once more to the Council. This system continued till 1873 when the Municipal Act was consolidated and provision was made for the election of the Mayor and aldermen by the people.

Though the Mayor now became a popularly elected official, his influence and authority in directing the affairs of the city remained somewhat limited. Though he might undertake particular programmes or initiate certain reforms, it was up to the whole of the Council to finally approve any changes. Thus, the Mayor's role was largely titular, such as signing bills into law and making applications on behalf of the city. However, it appears that in the 1880's, the leadership of Mayor W. H. Howland introduced an alteration in the position of the Mayor.

From being a mere President of the Council and dispenser of civic charity, the Mayor was to be henceforth, an active participant in the government of the city.

This active participation on the part of Mayor Howland was largely directed towards curbing the expanding drink traffic of the city. A great 'moral reform' campaign was conducted by the Howland forces to reduce the incidence of intemperance and the vices which followed from it. However, no changes in the system of municipal government were made during Howland's two terms and the accumulating administrative difficulties were left for
the new Mayor, E. F. Clarke, to deal with.

These weaknesses in the administration of civic affairs were becoming evident in several departments of the civic government. The mismanagement of the Water Works Department, through poorly supervised construction and operation of important equipment, posed a direct threat to the health of the citizens; and, the dangers of an outbreak of cholera were ever present. In conjunction with this, the Health Department was criticized for not maintaining a close check on the quality of water provided for use by the city and for failing to keep a detailed record of expenditure of the department's funds.

The Works Department was charged with failing to obtain full value for the contracts which it let out to private companies. Poor grade materials and careless workmanship often meant a very short life-span for sewers, streets, and sidewalks and these would have to be constantly repaired at further expense to the city. It was also suspected that favouritism and 'pull' were used to secure contracts from the city. Information which came to light in the Godson trial suggests a system of bribery and graft in the letting of some of the city's contracts.

The Assessment Department represented another area where the city was getting less than full value. Semi-autonomous assessors would go out and valuate property in the various wards of the city and again it was felt that influence could serve to reduce one's assessment rate and thus lower taxes, thereby reducing the city's revenue.

City Council also came in for criticism in its handling of negotiations with the Canadian Pacific Railway over the question
of running rights along the city's waterfront. Many citizens felt that Council was not taking a strong enough stand against the railway and thus formed a 'citizens' committee' to work with the Council to defend Toronto's interests.

While there were major complaints against the manner in which the various departments were managed, the brunt of opposition was directed towards City Council. Criticism was especially centred on those 'sidewalk aldermen' who had approved the paving, lighting, and extension of municipal services to those relatively uninhabited areas of the city where they happened to hold property, thus increasing the value of their real estate investment:

The real estate contingent was large in Council and many a questionable transaction took place with the object of adding a few dollars to the value of real estate aldermen's property. The days of such practices are gone, but the legacy of extended municipal borders, loosely built suburbs with paved streets, schools, police and firemen administering to a sparse population, remains. It is this legacy that is the real cause of the cry for civic reform among a great many overburdened citizens. 10

The Mail remarked that "the real estate element is another feature of the council of which electors should be aware. It is probably as hard for a real estate speculator to be a just and straight member of a city council as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." 11

Much of the criticism of civic administration was directed at the system of municipal government practiced in Toronto. The Mail noted, "an incapable Council is bound to result from a defective municipal system, and that in order to secure men of ability and unquestioned probity to the Council, the system must
be revolutionized." 12 John Galt, a prominent citizen of Toronto, summed up the situation in an interview with a city reporter:

The time has come for a change. The present system has been proved and found wanting all along the line. It is entirely rotten, and is unworthy of Toronto. 13

If the system was characterized as rotten to the core, it was felt that the core of municipal government, the ward system, was responsible. One Toronto newspaper remarked that "the ward system is responsible for more jobbery, more scheming, more robbery of one part of the city to benefit another than any other inequality in the city government." 14 The Globe, in the fall of 1890, ran a series of editorials titled "What Our Masters Cost Us", pointing out abuses and weaknesses in the municipal system. One feature in particular which it singled out was the ward system. Commenting on the "municipal machine", the paper stated:

The ward system is a failure and until it is abolished the municipal government of the city will be simply a huge cumbersome machine, involving both waste and jobbery. Let the citizens unite in demanding a reconstruction of Council, including the abolition of the ward system. 15

The difficulty with the ward system was the kind of practices which resulted from aldermen trying to secure favourable advantages for their areas. Council members often 'traded' votes to ensure that public works projects and other 'plums' would be distributed to their wards. The ward system also encouraged the proliferation of committees to ensure that each ward received at least one chairmanship. Supporters and campaign workers of the various aldermen required 'favours' and the civic payrolls were swollen with supporters working as clerks, inspectors, and
other civic officials. To maintain such a cumbersome and inefficient operation required an ever-increasing supply of funds. The increase in the city's assessment rate during the early 1890's prompted citizens to demand an end to extravagance and waste.

Another weakness in the municipal system was Council's inability to fix responsibility and authority for its policies. The various committees, departments, and boards were not always unified behind a single programme, and at times appeared to be working at cross purposes. One city alderman tersely summed up the situation with the comment:

At present there is no definite authority. The heads of departments and the aldermen exercise a joint control and the result is often changed positions, inefficient work, the retention of men who are practically useless, and general confusion. 16

One general remedy which was widely supported as a means of solving this problem was the division of the legislative from the executive function to eliminate much of the confusion and lack of uniformity which characterized city affairs. However, while the feeling that something must be done might animate the citizens, council members were reluctant to disturb the civic machinery.

As far back as 1879-1880, Mayor J. Beatty had prepared a charter which proposed a longer term for the Mayor and aldermen, executive and legislative branches, the former comprising the aldermen, the latter the Mayor and heads of departments. No action was taken on the proposal. Six years later, Alderman Defoe, Chairman of the Executive Committee, had suggested a
reduction of the city's wards to nine, with three aldermen per ward, but this suggestion aroused little enthusiasm. Such a scheme, while it might reduce the cumbersome nature of an unwieldy Council, was no guarantee that 'undue influence' would not still pervade City Council.

The reform spirit was not totally defunct in the city. In the 1886 mayoralty election, a Municipal Reform Association was formed to aid the campaign of W. H. Howland. The main thrust of this reform push was centred on the liquor question with the Howland supporters lining up on the side against the 'whiskey interests' as represented by candidate Manning. Howland was successful at the polls and, while he reduced the number of unlicensed 'grog shops' from two hundred to eighteen and undertook some development projects, no real modification of the municipal system was attempted. Moreover, the burst of reform enthusiasm proved to be short lived. In the election of 1888, Elias Rogers, who was endorsed by Howland, failed to gain election. Instead the contest was won by E. F. Clarke, Conservative Toronto M. P. P., editor of the Orange Sentinel, and leading figure in the Orange Lodge. Clarke's victory was seen as a return to a 'machine' brand of municipal government, with influence in secret societies and political associations being the deciding factor in obtaining influence at city hall.

The Ontario provincial government also took an interest in the question of municipal government. In 1887, the Mowat Ministry set up a Government Commission under W. Houston, T. Anglin, and E. Johnston, to investigate and report on the practice of governing municipalities. The Commission presented
two detailed reports which described the various systems of municipal government in existence in Canada, the United States, England, and some European countries. The reports contained a large body of information, but were guarded and imprecise when offering possible recommendations for municipal practice in Ontario. As an attempt to "examine the municipal institutions of the province and of other countries to see if improvements could be made at home in light of experience elsewhere, the Commission was a failure." The Globe concluded that "the Commission had demonstrated that one city's meat is another city's poison." It thus appeared that any initiative on this question would have to come from the cities themselves. It was left to local councillors and influential citizens to organize a movement for civic reform.

One such movement which emerged in the city of Toronto was the Citizens' Association. The Association was formed by a number of leading Toronto citizens and was originally designed to assist the Board of Trade, City Council, and the Toronto Trades and Labour Council in trying to settle the Esplanade difficulty with the Canadian Pacific Railway. The discussion of this broader civic issue helped to promote an interest in the affairs of the whole city rather than particular ward grievances. With this larger perspective, many citizens were able to recognize a common interest in working for an improvement in the management of civic affairs.

This interest in civic issues was of particular importance as it was felt that the reform thrust would have to come from outside of the Council. Many citizens argued that it was fool-
hardy to expect men to legislate out of existence the system to which many of them owed their election to Council. This idea that reform would have to come from outside of Council was emphasized by one of the popular councillors, Alderman J. Boustead:

It is idle to expect any change for the better in civic administration to be inaugurated by the civic authorities. Reform must come from the outside. 21

E. E. Sheppard, editor of Saturday Night and leading figure in political and literary circles in Toronto, suggested that the citizens' group should meet and resolve itself into another organization with municipal reform and improved civic administration as its goal. 22

The President of the Citizens' Association, D. Thompson, declared himself in favour of reforming the system of municipal government, however, he was reluctant to see the Association get directly involved in municipal campaigns. He felt that if the Association supported a particular slate of candidates or a certain plan of reform it would become the object of infiltration by various aldermen. Thompson was conscious of the fact that the Philadelphia Citizens' Association, which appeared to be the model of the Toronto group, had been wrecked by nominating candidates. "When that business was taken in hand, it became an object with the wire-pullers to belong to the Association." 23

Many citizens looked upon the Association as the nucleus of an organization providing leadership in the campaign for reform. The reluctance of the Citizens' Association to act in this capacity did not augur well for a vigorous, united municipal reform movement successfully carrying through a programme of civic improvement.
Within Council itself, some members expressed an interest in the recent agitation among the citizens regarding the question of improving the administration of civic affairs. While Council as a whole might be reluctant to tackle the question, individual aldermen were attempting to provide some sort of solution to the difficulty. One alderman in particular who served as a catalyst in this direction was Earnest Albert Macdonald. On October 16, 1889, the Legislative Committee of City Council met to discuss a scheme proposed by Macdonald to reform city government. Essentially, his plan called for six paid commissioners to act as an executive in conducting the city's business. The commissioners, along with the Mayor, were to initiate projects, sign for contracts, and be in charge of hiring and firing civic employees. They were to be selected by the Mayor and approved by Council. As well, their plans and programmes were to be ratified by two-thirds of City Council. Generally, the comments provoked by this idea were of a subdued nature. There was some debate about committee chairmen serving instead of commissioners and also abolition of property qualifications but, after a few minor alterations, the plan was accepted. In November, the whole of City Council met to consider Macdonald's scheme. Not all the councillors were enthusiastic about the idea. Alderman J. Baxter remarked that "if the Council endorsed the principle of paid Commissioners, they would be stamping themselves as imbeciles. He was not prepared to give way to paid hirelings." Mayor Clarke raised the question of the relationship between the heads of the various departments and the Commissioners. In this he was supported by Alderman McDougall, who felt that to endorse
such a principle was to display a want of confidence in popular government. The meeting did not come to any agreement save that a special committee should be set up to look into the question.

Early in December, the committee under the chairmanship of Alderman J. Tait, met to discuss the question of civic reform. At this meeting another scheme was presented by Alderman G. Gillespie. In presenting his plan to the committee, Gillespie pointed out the major defects of the existing system:

There are three prominent defects connected with our present system; a disposition to elevate the ward above the city, lack of continuity of policy, and an absence of that feeling of personal responsibility among the people's representatives, without which efficient civic government is impossible. 26

As a remedy, he suggested eight wards returning two aldermen for a term of two years, one to retire annually. Eight other aldermen were to act as chairmen of the various committees and be elected for three year terms from the city at large. The Mayor and eight aldermen were to act as an advisory board and an executive, while the Council, now presided over by a President, would act as a legislative body passing or rejecting bills presented to it by the Executive Board.

City Council decided to have the scheme printed for further consideration by the aldermen. However, one aldermen had reached a decision as to the wisdom of the plan. Alderman C. Denison, a staunch supporter of the imperial connection, felt that "it was worse than a Yankee dodge. If adopted, it would place the city in the hands of rings and a state of affairs would exist worse than the Tammany regime in New York." 27

The publication of this proposed alteration in the structure
of civic government was of great interest to those citizens who were concerned about the state of affairs in the city. The Globe remarked that civic reform had become a frequent topic and was pleased to note that the question had taken hold on the public mind as a matter of first importance. However, City Council found it hard to sustain any momentum on the topic and at a meeting of the special Civic Reform Committee held in December, only five members of the fourteen member committee bothered to make an appearance.

The issue of civic reform did emerge as one of the issues in the municipal election and Mayor Clarke commented on the question in his nomination speech. In outlining his view on the issue, Clarke showed a preference for the British system of permanent executive department heads as opposed to the American system of popularly elected executive officers and department heads.

The mayor believes the remedy needed is to place in their [i.e. department heads] hands, full control of their department, rid them of aldermanic interference, making the Aldermanic position a legislative one pure and simple, and then demand of the officials results corresponding to the powers placed in their hands. The result of the mayoralty contest was a victory for Mayor Clarke. The incumbency, the Catholic and Orange vote, and the general acceptance of Clarke's stewardship, combined to give the Mayor a sizeable majority. The general question of streamlining city government served as a backdrop for the electoral contest, but the Mayor did not regard his return as a mandate for any dramatic changes. Indeed, in his inaugural address to the new Council in January, 1890, the question of
civic reform was not even discussed. However, at the first meeting of City Council, a special committee was struck to consider and report to the Council, "a scheme for the better administration of the affairs of Toronto."  

The first meeting of the new committee took place in early February. The main proposal put forward was the motion of Alderman J. Leslie, calling for the division of the city into nine wards, running north to south, each electing three aldermen. Alderman Gillespie protested, arguing that the evils complained of would persist. He preferred to see eight wards with at least half of the Council elected at large by the whole city. However, the motion passed and the scheme was sent on to the surveyor's office. Despite the volume of debate both within and without Council, the proliferation of schemes, and countless editorials in the press, the general plan of civic reform which was to emerge in the early 1890's, did not depart significantly from the general outline contained in Alderman Leslie's motion.

This approach to civic reform was confirmed early in April when the Ontario Legislature passed an amendment to the Municipal Act, stating that in cities of Ontario with over one hundred thousand population,

upon the receipt of a petition signed by 500 ratepayers, the City Council shall decrease the number of the city's wards. Should the City Council ignore the petition, the Lieutenant Governor in Council, shall issue a Commission which shall alter, rearrange, and decrease the city wards and the action of the Commission shall be final. 31

It was hoped that this would spur on the civic reform committee which after its initial enthusiasm in February, had slipped into the doldrums. A sub-committee report prepared by Macdonald,
again advocating paid commissioners, had provoked very little response. Alderman F. Moses commented: "The objections to paid commissioners is [sic] the expense and the fact that men would spend large sums to secure their election, leaving themselves in the power of those who supported them."  

The question was left over till early July when the committee met again. At this meeting, the schemes as drawn up by Gillespie and Macdonald were put forward for debate, but the committee held to its original decision calling for the division of the city into nine wards. As the Telegram noted, "The merits of the various schemes were not gone into." A few days later, the committee met with the City Surveyor to finalize the new divisions within the city and, after the boundaries had been decided on, the scheme was accepted. When one alderman jocularly asked whose plan had been successful in getting the approval of the committee, Alderman Macdonald replied, "it is a mongrel scheme adopted by nobody."  

The scheme had indeed fallen short of the expectations of many. R. Glocking, President of the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, and leading figure in labouring circles in Toronto, had favoured a removal of the wards and the baneful influence they exerted, and in their place, a reduced number of aldermen, who were to be elected from the city at large. Together with a more liberal franchise, he felt such changes would promote representation of all classes. However, further discussion on the plan was postponed as the aldermen took their summer vacation. With the approach of fall, and the seasonal increase in the tempo of business at city hall, the issue was again put to the
fore. The *Globe* continued its editorials against the evils of the ward system and the waste and jobbery which accompanied it. The continued unhealthy state of the city's water supply, the water works muddle, the unsatisfactory progress of Esplanade negotiations, all demonstrated the current weakness of the municipal machinery.

This state of affairs was given dramatic demonstration when late in October, Alderman Boustead, a sound and able administrator, tendered his resignation to Council as a means of demonstrating his displeasure with its conduct of civic business. The loss of men of his calibre from Council was viewed as a serious commentary on the deplorable conditions evident at city hall. In light of these developments, the Civic Reform Committee called an important meeting of its members to consider possible remedies to the difficulties besetting the city. A comprehensive and radical plan for restructuring the whole system of municipal government was given general approval by the committee. The suggestion of such sweeping changes caused some concern among the more cautious observers of civic affairs. The *Telegram* stated:

> A mere alteration of civic attire is not necessarily beneficial. There are changes and changes. Some are improvements and others are only changes. The wearer is not benefitted by putting off one dirty suit of linen and putting on another... The crazy-patch scheme which Chairman E. A. Macdonald identifies himself with is a farce. The civic government is not to be purified, cleansed, or rendered efficient by the acceptance of proposals to lengthen the aldermanic term to three years... Alderman Macdonald's change would allow two years for sin and one for repentance.

The *Telegram* remained reluctant to actively support organic
change of the municipal system, preferring to place its trust in "bigger men from smaller wards". The Globe took a more positive stand on the work of the committee:

The municipal machinery is bad and naturally good engineers will not have anything to do with it. The first reform must come in the machine itself. After that good men will come forward to operate it. 37

The journal went on to urge the committee not to put the "cart before the horse" by changing the system but not reducing the wards. This "left-handed municipal reform" was comparable to building a house from the roof down; "The ward system is the foundation of our municipal government and the starting point of all the polluted streams that taint it." 38

A few days later the Executive Committee met to consider and prepare the reports of the various committees for forwarding on to Council for final acceptance. The report of the Civic Reform Committee was accepted without any major alteration, the salary of the Committee Chairmen being reduced to $3,000.00. On October 27, the proposal was put to a full debate by the Committee of the Whole Council. The results were less than gratifying. During the debate, "amendments and amendments to amendments in favour of annual elections, abolition of wards, of a hundred and one schemes, followed each other amid up-roarious laughter." 39 Alderman G. Frankland, in summarizing the debate remarked that there had been much wrangling and discussion, but very little of sense had been said. As for the scheme itself, the proposals for streamlining committee work triennial elections, and the election of a President of the Council were all struck out. Instead, Council stayed with a
very modest plan of reducing the number of wards and councillors.

While Council as a whole may have been complacent on the question of civic reform, individual aldermen continued to devote their time and effort to this important question. At a meeting of City Council, held in late November, Alderman Alfred McDougall moved that an application be made to the Ontario Government, "authorizing the Council to pass a by-law for the better administration of the affairs of the City of Toronto." His detailed plan for revising the system of government in Toronto which accompanied the notice of motion, was sent on to the Civic Reform Committee, which met December 1, to consider the plan. Aside from reducing the number of wards to six and the size of Council to four aldermen per ward, the most dramatic feature of the scheme was the plan for a Board of Control. The most important feature of the Board was the proposal that, "no recommendation of any committee involving an expenditure or appropriation of money, or a reduction of civic revenue exceeding $200.00 could be submitted to the Council until it had first been submitted to the Board of Control and, if not approved by the Board, could not be passed except by a two-thirds vote of the whole Council."

Reaction to the proposals was mixed. The Globe hailed it as the "outward and visible sign of civic reform". The Telegram felt that while McDougall's motives were honest, the scheme itself was doomed. The paper deplored the increased power given to the Mayor. It stated: "A city that has been afflicted by the faults of the mayor's favourites does not covet the right to pay them for blundering at the city's expense." A few weeks later the plan was sent on to Council for deliberation by all
the members. However, after a short debate, Mayor Clarke asked McDougall for an opportunity to discuss the bill with him and suggested a special meeting of Council to meet a few days later to decide on the plan. Thus on December 26, City Council was called into special session for the purpose of accepting a scheme for the better administration of civic affairs. The main outline of McDougall's plan was concurred in by the members of Council. McDougall had to compromise on six wards rather than four and on the Mayor nominating chairmen, subject to Council's approval, rather than appointing them, in order to get his bill through. All members were pleased with the end result and, a by-law incorporating the changes, was prepared for a public vote on the day of the municipal elections. At the same meeting of Council, Alderman B. Saunders presented a petition of five hundred names requesting the reduction in the number of wards. He informed Council that they must submit this question of ward reduction to the electors as well, in keeping with the terms of the bill recently passed by the Ontario legislature.

With this issue settled, the members plunged into the municipal campaign. One of the disappointing features of the municipal contest was the failure of the Citizens' Association to galvanize public opinion behind a slate of sound and able candidates. The Globe lamented:

Not a single member of the association has entered the field as an aldermanic candidate. No attempt has been made to hold public meetings to discuss the great issues of the day. The Citizens' Association has had an opportunity for good and has folded its arms and called for a more convenient season. 46

The Association members had hoped that W. R. Brock 47 would act as their standard-bearer in the mayoralty contest. After giving
an indication of his support for municipal reform, Brock informed the members at a dinner held in his honour, that business obligations prevented his accepting their nomination. The *World* hinted that 'political influence' was really the underlying motive. 48

With the Citizens' Association thus frustrated and the voting public unorganized in support of a strong reform ticket, the re-election of Mayor Clarke was assured. The results of the voting confirmed this with Mayor Clarke winning by a comfortable margin over his only opponent, E. A. Macdonald. The real surprise of the elections however, was the overwhelming support for the McDougall by-law for civic reform. The final wording of the by-law had been slightly altered at the last meeting of the 1890 Council. The question of paying aldermen remained a troublesome issue and, to avoid a misunderstanding over the motives behind the payment of aldermen, Alderman McDougall moved that the tenth clause, providing for aldermanic salaries, be withdrawn. The motion was approved by Council. The by-law proposal of Alderman Saunders, advocating simple reduction of the wards to seven, also fared well, receiving a slightly larger number of votes than the McDougall plan.

Though the main features of the bill had been settled on in Council and ratified by the voters, a continuing debate on the controversial issue of paying aldermen continued outside the council chambers. Labour in particular was vocal in its opposition to the alteration of the McDougall scheme at the last meeting of Council. At the February 16, meeting of City Council, a resolution from the Trades and Labour Council was
presented to the members assembled:

No system of municipal reform not embodying the payment of the Mayor and Aldermen, the abolition of property qualifications for civic representation and the election thereof by cumulative voting will secure the full confidence of the working classes of the city. 49

Meanwhile, within the new City Council of 1891, the Legislative Committee which was responsible for drafting the by-laws which the city wanted approved by the provincial government submitted its report which included the draft scheme approved by the ratepayers. Council adopted the report, without any important changes in the plan, outlining a new system of civic government. On April 14, the Private Bills Committee of the Ontario government met to discuss the McDougall scheme. Several interested parties were present. J. Armstrong was in attendance representing the Toronto Trades and Labour Council. Also in attendance were Alderman McDougall along with his fellow councillors, representatives of the newspapers, and a number of private citizens.

Opinion was divided between those supporting simple reduction of the wards and those who favoured a dominant position for the Mayor and a small civic executive. Ex-Alderman R. J. Fleming, as the first speaker, criticized the degree of power given to the Mayor to appoint chairmen, fearing that men anxious to obtain a position would "toady" to the Mayor. He also felt the two year term was unsatisfactory as it would remove the aldermen from the purifying effect of annual elections. Joseph Tait, Liberal M. P.P. for Toronto, spoke out against the bill, opposing the wide powers vested in the Mayor. Mr. Armstrong of the Labour Council, called
upon the Committee to pass the scheme as presented. However, A. F. Jury disputed his right to speak out on behalf of all the delegates of the Trades and Labour Council. He for one, opposed a scheme which would leave the nomination of chairmen in the Mayor's hands, thus placing the patronage of the city at his disposal. Alderman McDougall replied to these criticisms by pointing out that Council had final say as to who would be chairmen of the standing committees and furthermore, it could over-rule a decision of the Board of Control by a two-thirds vote. Concluding, he reminded the Private Bills Committee that Council had overwhelmingly supported the measure and the proposed changes had been approved by a large majority of voters. Mayor Clarke reiterated the benefits to be derived from the proposed Board of Control idea. "The interests of the city can best be guarded" he told the members, "by a small committee such as the Board of Control, possessing the benefit of the advice of the various heads of departments." W. R. Meredith, leader of the Conservative Opposition, dwelt at some length on the particular needs of Toronto: "We must remember that the City of Toronto occupies an exceptional position, its monetary transactions being greater than those of the Province." He felt that the bill would not only centralize power, but would prompt people to pay greater attention to affairs of the city and the choosing of representatives. He supported the broad outline of the bill but opposed the two year terms, Meredith felt that the question of paying aldermen should be decided by the government and added it as an amendment to the Municipal Act to apply to all Ontario. Replying for the Government, Chairman J. M. Gibson saw the plan
as the first step towards a charter for the city of Toronto and remarked that the Ministry was not averse to this step. He suggested a vote be taken on the bill with the provision that City Council could not amend or repeal the by-law. The vote was taken and the measure reported with Messrs. J. Tait and A. Smith being the only dissenters.

The outcome of the initial debate on McDougall's plan was sharply criticized by the *Telegram*. In particular, it had harsh words for Gibson:

His power was exerted on behalf of the bunglers and his influence afflicted Toronto with a system such as he would never think of fastening upon Hamilton. Perhaps to oblige a decaying clique, the Ministry, through the Hon. Mr. Gibson, can afford to snub Mr. Smith, to humiliate nine out of ten city Liberals and to make its own Mr. Tait a target for Tory jeers. It has licensed political rings to pay party debts with public money and has made harder, the work of those who are trying to force into practice the principle that municipal government is business not politics.

Later in April, the Committee held another meeting to decide on the report. Again a number of interested individuals were present with the main issue still revolving around the Mayor and small executive cabinet idea. The first two clauses dealing with ward reduction and the number of aldermen per ward passed without any opposition. However, the clauses dealing with the standing committees, Board of Control, and other features ran into difficulty, a number of the committee members voicing opposition; and, when they were finally put to a vote, the measures were defeated on a straight party vote, fourteen Conservatives voting yes and twenty Liberals no.

Thus the thrust embodied in the McDougall plan for reform
in Toronto's civic government had yielded the barest results, reduction in the number of wards and aldermen. It is difficult to ascertain with any certainty why the Liberals voted the bill down. Perhaps the fact that Toronto was considered a Tory stronghold, headed by a Conservative Mayor might account for their reluctance to accede to any scheme which might strengthen the Conservative organization in the city. Another possible interpretation is the relative strength of the reform impulse in the City of Toronto in comparison with the attitude of the Provincial Government. In 1890, City Council included in its list of amendments which it wanted approved by the Ontario government, a request for granting all women with the necessary property qualifications the right to vote at municipal elections. This particular request was not acceded to. The same results followed an effort to eliminate property qualifications for aldermen. With its base in rural Ontario, the government was cautious in its approach to reform issues. The Mowat Ministry's decision to support ward reduction and delay action on the Board of Control was an attempt not to satisfy the widespread desire for changes in the city's system of government, but to appease those advocating municipal reform.

With the defeat of the McDougall scheme, the Civic Reform Committee of City Council turned its attention to a division of Toronto into new wards. Late in June, 1891, a plan outlining six wards running north from the Bay was adopted by Council. The breakdown of the old ward system was not without its benefits to the city. The new ward divisions ensured a wider cross-section of voters. The new plan of dividing the city into long slices
mixed business centres with residential areas of both the wealthy and the poor and, cut across occupational, religious, and political lines. Also, it encouraged citizens to take a greater interest in the upcoming municipal elections for the year 1892, as aldermen, cut adrift from the old ward moorings, sought support among the voters of the new ward divisions.

On October 23, 1891, a public meeting was held to consider the possibility of reviving the dormant Ratepayers' Association. The moving force in reorganizing the Association was a number of businessmen, concerned with the expense of civic affairs and desirous of instituting a period of economy at city hall. The movement cut across political lines with W. R. Brock and R. Jaffray, publisher of the Globe, both taking part in the meeting. At the meeting, a number of speakers reviewed the various weaknesses in the civic machinery and the need for strong leadership to improve Toronto's municipal situation. The Association with a slight majority of those present, decided that E. B. Osler could provide the necessary leadership, and offered him the mayoralty nomination on behalf of the Ratepayers' Association. Osler thanked the assembled group for their offer, but claimed that the press of business forced him to decline the nomination. The Association then decided to set up a committee under the chairmanship of Goldwin Smith to consider the best method of putting the desired improvements into practice.

Two weeks later, the committee presented their report. Their eleven point programme was outlined at a meeting of the Association. It called for a restructuring of the whole system of municipal government. The report recommended the division of
the city into three districts, with a Commissioner, nominated by the Mayor and approved by Council, to administer public works and departmental activities in each of the districts. The Mayor's role was designed to be primarily an honourary one, while the Council was to confine itself to legislative duties. The report went on to suggest a reduction in committees, officials, and departments to limit expense and a five year freeze on assessment values.

Such a scheme presented obvious difficulties, being more radical than that drawn up by Alderman McDougall and it generated considerable critical debate both during the meeting and afterwards in the press. A decision on the recommendations of the committee was postponed to a later meeting of the Association.

Meanwhile, the small group of men who were trying to induce a strong business figure to offer himself as a candidate for Mayor, called a meeting of citizens interested in the question of municipal reform for early November. The outcome of the meeting of this 'Citizens' Committee', a rather loosely formed group of the vestiges of the Citizens' Association, was a decision to again offer the nomination to Osler. This time the offer was accepted. Ex-Alderman D. Defoe, who was present at the meeting, expressed some concern over the manner in which Osler's nomination had been engineered and warned that offering the nomination to Osler without consulting the Ratepayers' Association, might alienate the latter. However, he was assured by Sheppard, Jaffray and others who were members of both groups, that there would be no trouble. Nothing could have been further from the truth.
At a rather 'heated' meeting of the ratepayers a few days later, strong opposition was voiced by the members, to the selection of the Citizens' Committee. Partly through personal pique at not being consulted and partly through a sincere concern that Osler's connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway might involve him in a conflict of interest when negotiating with the railway on behalf of the city, the members of the Association reversed their earlier decision and decided not to support the candidacy of Osler.

With the Citizens' Committee and the Ratepayers' Association divided on the issue of the mayoralty nomination, the possibility of a joint, united effort remained doubtful. The effort of the pro-Osler forces both in the Committee and the Association to force the Osler candidacy on the ratepayers was facing a determined resistance by a large section of the ratepayers. The showdown between the two groups came at the nomination meeting of the Ratepayers' Association held early in December. The meeting was constantly interrupted by shouting and scuffles and the chairman, unable to maintain order, announced his resignation and the meeting quickly ended in disarray. Osler remained as a candidate for Mayor, but without the support of the Ratepayers' Association. Nor was anymore heard of the plan drawn up by the executive committee of the Association, and the organization was an ineffectual force during the municipal campaign.

With Clarke retiring, the mayoralty race attracted other candidates; Ex-Mayor Beatty, John McMillan, and R. J. Fleming also entered the contest. Fleming had sat on Council in the late 1880's, and had also been active in opposing the McDougall
plan when it came before the Private Bills Committee. His business interests lay in real estate, though at the time real estate was suffering from the collapse of the building boom of the late 1880's. Fleming was also a nominal Liberal, running for office in a strong Conservative city, but as the Globe, not an unbiased observer, remarked:

He is anything but an offensive partisan... This is not because Mr. Fleming is inclined to halt between two opinions; it is simply because the bent of his mind is less toward Federal or Provincial politics, than toward municipal affairs.56

The Telegram echoed these sentiments and concentrated on Fleming's strong reform qualities. The paper argued that as a sound administrator and a man free of 'ring influences', Fleming would fearlessly introduce economy and order in the conduct of city affairs.

On behalf of Osler, it was claimed that his financial ability, as exhibited in his meteoric rise to prominence in the business world, would be a valuable asset for the city. Running on a campaign slogan of a "business man with a business plan", Osler had the backing of Jaffray, Goldwin Smith, and other leading figures in the community. His lack of municipal experience was downplayed and the case of W. H. Howland, who was elected directly to the mayoralty without first having served on Council, was held up as an example. However, Osler's connection with the Canadian Pacific Railway continued to cause some difficulty. The Globe remarked that "the position of that gentleman is such as to warrant grave suspicion that it is a bastard civic reform movement that he represents in this contest."57

On election day, Fleming succeeded in winning the contest,
even polling favourably in those areas where the Conservatives might have expected to have done well. The Telegram pronounced his win a victory of principle over party and incidentally fleshed out the legend that a nod from John Ross Robertson, the paper's editor, "was as good as a master key to City Hall." As for the Osler campaign, it represented "the first and last attempt to run a business man of the highest eminence for Mayor of Toronto." 

The general approach of the Fleming administration was set out in the new Mayor's first inaugural address to the Council of 1892. He advocated a shake-up in the committee system through a judicious plan of amalgamating certain committees and dispensing with unnecessary officials. He felt such a move would "improve our services, convenience our citizens, and save a great deal of money." As a final comment he added that "as you so generously have kept party politics out of the campaign, so shall I never let party preference influence a single act of my official duties."

R. Fleming served as Toronto Mayor for two years, obtaining the customary second term by a comfortable margin over E. E. Sheppard. The election of that year, January, 1893, was a particularly bitter one and of more than usual significance in the city's history. The organizers of Sheppard's bid for the mayoralty attempted to line up the Conservative vote for their candidate. However, the attempt to introduce partisan political affiliations in the 1893 municipal elections was defeated and Fleming's sound record was sufficient for a 'Grit' Mayor to succeed in Tory Toronto. During his stewardship, several im-
improvements were made in the administration of civic affairs. These changes were not attempts at any major restructuring of the municipal system, but rather represented a 'piecemeal' reform, a 'pruning of the dead wood', to improve the efficiency and level of service provided for the citizens. Several departments at city hall were reorganized with this goal in mind.

One of the first departments to feel the reform impulse of City Council under the strong influence of R. Fleming, was the Treasury Department. The City Treasurer was given control over the entire department and its officials, except regarding salary increases, and was thus brought into line with the practice of other departments.

Also, shortly after taking office, a new City Engineer was appointed, the old engineer being held in disapprobation. Under his vigorous leadership, a new direction in the department was quickly shown as he attempted to see that Toronto got full value for its contracts.

A similar shake-up occurred in the Medical Health Department which had been very loosely managed. A new Medical Health Officer was appointed and careful attention was paid to seeing that the quality of the city's water, milk, and food supplies was kept up to standard. Also, in connection with the supply of water to the city, the Water Works Department was abolished and its activities brought under the direct control of the City Engineer.

Another advance which occurred during Fleming's term was the electrification of the street railway by the over-head trolley system. Several other changes were introduced during this period; a reorganization of the Exhibition Committee, a policy
favourable to protecting parks and recreational areas in the city, and also the introduction of a policy for asphalting the main streets of the business section of the city. The Council also made another attempt to broaden the municipal franchise by giving the vote to married women with the necessary property qualification. In March of 1893 a resolution from Mr. J. L. Hughes, the Chairman of the Womens' Enfranchisement Association was presented to Council and, by a vote of fourteen to eight, the aldermen decided to again petition the Ontario Government for the desired change. In this instance, the Council was more progressive than the Mowat Government and the measure was turned back.

These changes and improvements introduced during Fleming's term earned the Mayor the respect of Toronto citizens for his "vigorous and efficient" administration of the city's business. While Mayor Fleming was successful in improving services for the community, the fight for economy was less successful, and the object of a reduction in taxation remained an elusive goal. The fixed part of the city's annual budget continued to be set at a high rate and efforts to pare down expenses were of no real consequence. Also, the city still had a large fixed payment on the debenture debt incurred during the boom years. The citizens continued to grow restless with this state of affairs.

The cry for economy had been one of the rallying points for civic reform groups, especially the Ratepayers' Association. Their efforts to bring out good candidates in the 1892 contest had been a failure and, following the campaign, the reform movement experienced a temporary relapse. The Association's
weak campaign in late 1892 to have the Mayor withdrawn from Council and given a veto power, thus making him clearly the Chief Executive and the man most responsible for the conduct of city business, was ineffective. However, with the approach of the 1894 civic elections and the continued high tax rate\(^6\), a strong movement was emerging to form a united organization to bring about some economy at city hall.

The *Globe* in July, 1893, gave an indication of the general direction which it felt the movement might take. Municipal reform in the past "had been mainly directed towards improving the machinery of civic government and the election of a strong Mayor rather than the aldermanic contests."\(^6\) The article went on to suggest that greater attention should be paid to the election of aldermen, the 'units' which really made up the driving force of City Council. The reduction of the wards had not fulfilled expectations in this direction and it was clear that some further changes were needed. In September, the *Globe* again drew attention to the need to elect better aldermen if civic reform was to be achieved. In an editorial it stated:

> The movement for civic reform is really one to put the city's business on a business basis and take it out of the hands of the popularity hunters who have been wont to control it through lodge room and political interference. \(^6\)

There were also signs that a greater spirit of harmony and co-operation would be forged among the various organizations interested in the question of municipal reform. In October, a meeting of delegates from the Board of Trade, Ratepayers' Association, and the Trades and Labour Council met to see if a common platform outlining some basic principles could be achieved.
The meeting did not decide on any proposals, but agreed to form a Joint Committee which was to seek the assistance of City Council. Late in October, the Joint Committee met with City Council and secured the appointment of a committee to confer with them "with a view of securing a definite scheme of reform."68

A set of proposals were drawn up and agreed upon at a meeting of representatives of the various groups held early in November. Again, the general object which the plan was designed to promote was the separation of legislative and executive functions. The first clause adopted set forth this basic principle. "The Executive and Legislative work of city government be entirely separated."69 To ensure that the executive work was suitably carried out, the Joint Committee called for the formation of a Board of Control composed of the Mayor and three others, nominated by the Mayor from outside the Council and approved by the aldermen. This Board was to devote its full time to the executive duties of the city such as drawing up by-laws, signing contracts, and preparing the budget. The proposals also dealt with the question of improving the Assessment Department, indeed half of the clauses were concerned with a modification of the system of assessment.

The plan drawn up by the Joint Committee was then submitted for approval by the various individual organizations. The Ratepayers' Association at a public meeting, approved of the scheme as presented. The Trades and Labour Council decided in favour of the scheme with a few adjustments, the most important concerned the proposed Board of Control. The labour delegates decided to have the controllers elected from the whole city rather than appointed. In light of these changes, another meeting
of the Joint Committee was held to see on what common ground they could agree to act. The most important proposal was the clause requesting the City Council to ask the government for power to elect aldermen from the city at large — in effect doing away with the ward system. The committee also agreed on an appointive Board of Control and the payment of aldermen on the basis of their attendance at meetings. All the members were pleased that a programme had been agreed upon which not only sought the improvement of the machinery of government, but also allowed for the election of a better class of men to Council.

The agreement on a plan of civic reform was a good sign for those advocates of municipal reform. Also encouraging was the widespread public interest in the question. Part of this interest in civic issues was a carry over of the Sunday street car agitation which took place in the fall of 1893. Even the clergy of Toronto got involved in the question. At a meeting of the Ministerialist Association, the Reverend Dr. Thomas read a paper on the topic of municipal reform. He opened his address by observing that,

> the whole system of municipal government is wrong. Secret societies, ring rule and ecclesiasticism rule municipal politics. The system now in use is one which would ruin any business corporation. 70

A further indication that public attention was directed towards the question, was the large audience which turned out to hear a public lecture by W. Houston on "The Problem of Civic Government". 71 In a vigorous address, he pointed out that the expanding population and resulting increase in demand for civic services, further added to the complexity of conducting Toronto's affairs. The present system he argued, put a "premium on blundering and waste, and offered facilities for dishonesty and
The remedy for such a state of affairs was the confining of legislative affairs to Council, two year terms for aldermen, and giving control of executive affairs to the Mayor and permanent heads of the various departments. Houston's remarks were well received by the listeners and the general idea of separating the two functions of government was heartily endorsed.

With this interest shown by the citizens, it was hoped that they would cast their vote for those candidates who supported the general reform programme outlined by the Joint Committee and approved of by the ratepayers. The Association submitted a questionnaire to the candidates asking their stand on the plan drawn up by the committee and published the results for the benefit of the voters. The Trades and Labour Council had given some thought to running 'labour candidates' making an offer to O'Donoghue, an active member of the Council, to run as an aldermanic candidate under the labour banner in Ward Four. He declined the offer owing to the lack of an electoral organization among working men.

The results of the ward elections showed that nearly half of those who had been endorsed by the ratepayers had failed to get elected. Many of these men were not widely known in the ward and, in the elections, it was difficult for new men to get in by defeating incumbent aldermen. More than the sanction of the Ratepayers' Association was needed to break into the aldermanic circle. The mayoralty contest centred on a fight between two Methodist businessmen, R. Fleming running for this third term, and Warren Kennedy, a popular Toronto merchant and active worker in the field of social reform. The main issue of the
campaign was the need for economy, and Fleming, saddled with the high assessment rate of 1892 and 1893, was defeated by Kennedy by a wide margin.

The new Council, under the direction of Mayor Kennedy, was given an opportunity to display its position on civic reform when the Joint Committee brought its proposals before the aldermen in February, 1894. A full discussion of the proposed alterations in the city's system of local government was undertaken, though several aldermen spoke out against the recommendation regarding the Board of Control, objecting to the selection of three men from outside of Council. It was finally decided to refer the proposed alterations to a committee for further study. No more was heard of civic reform during the middle of 1894. Other issues, a push for economy within Council, and a general inability to sustain any enthusiasm on the reform question, all contributed to push the scheme of the Joint Committee well into the background. Many aldermen adopted a 'seasonal' interest in the municipal reform question becoming concerned in November, committed in December, and after the January election, convinced that Council's attention should be directed to more immediate issues.

However, events during the latter part of 1894 in connection with the letting of the city's lighting contract once again drew public attention to affairs at city hall. When the Fire and Lighting Committee of City Council finally accepted the offer of the Toronto Electric Light Company for supplying the city with lighting, there were rumours that some 'shady dealings' had been involved in the letting of the contract. One of those to complain
was the unsuccessful tenderer. In an effort to 'clear the air' and get to the bottom of the various charges, Council ordered a judicial investigation. The findings of the inquiry revealed direct requests for bribes made by some aldermen, to the various tendering firms. With this evidence of blatant corruption it was decided to hold a far-ranging investigation into the conduct of city affairs especially the recent letting of the street railway contract. The findings produced a wave of shock and indignation, as it was found that 'Toronto the Good' had been betrayed by disreputable aldermen who willingly sold their votes to the highest bidder. The *Canadian Engineer*, departing from its technical format, commented:

The spectacle which Judge McDougall's special tribunal has exposed in Toronto is enough to make the angels of commerce weep. The fact that such a tribunal... has been so effective in exposing the current rascality, gives us ground to hope for better things in the Queen City.

These revelations spurred those citizens who had worked on behalf of civic reform to renew their efforts. They deemed it essential that pressure be put on City Council to take steps to ensure that such occurrences were not repeated. The first comprehensive step towards a public campaign to improve the conduct of civic affairs was a meeting between the Trades and Labour Council and the Ratepayers' Association to see if some plan of co-operation could not be arrived at. The *Mail* hailed this development as the portent of some definite action on the question and added that, "civic reform ought to be the question of the day in Toronto and it is gratifying that people are beginning to see it in that light." The outcome of this
co-operation between the two bodies, was a decision to hold an open public meeting for the discussion of two resolutions, one concerning the division of executive and legislative functions and the other concerning the abolition of the city's six wards. The public interest in the proposed meeting was an encouraging sign that the citizens had decided to give their full support to the present effort. The large attendance at the meeting held early in December was a good indication of the concern which citizens felt for the dismal level of city affairs and their desire to promote a campaign for clean, city government. An impressive list of speakers, many of whom had been long associated with the question of municipal reform in Toronto, addressed the audience. The opening speaker, W. R. Brock, drew attention to the faulty system which discouraged able men from taking an interest in the city's affairs. Professor Goldwin Smith emphasized this idea, pointing out that Toronto's present municipal system had not been designed to meet the needs of a city as large and as populous as was Toronto. "Unless we make some effort to change the system", he told the audience, "all our efforts to improve the elections will do us no good; we shall relapse again." 76 H. Blain, speaking on behalf of the Board of Trade, remarked that business men faced with the demands of day to day affairs were often unable to take on the extra duties required of aldermen. He stated that, "until the duties of aldermen and the call upon their time were lessened, they could not expect good men to take the position." 77

A resolution advocating the allocation of legislative functions to Council and executive functions to a salaried Board
of Administration was endorsed by the meeting, and an Executive Committee was appointed to aid in carrying the resolution into effect. The meeting ended on an optimistic note when G. Bertram moved a resolution, stating that, "this meeting pledges itself to use its influence to bring about a better condition of things for 1895, then has existed for some years past."78

Commenting on the outcome of the meeting, the Mail dwelt on the dominant theme of better men operating a better system. In an editorial the journal pointed out that better men would have to be elected to Council before the desired reforms could be implemented; "any reform of the system must be initiated by the aldermen themselves, and the whole effort of the electors should be directed to this end."79 The need for a reduction in the workload of aldermen by a division of executive and legislative functions was widely recognized as an important step in municipal reform. However, it was also felt that 'better men' would have to be elected to Council before these changes could be effected. This tautological riddle accounts for the shifting emphasis of the civic reform movement on electing good men and instituting a better system to attract better representatives.

One of the first actions of the Executive Committee was along the lines suggested in the Mail editorial. The committee appointed six ward committees who were to assess the situation in each of the city's wards, and report back to the executive, who in return would report to the members at a public meeting. This list of candidates was presented to the general public early in January, in time for the municipal elections. The results on voting day, indicated that the committee had many of its favourites elected. The Globe congratulated the group on its
efforts and the good results it had produced. "The Citizens' Committee must feel that its nominees were encouragingly received and that altogether the usefulness of such an organization has been demonstrated."

The election of a 'good Council' had been viewed during the election as a first step towards civic reform. Mayor Kennedy, who retained the mayor's chair by narrowly defeating Fleming, set out in his inaugural address to the Council of 1895, what he hoped would be the guiding principle for the aldermen on the vital question of reform:

The difficulty in the past has been that probably too much time has been given to securing reform Acts from the Legislature and not sufficient consideration given to such improvements as could be carried out without the expense and waste of time involved in carrying Acts of Parliament. In effect, he was suggesting a return to the Fleming approach to reform; piecemeal reorganization of the various departments to improve their efficiency.

However, the Council of 1895 did not undertake a modification of the municipal system to try and reduce the problems which the city faced. The Waterworks Department presented the most dramatic challenge to the aldermen, as the quality of the city's water supply was again in question. Despite the urgency, a decision as to the best remedy to alleviate the situation was postponed by Council. Instead, an expert from England was engaged to study the various remedies and recommend a solution to Council. Their inability to successfully deal with such problems partly stemmed from the lack of leadership from a vigorous Mayor. During his second term, Mayor Kennedy faced serious
reverse in his personal business affairs and resigned his office before the legal end of his term.

This lack of decisiveness at city hall prompted the civic reform groups to begin organizing earlier than usual. At the beginning of October, an organizational meeting of the Citizens' Committee was arranged to consider pursuing some of the goals which the committee had discussed during the last municipal election. The members decided to appoint an Executive Committee to draft a plan incorporating the desired reforms.

Members of City Council received an incentive to direct their attention to the problems of civic government, when a delegation of aldermen, who had attended the special meeting of the American Society for Municipal Improvement, presented their report. Council, acting on the motion of Alderman Davies, agreed to appoint a special committee to study the question of municipal reform. The aldermen also decided to select the City Engineer as Toronto's permanent member of the American society to keep the city informed of current developments in the field of municipal reform.

This Committee of City Council prepared a plan for remodelling the civic government. At the opening meeting, the Chairman, Alderman Davies presented a draft proposal which called for a Board of Control, composed of the Mayor and six aldermen elected from the whole city and acting as chairman of the standing committees. The Board would initiate business and Council, composed of eighteen men, three from each ward, would require a two-thirds vote to alter any of its recommendations. A President would preside over the deliberations of
City Council and also serve as chairman of the Board of Control. The committee reached no decision on the suggestion, but agreed to print the plan of Alderman Davies and meet again.

The Executive Committee of the Citizens' Committee brought down its scheme a few days later. Its proposals were of a more 'revolutionary' nature. The most important feature of the plan, was a recommendation for a small civic cabinet known as the Board of Administration. This Board would be composed of the Mayor and three directors, the latter being nominated from among the aldermen and approved by City Council. This small committee would have ready access to advice from the department heads and would be charged with the executive work of Council. The plan also called for two year terms for aldermen, changes in assessment procedures, and the method of preparing estimates, the latter to be carefully controlled by the Board of Administration.

The reaction to these two schemes was mixed. The Citizens' Committee report drew the most critical comment. The Globe held that the committee "would probably be wasting time in recommending any radical changes in civic government."84 Judging from past experience, it cautioned against any dramatic departure from civic practice. While supporting the proposed division of functions, the paper suggested that perhaps devolving more power on to the permanent heads of departments might be a method of divorcing the executive function from the general business of City Council. Similarly, the World was critical of the committee's plan. Preferring to place its trust in the safety of numbers, the editorial stated that aldermen sitting as the directors still
had to be elected, and with all its far reaching powers, there was no real method of calling individual members of the board to account for inefficiency or misconduct. The one feature which did find support, was the recommendation to bring the department heads, acting as an advisory body, into a larger role in conducting civic business. The *Telegram*, maintaining its distrust of sweeping changes, condemned the scheme and continued to support a push for better men; "The one thing needful to the good government of Toronto, is the general exercise of common sense at the polls." The *Mail and Empire* also exhibited a distrust of the centralizing of strong powers into a small committee stating, "we want to make our civic buildings the home of an intelligent, business-like, and representative assembly of our best citizens and not a mere bureau where three or four powerful men will sit and pull the wires."

The recommendations of City Council's committee received more support. At a meeting in November, the committee rejected the elaborate Davies' plan and instead opted for a resolution proposed by Alderman G. McMurrich and amended by Alderman B. Saunders. The main object of the resolution was to take the awarding of all city contracts from the various departments and committees, and place it in a single administrative board. The plan was a master stroke, as it allowed for the reduction of administrative detail of the committees, without a radical departure in municipal practice. Also, the Saunders' amendment which called for City Council to entrust from time to time, more administrative work to the board as it saw fit, allowed for a gradual evolution of the civic machinery. The proposed Board
of Administration was to be composed of the Mayor, chairmen of the Executive and Works Committee and various city officials such as the City Engineer, the City Solicitor, the City Commissioner, and the City Treasurer.

The deliberations of the two committees generated considerable interest on the issue. Interviews in the newspapers, editorial comment, and public meetings, all drew the attention of the citizens to the different aspects of the municipal reform question. The advantages and disadvantages of the various schemes were dealt with, and it was hoped that at last some change in municipal practice would be effected. A positive step in this direction was taken by City Council when the Report of the Civic Reform Committee was presented to Council. After a brief discussion in which a few aldermen raised the question of a small board deliberating on important contracts, the McMurrich-Saunders scheme was adopted by Council and at a subsequent meeting was put into by-law form. It was decided that no vote by the public was required in light of the interest and support shown for the measures.

With this innovation, the main thrust of the Citizens' Committee was blunted and at a joint meeting of the Civic Reform Committee and the Citizens' Committee, it was decided to refer all further schemes to the new incoming Council. The municipal campaign itself, saw the return of R. Fleming to the Mayoralty, defeating Alderman J. Shaw, a Conservative and long time member of City Council.

The Council of 1896 promptly established the new Board of Administration, and it quickly became an integral part of the civic machinery. Besides looking after the awarding of contracts,
the board became a focus for aldermen wishing to implement particular modifications in the structure of municipal government. Its first report contained a recommendation urging Council to study the possibility of amalgamating the Engineering and Sanitary Departments with the Medical Health Board.88

With the introduction of this important measure of municipal reform, the various civic organizations interested in the question of reform, directed their attention to obtaining specific changes in the Municipal Act, such as extending the hours of voting and moving polling day to January 1. To achieve these reforms, application would have to be made to the Ontario Government and, the Civic Reform Committee of City Council, invited the co-operation of the Citizens' Committee in obtaining these alterations.

The problem of municipal government had not been dealt with by the Ontario Government in a comprehensive fashion since the alterations made in the ward system in 1891. Amendments and minor adjustments were made to the Municipal Act and the Assessment Act was consolidated in 1892, but no overhaul of the system of local government for large cities had been undertaken. While the Mowat Ministry as a whole had been slow to respond to the needs of cities, individual members kept themselves abreast of these needs and attempted to bring their existence to the attention of the House. One such member was J. R. Stratton.89 Though representing the small city of Peterborough, Stratton took an active interest in the large issues facing Ontario. He was an early advocate of opening the 'New Ontario' and took up the question of improving the quality of government at the local
level. Early in the session of 1896, he introduced a bill calling for a one-third reduction in the number of men who made up the city and town councils. In support of his measure, Stratton read letters from several mayors and aldermen which he had received endorsing his bill. Summing up, Stratton declared, "he had obtained all the information he possibly could, and he wished to draw the attention of the government to the fact that all the towns and cities in the province required legislation of that kind." A. S. Hardy, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, concurred in the desire of Stratton to see the conduct of municipal affairs improved - but he felt the scheme proposed would not be suitable for cities the size of Toronto and since the proposed changes had not thoroughly been discussed, the matter should be left over till next year. The bill was withdrawn.

However, the chairman of the committee did not let the question of municipal reform lie fallow till the following year. He believed that large cities, such as Toronto, required special attention:

I have always felt the deepest interest in the workings of the municipal institutions, especially as developed in Toronto, as being the largest of the communities in the Province, and in which the most complex problems which had to be considered and solved, were presented. 91

On February 19, 1896, Hardy introduced a bill "respecting City Councils and other matters". The bill was read for the first time and outlined a number of changes in the practice of municipal government in cities over 100,000 population, thus applying only to Toronto.
The most important feature of the measure, was the proposal to introduce a Board of Control for the city. It was to be composed of the Mayor and three aldermen, the latter to be balloted for from among the aldermen at the first meeting of the incoming Council. The Board had extensive powers; having the right to hire, retire, or alter departmental heads and their administration of their departments, initiate business for Council's consideration, and these actions could only be overthrown by a two-thirds vote of the entire Council. Some other changes such as lengthening the aldermanic term to two years and revising the composition of the Court of Revision were also included in the bill.

Reaction to the proposed changes was generally critical, varying from moderate to severe. The Telegram bluntly stated that, "Toronto never expected a hard headed and far-sighted leader like Hardy, to introduce a bill which represents the Ontario Government's complete surrender to the views of fad peddlers and theorists, and the interest of schemers." The Mail and Empire claimed to see the fine hand of party patronage at work:

The Ontario Government slides with such unconscious facility into the creation of posts which may sometimes be convenient for supporters that it is not surprising to find that five or six pleasant positions, with comfortable salaries attached to them, cluster about the present proposals. The World was more moderate in tone but felt that interference into the affairs of the civic departments by the Board was an objectionable feature which it hoped would be corrected. The Globe reserved judgement on the proposed changes. A special meeting of the Legislative Committee of City Council had been
called to consider the proposed changes, and the members were generally agreed to the need for further consideration of the measure by the Government. The aldermen appeared content to experiment with the newly introduced Board of Administration before making any further changes along the lines suggested by Hardy. At the close of the meeting, the committee adopted a resolution requesting the legislature "not to pass the bill until Council arrives at some decision as to whether the experiment now being made in Toronto voluntarily with a somewhat similar board, can be regarded as a successful one."  

However, Hardy had decided to present his bill to the Municipal Committee and on March 24, the Municipal Committee met and deliberated on the measure. The meeting gave several interested groups an opportunity to address the committee on the proposed scheme. Hardy was the first speaker, explaining the features of the bill and the aim of the reforms which he was advocating. He also said that some amendments to the plan were contemplated such as the alteration of the two year term, but he proposed to hold these over until private members had an opportunity of expressing themselves on the bill.

All the important groups of the city were represented with the speakers either supporting the scheme or opposing it. Toronto's Legal Department was present and took strong exception to the features of the scheme which concerned executive 'interference' in departmental affairs. Ex-Alderman McDougall was present and in light of his past efforts both as an alderman and as Chairman of the Citizens' Committee, strongly supported the bill:
All I can say is that the bill is in response to public demand. The people want a responsible board with the Mayor of the city as a head. 95

Mayor Fleming, who had opposed the introduction of the board of control idea in 1891, now came out in support of the idea although he stated that the Council had not discussed it to any great extent. They were willing to leave the matter to the good sense of the legislature. Alderman D. Lamb spoke out against the measure and drew attention to the resolution of the Legislative Committee of City Council requesting Hardy to withdraw the bill until such time as the experiment with the administration board had shown the benefits of such a system. Delegates from the Board of Trade and the Ratepayers' Association were present and gave their support to the general principles of the bill as tending towards the efficient and economical management of civic affairs. The Toronto M. P. P.'s O. Howland, T. Crawford, and Doctor G. Ryerson opposed the 'coercive' feature of the bill and supported instead a permissive application to Toronto. However, by a vote of eighteen to thirty-four, it was decided to make the scheme imperative.96 Two further alterations were added, clarifying the selection of the controllers and the extra vote for the Mayor if the Board of Control produced a tie vote. These changes were endorsed and the committee rose.

While the general principle behind the bill was widely approved some concern was expressed both in the press and by individual aldermen over particular features of the bill.97 The Globe raised the problem of the Board of Control being responsible for the appointment of civic officials whether they be clerks or firemen. Such a system might undermine the discipline within the
departments and elevate the principle of favouritism rather than merit, in the selection of officials. It was felt that Heads of Departments should be left in charge of their departments.

The other problem which continued to cause some difficulty was the two-thirds requirement for Council to over-rule an action of the Board. Alderman D. Lamb raised this problem at a meeting of City Council late in March, stating that the two-thirds rule should only apply to the awarding of contracts and the preparation of the estimates. A compromise was finally worked out by Mayor Fleming and it was agreed to petition Hardy to restrict the two-thirds principle to the awarding of contracts, the preparing of the estimates, and the hiring of department heads, leaving all other matters to be reversed by a simple majority vote of City Council. These suggestions were taken into consideration by the Ontario Legislature and were added as amendments to the bill to confine the two-thirds vote to those areas suggested and to re-instate the powers of department heads to hire and fire subordinate officials. With these alterations, the bill was sent on to the House and passed in Committee of the Whole.

Hardy's determination to revise the structure of Toronto's municipal government represents the culmination of the campaign of interested aldermen and citizens to devise an improved system for administering Toronto's affairs. After several years of discussion, Council finally adopted a method of confining executive affairs to a small civic cabinet and legislative affairs to the aldermen sitting on City Council. The experiment
with the Board of Administration lasted only a few months. Chairman Hardy of the Municipal Affairs Committee decided to introduce his own system of government for Toronto and, after a few alterations, his proposal was approved by the government. Hardy's action not only emphasized the dependent position which cities held in relation to the provincial government, but also raised the question of why the government suddenly decided to implement a reform scheme after turning down the request in 1891. By introducing the machinery for streamlining municipal practice in cities of 100,000 population, the government may have been trying to demonstrate its interest in the problems of rapidly expanding urban communities. A broadening of Liberal support in urban centres would prevent the restriction of the party to a limited rural base and undercut the strength of the Conservatives in cities such as Toronto. It was also a bold stroke for Hardy and, with the upcoming federal election and possible hints that Oliver Mowat might switch to federal politics, helped place his name prominently among potential leadership candidates.

With the introduction of the Board of Control, the Ontario government established the system of civic administration with which large cities of the province would meet the problems of twentieth century urban life. A few alterations were later made to the system, additional controllers were added and members of the Board were elected from the whole city, but the basic format of the municipal system was fixed in 1896. The various reform groups continued their efforts on behalf of specific changes, such as revision of the assessment laws, extending
voting hours, and broadening the franchise. Labour, acting through the Trades and Labour Council, flirted with the idea of running labour candidates, but the voters remained reluctant to sanction the idea of 'class representatives'. The citizens of Toronto also continued to show their preference for non-partisan municipal representatives. Civic affairs were looked upon as business not politics, and it was in keeping with this general principle that the lawyers, doctors, labourers, and businessmen who were associated with civic reform, had waged their campaign for reform in the practice of civic government.
NOTES

1 J. Joyce and H. Hosse suggest that "In Canada, reformism was the cry of an articulate minority of middle class entrepreneurs to catapult themselves into power, depoliticize the city, and operate it in the way they were most familiar with, namely that of a small business." J. Joyce and H. Hosse, Civic Parties in Canada (Ottawa: Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, 1970), pp.15-16.

2 H. Ames was a leading figure in the municipal reform movement in Montreal and founder of the Montreal Volunteer Electoral League. His address was the third in a series of 'Canadian Talks' sponsored by the Young Mens' Christian Association and was titled: "The Young Canadian in Municipal Life"; Globe, March 4, 1896.


5 "In Saint David's Ward on the second day of the polling a riotous group of amateur politicians stopped the voting and the returning officer was unable legally to make a report. He said in an affidavit that he was placed in bodily fear by an outrageous party forcing their way into the poll room and taking possession of the premises." J. E. Middleton, The Municipality of Toronto - A History I (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Company, 1923), p.263.

6 Ibid., p.289.

7 Ibid., p.303.

8 Globe, September 3, 1893.

9 Telegram, April 14, 1891, gives full details of the casse.

10 Globe, September 12, 1893.

11 Mail, December 17, 1889.

12 Ibid., October 23, 1890.

13 Ibid.

14 The Evening News, February 20, 1890. (hereafter referred to as the News)

15 Globe, September 24, 1890.
16 **Globe**, December 13, 1890.

17 Mr. James Beatty Jr. was from a strong Conservative family; his uncle was editor of the Leader and, Beatty himself helped found the Monetary Times. He also assisted in the formation of the Confederation Life Association and served as Mayor of Toronto in 1879 and 1880.

18 S. Spencer, "Municipal Triumvirate: Politics, Services and Economy in Late Nineteenth Century Toronto," a paper read before the Canadian Historical Association (1972), p.9.


20 **Globe**, September 21, 1889.

21 **Mail**, October 23, 1890.

22 Ibid.

23 **Globe**, December 17, 1889.

24 Earnest Albert Macdonald was a prominent builder, real estate agent, and editor of the short-lived The Factor and Legal and Municipal Gazette. He took an active interest in municipal affairs, serving several terms as alderman, interspersed with three mayoralty contests. He strongly supported continental union and closely followed American municipal practice, in particular, the commission system as practiced in New York. He hunted out alleged scandals and misdemeanours at city hall and remained at the centre of controversy throughout the decade under study. As a real estate agent with considerable holdings in the suburbs, his interest in civic reform is of particular interest. It seems that the real estate aldermen who were interested in improving municipal practice endeavoured to encourage the growth and prosperity of the city and indirectly the legitimate increase in their own personal wealth. E. A. Macdonald represents one of the best examples of 'civic boomers' during the 1890's.

25 **Globe**, November 19, 1889.

26 Ibid., December 12, 1889.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid., December 16, 1889.

29 Ibid., December 18, 1889.

30 Minutes of City Council, 1890, Appendix A , p.23.

31 **Globe**, April 9, 1890.
The aldermen adopted the following proposals: "the election of aldermen for three years, one third retiring annually; the number of committees reduced to five, presided over by a chairman to be elected by Council and paid a salary of $5,000.00 per annum. It was also recommended that all city property should be in the hands of one committee and that the estimates be prepared each year before municipal elections." Globe, October 21, 1890.

Alderman Alfred McDougall represented the Saint James Ward on City Council, an area in the heart of the business district of the city. He had a thorough grasp of the problems before Council and earned the respect of his fellow aldermen. Mail, October 25, 1890.

The Board of Control was designed as a small civic cabinet for discussion and consideration of executive affairs. The Board was a uniquely Canadian development. P. Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers (1971), p.212.

Wm. R. Brock was a prominent Toronto capitalist. He was President of the Canadian General Electric Company, A Director of the General Trust Company, and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Empire. He was also a prominent Toronto Conservative and served for many years as President of the Toronto Conservative Association.

"The story goes that on hearing of this, E. F. Clarke went to Ottawa to confer with the Old Man and word was put out that Brock was in line for a seat in the Senate and, at a big
dinner at the National Club held for the purpose of offering the candidature to Mr. Brock, the latter declined." *World*, December 13, 1890.

49 *Toronto Trades and Labour Council Minutes*, 1891, p.294. Labour was generally interested in making it easier for working class representatives to sit on Council by such means as paying the aldermen and reducing the 'ward influences' by which many aldermen obtained election.

50 Under the terms of the British North America Act, the provinces have control over the municipalities. "This means that changes in the municipal structure depend on... the willingness of the legislature to make changes which are believed to be generally acceptable." C. A. Curtis, "Municipal Government in Ontario," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science*, 8, No.3(1942), p.416.

51 *Telegram*, April 14, 1891.

52 *News*, April 14, 1891.

53 *Telegram*, April 16, 1891.

54 The Ratepayers' Association had been formed back in the early 1880's, but over the years had lapsed into inactivity in civic affairs. The objects of the Association were clearly set forth in the Presidential address to the 1895 annual meeting. Dr. E. J. Barrick informed his audience that the aims of the Association were "to create a deeper interest in municipal affairs, to effect a more efficient and economical administration of civic affairs, to improve our system of municipal government, and to distribute as equally as possible the burden of taxation." *Globe*, February 14, 1895.

55 E. B. Osier entered the brokerage business with Henry Pellatt, the father of Sir Henry Pellatt, and gradually rose to a position of prominence in the financial circles in Toronto. He became associated with the Canadian Pacific Railway, serving on the Board of Directors. In 1896, he was elected as a Conservative M. P. for Toronto.

56 *Globe*, December 12, 1891.

57 Ibid., December 28, 1891.

58 Ibid., January 6, 1892.


During the summer of 1892, at a meeting in the Empire offices, the chief organizers of the Conservative Party decided to reorganize the party structure in the city. A small committee was appointed to look into the matter. Their report was presented in September, and recommended, among other changes, the introduction of party politics into municipal elections. Many of the active workers in the party opposed the move, fearing a 'backlash' if a Conservative Mayor were forced to raise taxes. Their position finally prevailed but an informal effort was made to run the 1893 contest on political lines. Dr. Nesbitt, President of the Conservative Association in Ward Three and R. Armstrong, President of the Young Liberal Conservatives, were active in bringing E. E. Sheppard out. In a letter to John Thompson, Sam Hughes noted that "these are the two men who brought out Mr. Sheppard and one of the others was brought out he was taken up by the Empire, the World, and the Albany Club as the last hope of beating a Grit candidate for mayor. But the result was a catastrophe."

Public Archives of Canada. Thompson Papers, Hughes to Thompson, February 10, 1893.

One member of the Ratepayers' Association termed the rates "confiscation".

Globe, July 10, 1893.

Ibid., September 11, 1893.

Minutes of Toronto City Council, 1893, p.261.

Telegram, November 1, 1893.

World, December 12, 1893.

W. Houston was a graduate in Sociology and Political Science from the University of Toronto and was a close observer of municipal affairs. As the Legislative Librarian he was responsible for keeping the reading shelves filled with journals on current topics and, in this capacity, he was able to keep a close watch on what American and other foreign writers were saying about the question of municipal reform.

Globe, December 13, 1893.

The findings of Judge McDougall were issued in two reports and published in full in the Minutes of Toronto City
Alderman T. Davies was another of the aldermen who had large real estate holdings and took an active interest in municipal reform.

J. R. Stratton was the Liberal Representative from Peterborough West from 1886-1905, rising to the position of Provincial Secretary. He was a former Mayor of the city and edited the Peterborough Examiner.
CHAPTER IV

MUNICIPAL MONOPOLIES AND MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT:
TORONTO, AND THE QUESTION OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Technological advances at the end of the nineteenth century in the fields of lighting, communication, and urban transit, held out the promise of greater comfort and convenience for the general public. The provision of gas, light, telephone, and street car service thus became a vital consideration of local councils, as citizens demanded cheap, efficient service. Along with this demand, a vigorous debate ensued on the best method of providing these services. In keeping with the late nineteenth century laissez-faire ethic of private enterprise, important sections of Toronto's business community argued for private corporations developing and supplying these services to the community. The prospect of lucrative profits plus a genuine belief in the individualist ethic underlying the free enterprise system prompted many of Toronto's foremost capitalists to become actively involved in the promotion of companies to supply these needs. ¹ Other groups within the community such as, labour, social reformers, and some businessmen argued that water, gas, and light companies should be operated for the benefit of the citizens, not for a small group of grasping capitalists. Drawing on the experience of England, Europe, and some American cities, they argued that public control of municipal franchises was the direction in which enlightened communities were moving. Bristling with the scorn and moral indignation characteristic of the populist reform thrust, the more aggressive proponents of public ownership engaged in a vigorous campaign against the Canadian
variety of the 'Robber Baron'. Less strident advocates argued for public ownership on grounds of cheaper prices and better service.

Several important franchises were considered by Toronto City Council during the period under study. On each occasion the advantages and disadvantages of the various plans suggested were debated in the press, in the council chamber, and from public platforms. This debate provides an insight into several currents of thought which were present in Toronto on the question of municipal ownership.

One of the earliest battles to be fought on the question of civic ownership occurred when Toronto took control of its street railway franchise. In March, 1861, the city had granted a thirty year franchise to the Toronto Street Railway Company - formed by an aggressive Philadelphia promoter, A. Easton. The Company agreed to provide track and cars along the main streets of the city for at least fourteen hours a day at a maximum fare of five cents. The city received an annual revenue from the company in the form of a rental on the number of cars employed. At the termination of the franchise, the city was to be given the opportunity of buying out the company, at a price to be set by arbitration.

In its early history, the Company faced a series of financial difficulties and underwent several reorganizations. Finally, Senator Frank Smith, the Company's largest investor, became president of the Toronto Street Railway Company. The other principal stockholder in the Company was G. Kiely. Under their control the Company became a very profitable operation.

The financial gain which accrued to the owners, did not escape
the attention of the city fathers and, with the approach of the franchise's termination, Council determined to arrange for a larger return to the city from the street railway. Early in January, 1890, on motion of E. A. Macdonald, a committee was appointed to "formulate a scheme(s) for the taking over of the assets and the franchise of the Toronto Street Railway Company, and for the disposition of the same." The committee quickly became embroiled with conflicts among the members, and Alderman Macdonald was voted out as chairman and replaced by Alderman G. Gillespie. This action brought a strong protest from Macdonald, who claimed to see 'sinister' implications in the actions of the committee.5

The importance of having a vigilant committee was evident when the Toronto Street Railway Company applied to the Ontario government for the right to use electric motive power in the operation of its street cars. Such a conversion from horse drawn cars to electric cars would greatly enhance the value of the franchise and increase the cost which the city would have to pay. Council, acting on the recommendation of a now united committee, successfully petitioned the legislature to withhold the request as matters were pending between the city and the Company. Frustrated by the City Council in its attempted 'grab' the Company remained hostile and unco-operative in its dealings with the city. The Globe complained that,

it is rather a pity and something close to a mistake that when the city authorities applied to the Street Railway Company for the balance sheets of the company for the last few years, with a view to ascertaining just how much the franchise was really worth to the city, the officials of the company refused that in-
formation. The suspicion has arisen that the profits are really so great, that the company does not care to have them made public. 6

The arrogant attitude of the Company and the possibility of a handsome profit, raised the prospect of having the city coffers benefit from the franchise rather than pockets of private individuals. However, at this juncture in the debate on the railway, the idea of municipal control was not widely discussed. 7 Before the city could acquire the assets of the Company, the ratepayers had to approve a by-law empowering Council to raise the necessary funds to purchase the Company. Those opposed to renewing the Company's contract were careful not to alienate public support by advocating the city operating the railroad. On the other hand, agents of the Toronto Street Railway Company attempted to discredit the idea of the city taking control of the franchise by circulating rumours implying that the aldermen wanted the city to operate the road because of the patronage it would provide. A circular published by the Street Railway Committee of City Council flatly denied any such intention:

The report which is being circulated, that it is the intention of the Council to operate the street railway as a corporation work is utterly false, and has been given publicity by parties hostile to the city's interest. 8

Mayor Clarke added to this statement the pledge,

There has never been on our part, any intention to operate the road. All that we desire is to amend the terms and conditions under which the right to operate is leased, and then put it up to public competition. 9

On the day of the ratepayer vote, an overwhelming number of citizens cast their ballot in favour of the city taking over the assets of the Toronto Street Railway Company. The prospects
of a better financial return from the railway and a general
dissatisfaction with the attitude of the Company towards the
city, were factors which led the voters to reject a renewal of
the franchise. As a result of the vote, the city was now in a
position to begin proceedings to reclaim the franchise which
had been given to the Company in 1861. The legality of the city's
position had been clarified earlier that year by a bill introduced
into the Ontario legislature by E. H. Bronson. The bill had
been requested by the Ottawa City Council but was made applicable
to the whole province. The bill outlined a city's right to
operate a street railroad, under a specified set of conditions.
Toronto was thus free to buy out the existing Company and
either operate it as a civic enterprise or, lease it out to another
company.

The city quickly initiated arbitration hearings to arrive
at a fair price for the Company's property. City Solicitor, S.
H. Blake and G. Fullerton represented Toronto, while D'Alton
McCarthy represented the Company in proceedings before the
arbitration tribunal. In the course of its investigation, the
city met with the continued obstruction on the part of the
Company and was hampered in its evaluation of the railway's
assets.

While the lawyers attempted to settle on a price for the
property, the press and partisans were engaged in another kind of
battle. Following the successful vote on the by-law, the alder-
men had to decide what to do with the railway, once the city
took possession of the property. S. T. Wood, President of the
Single Tax League, stated in a letter to the Globe that there
were two options; "there seems to me but two courses open to City Council viz. to lease the property for a term of years, or to operate the road through a special committee."  

Wood's letter was the signal for a vigorous campaign between those who favoured the city leasing out the newly acquired franchise, and those who wanted the city to operate the street railway. The Mail argued that the time was not opportune for such an experiment; "civic government in Toronto is in a transition state... the work of rehabilitation has not been taken in hand and, pending that, it would be unwise to load down the civic machine with business that it would be unable to perform."  

In other words, civic reform should precede civic operation. The Telegram was suspicious of those supporting public ownership suggesting it was "an agitation being fostered in somebody's interest... with these fine theories as theories, we are not at war; the proposal is not objectionable in principle but in practice."  

The paper firmly believed that the railway, if operated by the city, would be used to find 'places' for aldermanic favourites.

These arguments were answered by the supporters of municipal control. The most ardent advocates of the city operating the road were the members of the Nationalist Association. Through letters and resolutions sent to Council, the members attempted to force the city fathers to give serious consideration to their proposal. In December, 1891, a delegation waited on Council to set before the aldermen the Nationalists' position. Phillips Thompson spoke on behalf of the Association urging the city to retain the franchise and manage the railway by "placing the
street railway service in the hands of a civic department under a committee of Council, and appointing a practical man, with control over details, as superintendent. Such a system would minimize the possibility of aldermanic interference and retain the benefits of the railway for the citizens of Toronto. Thompson also argued that, at present, it was impossible to put a value on the franchise as advances in the field of electric motive power might greatly reduce the cost of operation. The speaker placed no trust in any "guarantees" which might be included in an agreement with a private corporation.

The sale of the franchise to any corporation, leaves the public at their mercy, despite any so called 'guarantees' which might be offered, as corporations are nearly always sufficiently powerful and unscrupulous to defy legal restrictions with impunity. 19

Thompson closed his address by reminding the aldermen that the city's interests in general, and the street car employees in particular, would be better protected as regards conditions of work and the quality of service if the city retained control of the street railway.

The Toronto Trades and Labour Council also took an active interest in the question. 20 The Council had appointed a special joint committee to confer with the Knights of Labour on the question of civic management. The Council later adopted a report calling for the street railway "to be operated for the city by a commission to be composed of the Mayor and other gentlemen, appointed by the Superior Court Judges." 21 Labour was especially interested in the question of railway franchise. Special reduced fares in the mornings and the evenings were considered necessary for working people travelling to and from work. The men were also
concerned that a reasonable standard of wages and working conditions should prevail in any arrangement the city might make.

The supporters of public ownership were given encouragement when Alderman McDougall in December, 1890, gave notice that he would move that the question of the city operating the railway be submitted to a vote by the citizens at the upcoming municipal election. McDougall personally favoured retaining the franchise. He believed that it was capable of generating a minimum annual revenue of $500,000.00 for the city. Also, if the city found the management too cumbersome, then it could always put the franchise up for lease.22 However, his opinion represented a minority view on Council and his motion, calling for a public vote, was not considered by the aldermen.23

Early in December, 1890, the Street Railway Committee presented a report containing a list of conditions which should be met by any company wishing to operate the street railway.24 After making a few alterations in the draft specifications, Council adopted the report and referred it to the City Solicitor to be put in proper legal shape.

During the ensuing municipal contest, most of the attention was focused on the municipal reform scheme drafted by McDougall. When this issue was finally decided, the citizens were able to devote their attention to the municipal ownership question. In his inaugural address to the Council of 1891, Mayor Clarke noted that "a strong feeling has developed in favour of the City operating the road, either through a Committee of Council or by a Commission."25 This strong feeling was in evidence at a
public meeting held to discuss the issue of municipal ownership. Thompson, Wood, and others addressed the audience, and the meeting unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the city to operate the road by an elective commission. The question of the city running the railway also came up for discussion by the special Street Railway Committee. Alderman Gillespie reminded the members that the city had pledged itself not to operate the road. Alderman W. Gibbs replied that the circular issued at the time of the ratepayer vote had never been approved by the committee or even considered by Council and was thus not binding.

Whether legally bound or not, the *Telegram* argued that the city had a "moral commitment" to put the franchise up for sale. Continuing its crusade against the 'machine' at city hall, the paper argued that municipal control would result in the squandering of civic funds and the swelling of the city's payroll with incompetent men. The Toronto Board of Trade felt that a more important issue was at stake than the loss of a few dollars through petty corruption. The Board regarded the principle that a governmental body could manage a business more efficiently and more profitably than a private corporation as deceitful, and it felt that to initiate such a practice set a dangerous precedent. The Council of the Board of Trade adopted a resolution stating, "it would be detrimental to the commercial interests of the city of Toronto, to have the street railway system run or managed by the city corporation or its employees."

This statement brought a stinging reply from Thompson. The idea that municipal monopolies were operated for the benefit of the community was soundly criticized in a series of addresses
delivered by leading Nationalists. The main thrust of their argument was that services operated in the public interest - whether it be fire fighting, sewage removal, or urban transit - were the legitimate function of local government. The efforts of some opponents to discredit the ideal by dwelling on the corruptibility of aldermen were rejected out of hand.

This is the most despicable and cowardly argument that can be used against municipal management and is only worthy of where it had its birth, and that is in the minds of those who are interested in private exploitation of the public purse.  

The Nationalists argued that it was the pressure of powerful corporations lobbying for valuable franchises that was responsible for the corrupting of aldermen and, if this baneful influence were removed, a major step towards clean civic government would be achieved.

The efforts of the Nationalists drew the attention of the Mail. In a patronizing editorial, the paper noted that there were "a number of amiable and well meaning people who not only wish the city to assume command of the railway but to retain it in detail." The article went on to assert, with questionable validity, that "all citizens, without exception, wish that at this juncture, the corporation of the City of Toronto, may have a chance of asserting its control by stipulating for a better service, quicker transit, lower fares, and a periodical revision of contracts." The World adopted much the same attitude:

Make the privileges more or less a monopoly, but in every case reserve the right to the city of arbitrating the rates and tariffs every two years or so. When we have succeeded in this, then we may begin to talk of the city running the monopoly itself.
The *Globe* took a neutral position in the early part of the debate, preferring to see the question put to a public vote, and thus let the citizens decide "which of the horns of the dilemma looks the more inviting."\(^{34}\)

The Council had already drafted a set of specifications and was accepting tenders from interested companies. The idea of a public vote was not considered by the aldermen. On April 17, the Street Railway Committee decided to open the tenders from those companies wishing to operate the road. A sub-committee was appointed to try and decipher the various conditions and qualifications in which the offers were couched and determine which was the best. At the end of April, the sub-committee reported:

> your committee do not consider either of the tenders should be accepted, as they are of the opinion, now the award of the arbitrators has been made public, that better offers can be obtained... and it is recommended that new Tenders be received up to May 20th, 1891. \(^{35}\)

The old franchise terminated on May 17, and it thus became evident that the city would have to operate the road for a short time until the new tenders could be acted upon. On the day appointed, the city took possession of the Company's property and requested the manager, J. Gunn, to stay on and supervise the operation of the railroad.\(^{36}\) It seemed as if the principle of municipal ownership might slip in the back door.

The decision of Council to operate the road during the interim was hailed by the Nationalists as an important victory for the city.

> It is turning in day by day a handsome surplus of receipts over expenditures to
The city's daily press was less enthusiastic. The Globe fretted that once begun "civic operation, even as a temporary measure, would be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible to take from under the control of the City Hall authorities." The World now expressed a cautious approval of civic operation, arguing that under civic control "the question of rapid transit, which is of immense importance to the city and its citizens, can best be settled if the city retains the road." The paper believed that the transition to electric motive power would best be settled if the city retained control of the road:

No matter what inventions or improvements may take place in two or three years, it will be very difficult to have them put in operation when a powerful corporation... has got hold of the franchise for a long period of time.

Toronto's temporary operation of the street railway as a civic enterprise was attracting attention from other municipalities and other journals interested in the question of municipal operation of civic franchises. The New Nation, a reform journal published in the United States, carried an article by Thompson describing the events leading up to Toronto's experiment and the possibility of successfully maintaining the road under civic control.

We have felt all along that if we can only secure delay, and prevent a deal being suddenly concluded, the people will come round to our way of thinking, as the feeling in favour of civic management is growing every day.

Part of the reason for this gradual acceptance was based on the service provided by the city. Objections to civic control
on grounds that mismanagement and incompetent officials would quickly undermine the street car system were proven false. Also, the city had applied the wage rate required on all civic undertakings - ten hours a day and fifteen cents per hour - to the street car employees and thus obtained their co-operation in the successful operation of the road. The system was also producing a substantial revenue for the city, showing a profit of $25,000.00 for each month the city owned the road.

In light of this satisfactory state of affairs, the committee deliberating on the new set of tenders experienced some difficulty in deciding which tender to accept. The Street Railway Committee experienced the same difficulty in trying to determine the actual cash valuation of the new tenders. Representatives of the companies were asked to appear before the members and explain their terms and later to submit revised tenders. All of this dickering over tender specifications, adjustments, and revisions further complicated the issue. At a committee meeting late in June, one alderman aptly summed up the feelings of the committee by remarking, "I feel something as if I was between the devil and the deep blue sea. I hardly know what to do tonight." The supporters of the Kerr syndicate asked the committee for more time in preparing their new tender. The other main syndicate headed by G. Kiely, protested against any further delay and threatened to withdraw the Company's tender if the matter was not settled once and for all. The committee, however, refused to be 'railroaded' and granted the Kerr group the extra time. The Telegram as a result of all this, sadly remarked that "there is nothing now before the committee and
the street railway business: if just where it was before tenders were asked."

The committee attempted to grapple with the problem at another meeting held at the end of June. Before the aldermen commenced discussion on the tenders, a deputation from the Central Social Reform Committee presented an address to the committee urging that the experiment in civic management be given a fair trial. "Every consideration of justice and honest dealing points to a test trial of civic control." The success of the road and the absence of interference with manager Gunn were marshalled as evidence to support the argument of municipal operation of the street railway service. Even city officials had recommended the proposal. The committee thanked the delegation for their presentation and voted to have the tenders printed for further consideration by the committee.

On July 12, the committee met again and took for its first business, the question of municipal operation of the road. Alderman W. Hall asked the committee to finally decide whether or not the city was to run the road. By a vote of eight to seven the committee decided to keep "the promise made to the electors when voting money to acquire the street railway, that it should not be operated under civic control." By a majority of only one vote, the committee decided against the city continuing the experiment of municipal ownership. The judicial investigation of 1894, probing into alleged misconduct in civic affairs, concluded that two of the committee members voting for the measure had privately consulted with the tendering companies and were guilty of violating the honour of their office.
civic ownership, attention turned to the three tenders before the committee. Mayor Clarke protested that none of the offers were good enough and moved that new tenders be called. His motion was defeated. Alderman Hall then moved that the Kiely offer be accepted and, by a vote of nine to seven, the motion carried.

The committee's action aroused a storm of protest among those supporting the retention of the road as a department of City Council. Thompson, writing in the *Labour Advocate*, charged:

> There is every reason to believe that this decision is due to bribery of the most flagrant kind... the shameless clique of ringsters who have so wantonly sacrificed the city's interests and voted to enthrone another monopoly in the place of that ousted at such infinite expense and trouble, should be in the penitentiary instead of at city hall helping govern the city of Toronto. 52

A mass meeting at city hall of citizens opposed to the committee's decision was arranged by the Combined Social Reform Committee. Upwards of two thousand people attended and heard a list of speakers elaborate on the theme of corruption in connection with the proposed lease of the railway. A resolution condemning the hasty action of the committee and urging the railway be retained as civic property, was passed with only a handful of nays. 53

Meanwhile, within the council chambers, the aldermen had decided to postpone action on the Street Railway Committee's report. The aldermen met again the following evening and, after several attempts to have the report referred back, decided by a vote of twenty-four to fourteen, to accept the offer of the Kiely syndicate. 54 This action so angered Alderman Boustead that after the vote was recorded he stood up and shouted, "You have just thrown away a million and a half." 55
In an effort to prevent the city from completing the agreement, Alderman Macdonald sought a court injunction prohibiting the Mayor from signing the contract. Shortly after, Macdonald suddenly dropped the legal action claiming he had been bribed to do so. This revelation intensified the rumours of 'boodling' surrounding the leasing of the franchise, and a judicial inquiry was commenced to try and determine if corrupt activities had taken place. The Globe argued that while the inquiry was taking place there must be no signing of the agreement with the syndicate.

To sign the franchise away for thirty years and then discover that it had been obtained by improper means would be a sorry ending to the largest transaction in which the people of Toronto have been concerned. 56

This policy of delay met with the strong disapproval of the Kiely syndicate. In a correspondence to the Mayor, the Company made their wishes clear:

We are ready to pay over our money and take possession, and we insist that we shall be put in a position to do so at once. The delay has been causing serious damage and we will hold the city responsible for the delay. 57

As the judicial investigation into the Macdonald allegations continued, it was revealed that a bribe had been paid to the alderman by Noel Marshall, an agent of the successful tenderer. However, the court concluded that the money had been paid "on his own responsibility, and from his own purse, but not with corrupt intent." 58 With the main claim of the Macdonald charges set aside, the inquiry gradually deteriorated into a 'fishing expedition'. In light of these developments and wishing to avoid further opportunity for boodling, Council met late in August, confirmed the agreement with the Kiely Company, and requested the
City Solicitor to prepare the necessary documents to complete the transfer.

A majority of the aldermen believed that the city was getting good value for the railway. A fixed mileage rental fee and an escalating percentage return on company profits, ensured the city a larger financial return from the railway than had existed under the old agreement. The contract with the Kiely Company also included specifications on fares, service, expansion, and upkeep of the railway.

The subsequent history of the street railway was not as encouraging as the set of specifications might have suggested. The specifications agreed to by the Company became the object of frequent court battles. Crowding on street cars, failure to extend lines beyond narrowly defined legal limits, a stubborn refusal to introduce improvements such as protective fenders and over-head shelters for conductors, and a general disregard for the citizens' comfort and convenience convinced Torontonians of the wisdom of the Nationalists' proposal. When the franchise expired in 1921, the ratepayers voted to operate the road as a municipal enterprise. The conduct of the railway bore out the later observation of Jesse Middleton that "perhaps there is no city in America where there is a stronger feeling in favour of public ownership than in Toronto. The cause can be traced to the unsatisfactory attitude of various corporations in their dealings with the municipality." As for the advocates of municipal ownership, though they were unsuccessful in maintaining the city's control of the railway, they did not look upon the signing of the contract as a defeat.
They felt their agitation had resulted in the city securing a more favourable agreement. They had also succeeded in creating a united reform organization, dedicated to advancing the cause of public ownership.

The idea of regulating a civic franchise by listing a set of specifications for its operation by a private company represents a stage in the development of the public ownership idea. While an improvement over a system of granting unconditional franchises, the citizens of Toronto were to find that the enforcement of these conditions required a constant resort to the courts. The experience with regulated monopoly represented a half-way house on the road to municipal ownership.

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This general pattern was demonstrated in the city's dealings with the Consumers' Gas Company. The Company was first organized in 1847 when it bought out the plant of that ambitious Toronto developer, Albert Furniss. Forty years later, the Company successfully applied for the right to increase its capital stock. This power was granted on the condition requested by Toronto City Council that a specified increase in profits would be matched by a lowering of the price of gas to consumers. The Company gradually fell out of public favour as consumers felt that the Company was manipulating its profits to prevent the reserve fund from reaching the amount that would require a reduction in the price of gas.

These charges came to light when the Company, in 1889, applied to City Council for power to engage in the production of electrical energy. The request was sent on to the Fire and Light
Committee. The committee chairman strongly criticized the Company for its high handed attitude towards the city and turned down the request. The Company replied, "It must be noted that the limitation of these two accounts - the 'rest' account and the 'plant, building, and renewal fund' - was a point yielded by this Company to the city... and it is certainly very ungracious for aldermen to find fault with that which was considered by the Company to be a large concession." Having defended the Company's honour, the manager went on to suggest that, if the committee granted the request, the Company would see its way clear to lowering the price of gas. Council upheld the recommendation of its committee and the request was turned down.

No satisfactory resolution of the reserve fund difficulty was achieved and in February, 1892, City Council applied to the Ontario legislature for power to compel the Company to limit additions to its repair fund and apply the profits towards a reduction in gas prices. The Company notified Council of its desire to discuss this proposal. At a meeting between representatives of the Company and the city, it was decided to apply to the courts for "an interpretation of the act of 1887 so that the reserve fund and the repairs and renewals fund may be properly administered."

This action proved ineffective however, as the Company was again under fire for the same 'offence' two years later. Increased pressure was applied to the gas mains, resulting in an increased cost to the consumer. The Globe stated:

The extra turn of the valve is likely to cost the company more than it is worth to them, for the City Council has at last been compelled to take action to force the company into compliance
with the law, and to prevent the gas monopoly from laying too heavy a hand on the people. 64

To meet this continued obstinancy on the part of the Company, City Council set up a special committee to review the Company's financial position and determine if any reductions were in order. The committee brought down its report in late July, and recommended that Council study the feasibility of managing its own electric light service in an effort to force down the price of gas. 65 The committee felt that an announcement of the city's intention to move in the direction of municipal operation of a lighting plant might prove sufficient to encourage the Company to comply with Council's request.

A more direct challenge to the Company's monopoly was the introduction of the Citizens' Gas Control Company into Toronto in the summer of 1894. This Montreal based firm had the backing of several prominent Toronto businessmen and during its first year and a half of operation was able to offer its customers savings from twenty percent in private houses to forty percent in large stores, churches, and warehouses. 66 The actual impact of the Citizens' Company is difficult to assess but the mere presence of a potential rival had a salutary effect on Consumers' Gas, and, in July, 1896, they announced a twenty percent reduction in price. 67

The presence of a second company was beneficial in forcing the price of gas down, but the necessary duplication of gas mains and other equipment had its drawbacks. The possibility of continuous excavation on city streets as the rival companies installed lines and meters was a serious possibility. Nor was
there a law to prevent the major company from drastically lowering its prices to eliminate a competitor, then simply raising them again when that company either folded or was absorbed. Clearly, the most desirable situation was one company operating in the interest of the consumers.

The failure of the city to get satisfaction from the company prompted a private citizen, T. W. Johnston, to initiate court proceedings against the Consumers' Gas Company. Johnston believed his gas bill excessive and attempted, through the courts, to force the Company to reduce its rates. City Council decided to aid Johnston and applied to the Ontario Government for power to provide assistance. The World complained that the Company was lobbying for the defeat of Toronto's request. "The Consumers' Gas Company, a most tyrannical and exasperating master,... tries its utmost to prevent the people from ever getting a hearing before the courts... and it was only through the casting vote of the chairman of the Private Bills Committee, that the city was allowed to help Mr. Johnston in his suit." In late December, 1896, the City Auditor examined the Company's records and found that it had indeed manipulated its profits to prevent the reserve fund from increasing. He concluded that the citizens were legally entitled to a further reduction of over forty cents a thousand cubic feet. This stiffened the city's resolve and Council decided to pursue the legal battle with the Company right up to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

This legal battle represented Council's attempt to bring this one corporation into line during the decade under discussion. The impracticality of having more than one gas company operating
in a city, prompted the aldermen to try and force the Company to abide by the conditions set out in the 1887 Act. During the 1890's there was no thought given to having the city move in the direction of a publicly owned gas company. Aldermen and citizens alike were interested in the prospects of electrical power rather than gas and devoted their attention to the city controlling and managing a civic lighting plant. With a publicly owned plant, the city would possess a useful lever to force the Gas Company into a more competitive position. Civic operation could produce direct as well as indirect benefits.

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While the city had some control over the gas monopoly by resorting to the courts, it was in a less secure position when dealing with the telephone monopoly. In 1891, two companies, Bell Telephone and Toronto Telephone, were applying for the privilege of supplying telephone service to the city. The Works Committee considered the two tenders and recommended that the Bell offer be accepted. The Telegram had some misgivings about the clause granting exclusive control to Bell Telephone. These misgivings were also evident among several aldermen and City Council decided to refer the report back to the committee. A second offer by Bell Telephone was considered by Council in June. The aldermen voted to accept this offer on the condition that the girls employed by the Company be paid not less than $6.00 a week and work not more than nine hours per day, and only one Sunday every three months. The Toronto Trades and Labour Council sent a resolution to City Council thanking the aldermen for their consideration of the interests of working girls. Their
congratulations proved to be premature, as the President of the Bell Telephone Company wrote to City Council that unless the clause on hours and wages was removed, the Company would refuse to sign the agreement. This ultimatum was accepted by Council and the agreement was finalized in late July, 1891.

The reluctance of the aldermen to press for the desired clause is open to several interpretations. Possibly they were engrossed in the street railway affair and were unable to sustain any effort on the clause. Also, the contract offer was financially profitable for the city and the aldermen may not have been disposed to haggle over a specification which was not in practice in other communities under contract with Bell. Possibly, the point was raised for its 'publicity' value, the aldermen having no intention of pressing for the desired clause if the Company remained obstinate. Whatever the reason, no further mention of the telephone business was recorded until the Company's contract came up for renewal five years later.

In May, 1896, a special committee on telephone service reported to the newly appointed Board of Control, that the Bell Telephone Company requested an unspecified increase in rates and a removal of the five percent payment to the city. The committee recommended that "the Board of Control advertise for tenders for telephone service for the city of Toronto with tenders outlining specifications." The city and the Company once again were at loggerheads only this time the question was money, not working conditions for employees. The advertisement for tenders yielded disappointing results and the franchise expired without any agreement being reached, the aldermen refusing to sign
a contract with the company allowing for increased rates.

In March, 1897, Council carried its case to the Railway Committee of the Privy Council. A delegation of aldermen appeared before the Railway Committee, in what the Star described as a "war to the death with the Bell Company." They reported back to City Council that the meeting was unsuccessful as the Railway Committee appeared to have accepted the position of the Company. The persistence of the Bell Company prompted the aldermen to petition the Ontario government for the necessary power to enable the city to operate its own telephone system, and thus break the 'oppressive' monopoly enjoyed by the Bell Telephone Company. Unlike the Gas Company, once the federal government approved an increase in rates, there was no possibility of the city applying to the courts to obtain more reasonable terms. Nor was the approval of such an increase an idle possibility. City Council's special committee on the telephone question noted:

They have an immense capital stock in the hands of very influential stockholders and are thus enabled to bring great pressure and influence to bear, and we are informed that great influence and pressure is being brought to bear in their favour.

It was also difficult to induce other companies to provide telephone service in the city. "The experience of Peterborough and other places, where competition has been tried and failed, by reason of the Bell Telephone Company reducing their prices to ruinous rates, which their great financial strength enables them to do, has made it difficult to induce capitalists to undertake such an enterprise."
Such a condition seemed an ideal case for introducing municipal ownership. An irresponsible monopoly independent of municipal regulation could only be matched by a publicly owned telephone service, operated at cost in the interests of citizens. Yet there were objections to such action, despite its attractiveness. Duplication was even less desirable in the case of telephone equipment, as it threatened to turn the city into a massive tangle of wires, cables, and poles. Also, the difficulty of arranging co-operation between two rival companies further inhibited the possibility of such action. In this particular incident, Toronto, despite its desire to consider municipal ownership, had to content itself — as did other communities in Canada — with matching the Company's powerful lobby at Ottawa in order to keep prices in line.

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A somewhat different aspect of the municipal ownership question was the effort of Alderman D. Lamb to introduce a "municipal insurance bureau." This proposal represented a response to the complaints of policy holders that insurance rates charged by Toronto companies were excessive. It was felt that the companies had combined to form a 'ring' to maintain high prices. In 1894, at the first meeting of the new Council, a resolution protesting the high insurance rates was presented and a delegation of aldermen appointed to meet with representatives of the fire insurance underwriters. At this meeting, representatives of the city argued that "considering the favourable class of risks in Toronto, the first class fire plant, the efficient fire brigade, diligent police force, and an excellent
water supply at high pressure, the rates were fully 25 percent too high." The insurance companies replied that rates in the city were lower than in cities similar to Toronto, and no further reduction was possible unless the city improved its fire-fighting equipment. The effect of this reply was a hardening of the positions of the two antagonists, which hindered the possibility of their reaching a compromise. It also served to increase public interest in a scheme which Alderman Lamb had under investigation. Lamb chaired a committee which had been studying the question of insurance rates. From the figures which the chairman had been able to secure, it appeared that current rates in the city were excessive. On July 4, 1894, a special meeting of the committee was held to consider a report drafted by the chairman. The contents of the report, as the Globe reported it, were "radical in the extreme". After detailing the various costs and charges levied by the unscrupulous fire underwriters, the report went on to propose that the city apply to Ontario government for power to introduce a municipal bureau of insurance. It was the intention of the chairman to have the bureau replace private companies in the area of fire insurance and, there was no consideration given to compensation. The report was sent on for consideration by City Council. Alderman Hallam congratulated Lamb on his proposal noting that "this was one step in the socialistic development of the time and there seemed to be no good reason to doubt that the city could operate such a scheme as the Legislature could be induced to consent to." The Council adopted the report and sent it to the city's Legislative Committee. The Municipal World, somewhat optimistically,
commented that "it is far from being settled that the Legislature will turn a deaf ear to the petition. On the contrary, there is an excellent prospect that it will be granted."86

Despite this action by Council, the underwriters remained calm. When early the next year, a dramatic series of fires broke out87, the inability of the fire company to contain the damage greatly weakened the city's case. Lamb was not discouraged by this setback. He set out to reduce the city's liability in the event of a calamitous fire by interesting other cities in the plan. He felt that a system of local bureaus operating under one central bureau would help spread possible risks and reduce the danger of heavy payments for any one city, while still guaranteeing more reasonable rates.

The support which Lamb received from City Council, is indicative of the aldermen's willingness to seriously consider the principles of civic ownership. Faced with a combine in the insurance business, members of City Council were prepared to have Toronto operate its own insurance services. In this instance, they had the support of a large section of the business community who felt insurance rates were excessive, and supported a public scheme because it held out the prospect of more reasonable rates.

In March, 1896, Council applied for power to set up the desired municipal insurance bureau. The City Solicitor, reporting to Council in April, informed the aldermen that the city's request had failed to receive the support of the Private Bills Committee. On those occasions when the advocates of municipal operation of public franchises were able to obtain public support for a specific plan, they were often frustrated by inaction of
the provincial government. The municipal ownership campaign did not experience a progression from success to success with public support increasing with each successful illustration of municipal operation. This reform movement was characterized by a series of advances and retreats with the citizens gradually developing an awareness of the benefits of public ownership.

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Another important area where Council and a large body of public opinion engaged in a discussion of municipal operation was the question of electrical power. The Toronto Electric Light Company first introduced the organized production and distribution of electricity into Toronto with the establishment of an arc lighting plant in 1883. The Company's operations were confined exclusively to the street and commercial arc lighting business. After satisfying City Council as to the feasibility of such a system, the Company received a contract to light several street corners. In 1890, the city renewed the contract for five years, the franchise to terminate in 1895. In 1889, another company interested in electrical production was established in Toronto. F. Nicholls succeeded in interesting several prominent Toronto capitalists in the possibility of supplying electricity to Toronto manufacturers. The following year, the syndicate organized the Toronto Incandescent Electric Light Company to supply a lighting service to Toronto offices and stores.

When the city's contract with the Toronto Electric Light Company approached termination, that Company prepared to tender again for this lucrative franchise. The prospect of a vigorous debate when the city's lighting contract fell due, was
reminiscent of the battle waged over the street railway franchise. Several competing companies were interested in the contract. There was also a body of public opinion in favour of having the city do its own lighting. The possibility of the city managing its own electric lighting was first raised at a meeting of the Nationalists held in 1892. In a discussion on the functions of civic government, the members mentioned the possibility of the city engaging in the production of electricity. However, no action was taken on the proposal. The question was raised again at the 1894 May Day rally of the Socialist League when a petition was drawn up and forwarded to Council calling on the city to run its own lighting plant. The Trades and Labour Council, at a meeting held in June, 1894, passed a resolution requesting City Council to establish a municipal electric light system.

The city's newspapers also took up the question of municipal management. The Telegram in February, 1894, had suggested the city give municipal operation a try. "Toronto might do worse than experiment with a task of street lighting by electricity." Alderman Lamb, in his enthusiasm for public control, suggested that Council look into the feasibility of such a proposal. The City Engineer prepared a lengthy report comparing relative costs between cities with private lighting and those operating their own plants. No recommendation was included in the report but the engineer did point out that "in going over these records, giving the cost per light per annum, there seems to be a very considerable margin in favour of municipal plants as compared with those owned by private companies or corporations."

Reaction to this report was mixed. The World believed the
report "unequivocally settled the question in favour of a municipal lighting plant. The prospect of cheap electrical service would be a boon to the consumers and would force the gas company into dealing fairly with the public." The Globe was less enthusiastic. Even if the engineer's figures were unassailable, the journal felt there were other considerations which suggested caution, especially the possibility that a rapid advance "in our knowledge of the mysterious element might render a civic plant useless." One prominent Torontonian had firmly settled his mind on the question. H. P. Dwight, a large investor in the Incandescent Company, and its first vice-president remarked that, "the proposal to establish a municipal electric lighting plant and service in Toronto virtually means the confiscation of the property of the Electric Light Company." The blusterings of a suspect observer did not deter the aldermen from considering the possibility of the city operating its own lighting plant. At a meeting of the Executive Committee, the aldermen adopted a report calling for "lighting tenders by August 1st, and tenders for a civic plant by September 1st, to be accepted if the lighting tenders are considered too high." Such a decision represented a more progressive attitude than that of the Council of 1891. Then, a majority of aldermen accepted the premise that a private company could best operate the street railway franchise. With the lighting contract, the private companies had to prove that they could produce a cheap, efficient service, otherwise the city would do its own lighting.

During the summer doldrums, no active campaign was organized by the supporters of public ownership. The ranks of reform...
groups had been divided following the great battle over the street railway, and there was no united association to press its collective viewpoint on City Council. Nor did the city have a functioning civic plant which partisans could rally round and protect from the machinations of greedy corporations. Until the tenders were published there were no firm figures to fix upon.

Early in September, 1894, the figures from the tendering companies were published. The results were disappointing for advocates of municipal ownership. The offer of the Toronto Electric Light Company was $2.25 per light below the figure for which E. Keating, the City Engineer said the city could produce light. The *World* tried to draw some comfort from the results. The possibility of the city entering the lighting business had prompted the Toronto Electric Company to greatly reduce its price from that which had existed under the old contract. The lesson was a useful one for it demonstrated that "as long as the two electric companies have the field to themselves, just so long will we have to pay through the nose for all our electrical services." The *Globe* was jubilant, claiming that its policy of calling for tenders rather than the city moving directly into the lighting business had been entirely vindicated. The *Mail* commented that "the course Toronto should pursue in this matter will readily present itself to those who give it their unbiased consideration... Toronto ought to take the lowest offer now available for a reasonably short term of years." The paper did not reject the idea of a civic plant out of hand, but felt the city should wait and see if technological developments further reduced the cost of electric lighting.
Early in October, discussion on the question took a dramatic turn when charges of bribery in connection with the lighting contract, were presented to City Council. The aldermen responded by setting up a judicial investigation. During the hearings, evidence was brought to light implicating several aldermen in corrupt dealings with companies tendering for the lighting contract. The findings of Judge McDougall revealed a startling practice by which companies tendering for contracts with the city, were approached by aldermen requesting money and other considerations in return for votes favourable to their tender. The evidence of collusion between corporations and certain aldermen delayed any further action on the street lighting contract. During the following municipal contest, the electors devoted their energies to returning straight, honest, men to Council, and the issue of public ownership slipped temporarily into the background.

The debate was renewed again in January, 1895, when George Bertram, president of the Bertram Engine Works Company, directed an open letter to Council, reminding the members that he had tendered for the contract to supply the city with the necessary lighting plant and urged them to consider the scheme recommended by the City Engineer. He informed Council that a reconsideration of various costs enabled him to make a better offer to the city than that of the Toronto Electric Light Company. The claim of Bertram was given support by Engineer Keating, in a report presented to City Council. "Mr. Bertram's offer for construction of the plant is certainly a most favourable one for the city... I think it is in the public interests that his offer for the
construction of the plant should be accepted. "100 Acting on the City Engineer's findings, the Fire and Light Committee recommended that Council seek a vote of the ratepayers on a sale of city debentures to raise the funds necessary to erect a municipal lighting plant. 101 The aldermen gave their approval, and attention shifted from consideration of the tenders to the outcome of the by-law vote.

The decision by Council was also the signal for a renewal of the civic lighting question in the city's press. The World continued its support for a lighting plant, arguing that the scheme was now even more desirable since it guaranteed a lower price, as well as the break-up of monopolies in the city. The paper roundly criticized those journals which opposed the scheme. The Globe was charged with protecting the interests of publisher Jaffray, a stock-holder in the Incandescent Light Company. The Mail was even more soundly roasted. The paper had been making cautious overtures towards civic management102, but after its merger with the Empire it gradually lost sympathy for the cause.

The Mail and Empire is preparing to flop - has already flopped on this question... The more the Mail and Empire now argues against the city lighting plant, the more will the citizens be disposed to install it, because it is plain as day that the paper has succumbed to the pressure of the friends of the company that wants the contract. 103

The Toronto Star advocated the municipal plant as a means of breaking a secret agreement which it felt existed between the two electric companies.

The movement to establish a civic plant... is a battle to break up the electric light combine. The two companies now in the field have an understanding by which one agrees not to tender the city's lighting if the other will not compete in the manufacture of incandescent light. 104
The question was also aired at a public meeting organized by the Trades and Labour Council, to consider the question. The resolution up for consideration, "That in the opinion of this meeting, it would be in the best interests of the city, that a civic electric light plant be established as soon as the present contract with the Toronto Electric Light Company is terminated" was given a rough handling by the crowd. One speaker warned the audience that:

the addition of $250,000.00 to the city's funded debt was a very grave matter. There was no saying that in five or ten years electric lights might be down to $5.00, and, anyway, it would be unwise to erect another civic department. 105

A counter resolution proposing that the city accept the offer from the Toronto Electric Light Company was put and carried by a large majority. The meeting was an indication of a pervasive mood among the ratepayers not to add to the city's burden of debt. The day before the vote, the Telegram listed thirty-three reasons why the citizens should support the by-law, but they failed to convince the ratepayers. The by-law was defeated by an overwhelming majority. 106

The World had a straight-forward explanation for the outcome. "The by-law was defeated by the work and money of the interested companies, and not by any public revulsion against civic control." 107 The Star traced the defeat to other causes as well. "It was the prejudice of the people against increasing the debt and the money and the organization of the Toronto Electric Light Company." 108

In the face of this rejection of the civic plant scheme, Council accepted the tender of the Toronto Light Company. The
Telegram had some consoling words for those supporters of the civic lighting plant, "The principal is sound and its advocates five years hence can renew the fight for the addition of electric lighting to the works and services which the city controls." Events were to show that barely five months would elapse before the agitation was renewed.

The immediate cause for the renewed interest in the lighting question, was the indication that the two light companies were proposing an amalgamation. On January 17, 1896, the World carried a story on "The Proposed Electric Monopoly," and urged City Council to be watchful of the city's interests. The two companies pursued negotiations, and on January 23, completed the merger. With the temporary set-back of the movement for municipal ownership following the ratepayer vote, the World argued that a strict regulation of the new company, somewhat along the lines of the agreement with the Consumers' Gas Company - only more clearly defined - would be in the city's interest. However, the new company was unresponsive to such requests from City Council, and the city applied to the courts to have the merger declared illegal.

The city also got involved in a disagreement with the Electric Light Company over the quality of lighting which it was providing. In August, 1896, the Fire and Light Committee recommended that "payment of the Toronto Electric Light Company be withheld owing to complaints about the quality of lighting, until it is tested." The outcome of this particular incident was not recorded, but it does serve as an illustration of the Company's disregard for the interests of the public.
This attitude on the part of the Company did much to hasten the growth of opinion in favour of a publicly owned electrical plant in the city. The question came up again for discussion when Council was deciding what lighting system to implement in the new city hall. The World warned the aldermen that the Company would supply the necessary current even at below cost, to prevent the city from undertaking the operation as an experiment. The paper went on to suggest that a reduction in the price offered to the city would be made up by an increase in the price charged to private consumers. The very real possibility of high costs for electrical power posed a direct threat to Toronto's commercial prosperity. The city's attractiveness to manufacturers depended, in part, on a cheap source of electrical power, and a municipal lighting plant would help make Toronto a favourable location for factories.

The Council members decided that the public should be given another opportunity to vote on the issue of the city lighting its own streets and buildings and, at a meeting in October, 1897, passed a motion to put the question of civic lighting to a public vote. In order to give the voters updated information on the whole question, the City Engineer was requested to prepare another report on the probable cost of erecting a civic lighting plant.

The Council's decision brought a qualified approval from the Globe. Noting that "there seems to be a very considerable amount of dissatisfaction with the charges of the company", the paper went on to suggest that, "if the people desire to assume the function of supplying light and power to the private
user, they should... make an offer to buy out the existing company at a price to be fixed by arbitration." The *World* scoffed at this 'conversion' of the *Globe* to the public ownership idea, charging that the idea of supplying energy to private consumers had been raised by the paper to confuse the issue. The *World* believed that the existence of a civic plant supplying electricity for civic needs would be a powerful enough lever to keep the Electric Light Company competitive. As for the idea of 'vested rights' which the *Globe* had claimed for the Company, the paper rejected it out of hand, claiming that the *Globe* had become "the mouthpiece of monopolists; it has ceased to be either liberal or progressive, or to have any genuine interest in the modern movement for better government."  

In late November, 1897, Engineer Keating submitted his report, showing that the city could light its streets by the introduction of a civic plant at an annual saving of $5,100.00. The Mayor called a special meeting of Council to consider the report. The urgency of the issue was becoming apparent in the increased attention paid to Toronto's need for electrical power:

> Cheap power is a **sine qua non** for the success of Toronto as a manufacturing centre. If the supply of power is to be constricted and expensive, it will certainly be an obstacle in the way of prospective manufacturing settlers. We want to have power and light here as cheaply as they can be obtained.  

If municipal ownership would produce such results, than let the cities adopt such a course of action. The council decided to have the question put to a vote by the citizens.

Municipal management was thus no longer the preserve of 'faddists and dreamers' as had been argued during the street
railway debate. The prosperity of Toronto's manufacturers was predicated on a cheap supply of electrical energy. The interest of manufacturers in the possibilities of municipal ownership indicate that, among those businessmen who required a cheap supply of electrical energy for the successful operation of their business, there was no doctrinaire opposition to the city operating a municipal plant. Some businessmen justified public ownership on the grounds that it prevented monopolies and preserved an equitable price system. Others regarded civic government as business straight and simple and, as long as it operated on sound, efficient, business principles, there could be no argument about confining its function. Their support for the campaign gave added weight and respectability to the public ownership movement.

During the middle years of the decade, the advocates of public ownership had called on the city to produce and distribute its own electricity by building a civic lighting plant. However, in the later months of 1897, a discernable shift in emphasis became noticeable. The World, as the leading organ in the battle for public ownership, gave an indication of the new direction which the debate would ultimately take. On December 16, 1897, the paper published a lengthy editorial on "The Situation In Regard To Niagara Falls Power." The article discussed the development of electrical power by harnessing the mighty Falls, and the possibility of distributing this power to surrounding communities. The paper concluded: "The time has arrived for Toronto to take up this question in real earnest." 118

The idea of transmitting electrical power over long distances
was still a theoretical possibility, and there remained a number of technical problems to solve, before such a scheme could be feasible. The debate within Council thus continued to revolve around the advisability of establishing a civic lighting plant. The by-law authorizing Council to construct a municipal plant had to be returned to the Solicitor's office, because of faulty wording, and did not come before the rate-payers at the election. However, the question did emerge as an issue in the municipal campaign of 1898, and Mayor Shaw, as an advocate of the city doing its own lighting, was returned to the mayor's chair. The Council re-appointed the special committee inquiring into the cost factors of a municipal plant. Council also took a first step towards an investigation of the possibilities of a Niagara Falls project. In April, 1898, the aldermen took a trip to the Falls to inspect the generation of electric power by the Canadian Niagara Power Company. The World was encouraged by this step, and attempted to show that the distribution of energy would be a step in the right direction:

The agitation in favour of establishing a civic electric plant has its origin in a widespread desire among manufacturers and other consumers of electrical current to break up the monopoly... if the city were to erect poles of its own for lighting the streets and thereby control the distribution of the current, we would secure immediate relief from the monopoly. It is in the distribution of the current alone, that makes a monopoly possible. 119

The prospect of the city participating in the supply of electrical power either through a municipally owned plant or through the distribution of power from Niagara Falls, brought a response from the Toronto Electric Light Company. To help
forestall the city erecting its own lighting plant, the Company announced a reduction in its schedule of rates. Through a discriminatory pricing system, the company was able to present the city a competitive offer, while maintaining the high prices charged to other consumers. Another course of action adopted by the Company was to seek, with the co-operation of other companies, legislative protection for their investment.

The whole issue of public versus private production of electrical energy and the question of compensation was raised at the June, 1898, meeting of the Canadian Electrical Association. The Association had appointed a Legislative Committee, to wait on the Ontario government and obtain legislative protection for investments in private power companies. The committee reported that the government's Municipal Affairs Committee debated their proposal and recommended that it be allowed to stand over for another year, adding that the general direction of the discussion was encouraging. The committee's main objection was directed at those municipalities that "destroy with public funds, and without public necessity or advantage, the value of property of those citizens who were encouraged to invest their private means in the enterprise." 120 As a solution for this difficulty, the committee recommended that municipalities intent on supplying electrical power to their citizens, be compelled to first buy out the plant of existing private companies. Such a remedy, the representatives of the Association argued, was both fair and reasonable:

It is eminently just and imposes no hardship on the municipality; nay, rather it benefits them because it tends to extinguish rivalry to themselves, which rivalry might render
municipal operation of these works, unprofitable. 121

With the announced reductions in price and the possibility of having to pay the Toronto Electric Light Company compensation, the scheme for a civic lighting plant was less favourably received. In October, the Board of Control reached the conclusion that it would be unadvisable for the city to engage in ruinous competition in the lighting of the city's streets and buildings. The coup de grace to the whole idea was the disappointing results of the tenders for building a municipal plant. No tenders had been received from a Canadian company and, of those submitted, several were found to be incomplete, offering to do only part of the work or lacking the necessary guarantee. 122

The defeat of the project was the signal for a regrouping of those supporting municipal ownership. The new direction for the advocates had been outlined by the World. The World had pointed out that it was in the distribution rather than in the production of electricity that the city could best secure reasonable rates. With the announcement, in November, 1898, that electrical current had successfully been transmitted from Niagara Falls to Hamilton 123, the success of such a scheme seemed assured. Working in co-operation with other interested communities, Toronto was successful in obtaining 'public power' for its citizens. The battle for the establishment of a civic plant, though it proved unsuccessful, had served to galvanize public opinion on the issue of the city's government providing for the energy requirements of Toronto.

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The citizens' determination, towards the end of the decade, to retain for civic management those functions which the city could practically perform, was demonstrated by the defeat of a scheme to place the control of the city's water supply in the hands of a private corporation. The history of the company lobbying for the franchise is a complicated affair, it being at one time or another a ship canal scheme, a power scheme, and a water gravitation scheme.

In 1893, Council set up a committee to study the possibility of supplying the city with water from Lake Simcoe by a gravitation scheme. In November, the committee, expanding on its mandate, recommended to Council that the city sign an agreement with the Toronto Aqueduct Company for the construction of a ship canal from Georgian Bay to Lake Ontario via Lake Simcoe and the Humber River, for the provision of water from Lake Simcoe, and for the production of hydro electric power from the proposed Humber Dam scheme. A draft agreement was prepared but Council, questioning the legality of the Company, did not authorize any agreement. The speculative nature of the Company was confirmed early the following year when the City's Solicitor, W. R. Meredith, commented that, "The Toronto Aqueduct Company has not yet been incorporated and therefore has no legal existence and cannot enter any agreement that would be binding upon the Company when incorporated." In October, 1894, J. D. Edgar, on behalf of the now incorporated Georgian Bay Ship Canal and Power Aqueduct Company, informed Council that the Company had scaled down its proposals, and offered to supply the city with water. A second draft
proposal was prepared by the special committee, but again Council did not ratify an agreement.

Early in 1896, the Company made another appearance before Council, petitioning for the right to meet the city's water requirements by a gravitation scheme from Lake Simcoe. The practicability of such a scheme had been seriously questioned by an English engineering expert, James Mansergh, engaged by the city to inquire into the whole question of Toronto's water supply. The Company refuted the objections to the scheme, declaring Lake Simcoe to be a purer source of water than Lake Ontario and the gravitation scheme to be a cheaper proposal than the city's system of intake pipes, pumps, and filters. While the feasibility of the proposal may have been a subject for debate, the desirability of the Company's offer was a different matter. The speculative nature of the Company and the bold proposal of taking the city's water supply and surrendering it to a private corporation brought a firm and unequivocal reply from Alderman W. Hubbard, Toronto's first negro alderman. In a clear enunciation of the basic premise underlying the municipal ownership movement, the alderman declared:

The municipal ownership of public franchises is now the recognized policy in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States and it is the deliberate opinion of this Council that the continuation of the municipal ownership and operation of the waterworks system and the unrestricted control of all sources of water supply are desirable and absolutely necessary in the financial interests of the corporation, and... the health, comfort, and convenience and general interests of the citizens will be best promoted by such municipal ownership, operation and control. 127

With this stamp of disapproval on the scheme, the proposal to
surrender the city's water supply to a private company was firmly rejected and was not considered by Council again.

The advancement of the public ownership idea, from the debate on the street railway, through to the decision to have the city engage in supplying electricity, follows a general pattern. The practice of leasing out city franchises on the basis of a set of specifications had proven unsuccessful. The legal battles waged with the Consumers' Gas Company, the Toronto Street Railway Company, and the Toronto Electric Light Company turned citizens away from municipal control by contract and towards municipal ownership by civic operation.

Yet, this shift in public opinion was by no means a straightforward advance towards the goal of municipal ownership of civic franchises. The success of a particular scheme depended on a favourable combination of several factors: general public support, especially among the business community, a willingness on the part of City Council to promote the proposal, the concurrence of the provincial government, and a determined resistance by the private concern to modify its prices, were all required for the implementation of a specific plan of municipal operation. The difficulty of achieving this combination is evidenced by the inability of the supporters of municipal ownership to successfully carry through a programme of civic operation during the 1890's, whether it was in providing street car service, fire insurance, or electrical current.

This failure to put into practice a programme of municipal ownership does not indicate a rejection of the municipal ownership idea. As early as 1891, there was a group of dedicated
supporters of municipal ownership actively campaigning for retention of the street railway franchise. The by-law vote of 1895, represents only a temporary set-back, as citizens hesitated on increasing the city's indebtedness. Following the vote, the municipal ownership campaign was able to draw support and respectability from concerned businessmen requiring inexpensive services, such as electricity, for expansion and growth. There was also a growing determination by City Council not to surrender municipal franchises for private exploitation, but to operate them as municipal works. The development of a practical scheme for civic operation, such as an insurance bureau, and later a system of distributing electrical power, enabled citizens to fix their attention and support on a feasible proposal. Thus, by the end of the decade, the emerging consensus which brought together the necessary conditions, put the public ownership question directly to the fore as an urgent municipal requirement.
NOTES


3 On May 1, 1890, the Telegram ran a full page article on "Senator Smith's Gold Mine"; Telegram reporters had been tabulating the passenger load during the previous month and, from this data, along with the Company's statement of assets and liabilities, the paper calculated that the franchise earned for its two principal owners, "profits totalling $272,532.00 and a six percent dividend."

4 Minutes of City Council, 1890, p. 22.

5 In a letter to the Telegram, March 5, 1890, Macdonald warned the citizens that, "If Alderman Gillespie imagines for one moment that his election as chairman is an evidence of the confidence and respect of the 'Gang' which influences the Council, he is laying a flatteringunction on his soul that is not warranted. It is simply an evidence that they think they can handle him easier than they can me," Macdonald believed a concerted effort was being made by a powerful lobby (unnamed) to influence Council in its deliberation on the street railway franchise.

6 Globe, April 17, 1890.

7 Labour had given some thought to the question, but had not formulated a definite plan. The Toronto Trades and Labour Council, in preparing a list of questions to be submitted to the aldermanic candidates in the municipal election of 1890, came out in favour of the city retaining control of the franchise - though how the railway was to be managed was not mentioned.

8 News, June 19, 1890.

9 Ibid.

10 The final vote was 5,385 Yeas and only 427 Nays. Minutes of City Council, 1890, Appendix A, p. 1462.

11 Mail, March 20-21, 1890.

12 D'Alton McCarthy, a prominent Protestant and member of the Equal Rights Association, did not let religious prejudices stand in the way of business dealings with the noted Irish Catholic Senator, Frank Smith.
“City valuators were refused entrance to the company's stables and the auditors were unable to inspect the company's records. A court order was obtained, permitting entrance to the stables, but no order was made as to the books and invoices." *Globe*, October 21, 1890.

14 *Globe*, June 24, 1890.

15 *Mail*, October 6, 1890.

16 *Telegram*, October 11, 1890.

17 The Nationalist Association was formed in Toronto in 1890 by a group of Bellamite reformers who believed in 'nationalism', the control of the means of production and distribution by the state, as a cure for the country's social and economic ills.

18 *Telegram*, December 2, 1890.

19 Ibid.

20 For a discussion of the growing sophistication of labour's ideology, as it moved beyond immediate needs such as hours and wages, to a critical examination of broader issues, see F. W. Watt, "The National Policy, Workingmen, and Proletarian Ideas in Victorian Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*, 40, No. 1 (1950).

21 *Labour Advocate*, December 26, 1890.

22 *World*, December 24, 1890.

23 The aldermen got involved in discussing the plan of civic reform proposed by McDougall and did not come back to the question of a public vote. see Chapter III, pp. 73-74.

24 Minutes of City Council, 1890, Appendix A, p. 2519.

25 Ibid., 1891, Appendix A, p. 10.

26 *World*, January 23, 1891.

27 *Telegram*, February 2, 1891.

28 *Mail*, March 13, 1891.

29 "The reason why plutocrats and profit mongers oppose the city taking over the road is not far to seek
it is because they realize that the operation of public services in the public interests by the representatives of the people is the thin end of the wedge of nationalism. It is the principle underlying the agitation that they dread. All their acquisitive instincts and selfish fears are aroused by the thought that when once the people get habituated to the idea, that whatever can be done by the peoples' representatives better, cheaper, and more satisfactorily than it can be done by private monopolists ought to be so done, their investments, monopolies, and special privileges will be in danger... And therefore, purely as a matter of class interest and to continue unimpaired their power of sweating labour and drawing large profits for very slight services, the Board of Trade and the entire caste of sweaters, profit-mongers, schemers and caterpillars on the leaf will naturally and instinctively oppose civic control and come to the rescue of beleagured monopoly." Labour Advocate, March 13, 1891.

30 A. Hepburn spoke on "Civic Services", G. Howell spoke on "Monopolies and Municipal Services", and in an effort to attract the interest of women in the campaign, addressed a group of ladies on "Why Women Should Be Bellamy Nationalists".

31 "Public Ownership of Public Services", an address delivered by A. Hepburn to the Nationalist Association. Labour Advocate, March 20, 1891.

32 Mail, March 4, 1891.

33 World, April 9, 1891.

34 Globe, January 31, 1891.

35 Minutes of City Council, 1891, Appendix A, p.235.

36 City Council adopted a recommendation from the Street Railway Committee that: "There be no interference with the present management of the Railway but that the management of the Railway be left in the hands of Mr. Gunn and the officials formerly employed by the company, with City Engineer Jennings together with the chairman of the committee and the Mayor - the purchasing of supplies, engaging and discharging of men, to remain as when this Council took over the street railway." World, May 21, 1891.

37 Labour Advocate, May 29, 1891.

38 Globe, April 20, 1891.

39 World, May 25, 1891.

40 Ibid.
The Mail, in a June 24, editorial stated that "the undertaking is now on the down grade and it will continue to go down hill until it is put beyond the reach of the ineffective administration at City Hall." J. Gunn, the manager appointed by the city, replied in a letter the following day, "I have not since entering the city employ, been interfered with in the management of the road either by the Mayor or by any Member of Council... as to the road being on the downgrade, the statement is absolutely without foundation."


The companies interested in the railway franchise included: the Kiely, Mackenzie, and Everett syndicate, the Kerr-Brock syndicate, and the Miller Brothers syndicate. A fourth company, the Toronto City Passenger Railway Company, which W. H. Howland had organized, withdrew from the bidding.

Telegram, June 26, 1891.

Ibid.

The Central Social Reform Committee represented the Toronto Trades and Labour Council, The Knights of Labour, the Women's Enfranchisement Association, the Eight Hour League, the Single Tax Association, and the Nationalist Association. The issue of the street railway served as a catalyst for a combined effort by these various organizations - the first such effort undertaken in Toronto.

Labour Advocate, July 10, 1891.

At a meeting of the Street Railway Committee in April, the City Engineer had suggested to the members the advisability of municipal ownership, but his suggestion was not considered by the committee. Telegram, April 25, 1891.

Telegram, June 13, 1891.

the resolution, Alderman Hewitt was later found guilty of corrupt conduct with one of the tendering companies and Alderman Verral was found to have engaged in improper conduct in seeking to buy shares in one of the tendering companies. Report of His Honour Judge McDougall, in the Matter of the Civic Investigation, Minutes of City Council, 1895, Appendix C, pp.619-638.

52 Labour Advocate, July 10, 1891.
53 Ibid., July 24, 1891.
54 Minutes of City Council, 1891, p.25.
55 News, July 22, 1891.
56 Globe, August 4, 1891.
57 Mail, August 6, 1891.
58 J. Middleton, p.342.
59 A. Shaw, an American student of municipal government, described the contract as "the most complete and satisfactory municipal franchise that has ever been granted in America." A. Shaw, "Toronto as a Municipal Object Lesson," Review of Reviews, 8,(1894), p.170.
60 J. Middleton, p.257.
61 "Any surplus of net profit from any source whatever, including premiums on sales of stock, after the rest or reserve fund shall have been established and maintained as aforesaid, remaining at the close of any fiscal year of the Company, after payment of the fees of the President, Vice-President, and Directors of the Company, not exceeding in all $9,000.00 per annum, after payment of dividends at the rate of 10 per cent on the paid up capital stock and the establishment and maintenance of the said reserve fund and providing for the said plant and buildings renewal fund shall be carried to a special account to be known as the special surplus account, is equal to five cents per 1,000 cubic feet on the quantity of gas sold during the preceding year, the price of gas shall be reduced for the then current year at least five cents per 1,000 cubic feet to all consumers." Globe, April 12, 1894.
62 Telegram, June 4, 1889.
63 Globe, March 17, 1892.
64 Ibid., April 12, 1894.
The ratepayers in 1901 voted to have the city purchase the Gas Company, but action on this was delayed and the city finally reached an agreement with the company regarding a sliding scale of rates. For a brief review of the subsequent history of the gas question, see, Middleton, p. 363.

"The clause that terminates the monopoly at the end of five years is not altogether satisfactory. The main streets will be asphalted by that time so that it will be almost impossible for a new company to lay underground wires. These changes will all tend to discourage competition and, in view of this contingency, the city should reserve the right to either cancel or renew the exclusive privileges of the Bell Telephone Company, at the end of every five years."

Telegram, May 9, 1891.

The terms of the contract were: an exclusive franchise for five years, the city to receive five percent of gross receipts of the Bell Company, the latter to provide suitable construction and equipment. Minutes of City Council, 1891, Appendix A, p. 252. The new agreement included the previous specifications plus some additional qualifications regarding the maximum charge for putting phone service in homes and business establishments. Minutes of City Council, 1891, p. 198.

Minutes of City Council, 1896, p. 248.

"The Bell Telephone Company franchise expires on September 15, and with it expires the five percent of the Telephone Company's revenue which has heretofore been paid to the city... The company have refused to continue the payment to the city of five percent of their receipts. Some time ago a committee of City Council was appointed to call for tenders for the telephone system, but the result was only one tender... It looks as though the company will get the franchise on its own terms." World, September 4, 1896.

The Bell Telephone Company had been incorporated by federal legislation and was therefore under federal
jurisdiction.

77 *Star*, March 30, 1897.

78 Minutes of City Council, 1897, Appendix A, p.277.

79 Ibid.

80 Alderman David Lamb seemed an unlikely candidate to introduce such a scheme. "To the student of economics there is much that is interesting in this debate. It shows how the tide is running when a staid old Tory like Alderman Lamb proposes a project under which the city would insure all buildings within the limits and charge the cost in the tax bill. Here is a departure from the individualism of a generation ago that Alderman Lamb himself could hardly have thought possible." *Globe*, July 5, 1894. For a discussion of the progressive strain in Conservativism, see C. W. Humphries, "The Sources of Ontario 'Progressive' Conservatism," Canadian Historical Association Historical Papers, (1967), and S. Wise, "Upper Canada and the Conservative Tradition," *Ontario History*, 59, No.3, (1967).

81 A report prepared for Council showed that over a period of eight years, "the average loss from fire in Toronto was $227,344.00 and that after meeting all losses, the insurance companies had a profit of $717,309.00." Dividends were ranging from ten to seventy percent. R. Donald, "Municipal Fire Insurance," *The Contemporary Review*, 68, (1895), p.844.

82 A special committee of City Council reported that "after a most careful and mature consideration, we can only come to one conclusion: that the forty different insurance companies doing business in the City of Toronto have united in a closed corporation, 'The Underwriters', in which they have a combination to control the fire insurance for their own gain and profit." Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix A, p.357. For a discussion of the movement towards 'combines' in business, labour, and professional groups, see M. Bliss, "The Protective Impulse: An Approach to the Social History of Oliver Mowat's Ontario," in *Oliver Mowat's Ontario*, ed. D. Swainson, (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1972).

83 R. Donald, p.844.

84 The bureau was to "consist of three commissioners two to be appointed by the City Council, and one by the Board of Trade who will appoint a manager, inspectors, treasurer, chief accountant, and such other staff as may be necessary. That this commission have power to assess
all buildings for insurance on merchandise, stock, machinery, furniture, etc. That the commission will have charge of the fire brigade. That debentures be issued to the extent of one million dollars to be sold and invested in other negotiable securities, for a reserve fund to meet extraordinary losses. " Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix A, p.360.

Globe, July 18, 1894.


Toronto had enjoyed " a notable immunity from fires for some years; but after the scheme was produced, there was a series of drastic outbreaks. The coincidence was more than remarkable, and the effect was to throw discredit on the municipal scheme. There was talk of incendiarism, and several persons were arrested, but no convictions were obtained." R. Donald, p.846.

Tenders were received from the Toronto Street Railway Company, the Toronto Electric Light Company and the Consumers' Gas Company. Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix A, p.540.

Globe, May 2, 1894.

Telegram, February 21, 1894.

Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix A, p.330. The City Engineer listed four reasons why cities could do their own lighting cheaper:

1. In the construction of a municipal station, the municipality saves the profit that a private company would of course expect to make.
2. A city is generally in a position to borrow money at a lower rate of interest than a private company.
3. Most of the plants owned by private companies in the large cities were put in some years ago when the cost of electrical appliances was greater than it is today.
4. In the construction of a private plant, capitalists will not risk investing money unless they are assured of receiving good dividends, while all the municipality requires is a sufficient return to pay the cost of running, including interest on the outlay, with a margin for renewals.

World, May 28, 1894.

Globe, June 28, 1894.

Telegram, June 9, 1894. Dwight went on to say, "the Company now furnishing electric lights on the street, have expended nearly half a million dollars in their
plant, believing, as they had a perfect right to do, that when the present contract expires, and would have to be renewed, they would at least have a fighting chance to secure it, but instead of that some individuals down at City Hall, have conceived the idea of the city doing its own lighting, and they do not even propose to purchase the valuable plant that will otherwise be virtually destroyed, or give the company a chance to tender again for the work." For a discussion of the beleagured businessman, see M. Bliss, "Dyspepsia of the Mind": The Canadian Businessman and His Enemies," in Canadian Business History, Selected Studies, 1497-1971, ed. D. Macmillan, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972).

95 Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix A., p.372.

96 World, September 19, 1894.

97 Globe September 16, 1894.

98 Mail September 21, 1894.

99 "There should be no difficulty on the part of the City Council deciding to assume control of the city's lighting... the time has now come when this city from past experience, will henceforth refuse to grant any more franchises, but will keep steadily in view the fact that public ownership of such necessities as light and water must be administered, first and last, for the benefit of the public, instead of compelling the people to pay increasing tribute to private corporations." Mail, January 22, 1895.

100 World, February 20, 1895.

101 Minutes of City Council, 1895, Appendix A , p.80.

102 There is a strong tendency against the disposal of public franchises to private organizations... The city has no wish to allow private companies, franchises that it can work perfectly well on its own account." Mail, January 22, 1895.

103 World, March 30, 1894.

104 Star, March 26, 1895.

105 Telegram, April 4, 1895. The meaning of the $5.00 was not mentioned by the speaker.

106 The result of the vote was 817 Yeas and 4,510 Nays. Mail and Empire, June 3, 1895.
For a review of the details of the merger, see the Telegram, January 23, 1896.

"In the litigation that followed amalgamation with the Incandescent Light Company, judgement in favour of the Toronto Electric Light Company was finally upheld when in 1906, the Privy Council refused the City leave to appeal from the adverse decision of the Court of Appeal." C. Hall, "Private Utilities", p.55.


The contract eventually went to the Toronto Electric Light Company. The Company was opposed to delay in signing the agreement while the city deliberated on the possibility of a municipal plant, and used dire threats to bend the city's will. It threatened to cut off the power to the building the day the new Governor General, Lord Minto was to open the new civic building, and thus leave the royal entourage in the dark. Telegram.

"Supposing the Legislature gave the Consumers' Gas Company power to go into the electric light business, or supposing the Street Railway Company offered to supply electric light for the streets and municipal buildings for less than the Toronto Company, would either the Gas Company or the Railway Company take over Toronto Electric Company 'at a price to be fixed by arbitration'? Not much! Neither should the city." World, October 28, 1897.

Ibid.

Mail, December 15, 1897.

World, December 16, 1897.

Ibid., June 22, 1898.

Globe, June 30, 1898.

Ibid.

Minutes of City Council, 1898, Appendix A, p.747.
The company was made up of a number of prominent Torontonians; J. L. Hughes, E. A. Macdonald, and ex-Mayor Boswell.

Minutes of City Council, 1894, Appendix A, p.94.

Globe, October 19, 1896.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

An examination of Toronto's attempt to respond to pressing issues associated with its status as a major urban centre, has provided an opportunity of observing an important Canadian community adjusting to its 'coming of age' at the end of the century. The efforts of the various groups and associations who were concerned with each of these issues, were discussed from the vantage point of motivating considerations and the success which they achieved.

It was shown that in each of the issues presented, the citizens succeeded in achieving only a partial victory. In the case of relief for the poor circumstances associated with the Laurier boom helped to relieve the problem which concerned citizens were attempting to solve. The campaign for a reformed system of municipal government achieved a limited success with the creation of a Board of Administration. However, this was quickly replaced by a somewhat different system imposed on Toronto by the dictates of the provincial government. On the question of municipal ownership, the advocates of civic operation of civic franchises failed during the period studied to produce a functioning system of municipal operation of basic services, such as gas, transit, and electrical power.

This conclusion raises the legitimate question, was the decade one of 'failures to respond' to those pressing needs which were evident during the period studied? The answer to this is decidedly no! If historical events were judged on the success which they achieved, then any disappointments which preceded
that success would be virtually ignored. The set-backs which citizens interested in these questions experienced were only temporary defeats. Though they did not achieve the ultimate goals which they set for themselves, during this period, they did succeed in drawing public attention to the issues, broadening support for a progressive attitude to these questions, and laying the basis for future action.

Those citizens who participated in the campaign to introduce a regular system of relief for the poor of the city established a firm foundation for a rational, professional approach to social welfare, as symbolized in the National Conference on Charities and Corrections. The advocates of municipal reform had focused public attention on the need for a division of legislative and executive functions. The interest which they generated among the public contributed to the introduction of an improved system of administering local affairs. Both the reforms they promoted and the public interest which they aroused prevented Toronto from falling under the control of powerful corporate and political rings as occurred in the United States. The campaign for municipal ownership during the 1890's was a key factor in educating public opinion on the advantages of public ownership. This solid base of public support in favour of municipal ownership was evident when public hydro was later introduced into Toronto through the actions of the progressive ministry of Sir James Whitney.

There was evident among the three topics discussed, a general approach towards reform issues. The desire to initiate a rational, scientific, business-like solution, is a common
theme which is evident in all of the three issues discussed. It is present in the campaign to reform the city's government, to initiate municipal ownership and even in the campaign to streamline the city's system of relief. This 'progressive' strain in Canadian reform movements should not be surprising. It formed an essential ingredient in the American reform movement and its existence in Canada indicates that those concerned citizens who attempted to respond to the needs of the new urban society were operating within a North American framework in their response to pressing reform questions.
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