



Fabian Tract No. 191.

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# BOROUGH COUNCILS

Their Constitution, Powers  
and Duties

BY

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PUBLISHED AND SOLD BY THE FABIAN SOCIETY,  
25, TOTHILL STREET, WESTMINSTER, LONDON, S.W.1.  
PRICE TWOPENCE . . . . . MARCH-1920

Local government - United Kingdom



# BOROUGH COUNCILS

## Their Constitution, Powers and Duties.

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**T**HE Borough is one of the most ancient of all English units of Local Government and one of the most important. It is an urban community which has received a Charter of Incorporation from the Crown and is governed under the Municipal Corporations Acts, 1835-1882. It is not the purpose of this pamphlet to deal with the history of Town Government in this country or to trace the rise and decline of civic administration prior to 1832, but rather to deal with the borough as part of the machinery of local government at the present time. It is well, however, to recall that some boroughs are of very ancient origin and may have rights and privileges derived from charters and private acts of Parliament, owning property acquired many years ago, while others are the creation of yesterday, new communities that owing to their size and importance have obtained incorporation but derive their powers solely from statute.

From the fact of their origin it is not surprising that there is a great diversity of area and population among boroughs. Birmingham has a population of over 830,000, and Manchester an area of 20,000 acres, while Winchelsea has but 700 inhabitants, and Blandford only 145 acres. Boroughs, also, have differences of status among themselves, some of practical importance, others of sentimental interest; thus some are Cities in virtue of being seats of bishops or possessing a grant from the Crown, others are allowed to style their chief magistrate Lord Mayor instead of Mayor, others have a more important distinction in the possession of separate Courts of Quarter Sessions and a paid judge, but the most important difference from the point of view of the student of local government and the practical administrator is that between County Boroughs and non-County Boroughs. The County Borough, which is in all but three cases a town of over 50,000 inhabitants, stands, for almost all purposes, outside the administrative county of which geographically it forms a part and has practically all the powers of a county council in addition to those of the most powerful municipal borough, while the non-county borough like the urban district divides its authority in its area with the county council. The county borough is the completest authority in English



local government, and when the Boards of Guardians are abolished will be the sole authority in its area. At the present time there are 327 boroughs outside London in England and Wales, of which 80 are county boroughs. There is a certain amount of promotion among urban governing authorities, urban districts applying to the Privy Council may be incorporated and municipal boroughs and urban districts of more than 50,000 inhabitants may apply for county powers.

The Metropolitan Boroughs in London and the City Corporation will be discussed in a separate pamphlet.

### CONSTITUTION OF BOROUGH COUNCILS.

With the exception of the City of London and one or two unreformed boroughs, every borough owes its constitution to the Municipal Corporations Acts and is governed by a municipal corporation which enjoys perpetual succession and a common seal and consists of a Lord Mayor or Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors, the number of members varying according to the size of the borough. Councillors must be either (a) local government electors; (b) persons possessing property in the borough of a certain value; or (c) persons who have been resident in the borough for the whole of the 12 months previous to the election. There is no property qualification, and the councillors are elected by ballot on the first of November each year for three years, one-third of their number retiring each year.

The qualifications to be enrolled as a local government elector are:—(a) If a man, the occupation on the last day of the qualifying period (six months) as owner or tenant of any land or premises in the borough and their occupation for the whole of the qualifying period. He must be 21 years of age. (b) If a woman, the same qualification as for a man—or being the wife of a man so qualified. In the latter case she must be 30 years old. Aldermen are elected by the councillors from among their own number or from persons qualified to be councillors, and their number is one-third of the councillors. One-half of their number retire every three years.

The Mayor or Lord Mayor is elected by the councillors from the councillors or those qualified to be such. He may receive a salary, but aldermen and councillors are unpaid. The Mayor is a Justice of the Peace for his year of office and one year afterwards.

### POWERS AND DUTIES OF BOROUGH COUNCILS.

The powers and duties of a borough council are derived partly from its position as the representative body charged with the good governance of the town, partly from its being also an urban sanitary authority and in the case of a county borough a county authority, and partly from its being charged or empowered by the legislature to carry out certain duties by public or private Acts of Parliament.

These powers vary with the size of the borough, those with 10,000 population and those with 20,000 population having additional powers, while county boroughs have most of all. It will be most convenient to consider these differences when dealing with the various services performed by the councils which may be most easily grouped under the following heads.

(1) **As Municipal Authority.**—It administers corporate property: this is in many cases very considerable. Bristol derives £25,000 and Nottingham £30,000 from rents, while in the small but ancient town of Bodmin the income was enough to preclude the necessity of raising a borough rate until the present century. Other examples are Doncaster, Chester and Brighton that own race-courses, Colchester that owns oyster fisheries, and Bath and Harrogate that own baths. Labour councillors should look well to see that municipal property is being used to the best advantage, as cases have been known where the City fathers or grandfathers have leased corporate property to their friends for long terms of years at low rentals. The council also makes by-laws for the good governance of the town.

In addition to specific duties the borough council is the representative body of the town, and it is its duty to give expression to the wishes of the inhabitants and protect their interests. Thus it is the duty of the council to keep a careful watch on public and private bills introduced into Parliament, and where necessary obtain a *locus standi* and offer opposition to bills injurious to the borough. Under threat of opposition useful concessions can be obtained from railway companies and other bodies. If a railway company or the Postmaster-General fails to provide adequate services for the town it is the business of the council to make representations in the proper quarter.

The council should also be careful to do all it can to increase the amenities of the town. If a town hall or other public building is to be erected, it should be worthy of a city, not a mere ugly block.

(2) **Local Justice.**—The Mayor presides over the Borough Bench, and in boroughs that have a separate Commission of the Peace the J.P.'s are appointed by the Lord Chancellor on the advice of the Council, elsewhere by the advice of the Lord-Lieutenant of the County. Certain boroughs have obtained the appointment of a stipendiary magistrate, who is a paid justice appointed by the Crown on the advice of the Home Secretary. (There are 18 stipendiaries outside London.) The Crown may grant a separate Court of Quarter Sessions for a borough when the Recorder, who is a barrister appointed by the Lord Chancellor, sits as judge and is paid from the borough fund. There are 121 Recorders. There are also certain ancient courts in boroughs, such as the Salford Court of Hundred and the Guild Hall Court, Norwich. The council of a quarter sessions borough with a population of 10,000 or over, which is either a county borough or received its grant of quarter sessions before 1888, must appoint a fit person to be coroner. A few ancient towns are counties of cities or counties of



towns, and have power to appoint a sheriff, who must be elected annually by the council on November 9th.

(3) **Public Health.**—This, with Housing and Education, will be dealt with in detail in other Tracts. It is enough to say here that the council is the authority for drainage, sewerage, scavenging and removal of refuse, treatment of infectious diseases, provision of hospitals, clinics, nursing, mortuaries, cemeteries, the inspection of slaughter-houses, bakeries, food and drugs, and the prevention of nuisances. County boroughs will also administer the Midwives Act.

Under the National Health Insurance Acts, 1911–1918, the council of a county borough appoints one-fifth of the Insurance Committee. A district committee is also set up for the area of each borough with over 10,000 population.

(4) **Lunacy and Mental Deficiency.**—The county borough is the authority for carrying out the Lunacy Acts, 1890–1911. It is its duty to provide an asylum or asylums for the accommodation of pauper lunatics, and it may also make provision for lunatics who are not paupers. A Visiting or Asylums Committee is appointed by the council which manages the institutions and visits the inmates. The expenses are met from the borough fund as far as they are not covered by contributions from the Exchequer and the Boards of Guardians. Under the Mental Deficiency Act, 1913, the county borough council appoints a committee for the care of the mentally defective, composed partly of members of the council and partly of guardians and other persons with special knowledge; some women must be appointed. As a general rule the Visiting or Asylums Committee, with the addition of at least two women, acts as the committee, or forms that part of it appointed by the council. The duties of the local authority include the ascertaining of what persons are defective, the provision of suitable supervision and suitable accommodation, and the provision of burial. The expenses are met from the borough funds or from the rates.

(5) **Housing and Town Planning.**—County boroughs are responsible for carrying out the Housing and Town Planning Acts in their entirety; and other boroughs, subject to certain powers vested in the county councils, are similarly responsible for these duties, which include the provision of houses, the clearing of congested areas, the ensuring that all houses are placed and kept in a proper state of repair, and the preparation of town planning schemes.

(6) **Education.**—The county borough is the authority for Higher and Elementary Education, and boroughs with a population of over 10,000 are authorities for elementary education in their areas. Other boroughs are minor education authorities appointing managers for elementary schools, etc., but with little effective control. The borough council, where it is the local authority, appoints an education committee, the majority of members of which must be councillors, but

there is power to co-opt on the nomination of other bodies and the inclusion of women is necessary. For higher education, including technical, all borough councils are authorities, although they can surrender their powers to or act jointly with the county councils.

(7) **Highways.**—Borough councils are responsible for the paving, lighting and cleansing of the roads in their area and for the general regulation, street numbering, tree planting, etc. Certain main roads although repairable and maintainable by the county are as a rule maintained and repaired by the borough councils receiving a contribution from the county councils. The latter may also make grants for the widening and improvement of local roads. The Ministry of Transport under the Act of 1919 may make grants to a borough council for the construction or improvement of roads.

The question of the distribution of the burden for the upkeep of main roads is a matter of some dispute at the present time, the burden falling heavily on places through which there is heavy traffic, and the possibility is being considered of some division of roads on a system analogous to that obtaining in France, whereby some roads would be maintained by the State, some by the larger and some by the smaller local authorities. County boroughs and boroughs over 10,000 population may make regulations as to the use of roads by heavy traffic, and councillors should not forget that they have power to make users pay for exceptional traffic. Borough councils also regulate by by-law the display of advertisements and licence hoardings and projections, etc., over the roadway. The council also maintains bridges and may contribute to the cost of construction by private persons.

(8) **Parks, Recreation Grounds, Commons, etc.**—Borough councils have power to purchase or lease land for the provision of parks, recreation grounds and open spaces, and to make by-laws for their use; they may also provide boats for hire on lakes. Many boroughs, under private acts of Parliament, provide bands of music. The council may regulate commons and assist in maintaining rights of common and rights of way. In most towns there are neglected gardens in squares that have "gone down" which an alert council can obtain for use as open spaces or children's recreation grounds. The council can erect swings and gymnastic apparatus in these grounds.

(9) **Allotments and Small Holdings.**—Borough councils have power to acquire allotments, and if six ratepayers represent that they are required, must hold an inquiry, and if the representations are correct the council must purchase or hire sufficient land for the purpose. The land can, if necessary, be acquired compulsorily, and it may lie within or without the boundaries of the borough. A county borough may also provide small holdings. A small holding is a plot of land between 1 and 50 acres or larger if of small value. The council may purchase or lease land for the purpose of letting as small holdings, or may sell the land to the tenant or assist a small holder in purchasing



from a private individual. The council may appoint a small holdings committee. In the first three years of the 1908 Act county boroughs had acquired 1,655 acres.

(10) **Libraries.**—Every borough council has power to provide and maintain either alone or in conjunction with neighbouring authorities public libraries, but the restriction of expenditure to the product of a penny rate has previously prevented the adoption of the Act by small boroughs. This has now been removed by the Libraries Act of 1919. The new Act also gives power to the county council to act in boroughs where the Libraries Act has not been adopted, and where this is done the borough will lose its powers. Museums may also be established and maintained. There is power to co-opt outside members on the libraries committee.

(11) **Public Utility Services.**—A borough council may have its own gas or electricity undertaking, its own water supply, and may run a tramway service. Municipal slaughterhouses may be provided and public markets, provided that ancient market rights are not interfered with. These are the most usual services provided, but councils may and do carry on other undertakings to meet their special requirements. Thus watering-places frequently have piers, sea-walls, harbours and bathing places. Bradford has a municipal conditioning house for textile fabrics which pays its way. Manchester City Council was largely responsible for the Ship Canal and is a large shareholder, while Bournemouth has an hotel.

Baths and washhouses, which may be considered as part of the public health work rather than as a trading venture, are provided by most boroughs and are almost invariably run at a loss, the prices being fixed to attract users rather than to cover expenses. The baths are frequently utilised as public halls in the winter, and there is no reason apart from finance why they should not be utilised as civic centres for social life with free dances, etc., instead of being let to individuals.

#### (12) **Protective and Regulative Powers—**

(A) *Police.*—County boroughs and some municipal boroughs with over 10,000 population maintain their own police forces, but no new force can be set up in boroughs where the population is under 20,000. The force is controlled by the Watch Committee, consisting of not more than one-third of the members of the council and the Mayor. In other boroughs the police are under the Standing Joint Committee of the county council and justices. One-half of the cost of the pay and clothing of the police is contributed from the Exchequer on a certificate of efficiency.

(B) *Protection from Fire.*—The borough council may establish and maintain a fire brigade and the necessary appliances under the Town and Police Clauses Act, 1847, and provide for a supply of water,



fire plugs, etc., under the Public Health Act, 1875, and where there is a local police force, may employ the constables as part of the fire brigade.

(c) *Employment of Children.*—The combined effect of the Employment of Children Act, 1903, and the Education Act, 1918, is that (1) No child under 12 years may be employed at all; (2) No child under 14 may be employed in street trading or in any factory, mine or quarry; (3) No child between 12–14 years of age may be employed on school days before the close of school hours or on Sunday for more than two hours, or on any day before 6 a.m. or after 8 p.m. But borough councils that are education authorities under Part 3 of the Act may make by-laws modifying provision (3) and extending (2). They may permit under certain conditions the employment of children over 12 before school hours and the employment of children by their parents, but such employment before 9 a.m. must be limited to one hour, and no child so employed before 9 a.m. must be employed for more than one hour in the afternoon. The above provisions of the law, it should be noted, are not yet in operation, but it is proposed to fix April 1st, 1920, “the appointed day” for their coming into force. In the meantime the local education authority have the power to prohibit or restrict any employment of a child which they are satisfied is prejudicial to his health, and by-laws may be made declaring street trading illegal by any young person under the age of 16.

(d) *Factories and Workshops.*—In workshops, including retail bakehouses, the law in regard to cleanliness, limewashing, ventilation, prevention of nuisances and overcrowding, etc., is enforced by the borough council. A register of workshops is kept by the council. Factories are inspected by the Home Office, but the Home Office may, if it considers it necessary, demand the assistance of the borough council.

(e) *Weights and Measures.*—County boroughs and boroughs with over 10,000 population are the authorities for putting into force the law relating to weights and measures. Standards of weights and measures must be provided and verified from time to time. The council appoints inspectors to verify and stamp weights and measures brought to them and to inspect those in use in the borough. It can also make by-laws regulating the sale of coal retail under the Weights and Measures Act, 1889.

(f) *Gas Meters.*—The testing and stamping of gas meters is carried out by county boroughs and municipal boroughs where the Sale of Gas Act, 1859, has been adopted, but where the council itself supplies gas, the matter is dealt with by the justices.

(g) *Shops.*—In county boroughs and boroughs with over 10,000 population the council is the authority for enforcing the Shops Act, 1912. It appoints inspectors to see that hours of work for young persons are not exceeded and that seats are provided for assistants.

The council may also make orders for early closing day and fix times of closing for classes of shops.

(H) *Diseases of Animals*.—County boroughs and boroughs with more than 10,000 population are the authorities for dealing with contagious diseases of animals and to prevent the introduction of destructive insects. The council elect an executive committee and appoint a veterinary inspector. The diseases dealt with are cattle plague, pleuro-pneumonia, foot and mouth disease, sheep pox, sheep scab, and swine fever, anthrax, rabies and other diseases. The council may also establish a place for the slaughtering of foreign cattle.

(I) *Licensing and Registration*.—The borough council is the authority for licensing knacker's yards, game dealers, pawnbrokers, hackney carriages, horses or donkeys let out for hire, and pleasure boats. It registers and inspects canal boats and old metal dealers and marine stores. It licenses and regulates the storage and selling of petroleum. It makes by-laws for the regulation and for the sanitary condition of tents, vans and other "temporary dwellings." It may be licensed by the Postmaster-General to provide a system of public telephones. And it may apply to the Home Office to abolish any fair in the borough or to alter the day for holding it. The county borough is the authority under the Explosives Act, 1875, and licenses the manufacturer and storage of fireworks and explosives. County boroughs also license emigration agents, race-courses, premises for the public performance of stage plays. Music and dancing licences are granted by the magistrates, except in county boroughs within 20 miles of the cities of London and Westminster, when they are granted by the Borough Council. Under the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, 1906, a county borough may appoint an agricultural analyst and official samplers.

(J) *Food Control*.—The borough council appoints the Food Control Committee from within or without its own body, one member at least must be a woman and one a representative of labour. The duties of this committee includes granting permission to open retail shops.

(K) *Profiteering*.—Under the Profiteering Act of 1919 a borough council may establish a profiteering committee or tribunal of not less than 7 or more than 25 members, who need not all be members of the council. They must include two women and at least three members of the local food committee and there must be adequate representation of labour. The duty of the committee is to investigate and hear complaints of alleged profiteering by local retailers, and they have power to state what is a reasonable price and order repayment of excess charges. The local authority may buy and sell articles, but must proceed on a commercial basis and not by way of subsidy at the expense of the ratepayers. Ordinary expenses may be met out of the rates.



(13) **Inebriates' Reformatories.**—A borough council may provide or contribute towards the provision of an inebriate's reformatory and may establish or license a retreat under the Inebriates' Acts, 1879 and 1881.

(14) **Pensions.**—In county boroughs and boroughs with over 20,000 population the council appoints the local pensions committee. The term of office is three years or less if the council so decide. The council is also represented on the Soldiers and Sailors Pensions Committee.

(15) **Charities.**—The Ministry of Health may confer on a borough council the powers of a parish council, enabling them to administer non-ecclesiastical charities, and a county borough may pay the costs of an inquiry by the Charity Commissioners into the public charities of the district. This is worth considering by labour councillors, as there are often old charities with funds that might be put to far greater use than they are at present.

(16) **Fisheries.**—County boroughs and boroughs with a population of over 20,000 may apply to the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries for the creation of a fishery district under the control of the council and those engaged in the industry.

(17) **Unemployment.**—In county boroughs and boroughs with over 10,000 population the Distress Committee under the Unemployed Workmen's Act, 1905, consists partly of members of the council, partly of guardians and other persons experienced in the relief of distress. Their duty is to make themselves acquainted with the conditions of labour in their area. They may provide temporary employment and assist persons to emigrate.

### FINANCE OF BOROUGH COUNCILS.

The expenses of a borough council are defrayed from three main sources :—

(A) Income from municipal property and from public utility undertakings such as gas, electricity, and tramways.

(B) Rates levied upon owners and occupiers of property within the borough.

(C) Contributions from the central government in the form of grants.

Two principal rates are levied in boroughs for council purposes, the Borough Rate and the General District Rate. In boroughs certain expenses such as the salary of the mayor, the costs of municipal

elections, education, and libraries are primarily met from the borough fund, into which are paid the rents and profits of corporate property, fines, fees, etc., but when this is insufficient, as it almost always is, a borough rate is levied by the overseers in each parish upon a precept served upon them by the borough council. The overseers of the poor are appointed as a rule by the council and are substantial householders, generally two in number; the actual work is done by the assistant overseer, who is a paid official. It is their duty to prepare the annual valuation list, which is then submitted to the assessment committee which is appointed by the Board of Guardians, or where the union is co-extensive with the borough, by the guardians and council in equal proportions. This committee hears appeals, and there is a further appeal from it to the justices. The overseers make and levy and collect the Poor Rate. The borough rate is collected as part of the Poor Rate and is based on the overseer's valuation, though the council may have a separate valuation made if it so desires.

The General District Rate is levied by every borough council directly and is generally based on the Poor Rate Valuation. The General District Rate is primarily levied to defray any expenses that cannot be met out of the district fund, which consists of monies received under the Public Health Acts.

Some boroughs levy special rates under private Acts of Parliament, and rates may be levied specially on occupiers of certain property where private improvements have been carried out.

Rates are levied on the rateable value of property which is the gross estimated rental, that is the sum at which the property might reasonably be expected to let, after deducting therefrom the probable annual cost of repairs, insurance and other expenses necessary to maintain them in a condition to command such a rent. The occupier pays the rates except in cases where the property is of low annual value, where the owner pays, the tenant paying his share in his rent. The question of rating cannot be dealt with here at any length as it is full of complications and there are various exemptions and reductions, notably in the case of agricultural land which is assessed at half its value.

The rates are the chief source of income of a borough council, and the amount levied in the £ varies very much between different boroughs according to their wealth and needs.

A penny rate in Southport will produce about £2,237, in Rotherham £1,128, though the population of the former is only 6,000 more than the latter, and a penny rate in Hedon will only produce £14, in Liverpool £21,030.

**Grants-in-aid** from the Central Government are made under various Acts and are distributed on principles that frequently conflict. Sometimes on rateable value when the rich boroughs profit most, sometimes on poverty. Sometimes unconditionally, sometimes as in the case of the Police Grant, on a certificate of efficiency of work



done. Some of the grants-in-aid are paid from the local taxation account into which the product of certain taxes are paid and certain fixed sums under the Agricultural Rates Act, 1896, and the Tithe Rent Charge Rates Act, 1899. But of more importance are the numerous grants made directly in aid of certain services such as education, public health, etc. These are constantly growing, and over two-thirds of the money received from the central in relief of local government now consists of direct grants, and by 1915 the total grants received by all local authorities amounted to nearly £24,000,000.

It has been mentioned above that many boroughs have considerable corporate property, and to the amount received in this way must be added the profits on trading undertakings. The amount derived from this source will depend on the policy of the council, which may either keep the price charged for services, such as light and transit, low and take no surplus, or make their charges higher and relieve the ratepayers from the profits thus accruing, or use the surplus for further municipal activities.

### LOANS.

For the purposes of carrying out works of a permanent nature and for financing undertakings such as tramways, water works, etc., a borough council may borrow on the security of the corporate property, funds or rates, with the consent of the Ministry of Health. The conditions of repayment are laid down in the various enactments empowering councils to carry out such works, and the amount that can be raised on the security of the rates under the Public Health Acts is limited to two years' assessable value. The limit of time for repayment is generally 60 years, though a longer period is allowed under the Housing and Town Planning Act. The Public Works Loan Commissioners lend money to local authorities on the security of the rates, but a council may also with the sanction of the Ministry of Health or in some cases under private Acts create stock.

### AUDIT.

Borough accounts are audited by the Borough Auditors, two of whom must be burgesses and qualified to be but not being members of the council who are elected by the burgesses on the 1st of March each year, and the Mayor's auditor who is a member of the council nominated by the Mayor. Some boroughs are audited by the district auditor who also audits the accounts under the Education and Unemployed Workmen Acts for all boroughs.

### BOROUGH COUNCIL WORK.

A borough council does its work through committees. Of these some such as the Education Committee are statutory, that is to say,

the council must appoint them, others are set up for convenience in dealing with the business, and their number will depend on the extent of the council's activities. In committee the details of the work are thrashed out and the officials of the council are in attendance to give information. The council's by-laws lay down what subjects should be dealt with by each committee. Each committee makes its recommendations and those involving expenditure are submitted to the finance committee; the whole of the transactions of the committees with their recommendations are then sent out in the form of minutes and are discussed at the council meeting.

The personnel of the committees should reflect as far as possible the strength of the different parties on the council. Not all councils are divided on party lines, but in most of the more important boroughs the need for a policy and the necessities of election work have resulted in the formation of parties on much the same lines as in the national legislature, though there is a greater number of independent members.

The hardest and most valuable work of the borough councillor is done in committee, and the man who thinks that he can make a show by speeches in full meeting reported in the press without thoroughly mastering the work in committee will find himself disillusioned. While it is desirable to keep in close touch with all the council's activities, the work is so great that the ordinary councillor is well advised to devote himself to one or two branches of the work:

### THE COUNCIL'S OFFICERS.

The Town Clerk is the chief executive officer and legal adviser of the council: he is a barrister or solicitor, and it is his duty to warn the council if their proposals are *ultra vires*. He is primarily responsible for seeing that the decisions of the council are put into effect.

The Borough Treasurer is head of the Finance Department. The Medical Officer of Health is the chief official for carrying out work under the Public Health Acts and is, of course, a medical man. He and the Inspector of Nuisances are appointed and removed subject to the approval of the Ministry of Health. The Borough Surveyor or Engineer is the executive officer for works, housing and highways, while the heads of the various trading undertakings are generally subordinate to him. Under the new Ministry of Transport Act he will be in the same position towards that authority as is the Medical Officer of Health to the Ministry of Health. Other important officials are the Director of Education, the Borough Librarian and the Chief Constable. The Recorder and Stipendiary Magistrate are paid judges in certain towns.

Beneath the officials comes the salaried staff, and then there are the numerous weekly wage earners employed in the various departments. Labour councillors may be trusted to see that good conditions are given to the council's workmen and that trade union rates of wages are paid by the council and its contractors, but they are not always



so ready to recognise the claims of the black-coated officials and there is even sometimes a tendency to use the council as a means of advance to equality of remuneration for all. This is a very shortsighted policy, for it must be remembered that the council is not the only employer in the market and that failure to give the usual occupational rates will prevent the council obtaining and retaining the services of a really efficient staff. It is worth while paying a high salary to get a really good Medical Officer of Health or Engineer.

In addition, where possible the council should employ direct labour, for especially in an isolated town there will be a tendency for rings of contractors to be formed. If the borough is small it may well join with a neighbouring authority for the provision of various services, thus obtaining the advantages of the economy of production on a large scale.

### CONCLUSION.

Generally it may be stated that the borough is a natural and useful governing body provided that it is big enough to have a separate life from the county, but there are very many small boroughs that are not nearly large enough for economical and efficient administration and their position will have to be considered in any scheme for reform of areas.

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