Fifteen Years' Work
on the
London County Council.

SIDNEY WEBB, LL.B., L.C.C.
Chairman of the Governors of the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a Member of the Senate of the University of London.
MRS. SIDNEY WEBB.

Appointed a Member of the Royal Commission to inquire into the Poor Law, November 1905.
FIFTEEN YEARS’ WORK
ON THE
LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL:
A LETTER TO THE ELECTORS OF DEPTFORD
BY
R. C. PHILLIMORE, B.A., L.C.C.,
AND
SIDNEY WEBB, LL.B., L.C.C.*

To the Electors of Deptford,

You have repeatedly chosen us by large majorities—one of us three times and the other five times—as your representatives on the London County Council. We have,

*Member of the Appeal Committee, 1892-3; Corporate Property Committee, 1895-8, 1899-1904; County Rate Committee, 1896-8, 1899-1901; Education Committee, 1904-7, (Chairman of Higher Education and Scholarships Sub-Committee, 1904-7); Establishment Committee, 1892-3, 1899-1901; Finance Committee, 1893-5, 1904-7; General Purposes Committee, 1892-8, 1899-1901; Local Government and Taxation Committee, 1892-1904, (Vice-Chairman, 1892-4, 1900; Chairman, 1900-1); Parliamentary Committee, 1892-1904; Public Health and Housing Committee, 1892-3; Rivers Committee, 1894-5, 1900-1; Water Committee, 1894-5; of the Special Committees on London Government, 1894-5; Technical Education (Chairman), 1892-3; Thames Conservancy, 1893-4; and New Offices, 1899-1904; and of the Technical Education Board, 1893-1904, (Chairman, 1893-1898, 1902-3, Vice-Chairman, 1899-1901); Metropolitan Water Board 1904-5; City Parochial Foundation, 1899-1907; and Senate of London University, 1900-7.

Appointed by Mr. Balfour’s Ministry a member (unpaid) of the Royal Commission on Trade Disputes, 1903-5; of the Departmental Committee on a Technological Institute at South Kensington, 1904-6; and of the Department Committee to enquire into a scheme for Agricultural Colonization, 1905-6; appointed by Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman’s Ministry a member (unpaid) of the Departmental Committee on a Territorial Organisation of the Army, 1906; of the Departmental Committee on the Education of the Administrative Staff, 1906; and of the Advisory Committee on the Census of Production, 1907.
by your choice, given no small part of our lives—one of us nine years and the other fifteen—to the great task of London Government. On Saturday, the 2nd of March next, you will have to vote whether you wish us to continue the work to which you appointed us, or whether you will dismiss us from your service.

ADMINISTRATION—NOT POLITICS.

This is no matter of party politics. The work that your County Councillors have to do—the supervision and control, by innumerable inspections and committee meetings, of the management of London's business—has nothing to do with Liberalism or Conservatism.

The hottest partisan can find no politics in Main Drainage or Asylums, Public Health or Building Act. Even the points on which opinions differ most keenly at the Council—such as the Development of the Tramways or the Taxation of Ground Rents, the Maintenance of Fair Conditions of Labour or Municipal Housing, the promotion of Temperance or the Resistance to the proposed new Electric Trust—are not points of difference between Liberals and Conservatives as such. No trace of either Liberalism or Conservatism will be found in the following pages. We have both of us steadily refused to become candidates for Parliament, because we felt that it would interfere with our County Council work. We shall continue to resist any introduction of national politics into municipal affairs.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We have always tried to remember that, once elected, we were the representatives, not of any one party or of any one denomination, but of every inhabitant of Deptford. No Deptford resident has ever written to us without receiving a full and careful reply. We are glad to think that our position in this respect has been widely appreciated, and (whilst we have perforce had to decline all requests for subscriptions) it has been a pleasure to us to do our best for a constant stream of applicants with suggestions or complaints about every conceivable subject—nuisances, the state of the roads, the supply of cricket or football grounds, street betting, bad smells, the issue of workmen's tickets by the railways, the state of the canal and its bridges, lines of frontage and other Building Act matters, the tramways, schools and scholarships, accidents and what not. In these matters our long experience in all the various branches of the Council's work has, we venture to believe, often enabled us to be of use.
THE WORK OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL, AND WHAT IT COSTS.

We shall describe presently some of the work which the Council has done for Deptford and for London generally; but first a few words as to its cost. You will be told by the enemies of the Council that it has been extravagant and wasteful: that it has squandered your money and raised the rates; that the men who have given years of hard work in your service are wastrels and spendthrifts; and much more abuse of the same kind.

But you will remember that exactly the same charges are made at every election, whether it is for Borough Councillors, Poor Law Guardians or County Councillors. The same leaflets are being distributed at this Election that were used against entirely different candidates last October. What is the sense of such indiscriminate abuse? We ask you to consider the following facts, and to judge for yourselves.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE RISING RATES.

Some of you have had the assessments of your houses raised, but this is done, not by the County Council, but by the Board of Guardians. Many of you have had to pay an increased sum in rates, but hardly any of the increase has been caused by the London County Council. During the last three years the Council’s rate (apart from the new Educational Charges) has risen just one farthing in the pound. You will not promote economy by blaming the wrong men! Five years ago the Greenwich Board of Guardians (which includes Deptford) spent what amounted to 2s. 5d. in the pound of your rates; last year it was 3s. 0d.—a rise of 7d in the £. Five years ago the Deptford Borough Council spent what amounted to 1s. 9d. in the pound of your rates; last year it was 2s. 2d.—a rise of 5d. in the £. Five years ago the School Board spent what amounted to 1s. 2½d. in the pound of your rates; last year the expense of this educational work (swollen by the 1903 Act) was 1s. 6d.; a rise of 3¾d. in the £. Five years ago the County Council spent on all other services what amounted to 1s. 3d. in the pound of your rates; last year it was 1s. 5d.—a rise of 2d. in the £ only. The County Council net expenditure has increased far less than that of any other spending body. This does not look like extravagance or waste. Nor has the County Council run into debt. The reckless figures of liabilities that are being quoted are utterly mis-
leading, as they take no account of the assets. As a business grows, so the figures in the balance sheet increase, but they increase on both sides of the account. As the County Council has taken over the Tramways, built Workmen’s Dwellings and purchased many acres of land, so its loans have increased. But against these loans the Council has now valuable Municipal Capital; and every year it pays off part of its debt. The result is that every year the Municipal Balance Sheet shows a more satisfactory statement of the assets and liabilities. The proof of this is the very remarkable fact that, whilst the net annual charge for debt handed over by the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1889 amounted to 7½d. in the pound on the rates, this has risen, during the whole 18 years of County Council administration (notwithstanding very large purchases of freehold land for parks, &c.) only to 8½d. in the pound last year. What other public body in London has so little increased its net burden of debt? Not one.

As a matter of fact if we compare the present with what existed in 1889, we shall find that, in these eighteen years, the County Council has reduced the Rates of the Deptford Householder. He used to pay a separate rate of 4d. to the Justices of Kent; this the County Council now settles for him. Moreover the County Council pays over to the Greenwich Board of Guardians and the Deptford Borough Council what is equal to no less than 6½d. in the pound, by way of partial equalization of rates. It is only on the richer parts of London that the County Council levies more than it used to do before the Acts of 1889 and 1894. Deptford pays less. This policy of Equalization of the Rates all over London, by which Deptford may gain still more, we have steadily advocated; and every proposal for it has been opposed by the Moderates. Now that they call themselves “Municipal Reformers” they have not changed their policy.

THE COUNCIL’S PARKS.

To turn now to the work of the County Council, let us begin with the most popular of all its committees, that of Parks and Open Spaces. In no department is the contrast with the work of the Metropolitan Board of Works more striking. During the whole eighteen years that the County Council has been going it has acquired seventy new parks and open spaces, opening a new one on an average, every three months; adding for every week of its existence a couple of acres to London’s playing fields and breathing spaces. We have voted for every one of these proposals that have come
before us. Deptford, and generally this quarter of London, has received special attention. It is an old story how that (often with generous local help) Deptford Park, Hilly Fields, and Telegraph Hill, Bostall Woods, Maryon Park, Sydenham Wells Park, and various smaller places have been secured. During the last few years we have added to the public possessions the beautiful grounds of Avery Hill; the broad acres of Eltham Park; Mountsfeld Park (Lewisham) and Ruskin Park (Camberwell) and just recently the very valuable summit (9 acres) of Shooter's Hill.

But the Council has done more than merely add to the open space area. By the wonderfully liberal provision of cricket pitches, football grounds, bowling greens, tennis courts and gymnasia for girls as well as for boys; by the excellent arrangements for boating in the summer and skating in the winter; by the supply of free public conveniences for both sexes; by the very successful regulation of the refreshment tariffs; and, above all, by the plentiful supply of music in the summer months by the Council's own uniformed band, the use and popularity of the Council's parks has enormously increased.

Our attention has been specially called, on behalf of Deptford boys and girls, to what is done in the way of games. The great majority of Deptford boys and young men cannot possibly hire private cricket or football grounds. But the poorest of them can organize a cricket or football club, and apply to the County Council to have pitches reserved for their games, on particular Saturday afternoons in this or that park.

**CRICKET AND FOOTBALL FOR DEPTFORD.**

Many hundreds of clubs thus get the advantage of a reserved ground free of charge. Over 25,000 cricket matches, and 15,000 football matches are thus annually provided for, besides bowls, croquet, hockey, quoits and lawn tennis. This means a lot of work in arranging and organizing. It has been a pleasing duty to both of us to look after the interests of the score or so of cricket and football clubs of Deptford, and to see that they had their fair share of reserved accommodation for matches and practice without trouble or expense to themselves.

And all these additional parks and new uses for our open spaces have not been so costly in money, as they have in time and ingenuity on the part of the Councillors and staff. The whole increase in the charge for parks and open spaces in the
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eighteen years does not amount to a penny in the pound on the rates. It comes, indeed, to something like fourpence per head per annum. Once a quarter 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 his wife and himself, more playing fields for the babies, cricket and football for his boys, a free gymnasium for his girls, and music for the family party.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ASYLUMS.

The work of the Council covers so many different subjects that it is not easy to refer to them all in one letter. The very extensive labours of the Asylums Committee, on which one of us (R. C. Phillimore) served for three years,* are seldom remembered. The annual report of this Committee makes, by itself, a volume of 219 foolscap pages, in which are summarised the results of 235 sittings, of sixteen distinct sub-committees, mostly meeting at the several asylums. Week after week the members of these sub-committees journey out to Cane Hill or Bexley, Horton or Banstead, to go through the thousand-and-one details involved in the management of nine colossal institutions, containing over 17,000 lunatics (of whom several hundreds are poor sufferers from Deptford), the careful scrutiny of those fit to be restored to the world, the vigilant investigation of every complaint or accident.

It is not usually recognised that asylums are, as regards many of their inmates, no longer prisons into which unfortunate lunatics are put for life. They are now very largely hospitals for brain disease, to which patients are committed for short terms, and from which they are discharged after a detention averaging only a few months. Every year sees about 2000 patients discharged from the County Council Asylums. Every week two or three dozen patients are sent home to their friends cured. Each month sees three or four Deptford people thus restored to health and sanity. This is work worth doing.

*Member of the Asylums Committee, 1901-4, (and Colney Hatch Asylum Sub-Committee, 1901-4); Bridges Committee, 1901-4; Building Act Committee, 1904-7, (Vice-Chairman, 1906-7; and member of Sub-Committee for considering the amendment of the Building Act, 1904-7); Highways Committee, 1898-1907, (and Accounts and Stores Sub-Committee, 1904-7; Acting Chairman, 1906-7.)
THE MODERATES (WHO ARE NOW MASQUERADING AS "MUNICIPAL REFORMERS") REFUSE TO DO THIS WORK.

It is interesting, now that so much is being said of the administrative character of the Council's work, to notice that in this important department of pure administration, the Progressives have to do practically all the work. From the very beginning of the Council's history, the Moderates have, with a few honourable exceptions, simply refused to serve on the Asylums Committee. Last year, out of a total of 1824 separate attendances, the Moderate members of the Committee contributed only 329. Occasionally not a single Moderate will be present at the meeting. They simply will not do the work. It is right that these facts should be known.

THE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS.

Perhaps the most important work which the Council has carried out during recent years has been the acquisition and electrification of the Tramways.

Only six years ago we promised you that the New Cross Road line should be electrified; but already the old slow-going, badly-lit horse cars are forgotten. We are all taking the new top-covered electric cars as a matter of course, and grumbling only at the delay in improving the Lower Road line. This we are striving to press on as quickly as possible.

And yet the Electric Tramways already working are by no means a small matter. Last year they carried a hundred and forty-one million passengers at an average fare of less than a penny, while the cars ran over twelve million miles. This has meant an enormous boon to the people of South London.

THE TRAMWAY PROFITS.

And now, if you happen to like figures, we wish to say a word about the Tramway Accounts. There are actually foolish people who say that this valuable Municipal Property does not pay, and is a burden on the ratepayer. They forget that the Tramway Accounts are strictly audited by the Government Auditor. Here are the figures. Since the County Council has owned the Tramways—remember that the "Moderates" fought hard against the Council getting them at all—the whole of the expenses and interest on debt has been paid out of the fares; there has been transferred, out of
the Tramway receipts, *in direct relief of the rates*, no less than £293,592; a reserve fund of £103,583 has been put by and invested; and over £600,000 has been paid off the debt. Not one penny has ever been charged to the rates for Tramways.

**EXTRA SERVICES.**

But this does not tell the whole story. The County Council’s Tramways afford a valuable subsidy to the Borough Council’s rates by *(a)* paving and maintaining 17 feet in width of the entire length of street; *(b)* removing and carting away a large part of the street mud produced by the horse vehicles, which falls into the conduit slot (this saves the Lambeth Borough Council alone £750 a year); and *(c)* contributing £13,240 to the local rates (£2,226 to the Deptford Borough Council itself) for the tram lines alone, which are assessed apart from any buildings. Besides all this, the Tramways are made to bear a part of the cost—usually one-third, but sometimes as much as one half—of street widenings which become necessary, though these benefit also the rest of the traffic. Thus, unlike the Motor Omnibusses, the County Council Tramways actually keep down your rates in more ways than one.

But the statement that the Tramways make no profit is absurd. Why, the Inland Revenue Officials demonstrate that it is absurd, by insisting that the Council shall pay Income Tax on its net Tramway Profits—in 1903-4 we had to pay £2,200, in 1904-5 £3,261; for 1905-6 no less than £8,000 was demanded, and for the current year the estimate is £10,000. This is the sort of Income Tax return that indicates a nice growing business! As a matter of fact, the Council’s Tramways yielded, last year, what a company would have called a Six per cent dividend on the entire capital outlay.

If the present Tramway policy is maintained, the prospect for the future is even brighter. The traffic is steadily increasing. The new Greenwich Generating Station, a heavy burden whilst under construction, will now enable us to make electricity, instead of paying £118,000 to a company for it. The new extensions, besides being a great boon to the public, are yielding most promising results. Finally, we have, after nine separate attempts to pass the bill, at last secured from the House of Lords permission to run the cars over Westminster and Blackfriars Bridges and along the Thames Embankment. The “Moderatés” (now calling themselves
"Municipal Reformers") said it was of no use to try for this. We insisted on persevering; and we think we may have earned some thanks from the thousands of tired passengers, who will not now have to walk over the Bridges.
Meanwhile the hardworking

**TRAMWAY EMPLOYEES**

have not been forgotten. We have always refused to increase the profits at the cost of the workers. Under the Companies their hours varied from 11½ to 13 hours a day, seven days a week. Now they have a Ten Hours Day, and a Six Days Week, whilst even the split hours have been spread over a much shorter time. The number of men in regular employment has been greatly increased, and the proportion of "spare men" reduced. Moreover, "spare men" not taken on used to get nothing; now they get a shilling merely for attending. The car-washers were still worse off, some of them getting only 3½d. per hour. Now they are paid, as the lowest minimum, 25s. per week, and they rise to 30s. per week. And the Council has now just offered a further increase to the Drivers and Conductors, so as to make their lowest minimum wages five shillings a day, with rises to six and sixpence a day, if they will learn enough about electricity to enable them to pass an easy examination.

These concessions amount to over £50,000 a year benefit to the Tramway Employees, besides causing the employment of many more men. The result is that the Council has got a first-rate staff, who are well worth the cost of the better conditions.

**LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS.**

The last two Councils have tried, by developing the Tramways as well as by street widenings, to cope with the growing congestion of the traffic. The County Council has, of course, to deal, not with minor street improvements (which are the work of the Borough Council) but with the great arteries of through traffic, by which each district is brought into the main stream of London life. We have never felt able to agree with those who urged that the Council ought to postpone those improvements which are urgently needed in a growing city. Deptford suffered much in the past by being cut off by the river from North and East London. The great Blackwall Tunnel has now shortened the journey between North-East and South-East London, and greatly facilitated heavy goods traffic. The Greenwich Tunnel for foot passengers has proved an immense boon to thousands of Deptford and Greenwich workmen who are saved the cold and often dangerous boat journey to and from their work in the Isle of Dogs. It also brings the parks of Deptford and Greenwich within reach of Poplar children. And now the
third tunnel, connecting the Lower Road with Shadwell, is rapidly nearing completion. We have personally had a hard struggle, first to get this work undertaken, and then to prevent its being abandoned. Whenever the Moderates have been pressed to explain how they would save the rates, they have repeatedly replied by urging the Stoppage of the of the Rotherhithe Tunnel. This will be an even greater work than that at Blackwall, as it is expected to cost over two million pounds. When it is opened, it will be of great use not only to the inhabitants in the North and West Wards, but in bringing Deptford into the main stream of traffic.

DEPTFORD STREET IMPROVEMENTS

Since the new street was opened by the County Council, from Evelyn Street to Creek Road and the wide Brookmill Road has replaced the slums of Mill Lane, the most urgently needed local improvement has perhaps been the reconstruction of the disgracefully narrow Necker Bridge over the Canal in Trundley's Road, with its open parapet positively dangerous to the children attending the Trundley's Road School. This though of real importance to the locality, could hardly be deemed a Metropolitan improvement. But your Borough Council did not see its way to undertake the work by its own staff; and it must be admitted that the engineering and other difficulties were great. Moreover, the railway and canal Companies had both to be dealt with. We have personally devoted much time to this complicated matter; and we are glad to report that we have been able to bring all parties to agreement. In view of the probable future importance of Trundley's Road, as part of the line of through traffic when the Rotherhithe Tunnel is opened, the County Council has decided to undertake the work and is now applying for the necessary Parliamentary powers, at its own expense, the Borough Council contributing half the cost. We look for great advantage from this long-delayed improvement, which will, we hope, eventually make Trundley's Road a thoroughfare for extensive traffic.

Among minor local improvements that we have, by personal attention, been able to secure, are the reconstruction of the railway bridge over Ravensbourne Road; and the transformation, without cost to the ratepayer, of the Deptford Railway Station, which used to be, perhaps, the dirtiest and most inconvenient railway station in the London area.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE STEAMBOATS.

The Council's Steamboat Service which was started two
years ago with the universal approval of London irrespective of party, forms part of the same great scheme of facilitating communication across the river, and up and down London, by which Deptford has already benefited so much. During the summer months the enormous number of passengers proved what a boon the steamboats were. Unfortunately the traffic fell off in the winter to such an extent that it was necessary to suspend the Service for the cold months. This has prevented the boats as yet paying their way. We do not see why this fact should be made a matter of reproach or blame to the Council. We, in particular, pointed out to Deptford six years ago that the Council's Steamboats would necessarily involve some cost to the ratepayers for "the
first year or two." But the deficit has been grossly exaggerated. The Council has taken over the charge on the piers, which formerly cost the Thames Conservancy Board over £7,000 a year. Allowing for this (which is not a new burden) the deficiency this year, with all the expense and disadvantage of a new service, amounts to no more than £30,000, or less than one-sixth of a penny in the pound—not so much as a good week's takings on the Tramways! In return for this sixth of a penny seven millions of passengers travel at cheap fares, thousands of children enjoy a "blow on the river," and a useful ferry service is afforded. We have received many letters from Deptford men testifying to the value to them of steamboat communication with the Limehouse and Poplar piers. It is usually forgotten that the
Council has had a Steamboat service of its own for eighteen years, and has spent out of the rates £20,000 a year upon it, without objection being raised. We allude to the Council's Steam Ferry at Woolwich. The annual charge on the rates for a new bridge, a new main thoroughfare, a new tunnel, or even a new park is far greater than that for the Council's whole Steamboat service. The Council has now decided to work this in close connection with its Tramways, with convenient interchange facilities; and it is hoped by this means greatly to increase the takings.

**BETTER HEALTH FOR LONDONERS.**

The Steamboat Service (our "Fresh Air Fund") like the Parks, has some bearing on Public Health. The heaviest rates that the Deptford citizen has to bear are the Sickness Rate and the Death Rate. We rejoice that so many branches of the Council's work co-operate in steadily bringing down the amount of illness and premature death. During the last 15 years, the death rate has been reduced from 21 to 15 per thousand. We claim some part of the credit for this result for the work of the County Council. There is more success in this direction yet to be won.

There is nothing on which the general health of Deptford so much depends as good drainage. We are glad to say that we have at last been able to get something done towards improving the Main Drainage system. The rapid increase of population in South London makes this an important consideration to Deptford, through which the great Southern Intercepting sewer passes. The Council hesitated to incur the expense, but some of us representing South London constituencies felt that the work must be no longer delayed. Ultimately the Council decided to undertake it, and further resolved that the eight miles of main sewer between Deptford and Crossness should be one of the very first parts dealt with, at an expense of half a million sterling. This work is now nearing completion, and will, when finished, be a great relief to the Deptford Sewers.

**THE LABOUR POLICY.**

No part of the Council's work was formerly more denounced than its Labour Policy, and none has been more successful. The Council does what the wisest employers do, namely, insist on paying the full Standard Wage, and so secure the most competent and trustworthy workmen. But it carries this policy down to the humblest grades of labour,
and refuses to allow "sweating" even of the unskilled labourer, or of the poor woman sewing garments. We think that this policy really pays best all round.

Nor can we forget the wise work which the Council has done in so many directions to diminish the evil of intemperance, and to promote all that makes for a better life.

THE EDUCATIONAL LADDER.

During the whole of the past three years the Council has been struggling with the gigantic task of reorganizing the entire Educational system of London, which the Act of 1903 imposed upon us. The Council most unwillingly assumed this duty. We, personally, have taken the line that, imperfect as is the Act of 1903, we ought not to permit either political or religious differences to stand in the way of Education; or let either the children or the teachers suffer. We have therefore striven to get the best possible provision of schools of all kinds, the most efficient teachers, and the best educational equipment, irrespective of creed or party. We hope that Parliament will amend the law at the earliest possible moment, so as to make more easy what is now a trying administrative task. Yet amid all the difficulties, there are more children actually at school in London than have ever been before; the average percentage of children on the school roll to the total number scheduled was higher for the two years 1904-6 than it was in the last two years under the School Board; the average attendance has steadily risen year by year, and is higher under the Council than it ever was under the School Board; the average number of children that each adult teacher has to look after has been reduced from 42.4 in the last year of the School Board to 39.6 on the 31st March last; over 30,000 new elementary school places have been opened by the Council, and over 32,000 more are in course of construction. Meanwhile over 1,000 new school places have been provided in the special schools for the blind, deaf, crippled or defective children, who are now better cared for than ever. Over 3,300 new places have been provided in the Council's Secondary Schools, whilst 4,000 more are in course of construction. Additional Training Colleges have been provided for nearly 1,000 students, and places for 700 more are being pushed on with. The supply of teachers is rapidly improving. Last year over 1,400 pupil teachers entered the Council's service, whereas the School Board never enrolled half that number; and no fewer than 1,118 teachers came to the Council's service straight from training.
college, as compared with about 750 in the last year of the School Board. For the last three years the Council has awarded nearly 4,000 general scholarships a year (apart from over a thousand art, science and domestic economy scholarships); under the School Board and Technical Education Board the corresponding number was less than one thousand. Finally—and this is typical of much—the Council has now no fewer than fifty-eight doctors and nurses doing their best to improve the physical condition of the children, as compared with eighteen only under the School Board.

We cannot say that all is yet well with London Education. Some of the worst elementary schools have been closed, and many of the others have been greatly improved; but there are still many where the cramped and insanitary premises and dark and dingy class rooms prevent the teacher's work from being fully efficient, or the children from getting the best advantages. There are still not enough properly trained cultivated men and women as teachers. The classes in many a school, elementary and secondary alike, are still too large for proper teaching. Although much has been done to bring the different schools and institutions into organic relation with each other, there are still gaps and deficiencies; possibly still unnecessary duplication and overlapping. We cannot yet say that London has anything like an adequate provision of Higher Elementary Schools, of Secondary Schools, of Technical Training, or of University Education. But we have made considerable progress. The historian of the future will, we think, say that London's educational organization made a greater advance, alike in quantity, in quality and in variety of the provision made, and in the work actually done, during the years 1904-7 than during any three years since 1871-4.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the work has been the expansion of the Scholarship Ladder into a Broad Educational Highway, by which an opportunity is given to every bright boy or girl to go forward to further studies. Fourteen years ago we devised the Scholarship scheme, under which 600 children a year have since been picked out by examination, to receive both Maintenance Grants and Free Secondary Education. Now we have expanded this into an unlimited offer, so that any boy or girl, between 11 and 12, may get a Junior County Scholarship for five years, without competition, if only he or she proves, on examination, to be good enough to enter a Secondary School at the public expense. More than 2000 of these scholarships, with maintenance allowances
of from £6 to £15 a year, are now awarded annually—nearly a hundred of them, we are glad to say, to Deptford children.

Along with this, has gone the development of Secondary Schools. Besides making large grants (to Aske's and the Addey and Stanhope Schools, among others) the Council has now twelve Secondary Schools of its own; and has already made arrangements for 15 more, which are in various stages of progress.

A little-known department of the Council's work is the special provision made, in numerous small, specialized schools, for the deaf, the blind, the crippled and the mentally defective children. These schools have been greatly extended and improved. In some cases the children are boarded and lodged, so as to be under constant care. They are kept until sixteen, and taught such trades as they are capable of, by which a considerable proportion learn to make a living. A number of these afflicted children belong to Deptford; and it has been a pleasure to us to see them so well attended to, and probably saved from becoming a permanent burden to their relations or to the public.

GIRLS' DOMESTIC ECONOMY SCHOOL. [From Municipal Journal]
Meanwhile Technical Education has been pressed forward. There is scarcely a trade in which the London artisan cannot now find ready to his hand efficient instruction in the technical processes of his industry, and in the sciences which bear upon them. The School of Building at Brixton is a notable example. Some of the Trade Unions—notably the Plasterers—now actually put official pressure on the boys and young men to join our Trade classes. The London workman or designer in the artistic crafts has now open to him, at nominal fees, art instruction, which (especially that at the Central School of Arts and Crafts) is superior to any in the Kingdom. This session the number of technical evening classes maintained or supported by the County Council exceeds 3,000, having over 50,000 students. These advantages are not confined to artisans. Many thousands of clerks and young business men and women of all grades are getting in the Polytechnic evening classes in modern languages, science, art and literature, the means both of earning better salaries and of living a more civilised life. All this evening work is made open to the very poorest by scholarships and exhibitions in Art, Science and Technology. Nor have the women and girls been forgotten. Besides sharing in all the preceding advantages, they enjoy a special department of their own. The Council has set up thirteen “Schools of Domestic Economy” (including one at Creek Road, Deptford), which intercept the maidens of fourteen who would otherwise be leaving school to “take a little place”; it maintains two Domestic Economy Training Schools, producing skilled teachers accustomed to the housekeeping of the London poor; and, by a permanent staff of qualified instructors in cookery, dressmaking, laundry work and hygiene, it has taken thousands of lessons in these subjects (and also in elementary nursing, the management of infants, &c.) 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 institution. The Domestic Economy Schools, in particular, with their thorough training in cookery and dressmaking, laundrywork and housekeeping, seem to be just what is wanted for London’s young girls. Every year one thousand young girls are helped to go to these Schools (about a score from Deptford alone).

We are not satisfied that the Council’s plan of organising its huge educational work is yet as good as it might be. We think that there should be, in each locality, greater devolution of details of administration; we regret that more scope is not given to those willing volunteers who do so much good in the
Elementary Schools by acting as school managers; and we believe that, excellent as is the staff of officials, there is too much tendency to run everything by circulars and formal regulations, which fetter the teachers and cannot be made applicable to all schools alike. We propose to strive for reform in all these respects.

We have done our utmost to protect the Londoner

**AGAINST THE ELECTRIC TRUST,**

which is trying to obtain the valuable monopoly of supplying electric power. The London shopkeeper and the London citizen have suffered in the past from the Water Companies: they are still suffering from the Gas Companies; it would be sheer folly to permit the new service of Electric Power, which may soon become indispensable to the smallest workshop, to fall into the hands of a gigantic capitalist Trust, having power to break up the streets at its will, in order to lay and repair its mains. The House of Commons Committee having decided in favour of the County Council undertaking the obligation to supply Electric Power to all who demand it, at cheap rates and under proper conditions, we heartily support this policy.
TAXATION OF GROUND VALUES.

We regret that, owing as we believe largely to the opposition of the "Moderates," and to the division of opinion that prevails on the subject, we cannot report much success in obtaining a fair contribution towards the cost of governing London, from the ground landlords, whose property is so greatly benefited by all improvements. On this question London must speak with no uncertain voice. The proposal to Tax Ground Values will certainly be shortly under consideration. If candidates are elected to the County Council who are lukewarm on this question, or who contrive to evade the issue, no reform of the present unjust system can be carried. We ask you if you consider it unfair that the occupier should bear the whole burden of the rates, to

VOTE FOR THE TAXATION OF GROUND VALUES

by voting for us, who have steadily striven for this reform.

And here we must make a personal protest. One of us, in particular [Sidney Webb], is well-known to have been, for twenty years or more, a persistent advocate of this long-delayed measure of relief to the occupying ratepayer. His strenuous protests against the injustice of the present system, under which hardworked clerks and shopkeepers have to pay rates for improving the Landlord's property, and then extra rents for the property so improved, drew upon him the special enmity of those who profit by this injustice. Twelve years ago a special effort was made to exclude him from the County Council, in order to stop his persistent demand for the Taxation of the Unearned Increment of Urban Site Values. The defenders of the Ground Landlords started against him a monstrous calumny asserting that he had stated that he did not mind if the rates rose to Twenty shillings in the Pound! This was really a very ingenious device. The agents of the London Ground Landlords thus picked out one of the most prominent of those who were demanding that the UNEARNED INCREMENT of site values should be taxed in relief of the ratepayer, and tried to make the public believe that it was the ratepayers whom he wanted to tax in relief of the Ground Landlord! This astounding piece of mendacity was immediately denied and exposed. Nevertheless some of the less reputable of the "Moderates" had the effrontery to placard the lie all over London, out of the money which the Ground Landlords and
their friends had subscribed. But the people of London (and the electors of Deptford in particular) showed by their votes that they knew better than to believe it.

We regret to find that, in spite of repeated exposure, and explanation, this old calumny is being revived at this election by some of the less scrupulous of those who now call themselves "Municipal Reformers." We leave such conduct to the judgment of honorable men. If the ratepayers allow themselves to be deluded by such tricks, they will never secure the Taxation of Ground Values. We ask you, at this election, to

STAND BY THOSE WHO HAVE FOUGHT FOR YOU.

The County Council is not yet old, but it has a splendid record of service performed. Above all it has brought a new spirit into London's affairs. Municipal administration is no mere matter of police. We believe that the great instrument of London's central governing authority should be used to raise in every way the Standard of Life of our poorer fellow-citizens, and to increase the well-being of all classes of the community.

A RECORD OF HARD WORK.

There are many other branches of the Council's multifarious business, on which we have not space to dwell. The Council may fairly claim to have a record of hard work, in which we have both taken our share. We are willing to go on with it, and if we have your confidence, we should wish to do so. It is now for you to decide. We have been told that, at this coming election, we shall be opposed because we are not put forward by the Deptford Conservative Association, and because we do not call ourselves "Municipal Reformers." If the Deptford Electors think we have served them badly in the past, or if they believe that someone else can do better work for them at Spring Gardens in the future, it is, of course, right that we should be dismissed, however faithfully we may have served you. But, in the interests of Deptford and of London, we beg you not to let party politics interfere with the choice of whomsoever you may believe to be the best men to do your Municipal Work. We believe that every Elector in Deptford, however he may vote for Parliament, wants the taxation of ground values, and a greatly improved housing of the poorer sections of the people. We believe that the vast majority sincerely desire, in municipal
affairs, a careful and steady progress in efficient administration. We refuse, as we have always refused, to allow either party politics or religious differences to come into matters of local government. On every previous election we have been honoured by the support and votes of many hundreds of Unionists and Conservatives, as well as Liberals and Labour Men, Churchmen and Nonconformists; and of many others who put good municipal administration far above party differences. Once more we appeal, on the record of actual work done, for the support of all who desire the better government of this vast city.

R. C. PHILLIMORE.

SIDNEY WEBB.

January 1907.

P.S.—Those willing to help in this election, either by canvassing, by addressing envelopes or (most valuable of all), by bringing up voters on polling day, are requested to write to, or call upon, Mr. H. Foskett, at the head office, 348 and 350 New Cross Road, S.E.

Please come and help on Saturday, 2nd March.
MRS. R. C. PHILLIMORE.

Elected a Member of St. Pancras Vestry, 1895-1899.
R. C. PHILLIMORE, L.C.C.