

MUNICIPAL LONDON, 1900

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649420193

Municipal London, 1900 by C. A. Whitmore

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

C. A. WHITMORE

**MUNICIPAL
LONDON, 1900**

MUNICIPAL LONDON, 1900

DUP EXCH 20 APR 1905

REFORM CLUB

MUNICIPAL LONDON

1900

BY

C. A. WHITMORE, M.P.

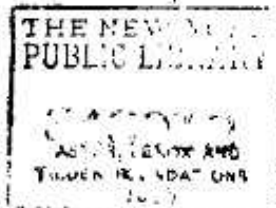


LONDON
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK
1900

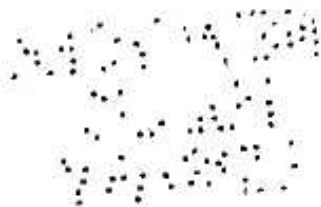
51

EDG. NO. 5172

DS



LIBRARY
OF THE
REFORM CLUB, NEW YORK,
CITY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.



MUNICIPAL LONDON

I

THE GROWTH OF LONDON GOVERNMENT

It is a remarkable fact that London should be the last place in Great Britain and Ireland to receive a coherent system of representative local government. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 applied to all municipalities of importance in England and Wales except that of London, which was expressly excluded ; and to all alike it gave a directly representative character.

The Local Government Act of 1888 substituted popularly elected County Councils for the old non-representative Courts of Quarter Sessions in all the counties of England and Wales. The Local Government (Scotland) Act of the following year conferred similar institu-

tions upon the whole of Scotland. The Local Government Act of 1894 gave, again, directly elected District and Parish Councils to every part of England and Wales, and later in the same year the Local Government (Scotland) Act extended the same principle of local government to Scotland.

In London, on the other hand, up to this year large districts have still remained without a directly elected local municipal authority. And where in the remainder of London elected local authorities have existed, those bodies have continued to bear the misleading and somewhat dyslogistic name of Vestry. In truth, the development of local government in London has been curiously slow and casual. Till four years after the Great Exhibition of 1851—i.e., till Sir Benjamin Hall's Metropolis Local Management Act of 1855—the local institutions under which London (outside the City) was governed were of a rural rather than an urban type. Mr. Balfour, in his speech in introducing the London Government Bill in 1899, said that down to 1855 'Parliament had made no organized attempt to confer an urban organization upon this great Metropolitan area.

At that time London was, and for more than two centuries had been, the largest city in Europe, and yet before then the organization of London, if it can be called organization, was in the main left to a series of local Bills, passed very much at haphazard, and, apart from these local Bills, was dependent upon the common law organization of the Vestries, which was the same for the most thinly-populated parish in the moors of Yorkshire as it was for the crowded streets of the Metropolis of the Empire.'

Sir Benjamin Hall, when he moved the first reading of the Metropolis Local Management Act in the House of Commons in 1855, gave a most interesting description of what the then existing organization was. This description has happily been rescued from Hansard and made accessible to ordinary readers. For in 'London in the Reign of Victoria,' by Mr. Laurence Gomme, the statistical officer of the London County Council, copious quotations are made from this speech.

There were then in force about 250 local Acts, besides the public general statutes. These were enforced by some 300 separate ad-

ministrative bodies. One hundred and thirty-seven of these bodies had made a return of their members, which amounted to a total of 4,738 persons. If the remaining bodies had the same average membership, they would produce 5,710 more administrators. So that at that time the local affairs of London were administered by no less than 10,448 persons. To illustrate the constitution of the Vestries of those days, in the Liberty of the Rolls it was composed of the 'ancient inhabitants'—that is, of those who had served the office of overseer. In St. Botolph Without, Aldgate, it was composed of persons who had served all the parochial offices—viz., of head borough constables, churchwardens, and overseers. How far these bodies were representative will be gathered from these facts. In Paddington 607 ratepayers, or one-seventh of the whole number, had 3,642 votes for the Vestry—that is, a larger number than the total possessed by the other 3,582 ratepayers of the same parish. The Vestrymen thus elected appointed a committee of eighteen to manage the affairs of the parish; their decision might be overruled by the *ex-officio* members, amounting to nearly