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Bonded Indebtedness of
Urban & Rural Municipalities
1916-30
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CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS
FINANCE STATISTICS BRANCH

REPORT
ON THE
BONDED INDEBTEDNESS
OF
URBAN & RURAL MUNICIPALITIES
IN
CANADA
1931

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BONDED INDEBTEDNESS OF URBAN AND RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

1931

The subject of governmental bonded debt is one of growing interest to parliamentarians, economists and students of public finance. The Bureau issues reports dealing with Dominion and Provincial Government Public Finance, and it now presents its annual bulletin dealing with Bonded Indebtedness of Municipal Governments throughout Canada for the year 1931. These statistics are compiled from the various reports by municipalities to provincial governments and represent the latest available information.

There were 4,280 municipalities in Canada in 1931 divided into urban and rural classes. The urban class consists of cities, towns and villages to which have been added some five suburban municipalities in the province of Manitoba while the rural classes consist of rural municipalities, districts and counties.

While the borrowing powers of municipal governments are more or less under restriction of their respective provincial governments, such powers have been somewhat freely used, with the result that there has been a steady annual increase in municipal debt since the Bureau first instituted this report in 1919. The demand for improvements of public services, such as, highways, educational, charitable, and social institutions, is largely responsible for the increase in debt. Ordinary revenues of municipalities, as is the case in other forms of government, have shown a distinct falling off and in order to meet the settlement of old obligations as well as provide funds to carry out improved services, debenture issues have been generally resorted to. Within the last year or two, an unusually heavy expenditure by municipal governments has taken place, due to the adoption of emergent measures to meet the cost of unemployment.

The Bulletin is made up of six tables, the first giving the number by classes of municipalities in each province; the second dealing with the debt of all municipalities reported in each province; the third showing the debt of all urban and rural municipalities in Canada; the fourth showing the debt of the various classes of municipalities by provinces; the fifth, a summary of the total and per capita urban as well as rural municipal debt for each province and the sixth showing the total bonded indebtedness of all municipalities by provinces for the years 1919-1931 inclusive.

There are no municipal estimates of population computed by the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba for the year 1931, consequently populations for these provinces as shown by the Dominion census returns for 1931 have been used in tables 2 and 5 of the report and the per capita debts are based on the census populations. In the case of the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia the estimated municipal populations as given in the provincial reports for 1931 have been employed in working out the per capita debt as shown in tables 2 and 5.

The municipal system of erection and incorporation of the different classes of municipalities varies considerably as between provinces, as for instance seven of the thirty-three cities of British Columbia have a population of under 1,000 while town municipalities do not exist. There is no rural municipal system in Prince Edward Island and all public loans and borrowings other than those contracted by eight incorporated urban municipalities, are administered by the provincial government.

The sixth summary table is particularly interesting as it shows comparatively the total municipal bonded debt by provinces for the years 1919 to 1931. In the case of the province of Quebec revised figures have been compiled including school debts which were not shown in previous reports.

Table 1.
Number of Municipalities in Canada and in each Province
by Classes, 1931.

Provinces	Cities	Towns	Villages	Counties	Rural Munici- palities	Local Improve- ment Districts	Subur- ban munici- palities	Total Number of munici- palities
Prince Edward Island	1	7	-	-	-	-	-	8
Nova Scotia	2	43	-	-	24	-	-	69
New Brunswick	3	20	2	15	-	-	-	40
Quebec	25	98	300	74	1,012	-	-	1,509
Ontario	28	146	156	1/ 38	2/ 571	-	-	939
Manitoba	4	30	22	-	113	-	5	174
Saskatchewan	8	80	3/ 385	-	302	83	-	858
Alberta	7	54	3/ 145	-	166	234	-	606
British Columbia	33	-	16	-	28	-	-	77
CANADA	111	478	1,026	127	2,216	317	5	4,280

- 1/ There are forty-four counties in all, geographically, but six of them are united for municipal purposes.
- 2/ Officially known as townships.
- 3/ Includes six summer villages.

Table 2.

Populations and Total and Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness of all Classes of Municipalities, by Provinces, year 1931.

Provinces		1931
Prince Edward Island 1/ -		
Population		-
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	1,959,672
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	-
Nova Scotia -		
Population		512,846
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	31,386,025
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	61.20
New Brunswick -		
Population		408,219
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	21,477,521
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	52.61
Quebec -		
Population		3,146,452
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	428,018,439
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	136.03
Ontario -		
Population		3,194,243
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	499,002,074
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	156.22
Manitoba -		
Population		700,139
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	91,615,195
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	130.85
Saskatchewan -		
Population		874,458
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	59,146,704
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	67.64
Alberta -		
Population		648,542
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	78,679,571
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	121.32
British Columbia -		
Population		519,823
Total Bonded Indebtedness	\$	123,913,890
Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	\$	249.92

1/ Urban Bonded Indebtedness only, there being no rural municipal system.

Table 3.

Bonded Indebtedness of Each Class of Urban and Rural Municipalities
for all Provinces combined, year 1931.

	1931
	\$
Cities	1,005,189,459
Towns	145,267,609
Villages 1/	502,971
Suburban Municipalities	8,166,726
Total Urban Municipalities	1,159,126,745
Rural Municipalities	2/ 68,167,492
Districts	13,742,590
Municipal Districts	17,974
County Councils	202,513
Counties	34,055,672
Total Rural Municipalities	116,186,241
Total School Debt, All Municipalities, Quebec (not separable by classes)	65,836,105
Total All Municipalities, Urban and Rural	1,341,199,091

1/ In Quebec the villages are included in counties and in Ontario they are included in towns.

2/ Includes \$22,409 Bonded Debt of Independent Rural Municipalities of Quebec.

Table 4.

Bonded Indebtedness of Municipalities, by Provinces and Classes, 1931.

Provinces		1931
		\$
Prince Edward Island-	Cities	1,650,600
	Towns	309,072
	Rural	-
	Total	1,959,672
Nova Scotia-	Cities	17,358,041
	Towns	12,372,667
	Municipalities	1,655,317
	Total	31,386,025
New Brunswick-	Cities	13,016,603
	Towns 1/	5,615,000
	Counties	2,845,918
	Total	21,477,521
Quebec- 2/	Cities	307,467,143
	Towns	41,186,843
	County Councils	202,513
	Counties 3/	13,253,426
	Ind. Rural Mun. 3/	22,409
	Total	362,132,334
	School Debt All Municipalities	65,886,105
Total including School Debt		428,018,439
Ontario-	Cities	351,078,531
	Towns 4/	74,938,125
	Rural	54,979,030
	Counties	17,956,328
	Total	499,002,074
Manitoba-	Cities	75,150,311
	Towns	3,368,291
	Villages	105,069
	Suburban Municipalities	8,166,726
	Rural	4,824,798
	Total	91,615,195
Saskatchewan-	Cities	47,160,534
	Towns	4,970,359
	Villages	329,433
	Rural 5/	6,685,878
	Total	59,146,704
Alberta-	Cities	76,136,376
	Towns	2,456,752
	Villages	68,469
	Municipal Districts	17,974
	Total	78,679,571
British Columbia-	Cities	116,171,300
	Districts	13,742,530
	Total	129,913,830

1/ Includes \$53,000 for two villages. 2/ School Debt by classes of Municipalities

3/ Includes Loans on obligations or notes. not available.

4/ Includes villages.

5/ Includes Rural Telephone Debt.

Table 5.

Populations, Total and Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness of Urban and Rural Municipalities, by Provinces, for the year 1931.

Provinces	Population		Total Bonded Indebtedness		Per Capita Bonded Indebtedness	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
			\$	\$	\$	\$
Prince Edward Island	20,385	-	1,959,672	-	96.13	-
Nova Scotia	231,654	281,192	29,730,708	1,655,317	128.34	5.89
New Brunswick	128,940	279,279	18,631,603	2,845,218	144.50	10.19
Quebec 1/	1,902,567	1,243,885	348,653,986	13,478,348	183.25	10.84
Ontario	2,085,017	1,109,226	426,066,656	72,935,418	204.35	65.75
Manitoba	315,969	384,170	2/ 86,790,397	4,824,798	274.68	12.56
Saskatchewan	291,329	583,129	52,460,826	6,685,878	130.07	11.47
Alberta	279,838	368,704	78,661,597	17,974	281.10	.05
British Columbia	395,442	124,331	116,171,300	13,742,530	293.73	110.49

1/ Exclusive of school debt not separable by classes of municipalities.
Total school debt 1931 was \$35,883,103 and per capita \$22.32.

2/ Includes five suburban municipalities which in previous years were included with rural municipalities.

Table 6.

Total Bonded Indebtedness of all Classes of Municipalities,
by Provinces, 1919 - 1931.

Year	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1919	970,100	17,863,881	11,128,467	205,636,519	243,226,877
1920	1,086,500	19,132,462	10,841,466	230,500,744	263,727,271
1921	1,202,200	22,451,745	7,578,567	237,515,794	317,613,283
1922	1,254,900	23,541,759	10,025,633	253,704,994	349,276,606
1923	1,290,800	24,243,782	7,974,362	267,593,757	376,512,002
1924	1,143,550	25,348,664	17,350,225	284,979,792	430,010,501
1925	1,163,050	25,722,635	10,660,863	288,843,822	405,173,853
1926	1,247,545	26,281,152	17,091,550	304,115,745	413,474,813
1927	1,452,425	28,381,613	15,707,699	324,673,587	434,464,056
1928	1,515,125	29,049,412	19,365,535	345,813,010	435,312,807
1929	1,598,624	29,029,119	21,129,540	363,160,768	451,936,592
1930	1,863,211	30,182,264	20,565,998	396,078,256	485,280,182
1931	1,959,672	31,386,025	21,477,521	428,013,439	499,002,074

	Manitoba	Saskatche- wan	Alberta	British Columbia	Totals
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
1919	55,562,788	39,585,388	66,870,464	94,741,615	735,535,899
1920	57,820,583	34,982,751	57,205,275	96,107,911	777,471,968
1921	65,463,239	35,040,336	53,429,558	97,495,984	837,730,704
1922	68,811,040	52,787,655	60,832,650	98,761,630	918,996,367
1923	73,908,963	51,719,648	70,999,611	96,273,987	970,526,912
1924	73,944,105	49,448,911	65,414,317	96,106,151	1,043,746,216
1925	79,211,867	46,732,040	57,908,593	99,055,201	1,014,476,924
1926	80,716,272	44,769,529	56,950,712	102,853,228	1,047,500,546
1927	83,017,302	54,361,158	62,414,660	107,376,118	1,111,843,621
1928	85,651,906	53,092,330	63,428,853	110,124,819	1,143,953,797
1929	85,901,404	54,913,100	73,473,392	118,483,618	1,204,626,157
1930	84,879,707	59,000,183	78,645,803	125,832,088	1,232,327,692
1931	91,615,195	59,146,704	78,672,571	129,913,890	1,341,199,091

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