So far no woman councillor has been appointed, and as fees for attendance at board meetings are paid, it will doubtless be some years yet before women are allowed to share in these coveted posts.[1]

In 1914 the Corporation again came to the assistance of the canal company, and took over about £700,000 of mortgage debentures which had fallen in and were not renewed by the original holders, so that to-day the Corporation holds about six and a half million pounds in an undertaking of approximately twenty million pounds. Owing to the suspension of interest, the charge on the rates was at one time 1s. 10d. in the £, but for some years now the company has prospered and the Corporation has received its full interest and dividend each year.

This is not the place to attempt an account of the Ship Canal to-day and its place in Manchester's commercial life. It was accepted and later supported by the Corporation as a means of combating the depression that had set in in the 'eighties, when the progress of Manchester, which had been so spectacular in the early part of the nineteenth century, seemed to be arrested. The Ship Canal was itself a bold scheme, and the action of the City Council in coming to its assistance at critical moments of its history showed courage and imagination. There is no doubt that its action has been justified and that the traffic brought by the canal was one of the factors that helped Manchester to increase her trade and her rateable value.

Apart from these indirect benefits, however, it is unfortunate that so many of the direct gains have gone not to Manchester but to Salford and Stretford. The principal docks are in Salford, and the canal pays more rates to Salford than to Manchester. The growth of Trafford Park as an industrial estate is due almost entirely to the Ship Canal, and it is situated in Stretford, not in Manchester. These arguments were advanced when Manchester tried twice unsuccessfully to include Stretford within the city.[2] If the Corporation, when it first came to the assistance of the canal, had promoted a Bill to include the docks and Trafford Park, there might have been some chance of success, and the ratepayers of Manchester would

[1] The present chairman of the company, Sir Frederick West, was for many years a distinguished member of the City Council. In 1917 he was appointed a director by the Corporation. On resigning that position in July 1923, he was elected to the Board by the shareholders' directors, and in the following November he succeeded to the chairmanship of the company rendered vacant by the retirement of Mr. Alfred Watkin.

[2] See above, p. 129.

have benefited directly as well as indirectly. Still, on an all too rare occasion when our city fathers did take a long view, and had the courage to risk the rates in what was then by no means a safe undertaking, it would be ungracious of us to criticize them for not taking an even longer one. The qualities of courage, imagination and enterprise shown by Bosdin Leech, John Harwood, John Mark and the town's meeting which followed their lead are not too common in our municipal history.

Manchester is to-day the fifth largest port in the United Kingdom. The Ship Canal has enabled ocean-going vessels up to 15,000 tons deadweight to come right up to the city, and the area between the docks and Eastham "is probably the busiest industrial zone of its size in the world."[1]

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, December 2, 1937.

PART V

CHAPTER XVII

THE COUNCIL THROUGH THE CENTURY

THE Council that met on December 16, 1838, in the York Hotel, King Street,[1] consisted of sixty four members, forty-eight councillors—three for each of the fourteen wards, and six for New Cross—and sixteen aldermen. It was an unopposed Council for, owing to the fight about the validity of the charter, the Conservative party decided to take no part in the elections. Ten of the aldermen were elected from the members of the Council, Thomas Potter, William Neild, Richard Cobden and Alexander Kay being amongst them, and the remaining six were elected by the Council from outside.[2] They were leading business men and Whigs. Paul Willert, who served until his death in 1879, and Elkanah Armitage, later to be Mayor, John Edward Taylor, founder of the *Manchester Guardian*, Archibald Prentice, the Radical journalist and writer, and George Wilson of Anti-Corn Law fame, were also members of that first Council. Of the sixty-four members, thirty-four were merchants and manufacturers, ten were shopkeepers. The leading group of aldermen,[3] of which Sir Thomas Potter,[4] Mayor for the first two years, was the oldest, directed the affairs of the Council for some years.

Self-made men, at a time when fortunes could be made more easily and more quickly than at almost any other period of our history, they had also a strong sense of public duty. Some of them had been Police Commissioners—Thomas Potter was one of the Gas Directors—and county magistrates sitting for the Manchester division, and their knowledge of public affairs as well as their proved business ability was of inestimable value in the early days of the new experiment in democratic government. Nonconformists

[1] See above, p. 97.

[2] This power has not been exercised in Manchester since 1864, although in other authorities—the L.C.C. for example—it is in force.

[3] Richard Cobden and George Wilson soon became so engrossed in the Anti-Corn Law campaign that they took little part in the Council's work, and both left it in 1844.

[4] He died March 20, 1845, aged seventy-one. He was knighted in 1840.

—many of them met every Sunday at the Cross Street Chapel—they were united by religion, by politics and by common business interests.

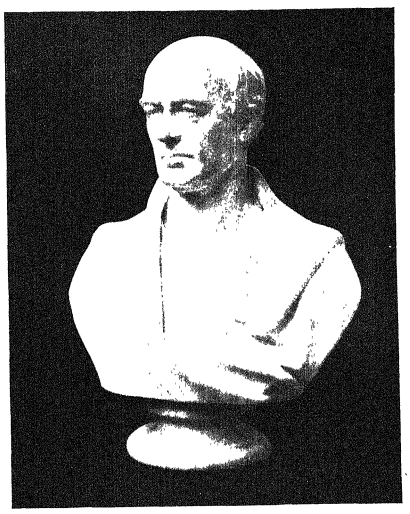
Those who associate Manchester business men with the doctrine of *laissez-faire* may be surprised by our account of the drastic interference with private property which the insistence upon the provision of privies entailed.[1] But that would be to misunderstand that doctrine which was concerned entirely with freeing trade. If later the same arguments were applied outside the economic sphere, the blame must not be put on Adam Smith and his disciples.

Macaulay, one of the strongest supporters of Free Trade, was also a supporter of legislation to regulate housing. In one of his speeches he said, "I am, I believe, as strongly attached as any member of this House to the principle of free trade rightly understood. Trade, considered merely as trade, considered merely with reference to the pecuniary interest of the contracting parties, can scarcely be too free. But there is a great deal of trade which cannot be considered as trade, and which affects higher pecuniary interests. And to say that Government never ought to regulate such trade is a monstrous proposition, a proposition at which Adam Smith would have stood aghast."[2]

It was this spirit that produced the spate of Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Reports that form such a striking feature of the early Victorian period. The administration of the Poor Laws, the state of the factory children, of the sanitary conditions of the labouring classes, of the health of large towns and populous places, were all part of this reaction of the public conscience to the alarming result of uncontrolled industrialism. The earlier attitude to the wonders of the mechanical inventions had changed to one of fear of the perhaps unavoidable but certainly attendant evils which the rapid accumulation of wealth had brought. The best of the men who had benefited from the new order were beginning to feel their responsibility. As one historian has said, "Those evils (i.e. of the factory system) were not most of them new evils. The peculiar feature of the Victorian Age was that it laid these social evils bare."[3]

We are an unimaginative race, and find it difficult to realize

[1] See above, p. 288.
[2] House of Commons, May 22, 1846.
[3] Paper read to the Historical Society by H. D. Henderson.



11. SIR THOMAS POTTER

Mayor of Manchester 1838–1840

From a bust in the Manchester Town Hall

nditions with which we are not familiar. Engels, as we saw, marked that Manchester, more than most towns, was so arranged at the rich could go to and from their homes to their places of usiness without passing through the streets where the poor ved.[1] The cholera epidemic of the 'thirties brought home to the oughtful leading citizens of Manchester who had been members the Board of Health facts about the lives of the working classes at they had never had to face before. When they, ordinary, kindly, umane people, saw the appalling housing conditions under which eir fellow citizens were living, it was not merely the fear of other epidemic—although this doubtless had some force—that them thinking of reform. "The ordinary man will readily concede instances what he would often violently deny to principles."[2] he troublous years of the early 'forties, with their "turnouts," leading often to riots, their large Chartist demonstrations which articued the demands of the working classes more coherently than fore, did not merely antagonize the more thoughtful of the middle sses. They forced them to think.

For many years there was no political opposition in the Council, r the Conservative party, after its defeat over the validity of the arter, abstained as a party from municipal affairs. This enabled e Whig Council to go ahead fast in those early years, but it ought certain disadvantages. Neither party ever had to define attitude to municipal questions. The first opponents of the Whig uncillors fought on the unimaginative platform of all Ratepayers' Associations, that of economy, and when the Conservative rty officially came out in opposition most of the fundamental estions had been settled piecemeal and generally accepted.

Up to 1890 the Liberals were in a majority.[3] That year the onservatives had a slight advantage, which increased so that, th the brief exception of the year 1919, they have been in control r the last half century. Neither party ever used their majority run the Council on party lines. There were Conservative mayors

[1] See above, p. 22.
[2] "Local Legislation," by I. G. Gibbon, *Journal of Public Administration*, July 1923.
[3] The Liberal Party, which brought the Council into being, and dominated it more than fifty years, has now only 22 out of a total of 140 members. There are Conservatives, 52 Labour and 3 Independents. In 1931 it entered into an election with the Conservatives, and although that has now been broken, no Liberal has since succeeded in a three-cornered election.

and chairmen of committees during the Liberal majority, and Liberal and Labour Lord Mayors and chairmen of committees during the Conservative ascendancy. Whether this has been an advantage to the city is doubted by some, who find in those Councils which are run on party lines, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and the L.C.C., a greater sense of responsibility, both in office and in opposition than can exist in Manchester, where the chairman of a committee may be and nowadays usually is of a different party from that of the deputy-chairman, and often of the majority of the members of the committee. By following this non-party line—also in the election of aldermen and the Lord Mayor—the Council has benefited by having had the advantage of chairmen who would never have been elected under a system of strict party control. On the other hand, it has meant that no party has produced for the public a clear-cut programme for which it has fought at elections, and to which it has worked in the Council.

The achievements of the first ten years are all the more remarkable when we remember that those years were years of financial crisis, falling wages, strikes, "the hungry forties," and a business depression which lasted until 1850. To-day such conditions would be made an excuse for curbing instead of extending municipal activities, but then markets were purchased, improvements made in the city, waterworks acquired,[1] owners of back-to-back houses made to construct privies, and builders of new houses made to submit to stricter regulations than had ever before been known. From 1850 to 1860 prosperity reigned, and the latter year is sometimes described as the peak of prosperity in the cotton industry. In spite of the depression caused by the cotton famine, 1861–64, trade recovered and was good until the slump of 1879. Before the shadow caused by the cotton famine had passed away in 1864 Manchester began to plan her new Town Hall. It was started in 1868 and opened in 1877. It cost £1,000,000, and was planned on a much larger scale than was necessary for the needs of the moment. It sufficed, in spite of all the extensions of the city and the additions of new departments, until 1923, although by then some of the departments had had to be accommodated outside its walls. Whatever we may think of the style of architecture—which was the fashionable style of the time—and its suitability for an administra-

[1] Manchester was one of the earliest municipalities to have its own water supply.

tive building rather than for a cathedral, it expresses the spirit of mid-Victorian Manchester and its belief in its future. Those who planned it must have felt that there was no limit to the growth of the city in riches or in population. That great mass in Albert Square, blackened by smoke, personifies the satisfaction of men in the present and their indomitable faith in the future.

Since Manchester was made a bishopric in 1847 there have been periodical suggestions that a cathedral should be substituted for the old Collegiate Church. Perhaps the reason that this has come to nothing is that the Town Hall, fashioned like a cathedral, may have seemed a more satisfactory expression of the spirit of the town. But although the Council was prepared to spend such a large sum for a magnificent building, that is after all these years still the most striking in the city, and although they saw to it that, unlike the other good buildings, its setting should be adequate, they were not prepared to spend money on a main drainage scheme. This sense of values seems to us now somewhat perverted, but we must remember that at that date the Council was only representative of the middle class, and the middle class suffered much less from the insanitary state of the city than did the working class.

By 1865 most of the original leaders of the Council had gone—Alderman Neild died suddenly at a committee meeting in 1864, Sir Elkanah Armitage retired the following year, and although Abel Heywood remained for another thirty years[1] the newer members of the Council were not of the same quality as the earlier ones. Even if their conception of social legislation was that of the successful business man of the time, those early leaders were entirely disinterested. They were too rich to mind about the rates for themselves, too unchallenged in their wards—even those who were councillors—to have to pay attention to the "economists." They were able to pursue with very little opposition their ideas of how the city should be improved. But the activities of the Council under their control gradually aroused the opposition of vested interests, property owners,[2] brewers,[3] etc., and these, with an in-

[1] He died August 19, 1893.
[2] By its insistence upon separate privies for each house.
[3] The Police Act of 1844, section 203, had enforced the closing of public-houses during certain hours on Sunday.

creasing number of shopkeepers, began to enter the Council in order to safeguard their interests. Many of the leading business men also came in, but it could perhaps hardly have been expected that the enthusiasm of the pioneers should continue.

This change mattered less in the 'fifties and 'sixties, as those years found Sir Joseph Heron in his zenith. It was then that his ascendancy in the Council was at its highest, and it compensated for the loss of the older men, and for any advantages that might have come from the clash of the party system. But in the years that followed his semi-retirement and then his death the Council seems to have broken up into a series of badly co-ordinated committees. There were several reasons for this, apart from the removal of the strong control of the Town Clerk. The city had been extended twice—in 1885 and 1890—and each time not only extra territory but extra councillors and officials had been brought in. The work had extended rapidly, and the administrative machinery of the Council had never been overhauled and fitted to its larger purpose. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, investigating municipal government, came to Manchester in the autumn of 1899. The following extracts from Mrs. Webb's diary show the impression made upon her.

"The Manchester Town Council turns out to be no better than that of Leeds. The most marked feature is the way in which the magnitude and importance of its work has outgrown its organization. The different parts of the machine are out of joint; it rumbles on in some sort of fashion because it is pushed along by outside pressure, but it is always breaking down in the efficiency of administration. The Council, judged by this fact, would seem to be inefficient or corrupt or both. The men running the organization are not a bad lot: one or two of the officials are distinctly able. But there is no head to the concern, no one who corresponds to a general manager of a railway company, still less to its paid chairman. The mayor elected for one year has all his time absorbed by public meetings, social functions, or routine administration: he is far more the ceremonial head of the city than the chief of the executive of the city government. The town clerk and his deputy are exclusively engaged in legal and parliamentary business; they spend most of their time in the lobbies of the House of Commons, in presenting the Corporation's case at L.G.B. inquiries, in preparing leases and drafting agreements or in submitting by-laws

to government departments. The suggestion that the town clerk of a great city like Manchester can be anything more than its solicitor and parliamentary agent—can fill the place of its chief executive officer is, as things are at present, an absurdity. . . . Some of the committees are dominated by persons who are grotesquely unfit. . . . In other cases the committee is run by a really able and upright man, but even he will pride himself on managing it 'as I should my own business'; he resents mightily any criticism of his policy or methods. In short, there is no body whose special business it is to see that all parts of the organization are co-ordinated and working to a common end. Friction and petty scandals, accusations and recriminations, dog the council's work. All this secretiveness and jealousy of control does not attain its object—if that be a quiet administrative life. . . . So far as we have made the acquaintance of the councillors there are none very good and none very bad. I have not picked out any who seem to be 'rotters.' The abler among them are all old men, a little gang of liberals who are still the salt of the council. The social status is predominantly lower middle class, a Tory solicitor and an I.L.P. journalist being the only men with any pretension to culture. The abler administrators have no pretension to ideas, hardly any to grammar—they are merely hard-headed shopkeepers divided in their mind between their desire to keep the rates down and their ambition to magnify the importance of Manchester as against other cities."[1] Such was the impression that the Manchester City Council made upon an able and experienced investigator at the end of the nineteenth century.

Twenty-five years later another observer, this time from within the Council, was struck by the lack of co-ordination between committees and the consequent petty jealousy of the respective chairmen, of the lack of proper reports submitted in time for the committees to read them, of the failure of the Town Clerk to draft resolutions or to get the Council out of a mess, and of the incompetence of many of the chairmen to present their case to the Council. Those committees who possessed able officials managed well. Referring to the Tramways Committee—as the Transport Committee was then called—the observer, who was not a member of it, writes: "The Engineer, McElroy, seems to be a thoroughly efficient

[1] *Methods of Social Study*, by S. and B. Webb, pp. 195–198.

and capable person, and is said to have the committee entirely under his thumb. The trams are accordingly, I believe, well run."

There seems little doubt that after the first forty years the Council passed through a difficult and unsatisfactory period, which lasted until after the war.

Apart from the new Labour members, the personnel was deteriorating, the work increasing and the administrative machinery badly out of gear. When the late Mr. Heath became Town Clerk in 1919 matters improved rapidly, and have continued to improve under the present Town Clerk and City Treasurer. Clear reports are issued, and the necessary resolutions drafted well before the Council meeting; briefs for the chairmen are always prepared by the officials of each committee.

But there are some things that no official, however able, can prevent. Throughout the century the number of leading business men attracted to Council work seems steadily to have decreased. The movement to the outskirts which we noticed even in 1838 had been accelerated as the city prospered and transport improved, and the smoke, though actually less, seemed more intolerable when attractive dwelling-houses were available further out. "I do not live in Manchester now," said the Stipendiary in 1866; "no one does who is at all in a position to live out of it." The increasing exodus from the city, when the business of making money is finished, has carried with it an increasing lack of responsibility for those who are not "in a position to live out of it."

Meanwhile the abolition of the property qualification for councillors[1] was followed in 1894 by the first two Labour members,[2] and after a period of years by several more. After the war and the extension of the municipal franchise their number increased, although they have not yet formed a majority. Their coming, together with the removal of the disqualification of women,[3] made the Council for the first time representative of the whole city. Apart from the fact that their advent coincided with a period of active social legislation, intensified after the war, their presence certainly quickened the imagination of the comfortable, middle-

[1] In 1882. [2] J. E. Sutton in 1894 and F. Brocklehurst in 1897.

[3] In 1907 women became eligible, and in 1908 Miss Margaret Ashton was elected for the Withington Ward. There are still only 7 women out of a council of 140.

class councillors and made them readier to vote for expenditure on public health, housing and education.

It was unfortunate that this gain should have to be offset by the loss to the Council of the leading business men. "Merchants and manufacturers," who formed more than half the Council in 1838, now provide nineteen out of a total of one hundred and forty, and whereas in 1838 a large number of the leading business men of the city were in the Council, now only one of the forty-two directors of the Chamber of Commerce is there.[1]

With a turnover of more than £18,000,000, the Council needs the help which business men, accustomed to deal with large undertakings, can give, just as it needs in the administration of the social services the experience and outlook of the Labour members. An occasional appeal from the Chamber of Commerce not to increase the rates is all that that body contributes to the Council, although it is surely as important to the business men of 1938 as it was to their predecessors in 1838 that the city should be well governed. This decline of a sense of civic responsibility in the business community is one of the most depressing reflections that arises from our survey of the last hundred years.

The system of permanent chairmen—because unless there is a Standing Order to the contrary, or a strict party system, committees always re-elect a retiring chairman, even when he has become incompetent—was first attacked in 1890, when a resolution was passed making three years the limit for a chairmanship without the special sanction of the Council. This system only lasted for a few years, however, and the old one was restored in 1894.

In 1927 the three-year system was again introduced, and it is still in force. Although three years is perhaps too short a term to enable a chairman to become familiar with the business, and five years might be better, the system has undoubtedly proved to have more advantages than disadvantages. It enables comparatively junior members to hold office, instead of having to wait for "dead men's shoes," and also ensures that, as an increasing number of members of the committee "pass through the chair," the committees become better informed and more responsible. It also does

[1] This is Alderman Sir Noton Barclay who has been on the Council since 1917 and was Lord Mayor 1929–30.

away with the domination of a committee by an old chairman of long service, who sometimes treated the committee with scant consideration. On the other hand, it makes life more difficult for the chief official, who has to accommodate himself to a new chairman just as he has become accustomed to the departing one. There is, however, some compensation for this in the increase of his power. He now, alone, is responsible for continuity of policy.

There are few echoes of municipal corruption in the last hundred years. On one or two occasions a member of the Council has retired after charges against him had been investigated by a committee of the Council. Charges against a Health Committee were inquired into by a committee under a K.C. and dismissed.[1] Charges of bribery brought by Mr. Norbury Williams against ex-officials and the Chairman of the Gas Committee were never substantiated.[2] Although there were occasional cases of individuals who used their knowledge acquired as members of the Improvement Committee to buy land that was afterwards bought by the Corporation, it was never done on a scale to justify an inquiry by a Council that had shown itself jealous of its reputation for financial probity.

We have been struck in our survey of the century by the important part played by outside voluntary associations in the work of the Council. The Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association for more than fifty years exercised considerable influence over the Council in matters of health and open spaces. Ratepayers' associations had shorter lives. We find them being formed to oppose a particular item of expenditure, sending memorials to the Council, sponsoring candidates at elections and then dying out. No organization can maintain enthusiasm for long on a purely negative policy of cutting down expenditure. Property owners' associations have lasted longer—they have definite interests to protect—and they can always count on the support of the ratepayers' association of the moment.

The Manchester and Salford Women's Citizens Association[3] aimed at building up a membership in all wards of the two cities in order to influence policy, but since elections have been increasingly fought on party lines—and the association is non-party—its influence has depended more on the contact between its central committee and the members of the Council. Although it has, in

[1] 1886. [2] 1890. [3] Founded January 1914.

III. ALDERMAN JOSEPH GRIME
Lord Mayor of Manchester 1938

conjunction with other women's societies, managed to get some of its policies accepted, it has never exercised as much influence as the Sanitary Association.

The Council started off with vision and imagination shown in the early private Acts, but since then it has only shown those two qualities twice. The first was when in years of bad trade the Council realized the possibilities of the Ship Canal, and came to its rescue.[1] The second was when, in 1926, it bought the Wythenshawe estate, planning it on the lines not merely of a municipal housing estate, but on those of a satellite garden town. But it lost Trafford Park, and its forty years' discussion about the use of the Infirmary site is not yet ended. It has neither the advantages nor the disadvantages of the party system. If the Council were run on the strict party system with chairmanships confined to members of the party in power, a definite policy could be followed with an opposition which could criticize effectively. If, on the other hand, elections were not run on party lines—though attempts so far made have been unsuccessful—then a General Purposes Committee, consisting of the chairmen of committees, could control the policy of the Council. In default of any other form of leadership, the Council has drifted into a position in which financial considerations are allowed to dominate it. However important these are, once finance becomes the master, instead of the servant of policy, all hope of imagination and vision disappear. It is true that rateable value has "wobbled" since 1930. This year, 1937, it is £6,661,545 which, although £33,000 less than in 1935, is higher by £107,000 than it was in 1930.[2] Manchester is not a poor city. Its rateable value per head of the population, £8 19s. 1d., is much higher than the average. It is higher than Birmingham, Liverpool, Bristol, Sheffield, and Leeds. The only county boroughs that exceed it are seven seaside towns, two cathedral cities and Oxford and Croydon. Manchester used to be proud of leading the country in municipal affairs; to-day she is satisfied to rest on her oars. Perhaps the centenary year, with rateable value again on the up-grade, will inspire the citizens with courage to go ahead with the task of re-moulding Manchester nearer to their hearts' desire.

[1] See above, p. 387.

[2] See table on p. 159.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE MUNICIPAL SERVICE THROUGH THE CENTURY

By 1838 the administration of the township of Manchester and most of the out-townships which made up the borough, primitive though it seems to us now, had already outgrown the first stage in local government when the work was done by unpaid, annually elected men, who had to serve under penalty of a fine. Although the custom still held for the Borough Reeve and Constables, they had long become decorative rather than executive officials. The Deputy Constable appointed annually, but actually reappointed each year, was the paid official in charge of the Day Police, and the Police and Improvement Commissioners had a long list of salaried officials, Comptroller, Superintendent of Gas Works, Surveyor, etc., who worked under their direction. In the same way the Churchwardens and Overseers had their paid clerk or comptroller as he was sometimes called, with a staff of assistant overseers—relieving officers—and rate collectors, under him.[1] The elected Highway Surveyors, too, had an Assistant Surveyor as their paid official.

Theoretically the paid officials had no security of tenure; they were re-elected each year, but in fact, if satisfactory, they were re-elected. Few things bring home more forcibly the difference between those days and ours, than the fact that dishonesty on the part of the rate collectors was not unusual.

At the first meeting of the newly elected Council, December 15, 1838, Mr. Joseph Heron[2] was appointed Town Clerk, Mr. Thorpe Treasurer and Mr. Edward Herford Assistant to the Town Clerk. Legal officials were appointed later, and when the Police Commissioners transferred their powers[3] they brought their officials

[1] From 1815 to 1910 the Lings family filled this office. George Ling, 1815–45, his son Thomas, 1845–78, and his son Arthur, 1878–1910. They were first-class officials, and it was Thomas Ling who was responsible for the Manchester Overseers Act of 1858, considerably in advance of the general law then, and indeed up to 1925, when it was superseded by the Rating and Valuation Act.

[2] He was knighted in 1869.

[3] 1843.

with them. Mr. Thomas Wroe was continued in charge of the Gas Department, and Mr. Shorland, the Surveyor, became the first Surveyor under the Corporation.

Although the Treasurer was required to give the whole of his time to the work of the Corporation at a salary of £300, neither the Town Clerk nor the Surveyor was at first a full-time official. Sir Joseph Heron was a partner in a private firm of solicitors, and was paid by fees until 1841, when a fixed salary of £1,000 was given in return for two-thirds of his time being devoted to Corporation business. In 1846 this was raised to £1,500 on condition that he gave all his time to the work.[1] In 1860, in spite of considerable opposition which persisted for nearly two years and coloured the elections, his salary was increased to £2,000.

The Surveyor was made a full-time official in 1845, and his salary raised to £750.

Manchester was fortunate in her first Town Clerk. Son of a merchant, and under thirty at the time of his appointment, he was already known to some of the leading members of the Council. Six years before he had served as honorary secretary to the Special Board of Health, which was set up to combat the cholera epidemic. He also served on the committee to work for the charter. Still "we are told that he was such a handsome man in appearance, and such a gay young spark withal, that he enacted misgiving in the minds of the 'potent, grave and reverend seigneurs' . . . who assembled in the Council Chamber . . . he, with handsome, smiling face and confident though respectful manner, elegantly dressed, and with the fastidiousness of a well-bred man of the world; they, as plain, practical men, looking furtively upon what they in their rigid integrity feared might be signs of frivolity in one whom they wished to trust implicitly; one alderman audibly making the remark to his neighbour that it would never do to appoint such a swell,' and both shaking their wise old heads as they glanced at the kid gloves, tight boots, glossy curls, and all the adornments and graces of a ladies' man."[2]

This outward appearance, so different from that of the typical business man, did not signify a frivolous or superficial nature. Great ability in the administrative sphere as well as in the legal,

[1] He was also made Registrar of the Borough Court of Record.
[2] *Manchester Faces and Places*, January 10, 1890.

and a high ideal of municipal government, was combined with wider interests and a love of the arts. He possessed wit, a capacity for public speaking, and a courteous and attractive manner. He rapidly became not only the leader of the Council and the inspirer of its actions, but the most distinguished Town Clerk in the country, to whom foreign inquirers into English municipal institutions were referred by the Government. During the forty years that he was Town Clerk he laid the foundations of Manchester's municipal government by means of private Acts which gave powers far in advance of general legislation, some parts of which are still in use.[1]

"A consummate ruler of men,"[2] he grew to dominate the Council, frequently intervening in the debate; on one occasion with "Councillor X, you know nothing about this matter. Please sit down," upon which the surprised member sat down—rumour has it—in the coal scuttle! On another occasion an angry councillor exclaimed, "What right have you to speak? What ward do you represent?" "A larger ward than yours, sir," said the Town Clerk. "I represent the entire city."

A bachelor until the age of seventy-one, he married Mrs. Willert,[3] two years after her husband, Alderman Willert, who was one of the original and most valued members of the Council, died. For many years the three had been great friends, spending their holidays abroad together. Alderman Willert presented to the City Council[4] the full-length portrait of Sir Joseph Heron which hangs in the Council Chamber. He died December 1889, just before his eightieth birthday, having been consultant Town Clerk since 1877.

Although the first few years of the new Council's life were dominated by the legal cases concerned with the dispute over the validity of the Charter, Sir Joseph Heron never conceived his office as mainly, or even as primarily, that of legal adviser. Reporting to the Council on his duties during the first two years, he classified these under "Ordinary and Extraordinary." Under the former he put, "To prepare resolutions and reports for the Committees, and to carry out all resolutions and orders of such Committees."

[1] The Police Act of 1844 and the Manchester Improvement Act of 1851.
[2] *Manchester City News*, January 4, 1890.
[3] 1881. She died at the age of ninety-three in 1899.
[4] In 1870. In 1878 the bust of Sir Joseph Heron which stands outside the great hall was presented to the Council by Alderman King.

Under "Extraordinary" came the legal and parliamentary business. He considered himself responsible for the whole of the work of the Corporation, even when there were other officials in charge of the different departments.

Manchester lost this view of the Town Clerk's position when they appointed as Sir Joseph Heron's successor Mr. (later Sir) William Talbot. He had been Deputy Town Clerk for twenty-three years, but although an excellent lawyer he seemed to have the defects that sometimes go with the legal mind. He had none of Sir Joseph Heron's capacity for quick decisions,[1] and sometimes appeared weak and hesitating. He had not his predecessor's dominant personality, nor his control of policy, and the Council, growing larger with each extension of the city, and taking on more and more duties, became less of a unity under a single control and more a collection of independent committees.

The position of the Town Clerk to-day is different from what it was when Sir Joseph Heron retired. He is the chief official, and as such receives the highest salary. He is there for consultation with officials and members of the Council, but he is not held responsible by the Council, and does not consider himself responsible, for the work of each department of the Corporation. He does not even keep the minutes of every committee, and proposals that he should do so are resisted by some departments, who are afraid that this might lead to undue control of their affairs. Some authorities hold that the Town Clerk should approximate more to the General Manager of a business. In towns of a certain size, when the Town Clerk has the necessary qualifications and personality, he does in fact though not in theory "manage" the Council's affairs, but this has not been the case in Manchester since the days of Sir Joseph Heron, when the city was half the size that it is to-day, and when its work was much more circumscribed.

Manchester was behind other towns—particularly Liverpool[2]—in the appointment of a Medical Officer of Health. It was not until

[1] An official, now retired, who remembered Sir Joseph Heron, tells how, when asked to come to a committee as his advice was wanted, he would stroll in smoking a cigar and, balancing himself on the edge of a table, would listen to the chairman's explanation of the difficulty, and then say, "You must do so and so." If a member made any objection he would wave it aside, repeat his instructions and then leave the room.

[2] Liverpool appointed a Medical Officer of Health in 1846.

1868, and after much pressure by the Manchester and Salford Sanitary Association, that Dr. John Leigh was appointed. A doctor, with a taste for literature which found vent in his official reports, he was also one of the secretaries of the committee that brought the Free Library into being.[1] He was a sensitive and humane man, who strove hard with an often unsympathetic Council to improve the appalling sanitary and housing conditions which he felt caused so much of the often excessive drunkenness of the time. He did much, helped by the propaganda of the Sanitary Association, to rouse the conscience of the public about the state of the city and, as a corollary, the enmity of those whose interests were threatened. The policy of the Health Committee was often obstructed, and a proposal to increase his salary[2] brought violent attacks from property owners, which were, however, unsuccessful.

The first women to be employed by the Corporation were library assistants in 1871, and then only, we regret to say, because of a shortage of suitable men. However, a year after the experiment had been initiated, fourteen were employed, and the Committee reported that they "had proved their fitness."

It was a long time before the Council provided for the retirement of its officials, who therefore continued in its service until death, a system which did not make for efficiency. In the ranks of the higher officials, the problem was solved by making them "Consultants." Thus in 1877 Sir Joseph Heron, having held office for nearly forty years, and feeling the effects of a severe illness, was made Consulting Town Clerk at his existing salary £2,500.[3] Mr. Talbot, although acting as Town Clerk, for Sir Joseph spent most of his winters abroad, was still called Deputy Town Clerk until Sir Joseph's death. In the fullness of time, in other words, when Sir William Talbot was seventy-nine,[4] he intimated his readiness to resign and to accept a consultative post. For nine years, until his death, he was "consulting solicitor" at a salary of £1,000 a year.

The same procedure enabled the Treasurer, Mr. Martin, at the advanced age of eighty-three,[5] to be appointed Consulting Treasurer, and as late as 1919 Mr. Rook, who had been Superintendent of the Sanitary Department for many years, was made "Consulting Superintendent" when he was eighty-four.

[1] 1851.
[2] April 1875.
[3] In 1885 this was reduced to £1,500.
[4] 1910.
[5] 1893.

The Corporation first tackled the question of superannuation in 1891. By a private Act of that year it established a Thrift Fund for all officials earning more than 30s. a week.[1] They were to contribute 3⅜ per cent and the Corporation 1½ per cent of their salaries, and on reaching the age of sixty-five, or on becoming incapacitated for service, the contributor would receive a lump sum consisting of his contributions and those of the Corporation. The scheme was compulsory for new members, and voluntary for existing ones, but it contained no provisions for compulsory retirement. When in 1913 the Council proposed to introduce a proper pension scheme with compulsory retirement, the Ratepayers and Property Owners' Association opposed it on the ground of cost. The war put an end to any further attempt, and it was not until 1920,[2] when teachers had been added to police and other municipal employees entitled to pensions, and subject to compulsory retirement, that the Corporation employees were put in the same position.

But a satisfactory end to a municipal career was not more important than a satisfactory beginning or than satisfactory conditions of service, including salaries and promotion. Although these questions were continually occupying the minds of the councillors—in 1872 Alderman Grundy spoke of the unsatisfactory method, or lack of method, by which advances in salaries were given—nothing was done until the beginning of the twentieth century. The continuing interest then taken in these questions was due largely to the Labour members. Since their advent on the Council attention had been called to the pay and conditions of service of the employees, and to the system of patronage then in force.

At a meeting of the Council in 1905 a resolution in favour of a minimum wage of 25s. a week for Corporation employees was moved by Councillor—later Alderman—Tom Fox, and carried. At the same meeting a special committee was appointed to consider terms and conditions of service and methods of appointment, and of promotion. This committee, whose labours eventually resulted in the grading and superannuation scheme now in force, made an interim report in 1907, when, amongst other proposals, it made the

[1] The Corporation felt that it would not be justified in making thrift compulsory on people earning less than 30s.

[2] The scheme came into force in 1921.

important recommendation "that entrance to the administrative service should be by open competitive examination." Many years —and the war—had come and gone before this proposal was adopted. A return in 1908 showed that of employees in the service of the Corporation, thirty-seven were related to heads of departments and eighty-six to aldermen and councillors, but an attempt by the present Alderman Jackson to prohibit the system by which applicants for posts brought a note from a councillor was heavily defeated. "Three voices were raised in favour of the resolution and the 'Noes' bellowed out like stage thunder."

No steps were taken to implement the recommendation of recruitment by examination for five years, and then, although the Council passed a resolution instructing the special committee to put it into effect, nothing more was heard of it until after the war. In 1922 the first examination was held for boys and girls, between the ages of fourteen and seventeen. The Education Department conducts the examination, which is highly competitive, and which succeeds in drawing much excellent material into the Corporation's service. Once in, further study on the part of the young men and women is encouraged. The Corporation pays the fees at the University or College of Technology for courses approved by the heads of departments. The University provides an evening degree course in commerce and administration, and it is largely attended by members of the Corporation's staff, who combine the theoretical study of public administration, finance and local government at night with their practical experience of it by day. There are now sixty holders of this degree in the municipal service.

The complete grading scheme was finally settled after consultation with representatives of the staff, and came into force in 1923. The main principles of the scheme are competitive examination for entry, probationary period, promotion by merit, minimum and maximum salaries for the different grades. Increases of salaries over £535 still have to come before the Council once a year, after having been considered by the Establishment Committee. The Council is seldom at its best when discussing salaries, largely owing to the fact that so many of its members are themselves earning less than many of their employees, and do not realize the importance of attracting—and keeping—the best possible officials. So long as the outside world rewards some posts more highly than

others, so long must the Corporation do the same if it is to obtain efficient service.

Although theoretically women are on an equality with men in the municipal service, and there is equal pay under the grading scheme and no marriage bar, there is a tendency there, as in private business, for the men to get the more interesting and responsible posts. There is as yet no woman head of a department on the administrative side.

Recruitment by examination has immensely improved the personnel of the administrative staff. The criticism that is still made is that by having only recruitment for juniors, the Corporation is missing those able boys and girls who stay at school and, by means of scholarships, go to the university for a full-time day course. At present it is only officials who possess technical qualifications, legal, medical, engineering, architects, etc., who can enter the municipal service after a university education. If some of the administrative posts were recruited by an examination at twenty-one for graduates, for which both those within the service and those just down from the university, would be eligible, the Corporation would get the advantage of both types of training. There would be difficulties, though not, we feel, insuperable ones, in devising an examination to give equal chances to those who left school at sixteen, and who had kept up their studies by attendance at evening university courses, and those who had remained at school until eighteen, and had then gone to a day course at a university. The experience that comes from practical work combined with the qualities necessary to undertake an evening degree course has shown that the part-time evening students can more than hold their own with the full-time day students.

Another way of enabling the Corporation to get the advantages that come from full-time attendance at a university with the greater opportunities of contact with lecturers and fellow-students, and more time for reading, would be for the Education Committee to offer some of its university scholarships to men and women already in the Corporation service—on the analogy of the scholarships awarded for university courses at the College of Technology. The Corporation would have to undertake to find a post for the scholar again at the end of the three years, but in a service of the size of Manchester's that should not be difficult, and such scholars,

assuming that they were well selected, should be of increased value to the Corporation as a result of their university career.

The question of wages, hours and conditions of service for the workmen in the employment of the Corporation has been considered at various times, but although the principle of a minimum wage of 25s. a week was secured in 1905, a forty-eight hour week was not introduced until 1916. Apart from these regulations, each committee made its own arrangements until Whitley, or Joint Industrial Councils were set up after the war for local authorities and their employees in Lancashire and Cheshire. These Councils, which consist of representatives of both sides, settle wages, hours, holidays, and working conditions generally for manual workers in the trading and also in the non-trading departments of the Corporations. The only workmen outside these Councils are those under trade agreements, i.e. building trade operatives, engineers, etc., who form only 5 per cent of the Corporation workmen in Manchester.

The question of patronage in the recruitment of workmen, particularly of unskilled labour, was not settled so satisfactorily as in the case of the administrative employees, and in spite of a standing order designed to prevent it the majority of the departments selected many of their men from those sent with a note or recommendation from a councillor. In 1930 an Employment Bureau was set up in the Town Hall under a special officer, and all the departments were supposed to engage their workmen through it. After two years it fell a victim to the Special Expenditure Committee's desire to economize, and the various departments were instructed to engage their labour through the ordinary Labour Exchanges, where a section specializes in selecting workers for the Corporation. It is safe to say that patronage is not yet eliminated. Even when the Bureau was working councillors could send a man with a note to the officer in charge, and under the present system the official in the Corporation's department can ask the Employment Exchange for a particular man who may have brought him a recommendation from a member of his committee. Although no official would engage an unsuitable man, even if he was recommended by a councillor, he cannot be blamed if, urged by a councillor to take on a certain man, he feels that for unskilled work one man is as good as another. The fact that one man should get

a job rather than another, not because he is better qualified nor even because his need for work is greater, but simply because he happens to be a friend—or a political supporter—of a member of the Council, does not offend the conscience of the Council.

When we compare the municipal service in 1838 with that of to-day, both in its quality and in the variety and complexity of its work, we find perhaps the greatest advance of all the advances during the century.

A hundred years ago the only citizens of Manchester who came into contact with any of their officials more than the once a year when they paid their rates were those who broke the law or those who became destitute, a small proportion of the population. To-day the only citizens, including in that term school children, who do not come into relation with a municipal official almost every day of their lives—even if it is only to buy a ticket on the tram or to benefit by the policeman's regulation of the traffic—are a small minority of the population. The success of teachers, health visitors, tram and bus guards, police, library attendants, rate collectors, doctors, relieving officers, sanitary inspectors, etc., depends not only upon their technical qualifications but upon their capacity to make contacts with ordinary members of the public. Parliament passes Acts and leaves local authorities to administer them. The fact that, even with the increasing "interference" of social legislation, these laws are administered with so little friction is the greatest tribute that can be paid to an administrative creation of the last hundred years, every bit as important, though not so fully recognized, as the creation of the national civil service.

These two branches of the public service are often compared, but in many respects they are fundamentally different. The first difference we have mentioned above. With the exception of the officials of the Post Office, the Employment Exchanges, and the Unemployment Assistance Board, the national civil servants do not come into contact with the ordinary citizen as do the municipal officials. Another difference is that the head officials, the Town Clerk, Medical Officer of Health, Director of Education, etc., are not anonymous as are the permanent heads of the departments of State. Few members of the Manchester public could tell you the name of the Permanent Secretary of the

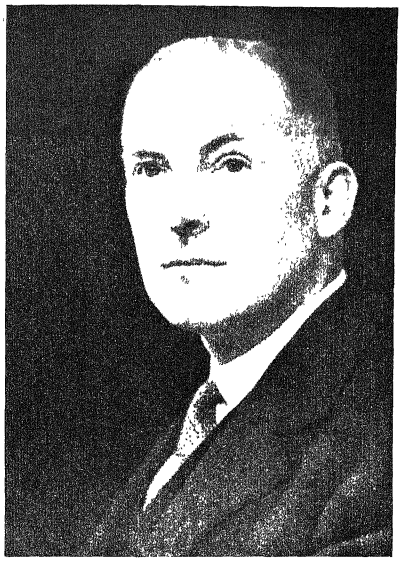
Ministry of Health, although many would know that Sir Kingsley Wood is the Minister. On the other hand, for the number of Manchester citizens who could tell you the name of the Chairman of the Education Committee, there are thousands who know the name of the Director of Education. In local government all communications from the different departments to the public are signed by the chief official.[1]

Although the chief official accepts full responsibility for all acts of his staff, neither the Council nor the public hold the chairman of the committee responsible, and complaints from the public might go to him or might just as easily go direct to the chief official. A few years ago a member of the Council who felt that he had a right to see a report which, he alleged, the then Director of Education had withheld, moved in the Council a vote of censure, not on the Chairman of the Education Committee but on the Director. Such a situation is, of course, impossible in the case of civil servants, for the Minister is responsible in the eyes of Parliament and of the country for all the acts of his department.

The anonymity of the national civil servant is essential to the working of the system. He has to advise impartially politicians of first one party and then of another. Unless full responsibility for decisions and actions is vested in the political head—the Minister—this impartiality would be endangered. The Minister, a member of a party with a declared policy, which it has been returned to carry out, will make proposals for legislation, and it is the civil servant's duty to examine and advise on them. If the Minister refuses his advice, then the civil servant must loyally carry out the policy even if he disapproves of it.

In local government the position is different. The Council does not, except when it applies for powers under private Acts, initiate legislation. Its duty is to administer laws passed by Parliament. There is, however, great scope for differences in administration—even when the Acts are compulsory and not permissive—and lack of uniformity in this respect, and differences in the expenditure of different localities, are among the most striking features of English local government. The work of the trading committees, too, is

[1] In the recent inquiry into the typhoid epidemic in Croydon, no member of the Council was called, and this was justified on the ground that the Council had agreed to all the proposals made by the officials.



IV. MR. F. E. WARBRECK HOWELL

Town Clerk of Manchester 1938

Photo Guttenberg

not so much in carrying out Acts of Parliament as in managing big business undertakings.

In Manchester, where the party system is not in force and the policy of a committee remains the same whether under a Labour or under a Conservative chairman, the official plays a far bigger part in making the policy of his committee than does the civil servant in the policy of his department. With few exceptions the official, after consultation with the chairman, formulates proposals and brings them before the committee, which discusses them, may or may not make alterations in them and then takes the responsibility for them. There have been cases in the past when a chairman of long standing has dominated both the committee and the official, sometimes, but rarely, to the advantage of the work, but this cannot happen under three-year chairmanships. On the contrary, there are now more members of the committee who are well informed, and the chairman is not the only one to be considered. It is the business of the official to study the idiosyncrasies of all the members; he does not expect the chairman to bear the brunt of the discussion in committee, he will explain the proposals himself. Once through the committee it is, of course, the chairman's job to get the report through the Council. The civil servant, on the other hand, has to deal with his Minister, not with the Cabinet.

Since the chairman changes every three years, the official alone has the necessary knowledge of complicated matters to plan a wise and continuous line of development.

If we are reluctantly led to the conclusion that—apart from the benefits which come from the broadening of the composition of the Council by the election of Labour members and of women—its personnel is on the average, with outstanding exceptions, inferior to what it was a hundred years ago, the contrary is true of the municipal service—apart from Sir Joseph Heron, who for fifty years was the leading Town Clerk in England.

The contrast between the civil service staffs of the city in 1838 and 1938 is striking. In 1838 there were very few whole-time officials. In 1938 there are thousands, and they include highly trained men and women who devote themselves to all kinds of different technical problems—doctors, mechanical and civil engineers; engineers who specialize in gas, water, electricity and trans-

port problems; lawyers and accountants, teachers and, on the staff of the College of Technology, university professors.

Manchester has never before possessed such a fine body of able officials who combine incorruptibility, enthusiasm and energy with a sympathetic understanding of the lives and problems of the ordinary citizens. It has been said of the national civil servants that if they were left to govern the country alone for six months, there would not be enough lamp-posts in Whitehall on which to hang the culprits. This could never be said—even in jest—of Manchester's municipal servants. So long as they receive fair treatment and loyal support from the Council, they will continue to serve the city with increasing efficiency.

CHAPTER XIX

PROBLEMS OF THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS

We have traced the growth of Manchester from a collection of townships, contiguous to one another and united by community of interests but separate in government, to the city of to-day. An area nearly six times as large as the original borough and containing more than three times the population is now governed by a single authority, not only the one authority for the area, but for all the functions that were formerly exercised by numerous different governing bodies. We have seen the city dealing with the problems of police, sanitation, public health, education, poor law relief, and the municipal provision of water, gas, electricity, markets and transport. These were the problems that all the towns were tackling during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Sometimes Manchester led, sometimes she followed, but when we compare the conditions of life in the city a hundred years ago with those of to-day, we need not be ashamed of the achievement. If democracy works slowly, its foundations are securely laid. Never once do we find that a step was taken backwards. Progress was uneven but, as even Mrs. Sidney Webb said, after a not too flattering review of the Council, "it has its head in the right direction."

Many of the problems that emerged during the first hundred years have actually been solved. The city now has a pure water supply, a good main drainage system; supplies of gas and electricity are cheap and ample; infectious diseases are scientifically controlled. Many other problems are in process of solution, those connected with transport, housing, education and public health. In all these fields immense progress has been made; at least we know what should be done, even if we still lack the determination to complete the task in the best possible way.

But other problems remain, which will have to be solved in the next hundred years. Chief among these is the problem of town planning. Manchester to-day, like our other great industrial cities, is a disgrace to civilization. She has grown up mean, unplanned,

and so dirty and unattractive as hardly to be fit for human habitation.

What are the fundamentals of well-planned life for urban workers? Clearly, that home and factory or office should be in pleasant places and close to one another. So far as possible, daily transport from home to place of work should be abolished. On the other hand, week-end transport and holiday transport should be increased. We shall probably all have a two-day week-end before long, and the ideal is that every family should be able to get easily to Blackpool or Derbyshire or the Lake District.

There are two schools of thought as to how this can be achieved; by centralizing or by decentralizing. The most ambitious plan for centralization is the ten-year reconstruction plan for Moscow. Five million people are to be housed in a relatively small area, the houses being five to ten stories high. Round the city is to be a forest belt five miles deep, with no buildings except country clubs. The city is designed on a spider's web plan, with broad radial roads and radial electric railways by which it is hoped to get the whole population out of the town on holidays.

On the other hand, most town planners in England are in favour of decentralization. Not only town planners, but traffic experts, regard London as the outstanding example of grossly wasteful and uneconomic planning. Town planners advocate the garden city—Letchworth or Welwyn—where men live within a few minutes' walk of their factory and in close contact with the country.

What is the right line of development in Manchester? For many reasons it is difficult to forecast its future, but whether there should be more Wythenshawes or whether industry should still be encouraged to settle in the centre of the city—which means a certain amount of residential property there also—are problems that have not yet been faced. The central area is now being replanned and we hope that provision will be made for parkways right through the centre of the city out to the Cheshire plain and the Derbyshire hills. Not only would these add immensely to the amenities of the city, but they would enable masses of the population to get into the country at week-ends. We need a far-reaching regional plan for the future of the greater Manchester, one with courage and imagination.

Another serious handicap to good government is the lack of

local interest in municipal affairs. At present far too many citizens feel that they have done all that is required of them when they have paid their rates. If their interest is roused at election times sufficiently to take them to meetings, the questions which they put to candidates seldom deal with the big problems of the city, but with a better bus service for *themselves*, a maintenance allowance for *their* child, a reduction of the assessment of *their* house, etc.

This is probably due to the fact that Manchester is so large, and the problems of her government so complicated, that the ordinary ratepayer feels that he cannot understand them without spending more time and thought than he is able to give. It is difficult for him, too, to learn about municipal affairs. The only daily paper that gives a consecutive account of the monthly meetings of the City Council is the *Manchester Guardian*, and it can only devote two columns out of a hundred and forty to this subject. A hundred years ago, then a bi-weekly paper, it devoted two and a third columns out of thirty-six—and the same was true of the other papers. The *City News*, which was started in 1864, devoted itself primarily to municipal questions for seventy years, but rather faded out for want of support. It is making a gallant effort to revive itself, and it is still the only paper from which the interested citizen can get an idea of all the questions discussed by the Council. Small towns, on the other hand, all have their local papers, which report their local council meetings at considerable length.

But the problem of the size of Manchester may be automatically solved by the general decline of the population of the country. Even so, we feel that the question of areas remains.

The best area for the supply of water, electricity, gas, transport, higher education and hospitals has never been scientifically worked out. No one can deny that the present haphazard areas are not necessarily the best for most, if not all, of these services. But there is a further and in some respects a more urgent problem, and that is the necessity for spreading more widely the cost of the social services.

The fact that practically all those "who can in any way live out of Manchester" do so, means that the cost of providing for the population who remain in the city—those who need the social services most—falls upon those least able to bear the burden. The better-off citizens, just because they are better off and can afford

higher train or bus fares, or possess a motor car, live in semi-rural parts of the country, where rates are naturally low. Yet they are entirely dependent upon Manchester for their living. The area of north Cheshire and Derbyshire within a radius of twenty miles has become a dormitory for Manchester. Rateable value there is increased each year by new houses built for people from Manchester. Its prosperity is becoming more and more dependent upon that of the city, and yet its residents pay nothing towards the cost of it.

We do not suggest that people move out of Manchester in order to avoid the high rates, but because they want fresher air and more country surroundings than the city provides. But they make their living in Manchester, and if they want to have the best of both worlds, they should be prepared to pay for both worlds.

If that area came within the boundaries of a county of Manchester, the cost of running the city could be spread fairly over all who benefit from the good government of the city.

We realize the immense difficulties of the problem and that much study and inquiry is necessary before a solution can be found. We have only tried to indicate the existence of the problem, and the necessity for a solution.

In connection with the Centenary celebrations we shall hear much self-congratulation, and it is only right that on such an occasion we should look back with pride to what we have achieved in the hundred years. But we should only do this in order to brace ourselves to further effort. We should not forget that there are still thousands of citizens living in unhealthy and overcrowded houses; that still 37 per cent of the classes in our elementary schools have more than forty children in them; that there is no dental treatment yet provided for 40 per cent of the school children; that still many boys and girls between fourteen and eighteen are working excessively long hours, which make continued education impossible; that still more than twice as many babies die in Ancoats than in Didsbury, and that the maternal mortality rate for 1936 was above that of the country as a whole.

Great though the achievement has been, Manchester, like other towns, does not yet realize that the only true wealth of a city lies in its citizens, and that she should put the interests of the children first. With a smaller child population, we should surely aim at a

better quality. With the knowledge now at our disposal of nutrition, of fresh air and exercise, of early medical treatment, of care in adolescence, etc., Manchester could, if she liked, produce a generation of children whose quality would more than compensate for a reduction in their quantity.

A hundred years ago responsible citizens in Manchester set to work to procure a form of self government which has enabled succeeding generations to tackle the problems of urban life. The achievements of the past give hope for the future. If, with the much greater scientific and administrative knowledge of to-day, the remaining problems are tackled in the same spirit, Manchester should, long before the bi-centenary is reached, be a model city both in appearance and in the quality of her citizens.