

the re-arrangement of the medieval streets of London to suit the needs and tastes of modern times, and the provision and maintenance of the London tramways. The magnitude of its operations may be guessed from the fact that, in normal years, its expenditure amounts to upwards of £12,000,000.

THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGHES

Within the area of the London County Council, and in some sense under its jurisdiction, are the twenty-eight Metropolitan Boroughs, which correspond to the urban sanitary districts of ordinary counties. Some of them, such as Westminster, Kensington, and Southwark, are old municipal boroughs with long histories; the majority are ancient parishes, which, owing to an enormous increase in population in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, acquired a special form of government, known as a 'select vestry,' either by custom or under the provisions of an Act of Parliament of the year 1831, known as 'Hobhouse's Act.'

'SELECT VESTRIES'

The powers of these 'select vestries' were not, however, always exercised with vigour or discretion; and much of the government of London outside the City was transferred to another representative body, the Metropolitan Board of Works, created in 1855. This step naturally tended to the further disparagement of vestry government; and, when the powers and duties of the Metropolitan Board of Works were themselves transferred to the London County Council in 1888, it was widely assumed that the parochial government of the 'inner suburbs' (for, by that time, 'London beyond the border' had become a very obvious fact) would disappear. But politics ruled otherwise; and, in the year 1899, the vestries of London were raised to the dignity of borough