

## Metropolitan Area for Toronto

The difficulties of a rapidly growing city surrounded partly by farm lands and partly by suburban municipalities, is seen very plainly in the case of Toronto.

Many problems are involved, and it is to try and solve them that a scheme for creating a metropolitan area, including the surrounding district, has been evolved, largely through the careful study of Ald. S. Morley Wickett (formerly Professor at the University). As this subject is of interest to almost every large city in Canada, we give in full the Memorandum prepared by the Transportation Committee, of which Ald. Wickett is Chairman.

### Not a Policy of Annexation.

The creation of a metropolitan area is not a policy of annexation. It is a policy of co-operation. It is something bigger and more effective than linking up Toronto with a more or less indefinite stretch of farm lands; it unites and strengthens live municipalities to their mutual advantage, and makes intervening territory a greater asset for the community, especially for the workingman.

### Existing Municipalities Continue.

It does not imply the disappearance of existing municipal units. It means simply the coming together of a group of municipalities for the purpose of carrying out certain services which they can do jointly more effectively than they could singly.

It is but the natural and inevitable outcome of municipal conditions, particularly of the wide scope of modern communal activities and of the great possibilities of rapid local transit.

### A Practical Necessity.

A metropolitan area is therefore no idle fancy, but a practical necessity of Toronto and the thirty or forty municipalities round about. These municipalities have many common needs that can only be worked out co-operatively: inter-municipal electric lines, permanent roads, lighting, sewage, water, housing and pre-emption of permanent breathing places.

### A Metropolitan Radius.

The radius of a metropolitan area may be taken as limited by the maximum time that a workman can afford to take going to his work day-by-day. This latter may be set at one hour. The radius of a metropolitan area may therefore be fixed at approximately twenty miles, or the distance the workingman could cover in the given hour. For the Toronto district this would mean approximately a metropolitan boundary of Oakville, Brampton, Aurora or Richmond Hill, Markham and Port Union.

### Annexation A Local Issue.

Recently the City Council unanimously endorsed the sound financial principle that the general ratepayer should be liable for the full cost of trunk-line services, but that for locals, property or districts directly benefited should pay the bill. Such a policy would be very necessary in a metropolitan organization.

If legislation to make this policy effective is secured it will of course give Toronto a much freer hand as to annexations. But it may be well to point out that annexations are not and cannot be a solution of the problem before us. Annexations can only affect territory immediately contiguous and within a restricted radius. Annexation remains, therefore, a local issue. The work of a metropolitan body is something above and beyond, consonant with the needs of a much wider area, embracing a series of independent municipalities with much undeveloped property between.

In the case of annexations financial considerations count heavily, for at present an annexed area becomes immediately liable for the accrued obligations of the City without, for some time to come at least, enjoying corresponding advantages in the form of municipal services. This handicap might be removed in whole or in part by special agreement or by a more business-like arrangement as regards city taxes, basing these on costs of the several classes of service actually rendered a newly annexed area. But even then the special problem of metropolitan activity would still be left practically untouched.

### Toronto's Interest.

From the point of view of Toronto early action seems advisable on various grounds:

1. One must acknowledge the extreme difficulty in securing large industrial sites at reasonable figures.
2. The practical land monopoly by reason of unsatisfactory transport service.
3. The consequent extreme height of rents, hiving together of families, and springing up of congested districts.
4. The difficulty of laying plans for public works on a sufficiently generous scale when a broader area is not constantly kept in mind.

### Interest of Outside Municipalities.

On the other hand, from the point of view of surrounding municipalities, the defective transportation of all kinds to and from their natural civic centre, their slow economic development, and in most cases, the unnecessary lack of certain public services which go to make life more agreeable and satisfying, all unite to give scope for successful action by a metropolitan body.

The cordial co-operation of the municipalities within the area indicated can all the more readily be counted on by reason of the fact that any taxes levied would be determined by service actually rendered.

### Special Reasons For Early Action.

The present seems a particularly opportune time to lay plans for the following reasons:

1. The Provincial Board of Health is actively considering more satisfactory sewage disposal facilities. Such provision must take cognizance of the natural drainage of a fairly wide area.
2. Suburban districts are calling on Toronto more and more to grant them water facilities.
3. Suburban and rural demand for electric lighting and power is rapidly growing.
4. The Provincial Government's revised Hydro policy, replacing easements for its electric lines by rights-of-way, opens up a wide perspective for inter-municipal lines and for a growing demand for electric power along these routes.
5. The call for permanent, in place of macadam roads, is heard on all sides. The Provincial Government have recognized this in their recent creation of a Provincial Road Commission.
6. In providing for a five-mile limit around Toronto, the Provincial Government and municipalities appear to have agreed already tentatively as to the need for acting now.

In taking action in a broad way we should only be recognizing local conditions and applying a simple common-sense solution. The old idea of planning for a restricted municipal area has necessarily had to change with the extending application of electricity to transportation. If to give courage to the municipalities of our district precedents is necessary, one might point to Chicago, with its eleven Park Improvement Commissions, operating over a considerable area; to the Metropolitan Commission of Boston; to London, England,