

**CASSELL'S SOCIAL  
ECONOMICS  
SERIES. THE FUTURE  
OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

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**G. D. H. COLE**

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# THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

By

G. D. H. COLE



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# The Future of Local Government

## CHAPTER I

### A FINANCIAL IMPASSE

**L**OCAL Government seems, to many people, an uninspiring study. The school of Socialists, very influential in this country in the past, which devoted its principal attention to the development of the "municipal enterprise" of a generation ago, has been, then and since then, freely denounced and contemned as advocates of mere "gas and water Socialism." Perhaps, from one point of view, the criticism was just; for it was easy for the local Labour councillor, keenly conscious of the responsibilities of his office and somewhat overwhelmed by the mass of administrative detail in which he found himself involved, to forget all about the wider issues of Socialism, and to devote himself entirely to his efforts to improve the housing, sanitation, and services and amenities of his native town within the limitations imposed by the present economic and political system. But, if the criticism was in some measure justified, certainly in some quarters the reaction has been allowed to proceed too far, so as to obscure the fundamental importance of the work upon which the local Labour councillor is engaged. For Local Government is a matter of primary concern, above all to the Labour Movement, not only on account of the immediate services which it is capable of performing, but also because of the place which it can be made to assume in a reorganized social system.

In a practical way Labour has recognized this