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THE

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL:

What it Is and What it Does.

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The Administrative County of London, with its fifty-eight Parliamentary constituencies, measures 16\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles in extreme length (east and west), from Plumstead to Bedford Park, and 11\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles in extreme breadth (north and south), from Stamford Hill to Anerley. This area comprises, including the "City" proper, 75,490 acres, or nearly 119 square miles (being three-quarters the size of the Isle of Wight or the county of Rutland). The County had in 1891, 549,283 inhabited houses, containing 4,211,743 persons, or 840,000 families, being 14.52 per cent. of the population of England and Wales; 56 to the acre; 35,392 to the square mile; and 7.8 to each house.

The London County Council is constituted under the Local Government Act, 1888 (England and Wales). It inherited the powers, duties and liabilities of the Metropolitan Board of Works and the County Justices. The Council consists of 118 Elected Councillors, who hold office for three years; and of nineteen Aldermen, chosen by the Council, who hold office for six years, one-half retiring every three years. Of the Councillors, four are elected by the City of London, while the remaining 57 electoral divisions of the metropolis elect two members each. The University of London is not represented, and the boroughs of West Ham, Croydon and Richmond are not included in the County of London. County electors consist of the householders, men or women, whose names are on the printed register. Lodgers, service-occupiers and freeholders cannot vote at a County Council election. Women occupiers, who are not directly rated, should take special care to send in claims by August 25th each year, if their names are not included in the list published.

on the 1st of that month. Candidates must be registered as County
electors in London, but not necessarily in the constituency for which
they are to stand. Aldermen must possess the qualifications required
of Councillors.

The Council elects its own Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Deputy-
Chairman. The last receives a salary of £1,500, and is the official
head of the clerical establishment.

The detailed work of the Council devolves on twenty-one Com-
mittees, five Special Committees, and the Technical Education Board.
The Committees vary in size from five to fifty members. The Council
also elects representatives on the Standing Joint Committee of the
Quarter Sessions and the London County Council, and on the Thames
and Lea Conservancy Boards. The following is a list of the Commit-
tees: (1) Asylums, (2) Bridges, (3) Building Act, (4) Corporate Prop-
Purposes, (9) Highways, (10) Improvements, (11) Industrial and Re-
formatory Schools, (12) Local Government and Taxation, (13) Main
Drainage, (14) Parks and Open Spaces, (15) Parliamentary, (16) Pub-
lic Control, (17) Public Health and Housing, (18) Stores, (19) Theatres
and Music Halls, (20) Water, (21) Works. The Special Committees
are two Statutory Committees for Assessment Appeals, and County
Rates, and two for Small Holdings, Fire Insurance, and the Joint
Committee on Coroners' Courts and Mortuaries.

The Council has nothing to do with paving, cleansing, or lighting
the streets; does not control the water-works, gas-works, markets,
and police; is almost powerless in valuation and assessment; does
not collect its own rates; is neither the sanitary nor the burial
authority; is inadequately represented on the Thames and Lea
Conservancy Boards; and cannot even prepare or supervise the
registration of the voters who elect it.

Notwithstanding this degradation of the chief Municipality of the
Kingdom below the meanest provincial borough incorporated under
the Municipal Corporations Act, 1835, the powers and duties of the
London County Council are extremely multifarious, and touch the
lives of London's citizens from the cradle to the grave. It has to
administer either wholly or in part, or supervise the administration
of a large number of general and special Acts of Parliament.

Amongst the more important are:

The Building Act, 1894.
The Factory and Workshop Act, 1891.
The Electric Lighting Acts and Orders.
The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888.
The Weights and Measures Acts, 1878 and 1889.
The Bread Act.
The Explosives Act, 1875.
The Public Health (London) Act, 1891.
The Petroleum Acts.
The Infant Life Protection Act.
The Shop Hours Act, 1892.
The Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts.
The Fertilizers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1893.
The Artizans' and Laborers' Dwellings Improvements Act, 1875.
The Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890.
The Technical Instruction Acts, 1889 and 1891.

The work of the Council may be conveniently considered under the following general heads:

I. THE COUNCIL AND THE HEALTH OF LONDON.

The public health of London is affected by the powers of the Council in the provision of more room for the people to live in, more and better air for them to breathe, more open spaces for them to play in out-of-doors, and safer theatres, and better conducted music-halls for their indoor amusement.

The Housing of the People.

The County Council has one medical officer and two assistants, and pays half the salaries of 23 medical officers and 188, out of a total of 219, sanitary inspectors appointed by the Vestries. Since the Council came into existence the number of inspectors in London has doubled. In addition, two women inspectors of workshops and laundries, fifteen coal and coke inspectors, and two street inspectors have been appointed. The most important duties of these officers are to inquire into the sanitary condition of houses and workshops, report on the water supply, and investigate the causes of any epidemic. The Public Health and Housing Committee is not the sanitary authority for the whole of London, but it supervises the administration of the Public Health Act (London), 1891, by the local authorities, with a view to secure an adequate sanitary staff in each district, and as far as possible the enforcement of the law. It has drawn up a set of bye-laws in order to regulate and secure greater uniformity of action by the local authorities, and thus to raise the sanitary standard of London. It makes bye-laws to regulate the removal and disposal of offensive material, to fix the clearance of dust-bins to at least once a week, to secure proper water-closets in houses, etc. This Committee also administers the Artizans' and Laborers' Dwellings Improvements Act, 1875, and the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, under which insanitary areas and houses all over London are investigated, clearances are made, and new buildings erected in the place of slum-dwellings.

386,973 persons in London live in one-roomed homes; 830,182 persons live in tenements with two or more than two in a room (Census Returns, 1891). Twenty per cent. of the population of London live in overcrowded dwellings (London Statistics, vol. iv., p. 20). "London needs the rebuilding of at least 400,000 rooms to house its poorest citizens, at the minimum of two decent rooms per family, not to speak of the ideal of three rooms and a scullery, which should be our goal." (The London Programme, p. 128).
The Council has, from the first, built either separate cottages, or, where this has been impossible, dwellings on the self-contained tenement system, which provides for separate sink and lavatory accommodation, and secures for the working-class tenant a distinct and complete little home of his own. The internal fittings and arrangements are made as neat and convenient as possible, an adequate system of ventilation, and a certain cubical capacity for every room, sleeping and living alike, are insisted upon; and, notwithstanding the better accommodation provided, the rents charged are based on those prevailing in the immediate neighborhood.

**Sanitary Inspectors.**

The Council's inspectors during the year ended 31st March, 1894, inspected 1,061 premises in respect of nuisances alleged to exist; have made 4,958 visits to premises upon which offensive trades are conducted; and have visited 3,962 cowsheds, 11,011 milk-shops, and 243 dairies. The Council granted licences during the year to 525 slaughter-houses, 489 cow-houses, and 7 knackers' yards. In one case a manure manufacturer at Rotherhithe was, after several convictions for breaches of the Council's bye-laws, deprived of the right to carry on his business.

The Council's inspectors of explosives and its coal officers are instructed to report any nuisance from the non-consumption of smoke that may come to their notice in the course of their other duties. In this way 774 cases of serious nuisance from smoke were reported in 1894, and in each case the attention of the sanitary authority concerned was called to the nuisance with a view to its abatement.

**New Streets and Buildings.**

Through the Building Act Committee the Council has organized a definite attack on the jerry-builder and house-farmer, and has begun to repair the neglect of past years in the clearing away of London's slums and rookeries, with all their evil outcome of intemperance, disease and crime. One of the most important pieces of this work was the drafting and steering through Parliament in 1894 of the London Building Act, which provides that the making of all new streets and the alteration of old ones shall be subject to the approval of the Council; that streets for carriage traffic shall be not less than forty feet wide, and those for foot passengers only not less than twenty feet wide; that no dwelling shall be erected or re-erected within twenty feet from the centre of a roadway, or ten feet from the centre of a footway for passengers, and that the height of the buildings shall not exceed the width of the street; that the space at the back shall be at least 150 square feet, and ten feet deep, and that the space shall increase by an angle of 62 1/2 degrees with the height of the houses; that dark recesses and shafts in blocks of dwellings shall not be allowed; and that the width of all recesses shall be half the height. Under the Act, provision must also be made for the proper lighting of new buildings in order to make it possible for the sunshine to have access to all tenements.
down to the street level; and powers are given for regulating the erection of buildings in which dangerous and noxious businesses are to be carried on, for preventing building on land lying too low to be properly drained, for the removal of dilapidated and neglected buildings, and for other purposes. During 1894 the Council granted 39 applications for the formation of new streets whose total length exceeded ten miles; and condemned 6,286 dangerous structures.

Main Drainage.

The main sewers of London (but not the local drains) are under the management of the Council, in whose sludge vessels 2,102,000 tons of sludge were, during 1894, sent to sea. The whole body of sewage used to flow into a vast underground reservoir, in which it was penned by the rising tide, and allowed to flow away with the falling water. The Thames used therefore to receive every day some two hundred million gallons of unpurified sewage. Under the improved methods which have been put into operation by the Council, the sewage is subjected to scientific processes, and is passed into the river as an inodorous, innocuous liquid. In consequence, the water in the Thames has been so purified as to make it possible for shrimps, whitebait, dace, and other fish to live where they could not before (even as high up as Woolwich), and the black mud banks have disappeared, and given place to clean shores of gravel, clay, or river sand.

Water.

Although the Council has not the Water Supply in its own hands, it has been making enquiries as to the provision of an adequate supply of pure water that shall keep pace with the growing needs of the people. In 1865 it introduced eight bills into Parliament for the acquisition of the existing means of supply, and in the meantime it has also so efficiently used its statutory powers to secure a constant supply of water, and thus to do away with the intermittently filled and often foul cisterns, as to have secured a constant supply to 613,187 houses, as against 423,567 so supplied in 1889. Of all the houses in London, 78.7 per cent. were on constant supply in 1894.

Gas.

The powers of the Council over the Gas Companies are of a very limited nature. They are confined to testing the illuminating power of the gas and the accuracy of the meters. During 1893 thirteen cases of deficient illuminating power and five of excess of sulphur impurity were reported.

Parks and Open Spaces.

During the first six years of the Council's existence, one new open space was secured for London, on an average, every two months. Every week it adds on an average between three and four acres to London's breathing grounds and playing fields. In 1888
there were forty-three separate open spaces, with an area of 2,578 acres, under the Council's control and management; in December 1894, their number had increased to seventy-five, covering 3,647 acres. But the Council's work is not confined to increasing the number and area of these open spaces. It organizes them in such a way as to make the most liberal provision of cricket-pitches, football grounds, tennis-courts, and gymnasium for both sexes. It supplies lavatories and free public conveniences. It regulates the refreshment tariffs. And, finally, it makes provision for a plentiful supply of music during the summer months by its own uniformed bands. The increase of charge in the six years did not amount to a rate of a halfpenny in the pound, and came almost exactly to three-pence per head per annum on the whole population. Once in four months every Londoner is invited in effect "to put a penny in the slot" of the Council's money-box, and to obtain in return nicer walks for the men and women, more playing-fields for the babies, cricket and football for the boys, a free gymnasium for the girls, and music for the family party, just at the times that they can enjoy it.

Theatres and Music Halls.

The County Council took over from the County Justices the licensing of London's Theatres, Music Halls, and Dancing Saloons; and, whatever mistakes they may have made in the opinion of some people, no one who knows the facts can deny that their work has increased the safety alike of the playgoer and the performer, and has raised the tone of the performances. Its action has wiped out some places which, under the guise of providing public amusement, were hotbeds of debauchery and vice. It has thoroughly inspected the theatres and halls, and insisted upon the provision of proper exits. One of the places to which a licence was refused has since been burned down; and in another case it was discovered that dramatic entertainments were given over a shop stored with dangerous material. In one instance, a dressing-room used by a large number of girls was found to be two storeys below the street, insanitary to the last degree, and without proper exits. The Council's regulations insist on the provision of non-mineral oil and candle-lamps in case of the sudden extinction of gas and electricity by fire; they require that there shall be two exits for each part in a theatre; that gangways shall not be blocked with seats; that the exits shall be plainly and boldly indicated; and that there shall be an ample supply of wraps, rugs and buckets kept on the stage or in the flies in the charge of a responsible person.

II. THE COUNCIL AND THE FIRE BRIGADE.

The Council has thoroughly reorganized this important section of its work. During its six years' term of office it has increased the staff from 790 to 846; the number of fire-engine stations from 55 to 56; the hose-cart stations from 27 to 53; the fire-escape stations from 146 to 180; the hydrants from 8,807 to 18,711. It has replaced worthless
machinery and appliances by the best mechanical contrivances. It has thus immensely increased the efficiency of the Brigade, and rendered the lives and property of Londoners more secure from the ravages of fire. The statistics of fires amply prove this. The total number of outbreaks—which no fire brigade can diminish—goes steadily up. In 1884 there were every day six outbreaks; in 1893 there were nearly nine. But the proportion of outbreaks allowed to reach very serious dimensions has, under the Council’s rule, steadily fallen. In the five years between 1884 and 1888, when Captain Shaw and the Metropolitan Board of Works were in power, 72 out of every 1,000 fires grew to such an extent as to be classified as “serious.” Between 1889 and 1893 the corresponding proportion was only 60—a reduction of no less than 16 per cent. Ten years ago one-eleventh of the outbreaks became “serious”; to-day the proportion is one-twentieth.

III. THE COUNCIL AND THE POOR.

The poor consumer is always at a disadvantage when compared with the rich purchaser, because he is obliged to buy in small quantities, and cannot for want of means set in motion the laws that should protect him from unscrupulous tradespeople. The Council has exercised to the full the powers it possesses in the testing of weights and measures. Out of a total of 1,123,211 weights, measures, and weighing instruments submitted for stamping, no less than 243,211 were rejected as unfit.

In the sale of coal and coke, the Council has also been a protector of the poor, for by its efficient inspection the sacks have had to be increased on the average by two inches. Last year 723 infringements of the law were reported; in 588 cases a written caution was sent by the Council, and 82 convictions were obtained.

During 1894 proceedings were taken under the Bread Act against eight persons for selling bread, other than fancy bread or rolls, otherwise than by weight. In seven cases convictions were obtained and fines imposed. Written cautions were also sent in a large number of cases.

The Council has used all its powers to make it possible for people to live a little way out of London, by improving the means of communication. Its policy of establishing free ferries, of buying up the Tramways, and exerting all its influence on the Railway Companies, the Board of Trade, and on Parliament to increase the number of workmen’s trains and to reduce the fares, both in the case of existing as well as of all newly projected railways has already resulted in very appreciable advantages to the community, and will be still more fruitful in the near future.

IV. THE COUNCIL AND EDUCATION.

The Council’s work touches on Education at two points. It has the management of the Industrial and Reformatory Schools at Feltham and Mayford in its hands. These schools contain boys
who have been sent there by the London Police Magistrates. The boys, rescued from vicious and criminal surroundings, are boarded, lodged, clothed, educated, and started in the world. Every endeavor is made during their detention to fit them for an honest life, and to this end increased attention is being given to their industrial training.

In connection with the Technical Education Grants, the Council has organized a Technical Education Board for London. It consists of twenty members of the Council and fifteen outside members, selected from the highest educational authorities in London, and representing the London School Board, the City and Guilds Institute, the City Parochial Trustees, the London Trades Council, the Head-Masters' Association, and the National Union of Teachers. The Board has already established a comprehensive “scholarship ladder,” from the Board School right up to the highest technical college, the best art schools, and the university; it has done much, by liberal grants and skilled inspection, to develop and improve the various Polytechnics now growing up all over the metropolis; it has worked a beneficent revolution in the evening science and technology classes, and made more practical the instruction in those subjects given in the public secondary schools; whilst the London Schools of Art are, under its fostering care, springing into new life.

The work of the Board is to extend the advantages of a higher education to the children of the poor. The Junior County Scholarships, tenable at secondary schools for two years, include free education in any upper standard or secondary school approved by the Board in which the fees do not exceed £10 a year, and a money payment of £8 for the first, and £12 for the second year. The scholarships are open to children under thirteen in the public elementary schools who are in the fifth or a higher standard, and whose parents are in receipt of an income of less than £150 a year. The Intermediate County Scholarships are for children over fifteen, and are renewable annually until the candidate reaches the age of eighteen years. The scholars are entitled to free education in secondary schools, including high schools or technical colleges, and to money payments varying from £20 to £35 a year. Senior County Scholarships will be established in due course. Art scholarships and exhibitions for artizans are also provided. They are intended merely to pay the fees and travelling expenses of students attending evening art classes, who are engaged during the day in earning a livelihood. The Board has under consideration the establishment of other scholarships and exhibitions. Grants are also made under certain conditions to schools of art, technical institutes and polytechnics, in order to raise the standard of teaching in the science and art classes. By the appointment, as its art advisers, of such expert craftsmen as Mr. George Frampton, A.R.A., and Mr. William Lethaby, a distinguished sculptor and a no less distinguished architect, the Board has shown how keenly it is alive to the need of a thorough reorganization of the “arts and crafts,” and we need not
now despair of London one day possessing a Municipal Art School to rival that of Birmingham. Nor have the women and girls been forgotten. Besides sharing in all the preceding advantages, they enjoy a special department of their own. The Board has set up three “Schools of Domestic Economy” (shortly to be increased to five), which intercept the maidens of thirteen who would otherwise be leaving school to “take a little place”; it has started at Battersea a Domestic Training School, which is already turning out skilled teachers accustomed to the housekeeping of the London poor; and by a staff of qualified instructors in cookery, dress-making, laundry work, and hygiene, it has given thousands of lessons in these subjects to groups of working women in all parts of London, who are too old or too poor, too hard-worked or too apathetic, to take advantage of any existing institutions.

V. THE COUNCIL AND THE WORKER.

The Council’s establishment consists of 339 permanent officials, and 105 temporary and other assistants who are arranged in eleven departments—Clerk’s, Comptroller’s, Engineer’s, Architect’s, Solicitor’s, Chemical, Valuer’s, Public Health, Public Control, Parks, and Statistical. In addition 34 messengers, caretakers, etc., and 18 charwomen are employed.

Unlike many private employers, the Council does not put any obstacle in the way of the combination of its workers. If there is any influence exercised in the matter, it is in the direction of encouraging the workers to join their Unions and increase the army of organized labor.

Fair Wages.

It is now the settled policy of the Council to pay its employees in each trade the recognized Trade Union rate of wages, and in no case less than 6d. an hour, or 24s. a week, to men; or 18s. a week to women. Seeing that Mr. Charles Booth places the actual “poverty line” in London at regular earnings of 21s. a week, it cannot be said that the Council’s “moral minimum” errs on the side of luxury or extravagance. But, unlike the Council’s wage for skilled workmen, it is more than is actually paid by many employers; and it is undoubtedly above the rate at which the Council could obtain similar labor if it chose to disregard all other considerations. It is noteworthy that this policy has not led to any ruinous increase in the labor bill. In 1889 the average pay of the wage-staff taken over from the Metropolitan Board of Works was £75 per annum. In 1894, after five years, this average has risen to £78, or exactly four per cent.

It must equally be put to the credit of the Council that it has settled the “Fair Wages” question, for its contractors as well as for itself. Over 150 local governing bodies have adopted some kind of fair-wages clause in their contracts (H.C. 189—1892). All firms tendering for the Council’s work are required to specify the wages they pay for each particular craft. Sub-contracting is forbidden, and a rigid penalty clause is included in every contract.
The Standing Orders of the Council are as follows:—

(1) There shall be kept at the county hall a list of the rates of wages and the hours of labor to be paid and observed by the Council in works which are in the nature of construction or manufacture, and which the Council may resolve to carry out without the intervention of a contractor.

The list shall be settled by the Council on the recommendation of the Works Committee, and shall be based on the rates of wages and hours of labor recognised and in practice obtained by the various Trade Unions in London, and by contractors in respect of the supply, manufacture and production of any raw material or manufactured articles, except contractors for the supply of stores to be used in maintenance, and shall form part of the standing orders of the Council.

The list shall at all times be open to public inspection.

(2) In inviting tenders for work to be executed within 20 miles of Charing Cross, the advertisements and instructions for tender shall state that in the case of all workmen to be employed by the contractor he will be required to pay wages at rates not less, and to observe hours of labor not greater, than the rates and hours set out in the Council's list, and that such rates of wages and hours of labor will be inserted in a schedule and will form part of the contract, and penalties shall be enforced for any breach thereof.

As regards each contract the list shall be that in force at the date of the tender.

The system works smoothly and well. If the work is to be executed within the London district it is an easy matter to see whether the rates correspond with those in the Council’s Standard List. If the work is to be done elsewhere, it is found in practice quite possible to ascertain by inquiry of the proper local officers of the associations of employers on the one hand, and the trade unions on the other, whether the proposed rates are really those current in the district. Firms accusing themselves of paying less than these rates are informed of the fact, as a reason why their tenders are not accepted, and have, therefore, full opportunity of correcting any injustice. The good contractors fall easily into line. The key-note of the Council’s policy is, not the abolition of competition, but the shifting of the plane from mere cheapness to that of industrial efficiency.

The Works Department.

Wherever possible the Council dispenses with the contractor, and executes its work by engaging a staff of workmen under the supervision of its own salaried officers. The first trial of this experiment was that of watering and cleaning the bridges over the Thames. The new system has now been tried for three years, with the result that whereas the contractor charged 4s. 7½d. to 4s. 10½d. per square yard, the work is now done at an average cost of 3s. 2d. a square yard, everything included. This, however, was a mere matter of hiring labor, no constructive work being involved. The first piece of actual building executed by the Council was the schoolhouse at Crossness. The architect’s estimate was for £1,800. The lowest tender was for £2,300. The work was completed by the Main Drainage Committee, under its own officers, at a cost of £1,764, or £536 under the lowest tender, and £36 under the architect’s estimate. But the case that finally convinced the Council was the York Road Sewer. The engineer’s estimate was for £7,000. Two tenders only were sent in,
for £11,588 and £11,608. The work was done by the Council itself, with the result that a net saving of £4,477 was made by having the work done without a contractor.

The outcome was the establishment in the spring of 1893 of a Works Committee to execute works required by the other committees. The Works Committee has an entirely distinct staff, and keeps its own separate accounts. Up to the present it has completed and rendered accounts for twenty-nine separate jobs, varying from £100 to £18,785. Sometimes the expenditure works out below the estimate, sometimes above, but, in the aggregate, the total cost of these twenty-nine works—undertaken at the very outset of a new business, with insufficient plant and under manifold disadvantages—comes to £63,961, against the architect's and engineer's detailed and independent prior estimates amounting to £66,661 18. 2d.

Stores.

The Council decided in 1891 that contracts for the supply of stores should be entered into for one year only, and in June, 1893, a special committee was appointed. The stores are supplied by ninety-nine firms, and comprise 1,817 items, which are classified under twenty-four headings, the most important of which are boots, brass fittings, brushes, baskets and matting, clothing, disinfectants, engineers' goods, firewood, fodder, glass, hats and caps, indiarubber and waterproof goods, ironmongery, leather, oilman's sundries, oils, paints and varnishes, rope and canvas, tools, and wrought and cast iron. The "Fair Wages" Clause is inserted in all the clothing and boots contracts, and the work must be done in the contractors' own factories. The question of establishing a Factory of its own, for making boots and clothing, is now under the consideration of the Committee.

The Shop Hours Act, 1892.

This Act provides that no young person under the age of eighteen years shall be employed in or about a shop for a longer period than seventy-four hours, including meal times, in any one week. At present, the duties of the inspectors have been confined to investigating specific complaints made as the result of the Council's widely advertised intention of following up cases of infringements of the Act brought to its notice. Experience showed that there were some businesses, notably that of hairdresser, in which the Act was very generally disregarded. The result of the enquiries that were made was that, in 1893, 102 infringements were discovered on the premises of hairdressers alone. With a view to more completely investigating cases affecting women, a woman inspector has been appointed. Since the Act came into force, 1,386 investigations and reports have been made, and infringements have been discovered in 231 cases. These have been dealt with by 179 written cautions, and legal proceedings have been taken in thirty cases, resulting, up to March 1894, in twenty-six convictions, and the imposition of penalties and costs to the amount of £28.
VI. THE COUNCIL AND LONDON’S PURSE.

The rateable value of London is £33,913,707, and the amount raised in 1893-4 was £1,782,599, which is equivalent to 8s. 3½d. per head of the population. Each penny in the rate represents 7¾d. per head.

London’s finance is complicated by the fact that the Council is not only a borrower, but also a lender. It lends money to local authorities, and receives interest from them. It receives contributions from various local authorities, and from the Government, and thus its receipts are swelled. In 1893-4 the gross debts were over £33,000,000, and the net debts under £19,000,000, having increased by £1,200,000 since the Council came into existence.

The Council’s precept for 1894-5 has been for 14d. in the pound, whilst the last precept of the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1888-9 was only for 10½d. But these figures can no more be fairly placed in comparison than the budget of a lone widow with that of the mother of a large and growing family. The Council’s precept includes not only the old charges of the Metropolitan Board of Works, but also several other rates which used to be formerly levied in other ways. The old County Justices’ rate, for instance, which amounted to 14d. in the Middlesex part of London, 1s. 3½d. in the Surrey part, and no less than 4d. in the corner which was formerly in Kent, or an average throughout London of 1s. 7½d. in the pound in 1888-9, the last year of its separate existence, now accounts for 1s. 7½d. of the Council’s expenditure. Then there are portions of the old Poor Rate and local Vestry Rates, which the Council, for the sake of efficiency and better equalization of the burden, has had placed on its own shoulders. These items, which are actually paid by the Council to the local Vestries and the Boards of Guardians, and do not form part of its own expenditure at all, amount to no less than 3s. 7½d. out of its levy on London. If we add these to the last Metropolitan Board of Works precept, as in all fairness we should do, we shall see that, instead of there being any increase of burden in the Council’s precept, there is an actual decrease of 1½d. in the pound. The result is, that as regards the majority of parishes, the net demand of the Central Municipal Authority has positively decreased during the six years of the Council’s existence.

Apart from these financial complications, which affect rather the distribution of the burden than its total amount, the Council’s net demand on the London ratepayer has, in the six years, risen by 1½d. in the pound, everything included. A half-penny each for the Parks Committee and the Technical Education Board, a farthing for the Fire Brigade, and another farthing for the growing activities of the Public Health, Asylums, Main Drainage, and other committees—this is the price which London as a whole is asked to pay for the abolition of its old corrupt government, and the substitution of a body which has carried out a beneficent revolution in every department of its municipal life. The net increase of charge upon each Londoner, after six years of the Council’s rule, is less than 1d. per month, everything included.
VII. A PROGRESSIVE COUNTY COUNCIL PROGRAM.

To bring it into line with the Municipal Boroughs in the provinces, London must be unified by the supersession of the City Corporation, and the London County Council must obtain powers from Parliament—

(1) To levy special taxation upon the owners of ground rents and other land values, and to collect half rates from owners of empty houses and vacant land.

(2) To secure special contributions by way of betterment from the owners of property benefited by public improvements.

(3) To absorb all future unearned increment by means of a Municipal Death Duty on local real estate.

(4) To further equalize the local rates by means of a Common Municipal Fund analogous to the Common Poor Fund.

(5) To enforce a proper valuation and assessment of houses and land.

(6) To collect its own rate.

(7) To protect, reclaim, and usefully employ the vast misappropriated endowments now in the hands of the City Guilds.

(8) To control the water supply by providing an independent supply, and taking over, on equitable terms, the plant, pipes, &c. of the existing undertakings.

(9) To work the tramways as it acquires them, under its legal powers, without the intervention of any lessee, contractor, or other middleman.
(10) To secure the transfer of all existing private markets, and to provide new ones where required.
(11) To take over and extend the existing gas supply.
(12) To control the police force.
(13) To take over the duties of the Asylums' Board, and the control of the hospitals.
(14) To obtain control of all the metropolitan open spaces still vested in the Crown, including the Royal Parks and Trafalgar Square.
(15) To supervise and control the Vestries and District Boards so as to secure more uniformity in paving, cleansing, and lighting the streets, and the enforcement of the sanitary and other laws affecting the public health.
(16) To license omnibuses and cabs.
(17) To prepare the register of electors.
(18) To become the Metropolitan Burial Authority.
(19) To promote bills in Parliament for all the purposes of its work.

In addition, women should be made eligible as candidates, in order that in its administrative work the Council may be able to have the assistance of every capable citizen, irrespective of sex.
The maintenance of the policy of the present Council on the following points should also be insisted upon:

The Proper Treatment of Labor.

(1) A normal Eight Hours day.
(2) Not less than Trade Union rate of wages for each occupation.
(3) Full liberty of combination.
(4) One day's rest in seven, and sufficient holidays.
(5) The prohibition of overtime except in unexpected emergencies.
(6) The direct employment of labor by the Council wherever possible, in preference to contracting, both in the supply of commodities and in constructive works.
(7) Where contracting is necessary, the putting down of all sweating and sub-contracting, and the rigid enforcement of the rule that only firms which pay the Trade Union rate of wages for the particular occupation, and observe the standard hours of labor, where such standard exists, shall be employed.

NOTE.
The authorities for the facts given in this Tract are the Annual Report of the London County Council, 1893-4, the Report of the Technical Education Board, and the Census Returns.

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