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C. A. Brackenburg

THE INDIAN MUNICIPALITY:

AND

SOME PRACTICAL HINTS ON ITS EVERYDAY WORK.

BY

H. T. S. FORREST

Indian Civil Service.

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PREFACE.

This little work, which embodies the results of the author's ten years' experience of municipal administration in various parts of the two provinces of Bengal, has been written in the hope that it may be found useful by Municipal Commissioners and others who are engaged in working out the many problems incident to the operation of European methods of local self-government under Oriental conditions.

The book has no pretensions to giving anything more than the outlines of the theory and practice of Indian municipal administration as it exists to-day ; and the only merit the author claims for it, is that of setting forth honestly and without reservations both the facts as he has found them, and the conclusions to which they have led him.

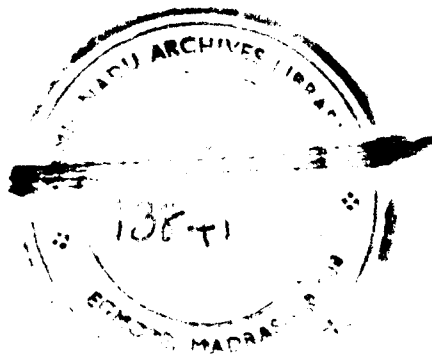
His best thanks are due to his friends Mr. A. Hale, M.I.C.E., Engineer of the Howrah Municipality, and Mr. K. N. Tagore, B.A., Secretary of the same Municipality, for much valuable assistance and advice—always most freely and cheerfully given.

MAGISTRATE'S HOUSE, HOWRAH

30th November, 1909.

H. S. F.

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ERRATA.

Page 41 *line* 12 *for* "dual" *read* "departmental".
Page 157 *line* 2 *for* "borrow" *read* "burrow".
Page 169 *last line for* "them" *read* "the holdings".
Page 171 *line* 22 *for* "84" *read* "134".

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A Plea for the Indian Municipal Commissioner.

Twenty-seven years have elapsed since Lord Ripon's famous Resolution marked the first real step in the experiment of grafting upon the "paternal" system of Indian administration a thoroughly European and democratic form of local self-government. How far the experiment has been a success is a question about which opinions differ very widely; the answers depending mainly on whether efficiency of administration, or the political education of the people is regarded as having been its main objective.

On one point, however, all observers are more or less in agreement; it is recognized, that is to say, that although this European form of self-government has been generally accepted by the nations and peoples of India—as far at least as any exotic institution ever is generally accepted in this land of immemorial tradition—and has been accorded a definite place in their social life, it has nevertheless not been altogether successful in attracting to the municipal councils an evenly-balanced selection of the best representatives of the upper-class elements of the urban population. The legal profession is always fully represented, in many cases a great deal more fully than its stake in the fortunes of the town warrants; but among the non-professional classes of the community—landowners, merchants, bankers, retired Government servants and so forth—one notices a disposition on the part of the recognized leading men to either hold themselves aloof from municipal politics altogether, or else to support the candidatures of lesser men of their own class in preference to seeking election themselves.

If, in such a case, one asks what exactly is the reason that makes the men, whose position marks them out as the best candidates, unwilling to serve on the municipal committee, the answer will probably be either "injudicious official interference," or else "characteristic lack of public spirit," according to the quarter in which one seeks enlightenment. Now whatever amount of truth

there may be in either or both of these explanations in individual cases, it is difficult to suppose that between them they account wholly or even mainly for the general results observed. One is led therefore to search for the reasons in the conditions of the self-government scheme itself : and a very slight investigation is sufficient to convince one that service as a Municipal Commissioner in this country is attended by exceptional difficulties and drawbacks, and involves a good deal that is foreign to Indian practice and distasteful to Indian sentiment.

Consider the case of the ordinary non-professional resident in a country town—a landowner or merchant for instance—who desires to enter public life as an elected Municipal Commissioner. At the very outset, he is confronted by a difficulty of the first magnitude in the shape of the obligation to canvass personally the ward he wishes to represent ; for this door-to-door canvassing, which is taken as a matter of course in European countries, is a real stumbling-block in India. The “best people” feel that it is derogatory to their dignity to go round personally soliciting votes, especially the votes of the lower orders—the idea, by the way, that a cartman who gets five rupees a month should have equal voting power with the landlord of half the town, being to the ordinary Indian way of thinking, a self-evident absurdity. Suppose however this initial difficulty overcome ; he is pretty sure to find other candidates in the field ; and he will either have to buy them off, or else, if he fails, to spend a considerable sum of money in distributing *baksheesh* among his supporters ; there is only one province in India in which anything like a Corrupt Practices Act is in force, and the lower class of ratepayer has a strong objection to giving something for nothing.

Once duly elected he will find much to perplex and dishearten him. The many provisions of the Municipal Act and the voluminous orders and regulations connected therewith, the unfamiliar and strict rules of debate, and the complex machinery of budgets, estimates and sanctions, contain numerous pitfalls in procedure which only careful study and much experience will teach him

how to avoid ; and however capable a man of business he may be in his own sphere, he will probably find himself placed at a serious disadvantage as compared with his legal colleagues in one very important respect—a knowledge of English. All the business of the committee—agenda, proceedings, reports and correspondence—is carried on in English ; and it cannot be expected that he will have found it necessary, or even possible, to acquire the familiar acquaintance with the English language that forms so important an item of the Indian lawyer’s stock-in-trade.

Moreover, his opportunities for doing useful work on the committee are likely to prove disappointingly meagre, the state of the finances in most municipalities offering an almost insurmountable obstacle to the setting on foot of any large scheme of improvement or reform. The average municipality has all its work cut out to make both ends meet at the end of the year—an operation which is rendered still more difficult by the persistent demands from all parts of the town for “sympathetic” treatment, *i.e.*, for leniency in the assessment and collection of rates and taxes ; the popularity of an elected Commissioner varying usually in direct ratio with his success in obtaining specially favourable terms in this respect for individual ratepayers in his ward.

Nor will he find it easy to persuade himself that against these drawbacks to his position, he can set the fact that he has become a member of a public body that enjoys the thorough respect and confidence of his fellow citizens. He will find that everybody knows all about municipal work ; and that everybody looks upon the Commissioners as fair game—the popular attitude towards the average municipality being perhaps best described as one of more or less good-humoured contempt. Energetic inspecting officers make periodical descents on the town and rebuke the municipality for not providing itself with up-to-date (*and* of course correspondingly expensive) appliances in the sanitary and engineering lines ; ratepayers combine to send memorials to the executive authorities imputing as a matter of course the gravest irregularities and the most reprehensible motives to the Commissioners and their staff ; the amateur municipal expert, whose

name is legion, writes a series of letters to the local papers to expose the defects of the administration and to prove how easy it is to remedy them ; and even the official from the Accountant-General's office who comes to audit the yearly accounts thinks it incumbent upon him to give the Commissioners the benefit of his views on such subjects as the number of inches of metal to be placed on a road, or the proper way to repair a conservancy cart. And in the rare cases in which a municipality plucks up the courage to "hit back," and by criticising its critics, asserts its claim to know something about its own business, it will find its action commented on in a spirit of pained surprise—*Cet animal est très méchant, Quand on l'attaque il se défend!*—and must expect to be severely snubbed for its presumption.

Now the fact remains that in spite of all these and many other difficulties that beset the path of the aspirant to civic distinction, Indian Municipal Committees do contain a substantial percentage of the very best men living in the towns—men with no particular axes to grind, who have joined the committees from motives indistinguishable from those which lead prosperous citizens to seek election on Town Councils and Boards of Guardians at Home. And this fact should go a long way towards refuting the sweeping statement often made that "there is no public spirit in India." The beginnings of a genuine public spirit are undoubtedly discernible in many parts of the India of to-day ; its growth and development will depend on the sort of encouragement it receives. And therefore *one could wish that people might be brought to realise more clearly than they do, how wretchedly poor Indian municipalities really are, and how often they find themselves called upon to work on lines, and deal with subjects, totally unfamiliar to the majority of their members. One might then reasonably expect to find the public rather more disposed than it is at present to "be to their faults a little blind," and to forgive a certain amount of blundering and lack of enterprise to those municipal administrations which show themselves to be at any rate honest and well-intentioned.*

PART I. THE CONSTITUTED AUTHORITIES.

CHAPTER I.

Spheres of Authority.

Introductory—The Municipal Constitution—The two fundamental Principles—Deductions and practical applications.

Introductory.

The municipal system described in the following pages is the system in force in the two provinces of Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam, both of which are governed by the Bengal Municipal Act III of 1884.

Each of the remaining provinces of India, namely, Madras, Bombay, the United Provinces, the Punjab (including the Frontier Province), the Central Provinces, and Burma, has a Municipal Act of its own with its complementary set of Rules and Regulations issued under the authority of its Local Government. But these Municipal Acts are not provincial Acts of the ordinary type—like the Village Chowkidars Act in Bengal for instance, or the Land Alienation Act in the Punjab. They were not evolved from *within*, on the basis of the facts and circumstances of town-government exhibited in the various provinces, but were imposed on the provinces from *without*, and were framed in order to carry into effect the precisely defined scheme of local self-government on Western lines which is set forth in Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882.

It is not surprising therefore to find that they all bear a very strong family resemblance ; and that a description of one provincial system will hold good, in almost all essential particulars,

for the rest. In fact, leaving minor details out of consideration, one may say that there are only three points in regard to which the provincial systems, as they exist to-day, exhibit any considerable variation either of principle or of practice. These three points are : (1) the strength of the influence exerted by government officials ; (2) the extent to which the division of power between the President or Chairman on the one hand and the Municipal Council on the other is determined *by the law itself* ; and (3) the methods of taxation.

To take each of these three points in order:—

1. *Strength of official influence*—This point, which is the most important of all as regards its effect on actual administration, is also the point in regard to which the provincial systems exhibit the greatest range of variation. Very little light however is thrown on it by the Municipal Acts themselves ; the “outside” official control which they provide, *i.e.*, the control of the Local Government and the divisional and district executive authorities, being of very much the same character in all provinces alike.

But it is the “inside” official control that really matters. And the strength of this “inside” control in a particular province is not very easy to gauge ; the only documentary evidence forthcoming on the point being contained in the Administration Reports and Resolutions published by the various Local Governments. These documents, when analysed, yield certain information as to the *numerical* strength of the official element ; and one may perhaps assume as a rough approximation to the truth, that the strength of official influence in any particular province will vary directly as (a) the proportion of official to non-official members in the municipal councils, and (b) the proportion of official Chairmen (whether elected or nominated) to non-official Chairmen—this latter factor being by far the more important of the two.

Now, as regards the percentage of official members, the figures are as follows : Bengal 15 per cent, Eastern Bengal and Assam 20 per cent, Madras and the Punjab 21 per cent, the United Pro-

vinces and Bombay 23 per cent, the Central Provinces 31 per cent, and Burma 36 per cent.

As regards the more important factor—the proportion of official Chairmen—exact figures are not available in all cases, and the following general statement must suffice. In the two Bengals, there are few official Chairmen, the Collector sometimes being Chairman of the municipality at his district head-quarters ; in the Central Provinces, most of the Chairmen are non-officials ; in Madras, one-third of the Chairmen are officials ; in Bombay, the Collector is President of all head-quarter municipalities ; in the Punjab, the Deputy Commissioner is Chairman of all important municipalities ; in the United Provinces, eighty-six out of eighty-nine Chairmen are officials ; and in Burma, the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer is Chairman of all municipalities.

These results square fairly well with the generally received opinion, that in Northern India and Burma, official influence is the predominant factor in municipal administration ; that in the two Bengals (especially in the Bengali-speaking areas), it is decidedly weaker than the non-official influence, *i.e.*, the influence of members elected by the ratepayers ; and that in Central and Southern India, the two influences are more or less evenly balanced.

2. *Extent to which the division of powers between the Chairman and the Municipal Council is determined by the law itself*—The only provinces in which this division is determined by the law itself are Bengal and Madras. In all the rest, the division is made by each municipality for itself, by means of a set of by-laws which must be approved by the Local Government, or be consistent with the rules on the subject laid down by the Local Government, as the case may be. Other differences of detail are of course to be found : for instance, in some provinces two Vice-Chairmen are allowed, in others one only ; in some provinces some of the powers of the Commissioners may be delegated to sub-committees, or to paid servants of the municipality, in others not ; and Madras has introduced a third authority peculiar to itself, in the shape of a Secretary, to whom the Chairman is bound to delegate

certain specified powers, and the Council may delegate others. One gathers that this institution of "a paid Secretary practically independent of the Chairman" has not proved altogether a success; it is certainly not in harmony with the ordinary idea of local self-government, and is not likely to be copied by the other provinces.

However, these are minor matters. And what strikes one is not these points of difference, but rather the great similarity in the actual working arrangements of the various provinces with regard to this division of duties and powers between the two constitutional authorities. In every province, whether the division be determined by the law, or is left to be settled by each municipality for itself, considerations of administrative convenience have brought about very much the same state of things in this respect; which, roughly speaking, is this: the Council deals with all matters outside mere office routine, and especially all such matters as involve considerations of policy, or expenditure of the municipal funds, or the appointment and dismissal of officers of superior status; while the Chairman, assisted by the Vice-Chairman (or two Vice-Chairmen), deals with the rest, exercising the very numerous routine "powers of the Commissioners" which are necessary for carrying on the everyday work of the municipality in its dealings with the ratepayers and the general public.

3. *Methods of Taxation*—There are four taxes which are imposed in every province, namely, (i) a tax on houses and lands, *i.e.*, a holding-rate, (alternative in Bengal with a personal tax); (ii) rates for special services rendered, *i.e.*, water, house-scavenging, etc.; (iii) a tax on vehicles; and, (iv) a tax on animals. There are other taxes which are imposed in some provinces and not in others, namely, (v) octroi; (vi) a tax on professions and trades; (vii) a fee for the removal of rubbish; (viii) license-fees for warehouses, dangerous trades, markets, etc.; (ix) tolls; (x) a tax on servants; (xi) a tax on pilgrims; and (xii) a tax on householders and families (Burma only).

Many of these taxes are of quite minor importance. One may say broadly, that the only taxes which really *count* are the

holding-rate (with its alternative in Bengal the personal tax); the various service-rates; and octroi. Where octroi is in force it forms the main source of the municipal revenue; and by far the most important distinction observable in the different systems of taxation in force, is the distinction between those provinces which impose an octroi and those which do not. The "octroi provinces" are Bombay, the United Provinces, the Central Provinces, and the Punjab: in the rest, namely, Bengal, Madras, and Burma, taxation is wholly direct.

In regard to all these three points of difference, Bengal may fairly be said to be in the direct line of progress; or rather, as progress is a debatable term, let us say the direct line of the future development of the Indian municipal system. Official influence is plainly destined to be curtailed considerably in the near future; the domain of law will presumably extend itself steadily in the region of municipal administration as it is doing everywhere else; and there are distinct signs of a tendency on the part of the "octroi provinces" towards abandoning indirect taxation in favour of the fiscal system of Madras or Bengal.

The Bengal system therefore will serve very well—perhaps better than any other provincial system—as the example on which to base a description of the theory and practice of Indian municipal administration as it exists to-day.

The Municipal Constitution.

The municipal affairs of every town in Bengal and Assam are managed by a body of Commissioners, varying in number from nine to thirty, who work under the authority conferred upon them by the Bengal Municipal Act.

The term of office of each such body is fixed at three years in all municipalities alike, but the methods of selecting the Commissioners and appointing the Chairman vary, and are dependent, in each municipality, on the class to which it has been assigned by the Act. These classes are three in number and are as follows:—

1. Municipalities where Government nominates one-third of the Commissioners, the ratepayers elect the rest, and the Commissioners elect a Chairman from their own body.

2. Municipalities where Government nominates the Chairman and one-third of the Commissioners, the ratepayers electing the rest.

3. Municipalities where Government nominates all the Commissioners and the Chairman.

It may be noted that in all three classes the Commissioners elect a Vice-Chairman from their own body.

The first two of these classes include the bulk of existing municipalities, the larger and more important towns being found in the first class. The third class consists chiefly of towns with very small populations, or situated in what are commonly known as "backward" districts, *i.e.*, districts in which popular interest in local self-government is imperfectly developed.

The Commissioners administer the Act under the general supervision of the Divisional Commissioner and the District Magistrate, who are empowered to intervene in cases where the Commissioners exceed their legal powers, or where their action is likely to lead to a breach of the peace, or to endanger the health or safety of the public. Such contingencies, however, rarely arise, and it is with the financial aspect of the Commissioners' policy that the concern of these two executive authorities mainly lies. It is the duty, first of the District Magistrate, and finally of the Divisional Commissioner, to satisfy himself of the soundness of the financial policy set forth in the budget which the Commissioners are bound to frame and submit annually, and this budget has no authority until finally sanctioned by the Divisional Commissioner who is empowered to modify it as he thinks fit. The dealings of the Commissioners with the municipal funds are further checked by means of a very complete and strict system of Account Rules, and by an annual audit conducted by the Examiner of Local Accounts.

Subject however to these checks and safeguards, the Act grants the Commissioners a very considerable amount of discretion

in the performance of the varied duties which fall within the province of a modern municipal administration.

The general representative of the Commissioners in their dealings both with the outside world and with their own staff is, of course, the Chairman; and as the Chairman enjoys certain statutory powers of his own in addition to, and distinct from, those derived from the Commissioners, it is not surprising that a good deal of uncertainty exists, not only among the general public, but among municipal Commissioners themselves, as to the exact extent of the Chairman's authority, and as to the varying limitations to which it is subject in the various spheres of municipal activity.

This uncertainty is possibly due to the fact that the sections of the Act, which, taken together, define the spheres of action of the various municipal authorities, are not found collected together in one place, but lie scattered throughout the body of the Act. In any case, however, as the principles on which this distribution of authority is made lie at the root of the whole system of municipal administration, it will be as well to clear up any uncertainty that may exist by giving the following brief summary of the law on the point:—

Summary of the "constitutional" sections of the Municipal Act.

The statutory authorities, that is to say, the authorities constituted by the Municipal Act, are three in number, and are designated respectively, (a) *The Commissioners at a meeting*, (b) *the Commissioners*, and (c) *the Chairman*.

To take them in order.—

(a) *The Commissioners at a meeting*—Speaking in a very broad and general way, the Act provides (to repeat what we have said above) that all matters outside mere office routine, and especially, all such matters as involve considerations of policy, or expenditure of municipal funds, or the appointment and dismissal of municipal servants of superior status, must be considered and decided upon by the Commissioners assembled in General Meeting.

The resolution passed by the majority of Commissioners present is called *the order of the Commissioners at a meeting*, and this order the Chairman is bound to carry out. Any act of his own or of his delegates that contravenes such order is *ipso facto* invalid and illegal.

(b) *The Commissioners*—The powers of “the Commissioners” form the great mass of powers not specifically reserved for the “Commissioners at a meeting,” and are, as we said above, the powers necessary for carrying on the everyday work of the municipality in its dealings with the ratepayers and the general public. These powers are exercisable only by the Chairman and his legally appointed delegates. Section 44 of the Act which limits his action in this respect is an important section, and may be quoted. It runs as follows :—

“The Chairman shall, for the transaction of the business connected with this Act, or for the purpose of making any order authorized thereby, exercise all the powers vested by this Act in the Commissioners. Provided that the Chairman shall not act in opposition to, or in contravention of, any order of the Commissioners at a meeting or exercise any power which is directed to be exercised by the Commissioners at a meeting.”

It will be noted that the Commissioners cannot set aside any act of the Chairman which he had authority at the time to perform. They can, however, pass a resolution that he should not perform similar acts in future, and after the passing of such a resolution, such acts, if performed, would be invalid and liable to be set aside.

(c) *The Chairman*—The statutory powers of the Chairman in his own capacity are limited to appointing or dismissing municipal servants drawing less than certain specified salaries, and delegating to the Vice-Chairman any or all of the powers vested in him as representative of the Commissioners.

His action in these matters is not subject to the control of any authority.

Fundamental Principles.

From this brief summary the intention of the legislature

appears sufficiently clearly. The Act is designed to make provision in every town, firstly, for the creation of a *public body* of as representative a character as circumstances allow, on whom may be fixed the responsibility for the general policy of the town in matters municipal ; and, secondly, for the appointment of a *person*, on whom may be fixed the responsibility for carrying this general policy into effect.

Each of these two constitutional authorities is intended to have its own separate and distinct sphere of action, and, as a matter of fact, experience shows unmistakably that those municipalities are the most successful in working in which this fundamental distinction between the *deliberative* functions of the Commissioners on the one hand, and the *executive* functions of the Chairman on the other, is most clearly recognized and most consistently acted upon.

One may feel justified therefore in taking this distinction as the starting point of any discussion of the mutual relations between the Commissioners, the Chairman and the municipal staff, the constitutional position as sanctioned by law and practice being defined in two fundamental principles which may be stated as follows :—

PRINCIPLE (A)—*The responsibility for the general policy of the municipality rests with the Commissioners. All matters therefore affecting this general policy should be discussed in the fullest and most open way by the Commissioners in meeting ; the expressed opinion of the majority of the meeting to be unreservedly accepted by the Chairman as representative of the Commissioners, and loyally carried out by him as Head of the Executive.*

PRINCIPLE (B)—*The responsibility for choosing the methods by which, and controlling the agents by whom, the orders of the Commissioners are carried into effect, rests with the Chairman. Commissioners, therefore, whether as a body or as individuals, should abstain from interfering directly with the working of the municipal staff.*

Deductions and Practical Applications.

The next step must be to apply these fundamental principles

to existing conditions in order to arrive at some definite rules by which the everyday procedure of a municipality may be guided. This is, of course, to enter on highly debatable ground; conditions varying so much in different municipalities, that to attempt anything approaching a rigorous deduction of a series of rules would be out of the question. However, one must work on probabilities and averages: and after eliminating doubtful points, and allowing for extreme cases, it is possible to obtain a residuum of four or five practical working rules of general applicability which may be regarded as being fair deductions from the two fundamental principles stated above: and which have besides the sanction of the practice prevailing in the most successful municipalities.

Let us enumerate these rules taking first those which may be regarded as deducible from Principle (A):—

RULE I—Matters of mere routine excepted, every subject submitted for the orders of the Commissioners at a meeting should have been previously discussed and reported on by a sub-committee appointed by the Commissioners.

It is obvious that any assembly whose proceedings are regulated by more or less formal rules of debate will find a difficulty in discussing questions involving the examination of a mass of detail. It is obvious also, that when it proceeds to discuss questions concerning which differences of opinion are likely to arise, it will find its task much simplified if the main points in issue, and the principal arguments for and against each particular proposal, have been settled and stated beforehand. These considerations however are apt to be overlooked, and one frequently sees the time of the Commissioners wasted, and the work of the municipality delayed, by lengthy and acrimonious debates on matters concerning which no doubt or difficulties would have arisen if they had been previously investigated by a representative sub-committee.

As a matter of fact, in many municipalities the sub-committee system is either unknown or imperfectly understood; and a brief reference may therefore be made to some of its more obvious advantages.

Firstly then, it accelerates the rate of working of the municipal machine.

The Ordinary General Meetings of the Commissioners take place once a month, or at most once a fortnight. Any subject therefore, which the Commissioners cannot decide at the meeting, or regarding which they may require further information, must be postponed for a more or less lengthy period during which no action can be taken. With a sub-committee, of course, nothing of the sort need occur, and, in the case of a particularly complicated or contentious question, the sub-committee can sit from day to day until some definite conclusion is arrived at.

Secondly, it enables the Commissioners to exercise their control over the conduct of municipal affairs in a more thorough and business-like manner.

Commissioners who possess special knowledge of such subjects as finance, engineering, medicine, law, &c., find a freer scope for its application in the informal discussions of a sub-committee; and maps and plans can be examined, and municipal employees consulted, in a way which would be impossible at a General Meeting.

Thirdly, if sub-committees are properly constituted and care is taken to see, that not only is the special knowledge of individual Commissioners utilized to the best advantage, but also that the various shades of opinion among the Commissioners are duly represented, the Commissioners in meeting need not waste time in examining too closely proposals which have been recommended unanimously, and are justified in reserving for full and careful discussion only those subjects in regard to which there has been a divergence of opinion in sub-committee.

The number of "standing" sub-committees appointed will of course vary with the circumstances of each municipality, but in most municipalities two will probably be found sufficient: one, (which may be called the Finance and Establishment Sub-Committee) to control the finances generally, and in particular to examine all applications for expenditure which require the sanc-

tion of the Commissioners at a meeting : and the other, (which may be called the Works Sub-Committee) to control outdoor work generally, and in particular to scrutinize plans and estimates and to select contractors.

If there is a real amount of regularly recurring work connected with such subjects as sanitation, water-supply, education, &c., other standing sub-committees may be formed to deal with it ; otherwise, the control of such matters may be left to one or other of the first-named sub-committees.

From time to time, of course, questions of special importance or difficulty will arise, which will render necessary the appointment of special sub-committees to deal with them : but the distinction between the functions of such special sub-committees and the functions of the standing sub-committees should not be lost sight of. A special sub-committee is appointed by the Commissioners at a meeting, and is directed to submit a report dealing (within limits defined by the Resolution of appointment) with some definite question, such as a scheme of water-supply, the revision of the by-laws, the measures necessary for dealing with an epidemic, &c., &c., and with the submission of this report it *ipso facto* ceases to exist. A standing sub-committee on the other hand, should be regarded as an integral portion of the machinery ; its function being to examine and report on all matters falling within its province which the Chairman proposes to lay before the General Meeting for orders. It should therefore sit at least as often as the General Meeting sits, and at least a week before the date fixed for the General Meeting ; and if necessary, it should be prepared to sit from day to day to avoid postponing the submission of its report beyond that date.

In appointing a sub-committee it should be remembered that the special advantages of the sub-committee system are to a great extent lost, if the number of members exceeds a certain limit ; and as a rule it will not be found necessary in any case to appoint a sub-committee of more than five Commissioners, exclusive of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman (who should of course be *ex-officio* members of every sub-committee).

In most cases, free discussion and the exercise of the give-and-take principle, will enable the sub-committee to frame a report which can be accepted by all its members : but where this satisfactory result cannot be attained, and the recommendations are not unanimously made, special care should be taken to state clearly the points of difference and the arguments on either side ; and in cases of importance, members whose views disagree with those of the majority should send in written minutes of dissent.

RULE 2—Both in General Meeting and Sub-Committee, every paper connected with the subject discussed must be laid on the table and be available for inspection.

Nothing is more likely to cause jealousy and discord than a suspicion that the Chairman is "keeping back" something from the Commissioners. As each subject comes up for discussion the Chairman should read a note, (for the accuracy of which he is personally responsible), in which the facts of the case are fully stated, and, if need be, mistakes or delays on the part of the staff pointed out. All connected office papers without exception must be ready at hand, and the Chairman must be prepared to read out any document or hand it over for inspection as required by any Commissioner.

With the possible exception of negotiations for the purchase or sale of property it is difficult to see in what department of municipal working secrecy is required, and the practice of keeping certain files or certain papers "confidential" as against the Commissioners appears to be entirely at variance with the spirit of the Municipal Act.

Now let us take the rules deducible from Principle (B) :—

RULE 3—The Commissioners in meeting should accept the Chairman's proposals for the appointment, dismissal, and promotion of municipal servants, and should not question his disciplinary methods.

The responsibilities and duties of a Chairman in his capacity of Head of the Executive are very much those of a manager of

a business concern; or rather perhaps those of a managing director of a public company, the Commissioners representing the directors, and the ratepayers the shareholders.

Now it would be impossible for a managing director to conduct the affairs of the company with satisfaction to himself and the shareholders, if every employee whom he found it necessary to get rid of were permitted to regard his reinstatement as an open question to be discussed and voted upon at the next meeting of the directors; or if the filling up of every vacancy on the staff were made the occasion of a struggle between two parties among the directors, the appointment going to the nominee of the party which commanded the majority of the votes.

Yet this sort of thing is constantly seen in many municipalities where the Chairman does not make a stand for his rights and privileges: a full meeting can always be counted on when a proposal to fill up a vacant appointment is on the agenda; and the amount of preliminary canvassing, lobbying, and intriguing that goes on on such occasions is surprising—and highly demoralising to the staff.

Even when the appointment is to be given to one of a number of "outside" applicants, of whose qualifications the Commissioners might reasonably claim to be as good judges as the Chairman, they should not reject the Chairman's selection except for some special reason; while in the case of the dismissal or promotion of an officer actually serving on the staff, the reversal of the Chairman's order should be regarded as being equivalent to a vote of no confidence, and as justifying him in tendering his resignation.

RULE 4—Individual Commissioners should not correspond with, or give orders to, individual members of the municipal staff.

The mistaken idea that the relation between an individual Commissioner and an individual municipal employee is one of master and servant, is responsible for a great deal of misunderstanding and unsatisfactory work. In some municipalities one sees this idea dominating the actual working with the most disas-

trous results; while even in the best managed and most enlightened municipalities one finds traces of a vague feeling that a Commissioner has a special claim on the services of the staff, and a special authority to interfere in its work.

But if the object of the Commissioners is to get the maximum amount of honest work out of their staff, this idea must be done away with altogether. It is fatal to discipline, and the efficiency of the staff, particularly of the outdoor staff, depends mainly on the discipline that allots a man his task, tells him how and when he should do it, and punishes him promptly for disobedience and neglect.

It is obviously impossible to enforce this discipline against a municipal servant if any one of twenty Commissioners is at liberty at any time to interfere with his work by ordering him to do a certain thing, or by calling upon him for an explanation for his omission to do something else; and in municipalities where this sort of thing is allowed, one inevitably finds municipal servants working in a half-hearted and perfunctory way, their chief anxiety being to please the more influential Commissioners and their friends.

A Commissioner who brings to light delinquencies on the part of the staff, or makes well-considered suggestions for improving its method of working, can render most valuable service to the ratepayers, and should be encouraged in every possible way: but the interests of discipline require that his reports and his suggestions should be sent not directly to the officer concerned, but to the Chairman, and that the Chairman, and not the officer concerned, should be held responsible for taking proper action upon them. In municipalities where misconception on this point exists, the only way to make the position clear is for the Chairman to issue a definite order that any paid servant of the municipality, who without his sanction enters into correspondence with an individual Commissioner on matters connected with his work, will be dismissed, and to ask the Commissioners to assist him by bringing to his notice any instance in which this order is disobeyed.

RULE 5—*No portion of executive control should be delegated to individual Commissioners or to committees of Commissioners.*

In some municipalities the management of the various departments of municipal working—drainage, lighting, markets, etc.—is handed over to special sub-committees, or even in some cases to individual Commissioners. In other municipalities again, the Ward Commissioners appear to be held responsible for “looking after” generally the working of all departments within their respective wards. Such management or “looking after” of course involves the issuing of orders and instructions to the staff, and thereby conflicts with the conclusion arrived at above; namely, that the strict discipline on which the efficiency of the staff mainly depends can be enforced only where the staff as a whole has one master, and each individual member of it one immediate superior through whom all his orders come, and to whom he is accountable for every detail of his work.

The disadvantages attendant on the practice of allowing individual Commissioners to issue orders to individual members of the staff have been detailed above, and very similar results are observable in municipalities where a committee of Commissioners—whether it is called a sub-committee, a district committee, or a ward committee—is allowed any measure of control over the working of the executive staff. For example, the Municipal Engineer may be directed by two different sub-committees to execute orders which are mutually incompatible; or he may be directed by one ward committee to carry out his work in one ward on principles entirely different from those he has to follow in another; or again, he will find conflicting demands made upon his time, which demands he must reconcile according to his own discretion, whence friction and misunderstanding are pretty sure to arise.

Moreover, when brought to book for neglect or bad work, he will usually be able to shelter himself behind an order of a committee; and this may lead to embarrassing situations in which the Chairman may find his duty of distributing censure and punishment hampered by the fact that the blame, or a portion

of it, rests with the sub-committee itself. The Chairman cannot deal with a slack or procrastinating sub-committee as he can deal with a slack or procrastinating overseer: but, as the strength of a chain is the strength of its weakest link, so inefficiency at one point of the municipal organization means loss of efficiency throughout; and, in municipalities where important executive functions are performed by sub-committees, executive work cannot be expected to reach the high standard of efficiency which it can be made to reach, where the executive agency consists wholly of paid officers who are amenable to discipline, and whose prospects depend entirely on the way in which they do their daily work.

In the interests of efficiency these sub-committees should be restricted to the exercise of their function of criticising and making recommendations, and it should be recognized that, while nothing is more desirable than that Commissioners as members of sub-committees or otherwise, should interest themselves zealously in the actual working of the municipal machine, this zeal and interest should find expression in the making of reports, and the writing of letters to the Chairman, and the moving of resolutions in sub-committee and General Meeting, and not in the issuing of direct orders to the executive staff.

CHAPTER II.

The Responsibilities of the Chairman.

*General responsibility of the Chairman—His duty to the Ratepayers—
His duty to the Commissioners—His duty to the Staff—
The position of the Vice-Chairman.*

General responsibility of the Chairman.

In the foregoing chapter an attempt has been made to define the spheres of the various municipal authorities, and to deduce some general principles which may be taken to govern their exercise of the powers conferred on them by law. In succeeding chapters, the duties of the Commissioners, the organization of the municipal staff, and the details of its working will be discussed. But it should be remembered, sound principles of working, an efficient organization, and a disciplined staff, necessary as they all are, are not enough by themselves to ensure success in municipal work. There must exist besides, among ratepayers, Commissioners, and staff alike, a general spirit of confidence in the honesty and fairness of the administration. To encourage the growth of this spirit of confidence is the business of the Chairman: and though he may, under the law, delegate practically all his duties to the Vice-Chairman, still the general tone of the administration depends ultimately on him: and this responsibility is one of which he cannot under any circumstances divest himself.

"Tact" is often spoken of as being the one thing needful for the head of a self-governing body like a municipality; and a very valuable asset it is undoubtedly to the man who is fortunate enough to possess it. Genuine tact however is perhaps not so commonly met with as is generally supposed; and one must beware of confusing it with the habit of mind which leads a man to take the line of least resistance, and to refrain from following the course

he feels to be the right one, for fear of injuring somebody's interests, or hurting somebody's feelings. This sort of tact is not to be commended; and may be relied upon to produce a "dry-rot" in a municipal administration as surely as it does in any other department of public work.

If there is one virtue more indispensable than another for a Chairman who wishes to secure and retain the general confidence referred to above, it is, one is inclined to say, not so much tact as impartiality. And for a Chairman to maintain invariably a strictly impartial attitude is not so easy a matter as it might seem. He has to perform three parts simultaneously; he is, that is to say, at once guardian in the last resort of the general interests of the ratepayers, representative of the majority of the Commissioners, and responsible Head of the Executive. His natural bent may very well lead him to prefer one of these rôles to the others; but this tendency should be resisted, and he should not forget that the interests of each of these three bodies—the ratepayers, the Commissioners, and the staff—have an equal claim to his attention. And when two of these interests clash, (as must happen occasionally), it should be his particular business to make it clear that he weighs their respective claims and makes his decision without favour or prejudice to either side.

In dealing therefore with the subject of this chapter—the responsibility of the Chairman—we shall find that the most convenient method will be to consider it under each of these three aspects separately. We shall take first, that is to say, his duty to the ratepayers, secondly, his duty to the Commissioners, and thirdly, his duty to the staff.

The Chairman's duty to the Ratepayers.

The influence of the general body of ratepayers on the policy of the municipality is usually not very perceptible. Although in most municipalities the elective system is in force, and the ratepayers elect two-thirds of the Commissioners every three years, it is rare, at present, to find a question of municipal policy in-

fluencing the general election. Contested elections are usually due to a disagreement between the rival social factions which are so prominent a feature of the inner life of an Indian community. Even when this is not the case, the attention of the electors is directed to the personal qualities of the candidate, and to his wealth and social position, rather than to his attitude on particular questions of municipal policy. It is true that, in some municipalities, Ratepayers' Associations exist; but it will be found desirable to examine their constitution and method of working before accepting them at their own valuation—a body of this kind is very liable to fall into the hands of a particular social faction, or local clique, and so to lose all claim to represent the general interest of the community.

It will usually be found however that a Commissioner, elected or otherwise, will, particularly if stimulated by the Chairman, take an interest in the general welfare of his ward, and will be ready to bring to notice the wants and grievances of individual ratepayers. This spirit should be consistently encouraged: and the Chairman should endeavour, by shewing himself particularly sympathetic in the matter of complaints and petitions enquired into and endorsed by the Ward Commissioners, to induce the ratepayers to look upon the Ward Commissioners as the immediate guardians of their interests, and to go to them in the first place for redress or advice.

Other more or less obvious duties which should be borne in mind by a Chairman anxious to secure the confidence of the ratepayers are:—

(a) To see that equal treatment is accorded to all classes; and to make it clear that the general interest of the community is not subordinated to the interests of Ward Commissioners and their friends.

(b) To protect the ratepayers against corrupt and oppressive municipal servants.

This he can best do by personally investigating any case in which there is the slightest suspicion of corrupt or oppressive conduct, and by dealing summarily with the offenders. If this

is not done systematically, an impression is likely to be formed, (which it will be the interest of the staff to strengthen), that the Chairman is in the hands of the staff, and resents criticism of individual members of it as a reflection on his own administration.

(c) To make arrangements for the prompt and thorough investigation of all complaints and petitions received from ratepayers; and, (this is an important point), for the communication to the petitioners of the decision arrived at with the least possible delay.

This is chiefly a matter of system and organized control, and will be dealt with in a succeeding chapter.

(d) To make frequent local inspections.

The more a Chairman is seen to move about the streets looking at things for himself, the better will be the effect on all concerned.

In addition, however, to these, so to speak, "casual" visits and inspections, he should arrange to make, at least once a year, a regular inspection of the whole town, ward by ward, giving a day or more to each ward. Long notice should be given of the dates of the inspections, and Commissioners and ratepayers invited to send in petitions and suggestions at least a week beforehand. This will allow of their being examined and reported upon by the staff with a view to enable the Chairman to decide what matters require his personal inspection. The results of the inspections should be embodied in a detailed note containing the Chairman's orders with regard to all matters in which he considers action necessary, and the note should then be placed before the Commissioners in meeting for their information.

These annual inspection notes, besides providing a means of checking the general working of the municipality, will serve in some measure as a history of municipal policy from year to year, and will be found particularly useful when changes take place in the *personnel* of the staff.

The Chairman's duty to the Commissioners.

The legal obligations of the Chairman towards the general body of Commissioners are two only. The first is, to place before

a general meeting every subject declared by the Act to require the sanction of the "Commissioners at a meeting." The second is, to see that the resolution passed thereon by the meeting is duly carried into effect.

Although these duties are sufficiently plain and simple in themselves, a good deal depends on the spirit in which they are performed : a Chairman who aims at gaining the confidence of his colleagues will do well to take particular care to see that these, his "constitutional" dealings with them are free from any suspicion of partiality or prejudice.

When the Chairman lays a subject before a General Meeting, he is morally bound to bring to the notice of the Commissioners *all* relevant facts and papers : and when the meeting has passed a resolution with regard to it, he is morally bound to do his best to carry it into effect whether he agrees with it or not. If he fails to fulfil these moral obligations ; if, for example, in the case of a blunder committed by the executive, he "keeps back" certain papers, or slurs over certain facts, with the view of screening the delinquent ; or if again, he allows the executive to deal in a dilatory or half-hearted spirit with a matter in which his own views have been overruled by the Commissioners ; he must not be surprised to find his colleagues exhibiting a spirit of irritation and suspicion, which leads them to obstruct the everyday work of the municipality by questioning his motives in the proposals he brings forward, and by criticising his procedure in the executive duties he performs.

In addition to his obligations to the Commissioners as a body, the Chairman is the natural guardian of the rights of the individual Commissioner attending a meeting ; and he should not forget that it is his duty both to respect these rights himself, and to see that they are respected by others.

One not unfrequently finds however a Chairman ignoring this particular responsibility, and, as representative of the stronger party among the Commissioners, using his majority to cut short criticism or discussion. This of course is all wrong ; every Com-

missioner present at a sub-committee or General Meeting has certain rights, specified or implied in the Act, which he can claim to exercise without reference to the wishes of the Chairman or those of the majority of his colleagues.

He can claim, that is to say :—

(a) To see every document in the possession of the municipality which is connected with the subject under discussion.

(b) To criticise freely the opinion or action of any municipal servant or Commissioner *including the Chairman*.

The Chairman should remember that the quality of infallibility which distinguishes his rulings on points of order does not attach to his views on points of municipal policy ; or to his actions as Head of the Executive. These views and acts are as much open to criticism as those of any other Commissioner or municipal servant ; and the language used must be very strong indeed before he can be justified in calling the critic to order for "disrespect to the Chair."

(c) To speak as often and as long as the standing rules of debate allow.

It is true that the unmerciful exercise of this right may at times produce an extremely exasperating effect ; but the only practical alternative is to allow, either the Chairman, or the majority of the meeting, to "closure" the discussion at any stage ; and in the best interests of municipal government the Chairman is bound to set his face against any such interference with the freedom of debate.

A "Ten-minute Rule" is a device sometimes employed, but is not of much use when a Commissioner is really bent on speech-making ; the usual result of an attempt to enforce such a rule being merely to stimulate him and his friends to produce fresh resolutions and amendments ingeniously designed to circumvent it. Practically the only thing to be done in such cases is for the Chairman to call the orator's attention to the flight of time, and to trust to his consideration for the feelings of others to bring his eloquence to a close.

But in well-regulated municipalities such cases should be

of rare occurrence ; and it will usually be found, especially if the Chairman by example, as well as by precept, does all in his power to discourage formal speech-making, that Commissioners will realise that the municipal meeting-room is not a place for oratorical displays, and that they themselves are members, not of a debating society or a political assembly, but of a committee of citizens who meet to consider the ways and means of doing the essentially practical and humdrum business of draining, lighting, and cleaning the town in which they live.

Outside the meeting-room, the Chairman has no statutory obligations towards individual Commissioners. He should not forget, however, that their position as his colleagues in the administration of the affairs of the town gives them certain more or less well-understood privileges, which he should be careful to recognize and maintain.

It is generally understood, that is to say, that every Commissioner can reasonably claim :—

(a) To have free access to the Chairman for the purpose of discussing matters affecting the municipality.

(b) To have any complaints or suggestions he may make enquired into and replied to by the Chairman himself.

(c) To have his communications, written or verbal, with the Chairman kept confidential, if he so desires.

(d) To be consulted by the Chairman on any matter (not being mere routine work) which specially affects his ward.

This of course represents a minimum merely ; and when any Commissioner is known to possess local knowledge or professional experience in a special degree, the Chairman will naturally be expected to avail himself freely of his advice and assistance by consulting him unofficially whenever occasion arises.

The Chairman's duty to the staff.

The conditions of service in the average municipality cannot

be described as attractive. The pay is usually small, there is little prospect of promotion, and an appointment carries with it no sort of claim to permanent employment. Moreover, the position is rendered still more unsatisfactory by the fact, that an officer who does his duty honestly will frequently find himself called upon to act in direct opposition to the interests of one or more of the many masters on whose favour his future prospects depend.

Under such conditions one cannot expect to find the best men entering the service of the municipalities ; and, as a matter of fact, one will usually find that municipal servants, both clerical and outdoor, compare unfavourably in energy and ability with the staff of the other public offices in the district.

A certain disparity between the conditions of Government service and the conditions of municipal service is, in the nature of the case, unavoidable ; but in many municipalities, the disparity is a good deal greater than it need be, and the difficulties under which the municipal staff has to work, are such as to render the attainment of any respectable standard of efficiency practically hopeless. An officer in Government employ carries out the rules of his department and the orders of his superiors, untroubled by considerations as to whether they are agreeable or otherwise to the members of the public affected by them ; he has too, to serve and to satisfy one master only, and he knows that on the good opinion of this master—the head of his department—his advancement in the service entirely depends. There is really no reason why, as regards these two points at least, an officer in the service of a municipality should not be on a par with the Government servant ; but as one knows very well, this is often very far from being the case. In many municipalities one sees the members of the staff influenced in the performance of the most ordinary routine duties by the fear of offending this or that influential Commissioner, or even this or that influential ratepayer ; and relying for promotion, not on the quality of their work, but on the amount of “interest” they have succeeded in securing among the Commissioners and their friends.

Where this unsatisfactory state of things exists, it will be found that the Chairman, either through ignorance, or weakness, or a desire to please his colleagues, has surrendered in their favour his duties and privileges as head of the staff, without perhaps realizing that in so doing he has dealt a serious blow at the efficiency of his administration. It is impossible for a staff to work satisfactorily under a number of separate masters; and in the interests of the staff and of the municipality generally, it is the Chairman's plain duty to constitute himself the sole judge of the merits or demerits of particular municipal servants, and, even at the cost of incurring unpopularity among the Commissioners, to insist on keeping the control exercised by them over the staff strictly at its legal minimum.

As pointed out above, the conditions of Government service furnish a standard to which it is desirable that the conditions of municipal service should conform as nearly as circumstances allow. Whether in any particular municipality this is the case—whether, that is to say, it can offer a self-respecting man, who enters its service, reasonable prospects of permanence and promotion—is a matter which depends almost entirely on the way in which the Chairman discharges his responsibility as head of the staff.

When dealing with the Chairman's duty to the ratepayers, and his duty to the Commissioners, we propounded certain rules and conditions to which his conduct should conform in each case. In the case of his duty to the staff, the conditions are still more clear and definite. We may reduce them to three simple rules which may be stated as follows:—

RULE 1—*The Chairman must protect the legitimate interests of the staff regarded as a whole.*

This rule can be best illustrated by negative examples. A Chairman is *not* protecting the interests of the staff as a whole—

(a) If, when a municipal servant has in the execution of his duty been beaten or insulted by a ratepayer, he refuses to prosecute, or compounds with the offender, in order to oblige the Commissioner of the Ward in which the ratepayer lives; or,

(b) If he allows a Commissioner in open meeting to refer to “the notorious incompetence of the staff,” or to impute corrupt motives to any member of the staff, without insisting that the speaker shall make a definite charge which the officer concerned can be called upon to meet in a regular and open way; or,

(c) If he does not use his influence to prevent the Commissioners, arbitrarily or without urgent necessity, cutting down existing salaries and allowances at Budget-time.

RULE 2—*The Chairman must be fair and impartial in his dealings with individual members of the staff.*

That is to say, when censure or punishment has to be awarded, or a promotion to be made, he must shew no favouritism to an officer who is a *protegé* of his own or of any Commissioner. A *protegé* is always a nuisance in the office. He neglects his work, bullies his colleagues and creates unnecessary friction by retailing office tittle-tattle to his patron.

RULE 3—*The Chairman must not allow anybody but himself to have any dealings with the staff at all.*

This point, which has been laboured a good deal in preceding pages, is unfortunately not fully appreciated in India; and a Chairman acting in conformity with this particular rule may find himself brought into collision with the best and most useful men among the Commissioners—men who are keen on the welfare of their wards, and the work of the municipality generally. But breaches of the rule have such a demoralising effect on the staff, that a Chairman is bound to resist steadily all temptation to give way, and must gently but firmly make it clear to every Commissioner, however zealous he may be, that, as we said above, “his zeal and interest should find expression in the making of reports to the Chairman, and the moving of resolutions in sub-committee and General Meeting, rather than in the issuing of direct orders to the executive staff.”

The position of the Vice-Chairman.

The Vice-Chairman (except of course when he is a paid

whole-time officer) occupies a very uncertain position. In one municipality he may be the virtual Chairman; in another he may have no more power than an ordinary Commissioner. Although he is elected independently of the Chairman, and without reference to his wishes, the only right inherent to his position is the right to preside at meetings in the Chairman's absence. Whatever authority he may exercise over the executive staff is derived from the Chairman, who may "by a written order delegate to the Vice-Chairman all or any of the duties and powers of a Chairman as defined by the Act subject to such restrictions as may seem fit to him, and may by a written order withdraw or modify the same" (Bengal Municipal Act, Section 4).

In practice, the division of responsibility between the Chairman and Vice-Chairman takes place in one of three different ways—*either*,

1. The Chairman delegates to the Vice-Chairman the whole of his powers and duties with regard to certain departments of municipal work, retaining the remaining departments for himself.

In this case the authority of the Vice-Chairman in regard to these delegated departments is the authority of the Chairman himself and is not subject to his revision. This is the usual arrangement when both Chairman and Vice-Chairman are non-official and unpaid officers; *or*,

2. The Chairman defines certain of his minor duties and powers with regard to *all* departments as "routine work," and delegates it entirely to the Vice-Chairman reserving for his own orders all the remainder.

This is the usual arrangement in the rarer cases where the Vice-Chairman is a whole-time paid officer and the Chairman an unpaid official or non-official; *or*,

3. The Chairman delegates to the Vice-Chairman the whole of his powers and duties with regard to certain departments of his work, and with regard to the remaining departments, defines certain powers and duties as "routine work," and delegates that also entirely to the Vice-Chairman, reserving the remainder for his own orders.

This is the usual arrangement where the Chairman is an unpaid official, and the Vice-Chairman is an unpaid non-official.

But however extensive a delegation of his powers a Chairman may make in favour of the Vice-Chairman, there is a certain minimum of authority which he must retain in his own hands unless he wishes to abdicate his responsibility altogether. This irreducible minimum may be taken to consist of the following duties :—

(a) To preside at all meetings and sub-committees.

(b) To personally check the Budget, and explain it to the Commissioners at the Budget-meeting.

(c) To make an annual inspection of the town.

(d) To see all correspondence addressed to, or received from, the Magistrate, the Commissioner, and other executive authorities.

(e) To pass all orders appointing, promoting, dismissing, punishing, and rewarding members of the municipal staff.

CHAPTER III.

The Duties of the Commissioners.

The financial difficulty—Enumeration of duties—The Contract System and its limitations—Summary of conclusions—Hints on municipal policy.

The Financial Difficulty.

The objects on which municipal funds may legally be spent are enumerated in section 69 of the Act. The list is a comprehensive one and offers a wide field to municipal enterprise and activity. Unfortunately however Indian municipalities—judged by English and Continental standards at least—are extremely poor, and very few of them have money to spend on any thing but the barest necessities. Taking for instance the hundred and fifty municipalities of Bengal, the province in which the municipal system is supposed to have attained its greatest development, we find that the amount paid in municipal taxes works out to an average of less than one and a half rupees per head of population per annum. It must be remembered too, that this direct taxation of the ratepayers is practically the only source from which municipal revenues can be drawn. (The first mofussil Indian municipalities were created only a generation ago; and Indian towns have not yet had time to accumulate gifts and bequests, or to become, as so many European towns have become, owners of large landed properties acquired in the past, and enormously increased in value since. Municipal trading too is practically non-existent in India; and the possibility of obtaining a revenue from this source need not be seriously considered for some time to come.

One is therefore not surprised to find that in the majority of Indian municipalities, the Commissioners do little beyond cleaning the town, repairing and lighting the streets, and making small contributions to local schools, and dispensaries.

Nevertheless creditable progress on the ordinary European lines is taking place in not a few of the larger towns, where the incidence of taxation is considerably higher, and where the Commissioners have taken advantage of the system by which loans for expenditure on permanent improvements are advanced on easy terms by the Local Government, and have provided the town with a filtered water-supply, a scientific drainage system and a public market, and at the same time are undertaking to regulate the building of houses and huts, to inspect dairies, private markets and the private water-supply, to maintain a fire-brigade and a vaccination staff, and to finance local hospitals and high schools.

The example of these “advanced” municipalities is undoubtedly producing its effect on the rest. For one thing, one notices everywhere an increasing tendency to be strict and careful in the matter of the imposition and collection of rates and taxes. This is an encouraging symptom, which may be taken to mean that people are beginning to realise that efficiency and progress are incompatible with the lax financial methods that marked the early days of municipal administration. At any rate there seems to be no reason to doubt that a “levelling-up” process has begun, and is likely to continue; so that, in dealing with the subject of this chapter, we shall be justified in taking a large municipality of the advanced type as our example, leaving the “Duties of the Commissioners” in smaller and less developed municipalities to be deduced from the list now to be given.

Enumeration of Duties.

What we have to consider then are the duties of the Commissioners in a municipality of this “advanced” type. These duties are of course all to be found detailed in various sections of the Acts and Rules that make up the Municipal Manual; but the difficulty is that the Municipal Manual is a large-sized volume, and the sections in question are not to be found in one place but lie scattered throughout its pages. Let us therefore

bring all these sections together and extract from them a regular list of the "Duties of the Commissioners."

We shall get something like this :—

- (1) The election of Commissioners.
- (2) The holding of meetings.
- (3) The framing of by-laws.
- (4) The imposition of taxes and rates.
- (5) The assessment of the ratepayers.
- (6) The collection of taxes and rates from the ratepayers.
- (7) The conduct of correspondence with the authorities and the public.
- (8) The maintenance of records.
- (9) The keeping of accounts of receipts and expenditure.
- (10) The conservancy of the town (public and private).
- (11) The construction and maintenance of roads and streets.
- (12) The lighting of roads and streets.
- (13) The maintenance of a drainage system.
- (14) The provision of filtered-water and the control of private sources of water-supply.
- (15) The construction of bridges, drains, and municipal buildings.
- (16) The maintenance of public markets.
- (17) The inspection of private markets and the food-supply generally.
- (18) The registration of births and deaths.
- (19) The entire or partial maintenance of a force of Town Police.
- (20) The advancement of education.
- (21) The maintenance of hospitals and dispensaries.
- (22) The taking of measures for dealing with plague and other epidemics.
- (23) The maintenance of a staff of public vaccinators.
- (24) The prevention of fires and the maintenance of a fire-brigade.
- (25) The regulation of the building of houses and huts.

- (26) The opening up of crowded and insanitary areas.
- (27) The maintenance of pounds and ferries.
- (28) The maintenance of public burial-grounds and burning-ghats.
- (29) The stocking and issuing of municipal stores.
- (30) The prosecution of offenders against the various Acts and by-laws.

These thirty items may be taken to make up a fairly complete list.

Before proceeding to discuss the ways and means of carrying out the thirty duties in this list, it may be noted that as regards five of the items, namely, Nos. 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23, the responsibility of the Commissioners is under present conditions a financial one only—that is to say, all they have to do with regard to each of them is to settle in consultation with the Government authorities the amount of the municipal contribution, and to pay over this amount to be spent by the public department or body concerned.

They can too, if they wish, adopt a similar procedure with regard to two other items, namely, Nos. 5 and 15. That is to say, if they wish to avoid the labour and worry involved in making the quinquennial revision of the assessment, they can, on paying the cost, obtain the services of a Government officer to make it for them. Or, if they are not confident of the ability of their own staff to devise and carry out a scheme of drainage, or water-supply, or other big engineering project, they can, on paying the cost, hand over the whole thing to the Department of Public Works. In some cases of course, it will be found necessary to adopt this procedure ; but, speaking generally, in a large and reasonably efficient municipality, the municipal staff should be able to do both kinds of work as effectively as the Government agencies and at a cheaper rate. At all events the attempt should be made ; it should be the aim of a well-regulated municipality to be "self-contained" as far as possible, and to ask Government for assistance only when absolutely compelled to do so.

It will be assumed then that in the municipality we are taking as our example the Commissioners hold this view, and have decided to rely on their own staff to carry out their Assessment and Construction work.

For the twenty-three remaining items on the list, the Commissioners are wholly responsible and cannot shift their responsibility to others; so that in order to get a list of the work to be done by the staff, all that is necessary is to eliminate from the list given above the five items (19) Police, (20) Education, (21) Hospitals, (22) Plague, and (23) Vaccination.

The list, thus revised and written as shortly as possible, of duties to be performed directly by the Commissioners will be as follows :—

Elections, Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Assessment, Collections, Correspondence, Records, Accounts, Conservancy, Roads, Lighting, Drainage, Water supply, Construction, Public Markets, Food Inspection, Vital Statistics, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations, Slum Improvement, Pounds and Ferries, Burial Grounds, Storekeeping, and Prosecutions.

The Contract System and its limitations.

Now comes a much-vexed question—how far should our Commissioners perform the twenty-five duties on this list “departmentally,” that is to say, through the agency of their own staff, and how far through the agency of contractors? Practice in this respect varies a good deal. Practically every municipality adopts the contract system to a greater or less extent as regards the items of Roads, Construction, and Ferries and Pounds. Some municipalities lease out the municipal markets; most have their streets lighted by contract; a few appoint a contractor to carry out the important duties included under the head Conservancy; and still fewer perhaps do not collect their own taxes, but employ a contractor who is paid by a commission on the results.

None of the other items on the list permit of the application of the contract system.

Now given certain conditions—given, that is to say, that the work in question is of a nature to allow of (a) genuine competition existing among contractors, (b) precise specifications being drawn up, and (c) failure on the part of the contractor being at once detected and dealt with under a penalty-clause without difficulty or dispute—it is recognised that the contract system furnishes what is probably the safest and most economical of all agencies for carrying it out. When, however, the system is extended to work which does not allow of these conditions being complied with, its peculiar safeguards disappear, and wasteful and inefficient working is the usual result.

This, or something like it, is the commonly accepted view of the advantages and limitations of the contract system. And if we accept it, (and there seems to be no reason why we should not), our next step must be to consider how far the three conditions noted above are fulfilled in the case of each of the above mentioned seven items of municipal work to which the system is more or less frequently applied, *viz.*, Road-repairs, Construction, Pounds and Ferries, Markets, Lighting, Conservancy, and Collections.

Road-repairs and Construction—These two obviously fulfil the conditions completely. There is never any lack of contractors for work of this kind; the specification can be made quite definite both as regards quantity and quality; and the contractor's work is always there to be measured and inspected.

Pounds and Ferries—In respect of this item very much the same may be said as regards competition and the specification; and although the contractor's work cannot be actually measured, yet the conditions of the contract are so few and simple that any attempt on his part to evade them can very easily be detected and penalised.

Public Markets—This item stands on a different footing al-

together. It must be assumed of course that the object of the Commissioners in constructing a public market is to safeguard the health of the community by providing a place where wholesome food can be stored and sold under proper sanitary conditions, and, incidentally, to set an example of market management for the owners of private markets to follow. If this object is not kept in view, and the Commissioners treat their markets as a source of revenue merely, and after prohibiting (as they have a right to do) the establishment of new markets anywhere in their neighbourhood, simply let them out to the highest bidder to make what he can out of them, they are distinctly abusing the power conferred upon them by the law, and probably do more harm than good.

If however they intend to make the contractors keep up a proper standard of market management, they will find it necessary to insert in the contracts numerous and elaborate provisions regarding food-inspection, accommodation, fees, water-supply, disposal of refuse, etc., etc., and to depute an officer to visit the markets daily to see that they are carried out. Now in the nature of things, these provisions cannot be made definite and precise after the manner of an engineering specification; and if each case of non-compliance with the terms of the contract reported by the inspecting officer and disputed by the contractor, is investigated on its merits, a good deal of troublesome work will be thrown on the higher officers of the municipality and the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman. If, on the other hand, the contractor's protests are ignored, and fines and penalties are inflicted upon him simply on the reports of the inspecting officer, it is not improbable that an understanding will be come to between these two persons which will not only result in the cessation of unfavourable reports on the market arrangements, but will give complete satisfaction to everybody concerned—the public always excepted.

Again, the interests of the public will constantly require the making of minor improvements and temporary alterations in the market arrangements. With departmental management, this is

an easy matter; with management by contract, it may prove a very difficult matter indeed if the contractor be disposed (as he generally is) to stand on the strict letter of his contract.

It is clear then, that the three conditions we have specified above cannot be complied with in the case of public markets; and everything taken into consideration, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the ratepayers distinctly do not get the best value out of their markets when they are let out to contractors.

Lighting—Where electricity or gas is used, the work must of necessity (under present conditions) be done by contract, that is to say, an arrangement must be come to with the lighting company concerned. Where, however, as in the great majority of towns, the illumination of the streets is effected by means of oil-lamps fixed on the tops of posts, the question of giving the work out in contract becomes a debatable one.

The difficulties in the way of framing an exact specification, and of keeping the contractor's work up to the mark, are much the same as in the case of public markets. The arguments against the employment of a contractor are thus practically the same as those we have just rehearsed, and need not therefore be recapitulated; and we may conclude at once, that, as in the case of public markets, so in the case of lighting of the public streets, the "departmental system" is likely to give the better results.

The two facts, *first*, that the general practice tends the other way, and *second*, that the departmental method will probably prove the more expensive of the two, do not tell against this conclusion so heavily as they might, when one remembers that the lighting of the streets is almost invariably the worst performed of all municipal duties; and when one observes, that in many municipalities the lighting contract rates are cut so low, that it is actually impossible for the contractor to supply the plant, oil, and labour specified, except at a loss.

To put the matter in a nutshell, the ratepayers are more likely to get a regular and efficient lighting service, when unlit lamps and inferior oil mean the dismissal of the municipal servant

responsible, instead of more or less trivial fines inflicted on a contractor.

Conservancy—We have seen that as regards market and lighting work, the difficulty of binding down the contractors and keeping their work up to the mark is a serious obstacle in the way of the successful working of the contract system. Exactly the same difficulties, in many cases in an intensified form, have to be met when the contract system is applied to conservancy. And, of course, in the case of conservancy, the consequences of a failure of the system are out of all comparison more serious. The remissness of a market or lighting contractor causes a certain amount of inconvenience of a more or less temporary and remediable character; the remissness of a conservancy contractor means, at best, a particularly offensive form of public nuisance, and at worst, an increased death-rate and irreparable damage to the health of the community.

But the great objection to conservancy by contract, altogether apart from, and in addition to, the disadvantages which it shares with market-keeping by contract, and lighting by contract, lies in the fact that it is subject in a very special degree to the danger of being converted into a monopoly of a most undesirable and mischievous type. Conservancy work in India is exclusively performed by persons belonging to a few of the lowest castes; and a man of any other caste who does a single day's work as a night-soil carter or a scavenger has to pay the penalty of instant and complete social ostracism. The ordinary laws therefore of supply and demand, under which, in any other department of municipal work, the raising of the wage-rate ensures a practically unlimited supply of coolie labour, do not apply to conservancy work. And as in most municipalities (in Bengal at least); the number of persons belonging to the *mehter* castes is not very much in excess of the number actually required for the public and private conservancy of the town, the serious consequences of a strike of municipal sweepers may easily be imagined.

Should such a crisis arise, no temporary expedient is possible;

and the only alternative to giving such concessions as will induce the sweepers to return to work, is to import at once a completely new staff of men and women from some other town or towns which may happen to have a sweeper population in excess of local requirements. This must necessarily be an anxious and very expensive business for the municipal authorities: every twenty-four hours' delay adds to the discomfort of the public, and increases the danger of an outbreak of an epidemic: while the new staff of sweepers may have to be collected from places hundreds of miles away, and, in any case, will have to be very heavily compensated for being required to leave their houses at a few hours' notice. Moreover, it is by no means certain that their arrival will put an end to the trouble: the sweeper castes are particularly clannish, and it is quite on the cards that the imported "blacklegs" will sooner or later be forced or persuaded to make common cause with their local brethren.

The fact is that a strike of sweepers is such a nuisance, and causes so much anxiety to all concerned, that Commissioners will put up with almost anything rather than run the risk of provoking it. And herein lies the special danger of conservancy by contract. Sweepers are ignorant and credulous people who yield a large measure of obedience to their own *jemadars* or headmen. It is not particularly difficult for an astute contractor who has got a good footing in the municipality, by making judicious loans to these *jemadars* and otherwise, to gradually get such a hold on them, and through them, on the whole of the sweeper staff, as to be able to engineer a strike practically whenever he chooses. This power he will most certainly exert if he sees any intention on the part of the Commissioners to supersede him by a rival contractor: nor is he likely to be backward in hinting at unpleasant possibilities, should they begin to "put the screw on" him to such an extent as to endanger whatever he may consider to be his legitimate profits.

This is not a dignified position for the Commissioners to be placed in by one of their own contractors; but there is no doubt

that such a state of things, more or less decently veiled, does exist in a good many municipalities. In such a municipality one may observe that the conservancy work is constantly below the contract standard; that the ratepayers are constantly grumbling; and that the Commissioners are constantly worrying the contractor without taking any decisive steps to remove him.

There is perhaps no branch of municipal work in which efficiency is more intimately connected with the comfort and health of the community than conservancy work; certainly none in which the effects of efficient working are more immediately apparent. But it is unreasonable to expect a high standard of efficiency to be shown, when, in addition to the many difficulties incidental to handling of "sweeper" labour, the executive authorities are called upon to encounter a formidable stumbling-block in the shape of a contractor prepared to embarrass them very seriously, whenever he thinks that his position or his profits are being threatened.

Collections—It is not easy to see exactly what advantages Commissioners propose to gain by farming out the collection of municipal rates and taxes in preference to getting the work done by their regular staff.

They cannot surely imagine that they will secure either greater economy or greater efficiency under the contract system. If they examine the figures given in the annual provincial Reviews of Municipal Administration, they will see, that it is quite possible for a municipality which follows the procedure laid down in the Collection Rules, to collect by means of its own staff from ninety-five to ninety-nine per cent of its demand within the year at a cost for collection charges of about two and a half per cent on the realisations. Now they know, or if they do not, their first year's experience will teach them, that these are results which no contractor who works honestly, *i.e.*, without swindling either the Commissioners or the taxpayers or both, can hope to attain. And the reason is quite obvious: the contractor has at once less power over the taxpayers, and more

expenses to meet, than the tax-collector who is a regular member of the municipal staff. As every one who has had experience of collecting work knows very well, the last twenty per cent or so of the demand gives more worry and requires more labour than all the rest put together. This twenty per cent may be taken to represent the taxes of the contingent of "habitual defaulters"; and it is precisely in his dealings with this class that the disadvantages of the contractor's position become most clearly apparent.

The tax-collector on the one hand takes the necessary coercive measures with the full and undivided weight of the authority of the Commissioners behind him; orders for warrants, sales of property, and the institution of civil suits are all passed by the Chairman himself, and against his orders there is no appeal. The contractor on the other hand, though he may nominally exercise all these powers, finds them considerably restricted in practice. The Chairman must of course see that the ratepayers are not victimised by the contractor and his subordinates; and when he receives complaints of illegal action and oppression on the part of the latter, he is in duty bound to satisfy himself as to their truth. Now, to any one who has had any experience of Indian ways, the endless opportunities for delay afforded by the procedure necessary for his so satisfying himself need not be pointed out. The habitual defaulter at any rate may be trusted to recognise and avail himself of them at once; he will discover that the system is virtually one of dual control; and by the exercise of a little ingenuity he will be able to ring the changes on reports, explanations, local enquiries, and adjournments to such an extent, as to prevent the contractor from really coming to grips with him within six months of the date on which his tax falls due.

Again, in the case of the contractor, the percentage for collection charges has to cover a good deal more than it does in the case of the collector. In addition to the actual expenses of collection, the contractor has to provide for his own profits, interest on his sunk capital, insurance against loss, and in all probability,

regular *douceurs* to the subordinates of the municipal staff told off to check his work and watch his dealings with the taxpayers.

It would be an extraordinary thing then, if one found that a contractor working under all these disadvantages could do things as cheaply and efficiently as a properly organized and well-managed municipal staff. And as a matter of fact he does not. In municipalities where the contract system is in force, one usually finds the collecting staff badly undermanned, and the contractor content to realise between eighty and ninety per cent of the demand, the remainder lapsing as "irrecoverable." This state of things of course entails a serious financial loss on the Commissioners. Moreover it is very bad administration, inasmuch as it puts a direct premium on "passive resistance." It is very demoralising to the exemplary householder who pays his rates and taxes punctually, to see a section of his fellow-citizens evading all such financial obligations by dint of first ignoring, and then objecting to, all demands made upon them by the contractor: and Commissioners should not allow themselves to forget that one of the chief features of a sound collection system is the encouragement of the others by the persistent harrying of the passive resister. He must be made to learn that he has *got* to pay sooner or later, and that the longer he evades payment the larger will be the item for "extras" in his bill.

If then we accept this view, *i.e.*, that the contract system of collection is both less efficient and more expensive than the departmental system, it becomes necessary to enquire what compensating advantages it possesses sufficiently considerable to induce Commissioners to adopt it. The only reasonable answer that suggests itself is, that the Commissioners have an idea that, by appointing a contractor, they relieve themselves and their officers of an appreciable amount of difficult work. But surely such an idea is quite fallacious. The actual work of collection, however large the amount may be, is not particularly difficult: as will be shewn below when we discuss the details of the system, with a properly organized staff, and a strict adherence to the Collection Rules prescribed by Government, collection work becomes in a great

measure automatic, and calls for little special attention on the part of the higher authorities. The part of the work that *does* call for the special attention of the authorities, and that often proves very troublesome indeed, is that connected with petitions for exemption, remission, and apportionment, and with complaints of misconduct and oppression on the part of the collecting staff. But the work in connection with exemption, remission, and apportionment is identically the same whichever system is followed; while from what has been said above on this subject, it is not difficult to see that the work in connection with complaints against the staff is likely to be both heavier and more difficult to dispose of under the contract system than it is under the departmental system.

There is another consideration however that may possibly have some weight, especially with the Commissioners of small municipalities who are necessarily brought in somewhat closer personal touch with individual ratepayers than is the case in larger towns, and that is the consideration that the contract system diverts from the Commissioners to the contractor a good deal of the unpopularity that always and everywhere attaches to the tax-gatherer.

But this, of course, is a mere shirking of the issue; and in the case of the advanced municipality we have taken as an example, we must certainly assume that the Commissioners possess the "courage of their assessment" so to speak, and make their choice of systems uninfluenced by any idea of providing themselves with something in the shape of a scape-goat.

We have now examined in some detail the advantages and limitations of the contract system as applied to each of the seven items to which it is found possible in practice to adapt it. The only point in issue is expediency; and on this point we have found in each case the evidence for and against the system to be sufficiently clear and straightforward to justify us in coming to a definite conclusion on the whole question without further delay.

Let us then pronounce our verdict as follows—A large municipality of an advanced type should adopt the contract system in the case of three items of work, viz., Roads, Construction, and Pounds and Ferries; and should reject it in the case of the four remaining items, to which it is possible to apply it, viz., Lighting, Markets, Conservancy, and Collections.

This, of course, is to be regarded as a general statement only; and as being subject to the reservation that peculiar local conditions may possibly in some cases cause the balance to incline the other way.

Summary of conclusions.

With the passing of judgment in the "Contract System" question our discussion of the duties of the Commissioners, and of the ways and means of performing them comes to an end. The discussion has been a rather discursive one, and it is possible that the detailed enquiries we have found it necessary to make into the inner working of various municipal departments may have obscured to some extent the conclusions we have come to with regard to the main points in issue. At any rate, there can be no harm in recapitulating them. Let us therefore condense the general results of our enquiries, and restate them as follows:—

1. In a large and advanced municipality the Commissioners' duties (both compulsory and "optional"), may be grouped under the thirty heads or items of work detailed above on pages 36—37.

2. As regards five of these items, viz., Police, Education, Hospitals, Plague, and Vaccination, the responsibility of the Commissioners is, under present circumstances, a financial one merely, the actual work being done by Government.

3. As regards two of the items, viz., Assessment and Construction, the Commissioners may, but should not, convert their direct responsibility into a merely financial one by engaging Government to do the work for them.

4. As regards three items, viz., Construction, Roads, and

Pounds and Ferries, the Commissioners should have the work performed by contractors working under the general supervision of the municipal staff.

5. As regards four items, viz., Lighting, Markets, Conservancy, and Collections, the Commissioners may have the work performed by contractors working under the general supervision of the municipal staff, but should not do so, but should have the work performed directly by the municipal staff.

6. As regards all the remaining seventeen items, viz., Elections, Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Correspondence, Records, Accounts, Drainage, Water-supply, Food Inspection, Vital Statistics, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations, Slum Improvement, Burial Grounds, Storekeeping, and Prosecutions, the Commissioners must necessarily have the work performed directly by the municipal staff.

Hints on Municipal Policy.

In this and the two preceding chapters we have on several occasions found it necessary to consider some question of general municipal policy, and to decide which of several alternative courses it would be advisable for our typical municipality to adopt with regard to it. And we may conveniently wind up our discussion of this first main section of our subject by making a list of our decisions on these questions; completing the list by adding to it such other conclusions with regard to the main features of municipal administration as appear to command general acceptance.

Indian municipalities are too young to have much in the way of tradition to go upon, and, as a rule, too much isolated to have any chance of profiting by the successes and mistakes of their neighbours; so that a summary of the generally accepted views on a few of the more important points of municipal policy with regard to which differences of opinion are likely to arise, may be of some use to them, in the way of pointing out the more common pitfalls, and of warning them from starting work on lines which experience in this and other countries has proved to be foredoomed to failure.

Indeed perhaps the best way of presenting this summary of decisions and conclusions would be to throw it into the form of a series of warnings and recommendations addressed to the Commissioners of an imaginary municipality. Let us do so and let us call it "Hints to Commissioners."

Hints to Commissioners.

1. Make a strict and impartial assessment of the ratepayers. Deal carefully with objections and appeals, shewing special consideration to the poor and those who are not able-bodied. But once you have finally settled your demand, realise it in full by the rigorous application of the methods placed at your disposal by the law.

2. Before finally passing any resolution, estimate carefully its effect on your finances and place the estimate on record.

3. Avoid speech-making; and do the bulk of your work in sub-committee.

4. Do not let clamour among the ratepayers deter you from following what you believe to be the right course—a popularity that is tinged with contempt is not such a valuable possession after all.

5. Assume as many of your "optional" responsibilities as you may reasonably expect to be able to perform.

6. Make it a general rule to get your work done by your own staff, rather than by the agency of contractors; and invoke the assistance of Government only when absolutely compelled to do so.

7. When settling the salaries and wages of your staff, bear in mind Mr. Chamberlain's dictum that "municipal corruption creeps in when the higher officials are paid less, and lower employees more, than the market value of their services."

8. Do not let ideas of party patronage, or anything in the shape of what is known in America as "the spoils system," influence your dealings with the members of your staff; and interfere with your Chairman's control of them as little as possible.

9. Remember that whatever may be the case with your other imperfections, the avoidance of the reproach of the two besetting sins of municipal administration in this country—slackness and procrastination—is a matter which lies entirely in your own hands.

10. Look ahead. Remember that you are not merely the representatives of the actually existing ratepayers; you are responsible to a greater or less degree for your town's future development, and for the health, safety, and comfort of future generations of its citizens.

PART II.

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE STAFF.

CHAPTER IV.

Principles and precepts of Organization.

The six conditions of a successful organization system—The three different systems compared—Division of responsibility between the Secretary and the Engineer—Rules of working for the Secretary—*cum-Engineer system.*

The six conditions of a successful organization system.

From what has been said in the last chapter, it may be gathered that the great stumbling-block in the path of the Commissioners of an advanced municipality is the simple fact that they have not got sufficient funds to perform properly all of the many important duties imposed upon them by the law and by public opinion. This, of course, is a very common difficulty; as one knows very well, in every department of public business, the interests of efficiency and the interests of economy are more or less in conflict, and the working arrangements must necessarily be the outcome of some sort of compromise between them. But nowhere perhaps are the claims of both these interests more urgent, or more difficult to reconcile, than in an average municipality; and it is, and always must be, a difficult task for the Commissioners to work out the terms of the particular compromise that best suits the circumstances of their particular town, and to assign to each department of municipal work its proper place in the system, and its due proportion of the municipal staff and the municipal funds.

It must be remembered too, that in carrying out this task the

Commissioners get very little help from outside. The Government has designedly refrained from prescribing any particular form of municipal organization, and the municipal system itself has not yet been in force long enough to allow of anything in the shape of a "standard plan" being evolved from experience, and being tested sufficiently to receive the stamp of popular recognition and approval. It is not surprising to find therefore, that in many municipalities, the Commissioners, thus deprived of the guidance of authority and tradition alike, have gone rather widely astray, and are, without realising it, struggling against the heavy handicap of an ill-balanced and unco-ordinated system of organization and administration.

Returning now to our typical municipality, let us suppose that the Commissioners have determined to satisfy themselves that they are not labouring under this particular disadvantage. And let us suppose that, as the best means of doing so, and of ensuring that their investigations shall be conducted without prejudice and with an open mind, they have decided to make a *tabula rasa* of their existing arrangements, and to work out for themselves, at first hand, the scheme of organization best suited to the needs and resources of their municipality.

Their first step will naturally be to examine and compare the different systems of working in force in the best and most successful of existing municipalities, with the view of extracting from them some common principles of organization and administration to serve as a foundation on which their own scheme may be built. Nor should this be a difficult matter. They will find that however much they may appear to differ outwardly, all successful systems, when carefully examined, exhibit certain well-defined features in common. They will find, that is to say, that every system which is distinguished by efficient and economical working, complies generally with certain conditions, which may be formulated somewhat as follows :—

CONDITION I—*The control exercised by the Chairman in every department must be as direct and thorough as the amount of time at the Chairman's disposal allows.*

CONDITION II—*The Chairman's control must be facilitated by a system of inter-departmental checking of as complete a character as the circumstances of the municipality allow.*

CONDITION III—*The higher officers must be relieved of the burden of detail by a system of devolution of responsibility carried as far as the qualifications of subordinate officers allow.*

CONDITION IV—*The work of the departments must be so organized and co-ordinated, that there is no overlapping of authority, and that each officer knows precisely to what superior officer, and for what work, and for what subordinate officers, he is responsible.*

CONDITION V—*Each department must be adequately, and not more than adequately, staffed.*

CONDITION VI—*Provision must be made for the periodical readjustment of the staffing arrangements in response to the growth and decline of work in the various departments.*

These six conditions thus sanctioned by the best experience will presumably be taken by our Commissioners as the guiding principles of their investigation, and their task of constructing an organization scheme will therefore resolve itself into the task of applying these conditions to the particular circumstances of their own town, cases of doubt and difficulty being settled by a reference to the practice prevailing in the municipalities of the best repute.

It will be seen that the order in which these six conditions have been placed is, roughly speaking, the order of increasing definiteness and detail. And this of course is the order in which the Commissioners would most naturally consider them. They would, that is to say, in the first place naturally decide on the general outlines of a scheme which (other things being more or less equal) would best provide for the fullest measure of control that their Chairman and Vice-Chairman could find the time for; next, they would consider this scheme in detail, and work out a co-ordinated system of departmental organization; and finally, they would distribute among these departments, in accord-

ance with their relative importance, the men and money they were able to provide.

Let us therefore suppose them to start on their investigation in accordance with this programme.

The three different systems of organization compared.

Now the first thing that they will notice is that for all but the highest officers, the actual working arrangements in all large municipalities are framed on very similar lines. In every municipality they will find the daily routine work performed by a staff of officers divided off into separate and distinct departments ; each department having its particular responsibility, and each officer of the department his particular share of this responsibility, more or less precisely defined. But in regard to the important matter of co-ordinating the work of these departments, and regulating the mutual relations of their respective heads, no such uniformity will be found to exist. The arrangements made for this purpose by different municipalities exhibit many striking differences, and it is on the character of these arrangements that the nature and extent of the control exercised by the Chairman will be found mainly to depend.

Let us suppose then our Commissioners to proceed to pass in review these different arrangements, or (to be more precise), these different systems of organization, actually in force in various large municipalities, with the object of ascertaining their respective advantages and disadvantages, more particularly with reference to the question of control by the Chairman.

Their investigations will shew them that these organization systems naturally fall into three groups or types, to one or other of which the system in force in any particular municipality may always be referred. These classes, or types, may be designated respectively—(1) *The One-man system*, (2) *The Departmental system*, and (3) *The Dual system*—each of which has its more or less well recognised merits and defects.

Let us deal with them in this order :—

The One-man system.

This system concentrates the responsibility for the working of the staff in one officer. He may be styled variously the Engineer, or the Secretary, or the Engineer-Secretary, or the Secretary-Engineer ; but in every case his position is the same. He is the one man ultimately responsible for the work of every single department, and all orders from the Chairman to the staff, and all reports and representations from the staff to the Chairman pass through him.

Let us note briefly the advantages and disadvantages of this system.

Firstly, its advantages :—

(i) It has the great merit always attaching to a *one-man rule*.

One bad general is proverbially better than two good ones ; and it is not easy to over-estimate the economic advantage of having the same set of ideas, purposes, and methods applied consistently to the work of the staff in every department.

(ii) It prevents any loss of power on account of inter-departmental friction.

Where there is one supreme head, this sort of thing can be very promptly nipped in the bud.

(iii) It saves the time of the Chairman.

Cases requiring the Chairman's orders will be put up in a more or less cut-and-dried form : and he will very rarely find himself called upon to investigate disputes between departments, or to discuss and settle questions with regard to which different opinions are entertained by different officers.

Secondly, its disadvantages :—

(i) The post of the Engineer-Secretary (as we may call him for the sake of convenience) is a very difficult one to fill.

There is no particular training ground for Engineer-Secretaries. They are recruited either from the ranks of "office men," i.e., men whose work is concerned with files and accounts, and is done at a desk ; or else from the ranks of practical Engineers, i.e., men trained to supervise contractors and handle skilled and unskilled labour, and whose work lies mainly in the field.

Now, as we have seen, the duties that devolve on the staff in a large municipality are highly diversified in character, more so perhaps than in any other department of public business. Moreover these duties will be found to divide themselves naturally into two strongly contrasted classes or sides—indoor or office work on one side, and outdoor or executive work on the other. Further, as is fairly obvious, it will be found that the efficiency of the staff as a whole depends a good deal on whether or no the balance is fairly maintained between the interests of these two sides. But, from the nature of the case, the Engineer-Secretary under the one-man system will not find it an easy matter to maintain this balance. If he is an office-trained man, he will at times fail to realise that “the work is the thing,” and that rules, forms, and procedure generally are means and not ends. If, on the other hand, his previous training has been on “practical” lines, he will be apt to become impatient of the checks and delays incident to a system of sub-committees and General Meetings, and in general, to undervalue the constitutional privileges of the Commissioners and the rights of the public. In the one case, the danger to be guarded against is “red-tape”; in the other case, it is friction with the Commissioners and litigation with the ratepayers.

In fact, the knowledge, training, and habits of mind demanded by one of the two sides of municipal work differ so widely from those demanded by the other, that it is no exaggeration to say, that the Commissioners would find less difficulty in selecting six good Secretaries, and six good Engineers, than in selecting one man who possesses in a satisfactory degree all the qualifications necessary for the combined post.

(ii). It is very difficult to fill up the vacancy caused by the Engineer-Secretary's absence on leave.

This is a real difficulty, especially where (as in many large municipalities) the Engineer-Secretary is a European who requires to go to Europe periodically on long leave. No member of the staff is in training to take his place; and either a new man who knows nothing of the municipality, or else the head assistant on

the office side, or the head assistant on the executive side, must be put in to officiate for him. In any case, the disadvantages of the arrangement are obvious, and are well enough recognized in practice; for one usually finds, that when the Engineer-Secretary is on leave, no attempt is made to do more than “keep things going,” all important questions affecting the work of the staff being shelved till his return.

(iii). The direct control of the Chairman is reduced to a minimum.

Of this there can be no doubt whatever: every member of the staff knows very well that in regard to the merits of subordinate officers the Chairman is more or less bound to accept the opinion of the Engineer-Secretary; and he realises that on the favour of this officer his own prospects of promotion and increased pay depend almost entirely. It would be too much to expect therefore, that any departmental head or other officer should criticise frankly arrangements made by his chief; or, when any question of municipal policy comes under discussion, that he should express with freedom views which he knows that his chief does not share.

The result is, that the Chairman, when dealing with questions affecting the staff, finds that he has very little material to work upon. He will find, in fact, that not only is he obliged to leave more or less entirely in the hands of the Engineer-Secretary the distribution of work among the departments and routine arrangements generally; but also that he must in the absence of effective criticism accept perforce that officer's individual opinion with regard to important matters in which the interests of *both* sides of the staff may be concerned.

(iv). Control by means of a system of inter-departmental check is rendered practically non-efficient, *as far as the Chairman is concerned.*

The reasons are much the same as those given in (iii) above: a departmental head, who finds something wrong in the methods or doings of another department with which his own is concerned, cannot be expected to criticise them freely and independently, if

he has reason to believe that they have been inspired by the Engineer-Secretary. The utmost he will do, is to state the facts and his views in a more or less colourless way for that officer to take such action as he may think fit.

But it is obvious that the Chairman's power to discover and prevent extravagance and financial irregularities must depend mainly on the effectiveness with which the work of the spending departments is checked by the Accounts and other allied departments of the office : and although it is not so obvious, it is no less true, that the Chairman's power to discover and prevent illegal and oppressive conduct on the part of the members of the staff depends greatly on the extent to which departmental independence *in general* is carried.

To take an example from actual experience. In a certain municipality in which the one-man system was in force, it was discovered that one of the methods of bringing pressure to bear on house-holders who were dilatory in paying their rates and taxes, was first to curtail, and subsequently to discontinue altogether, the visits of the conservancy staff to their houses. Now this sort of thing may easily occur under a system by which the same officer is made responsible both for the collection of taxes and the conservancy service ; but would be practically impossible in municipalities where the Collection and Conservancy departments were entirely independent of each other, with the Chairman as their only common head.

The considerations of principle and expediency, which we have applied in this analysis of the one-man system, apply of course equally to all. It would not therefore be necessary for our Commissioners to go over the same ground again and discuss the two remaining systems in the same detail ; all that they would need to do, would be to apply these considerations at once to each system, note briefly the resultant good and bad points, and compare these good and bad points with those of the other two.

Let us therefore suppose them to deal in this way with the departmental system.

The Departmental System.

Under this system the staff is divided into several departments entirely independent of each other, the head of each department receiving orders from, and sending reports and representations to, the Chairman direct. In a fairly large municipality the heads of departments would be some six or seven in number, *e.g.*, the Head Clerk, the Tax-Collector, the Accountant, the Conservancy Superintendent, the Road Overseer, the Water Works Overseer, and the Food Inspector.

This system is, of course, the exact opposite of the one-man system, and generally speaking, will be found to be defective in precisely those points in which that system is effective, and *vice versa*. Let us note its advantages and disadvantages :—

Firstly, its advantages :—

- (i) The Chairman exercises a complete control.
- (ii) Inter-departmental check is provided for as fully as possible.
- (iii) There is no difficulty in appointing competent heads of departments.
- (iv) There is no difficulty in filling up temporary vacancies caused by the absence on leave of heads of departments.

Secondly, its disadvantages :—

- (i) A great deal of work is thrown on the Chairman.
- (ii) When the Chairman is temporarily absent, all work except that of a strictly routine character is suspended.

This is an important point where (as in most municipalities) the Chairman is an honorary official who will naturally want to leave the town periodically on business or pleasure.

- (iii) There is no officer of sufficient calibre to give the Chairman advice regarding matters that occur outside the ordinary routine.

- (iv) There is abundant opportunity for inter-departmental friction, which may result in serious confusion and delay.

Now let us take the last remaining system—The dual or Engineer-cum-Secretary system.

The Dual System.

Under this system, the entire work of the staff is divided into two sides, which represent roughly the indoor work and the outdoor work respectively. The indoor side is placed under an officer called the Secretary, and the outdoor side under an officer called the Engineer. These two officers are entirely independent of each other, and are responsible for every matter affecting every department of their respective sides. All orders of the Chairman to the staff, and all reports and representations from the staff to the Chairman, pass through the Secretary or the Engineer, as the case may be.

This system is, of course, a compromise between the one-man system and the departmental system. Let us see then how it compares with them in regard to each of the main points in issue, which, as we have seen, may be taken to be seven in number as follows: (*a*) selection of heads of the staff, (*b*) filling of temporary vacancies caused by absence on leave of heads of the staff, (*c*) efficiency of Chairman's general control, (*d*) efficiency of inter-departmental checking, (*e*) saving of Chairman's time, (*f*) loss of power through inter-departmental friction, (*g*) ability of officers to act as advisers of the Chairman.

With regard to points (*a*) and (*b*) we may say that the dual system holds a great advantage over the one-man system, and is at a slight disadvantage as compared with the departmental system.

Much the same may be said with regard to points (*c*) and (*d*), it being noted that the checking department and the checked department can usually be put on opposite sides.

With regard to points (*e*) and (*f*) the dual system obviously holds a great advantage over the departmental system, and is at some disadvantage as compared with the one-man system.

In regard to point (*g*) the dual system holds a distinct advantage over the departmental system, and certainly is at no disadvantage as compared with the one-man system.

We may now presume that our Commissioners are satisfied

that they have before them sufficient material to justify them in coming to some general conclusion as to the respective merits of the three different types of systems they have found to be in force in existing municipalities; their first consideration being, as we said above, to "decide on the general outlines of a scheme which (other things being more or less equal) would best provide for the fullest measure of control that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman could find the time for."

Reviewing therefore the three systems from this standpoint, our Commissioners will presumably come to some such conclusions as these:—

1. The departmental system throws so much work on the Chairman, and provides so many opportunities for confusion and delay on account of inter-departmental friction, that it is to be preferred only in either a very large municipality, in which the Chairman (or the Vice-Chairman) is a whole-time salaried officer, or else a small municipality, in which the amount of work to be performed by the staff is, comparatively speaking, inconsiderable.

2. The dual system, combining as it does to a great extent the advantages of the other two systems, is decidedly to be preferred in ordinary municipalities where the Chairmanship is an honorary post, provided always that the Chairman is competent, and can devote a reasonable amount of his time to the daily routine work of the office.

3. If, however, the Chairman either has not leisure enough, or is not competent enough, or intelligent enough, to control efficiently the Secretary and the Engineer, and to co-ordinate the work of their respective sides—then, in spite of its many disadvantages, the one-man or Engineer-Secretary system is to be preferred.

In the case of our "advanced" municipality we must of course assume that the Chairman is a competent person, and has the requisite amount of leisure. This being taken for granted, our Commissioners need have no hesitation in selecting the dual or Engineer-cum-Secretary system as the system best suited to their municipality, and as best fulfilling the requirements of the first

of the conditions of successful organization, namely, the condition of "Control by the Chairman."

Division of responsibility between the Secretary and the Engineer.

The first condition thus disposed of, the Commissioners will now proceed to consider the second—the condition of "Inter-departmental check." And as the dual system has been definitely adopted, their first step in this direction will necessarily be to divide between the Secretary and the Engineer the entire amount of work connected with the performance of such of the "Duties of the Commissioners" as they have decided to have performed directly by the municipal staff.

A list of these duties is given on page 38 and may be reproduced. It is as follows—Elections, Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Assessment, Collections, Correspondence, Records, Accounts, Conservancy, Roads, Lighting, Drainage, Water-supply, Construction, Public Markets, Food Inspection, Vital Statistics, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations, Slum Improvement, Pounds and Ferries, Burial Grounds, Storekeeping, and Prosecutions.

Now, as we have seen, office or indoor work is to be the province of the Secretary, executive or outdoor work the province of the Engineer; and in the case of the majority of the duties in the list, there can be no doubt as to the category to which they may severally be referred. Some cases however are doubtful, and must be settled in accordance with considerations of general expediency. Let us divide up the list accordingly into (a) duties wholly or mainly of an office character, (b) duties wholly or mainly of an executive character, and (c) duties of a "mixed" character, in which office work and executive work are more or less equally balanced. We shall get three lists as follows:—

(a) *Office Duties*—Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Correspondence, Records, and Accounts.

(b) *Executive Duties*—Conservancy, Roads, Lighting, Drainage, Water-supply, Construction, Public Markets, Food

Inspection, Vital Statistics, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations, Slum Improvement, Pounds and Ferries, and Burial Grounds.

(c) "*Mixed*" *Duties*—Elections, Assessment, Collections, Stores, and Prosecutions.

Giving the duties in list (a) to the Secretary and those in list (b) to the Engineer, let us consider how the duties in the "mixed" list (c) are to be distributed.

Elections—The work connected with a general election or a by-election is not great in quantity; but it is important that the preliminary procedure (which covers a period of three months) should be very carefully performed, as the slightest irregularity renders the election void. This preliminary procedure is entirely of an office nature, and there can be little doubt that the entire responsibility for the conduct of elections should be with the Secretary.

Assessment—The work is mainly of an outdoor nature, and is moreover intimately connected with (and in fact the natural sequel of) the work of the Building Regulations department, which is a typical Engineer's department. Some municipalities however make the Secretary their Assessor, while others divide the work among the Commissioners themselves. Neither of these arrangements can be approved; the work of valuation calls for a certain amount of engineering knowledge and experience, and the Engineer should certainly be the Assessor also.

Collections—The upkeep of the registers, the writing out of bills demand notices and receipts, correspondence and interviews with ratepayers, all come under the head of office work. The actual work of collection is, of course, outdoor work (although in some municipalities a fair proportion of the rates and taxes is paid into the office direct). But the deciding factor in the case is the circumstance that the Assessment department and the Collection department are natural checks on each other. They should therefore be on different sides of the office, and, as the Assessment department has been given to the Engineer, the Collection department should go to the Secretary.

Stores—The keeping of the stores required by the executive

departments would naturally seem to be the business of the Engineer : but, on the principle that a checking department should be on a different side from the department it checks, Store-keeping must go to the Secretary.

Prosecutions—Offences against municipal laws and by-laws are detected and reported by the officers of the executive departments ; and when the Chairman's sanction for prosecution has been obtained, the responsibility for putting the cases before the Court will lie ordinarily with the head of the department concerned. Specially difficult cases however, or those which involve points of law, will be made over by the Chairman to the Secretary, who will examine and report on the evidence, and if necessary, employ and instruct a pleader.

Nevertheless, nine-tenths of the cases can be perfectly well dealt with by the executive departments themselves ; and "Prosecutions" should therefore be reckoned among the duties of the Engineer.

Dividing up then these five "mixed" duties on the above lines, and adding them to their appropriate lists, the Commissioners will get as their final distribution of work between the Secretary and the Engineer, the following :—

(a) *Secretary's work*—Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Correspondence, Records, Accounts, Elections, Collections, and Stores.

(b) *Engineer's work*—Conservancy, Roads, Lighting, Drainage, Water-supply, Construction, Public Markets, Food Inspection, Vital Statistics, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations, Slum Improvement, Pounds and Ferries, Burial grounds, Assessment, and Prosecutions.

Rules of working for the Dual System.

This division of duties between the Secretary and the Engineer provides a framework for the system of inter-departmental check required by the second condition of successful organization given above ; and the Commissioners can now proceed to fill in this framework, and at the same time arrange to satisfy

the third and fourth conditions, namely, the condition of the "devolution of responsibility" and the condition of the "co-ordination of work." To do this, they will have to divide up the work of each side into a number of departments, and lay down some general rules to govern the mutual relations of these departments and, as far as is practicable, their internal working.

Now the number of these departments is, of course, a matter which depends almost entirely on the size of the municipality under consideration ; and, as it is advisable to avoid particulars and keep our investigations on general lines as long as possible, it will be convenient to defer discussing the details of the departments and their number and size to the next chapter, where we shall find ourselves at last obliged to give our typical municipality a definite income and a definite population.

This however need not prevent us from proceeding to discuss forthwith the mutual relations of departments and their internal regulation—these being matters which can be dealt with on general principles applicable more or less to all municipalities.

We must suppose then our Commissioners to apply to the dual system the second third and fourth conditions of successful organization given above, and we must suppose them to check their deductions as before by a reference to the practice of the most efficient municipalities.

This procedure will put them in possession of a series of practical working rules which may be formulated somewhat as follows :—

RULE 1.—*The two sides of the office are to be kept absolutely distinct, and communication between departments on opposite sides is to take place only through the heads of the staff, or on lines definitely approved by both heads of the staff and the Chairman. Communication between departments on the same side is to take place only through the head of the staff concerned, or on lines definitely approved by him.*

This rule is the foundation of the whole system, and must be observed to the letter.

RULE 2—The work of every department is to be under the control of one head, who is to be held solely and entirely responsible for the due performance of the routine duties of his department.

The distinguishing mark of a head of a department is the right to report to, and receive orders from, his head of the staff direct; and all dealings of his department both with the head of the staff and other departments must be conducted through him.

The "routine duties" of each department must be prescribed by the heads of the staff. That is to say, they will lay down generally what kinds of cases are to be dealt with and decided by the heads of the various departments, and what kinds of cases are to be reserved for their own orders. The proportion of the work of any department to be considered as "routine" will, of course, vary with the character of the department, and the degree of confidence placed in its head, but the general principle should be to carry the devolution of responsibility as far as is consistent with safety.

N. B.—A head of the staff must be entitled to assume, in the absence of any representation to the contrary from a head of a department, that the staff of that department is generally adequate, and that each member of it is working satisfactorily. But this assumption will throw an unfair responsibility on the head of the department, unless he is given more or less of a free hand in maintaining discipline among his subordinates and arranging their work.

RULE 3—A head of a department submitting the facts of a case for the orders of his head of the staff shall invariably make a recommendation as to the orders to be passed.

Where this is not insisted on, one is likely to find the greater part of the time of the head of the staff taken up by the actual manual labour of writing a multitude of orders which vary little in their general character from day to day. This is not economical administration. In any municipal department at least seventy

per cent of the work submitted to the head of the staff is of a purely routine character, and the head of the department knows better than anybody else the orders that should be passed on it; in at least twenty per cent of the remaining cases he should be able, from his knowledge of orders passed in previous cases, to make a very accurate guess as to the actual order that the head of the staff will pass; while in the remaining ten per cent of the cases in which he finds himself obliged to rely on his own unaided intelligence, it will certainly do no harm to himself, or any one else, to have his views as to the course to pursue, placed on record.

The criticism therefore is not well-informed that would make it a matter of reproach to a head of the staff that he "simply initials his subordinate's orders." Properly understood, they are not his subordinate's orders but his own. A head of a department does not want his own subordinates to see his recommendations ignored time after time, and very soon learns to recommend only what he knows his chief will endorse, and he will frame his draft orders, not in accordance with his own idea of what is right and proper, but in accordance with what he has learnt to be the views and methods of the head of the staff.

N. B.—The heads of the staff may extend this privilege of making recommendations to selected subordinate officers of the departments with useful results. Their interest in their work is stimulated, they are made to use their brains, and a capable man gets a chance of distinguishing himself from the ruck.

RULE 4—Every officer shall have one immediate superior to whom he is responsible for all his work and from whom he receives all his orders.

The art of playing off one superior officer against another is thoroughly well understood in India, and an arrangement that puts a clerk to work under two heads of departments, or an overseer to work under two superintendents, renders the responsibility of all concerned uncertain, and is bound to result in friction sooner or later.

In many municipalities this particular defect of organization

is very noticeable. It is only very seldom however, that it will not be found possible to remove it by a re-arrangement of duties among the departments ; and every municipality should have a scheme of its organization system prepared and kept up to date, so that the Commissioners and the Chairman may be able at any time to satisfy themselves that the existing arrangements conform to this rule.

But it is no use having a good system on paper if it is not followed in practice. If, to take a particular instance of not infrequent occurrence, a Chairman with the laudable intention of saving time and trouble, makes a practice of sending petitions and complaints for enquiry to the various overseers in the various wards *direct*, instead of through the Engineer and the heads of departments concerned, he is bound to throw the whole machine out of gear; higher officers lose something of their sense of responsibility, their authority with their subordinates is weakened, and any routine system of control that may be in operation goes by the board altogether.

To insist on orders and reports going through "the usual channels" is not "red-tape," but a sign that one appreciates at its proper value a principle of administration recognised as axiomatic all the world over.

RULE 5—For every subordinate officer there shall be prepared a detailed list of the duties for which he is responsible, approved and countersigned by his head of the staff.

A department can get on well enough without any thing of this sort for a long time ; but sooner or later, some scandal or serious error comes to light, and then everybody throws the blame on everybody else, and it is impossible to fix the responsibility on anybody in particular. Moreover these lists are useful for inspection purposes ; they facilitate the general control of the heads of the staff ; and they save a lot of trouble when changes take place in the *personnel*.

RULE 6—Every outdoor officer shall keep a full diary and submit it daily to his immediate superior.

It is not easy to keep an outdoor subordinate working up to the collar in the same way as one can an office clerk who sits all day under the eye of the head of his department. One effect of the Indian climate is to make people, outside the ranks of manual labourers, find outdoor work distinctly irksome during the greater part of the year, while during the two or three hot-weather months, merely to walk about in the streets causes them actual physical discomfort. The outdoor officer is therefore always subject to the temptation to "lie off" for an hour or so out of the sun, instead of doing his work ; and of course, if he yields to the temptation, the coolies he has to look after will do the same.

The only means of checking this sort of thing is to make the outdoor officer keep a diary, shewing in full detail how he spends his time, to test its correctness occasionally by means of local enquiries and surprise inspections, and to make it very clear to him that the discovery of any deliberate falsification of his diary means his immediate dismissal.

A thorough-going devolution of responsibility on the lines indicated above requires, of course, the complement of an effective *general* control by the two heads of the staff. Relieved to a large extent of the burden of detail, they will have leisure to supervise the working of the machine as a whole, and to satisfy themselves by means of occasional surprise inspections that each part is working up to its maximum of efficiency.

Each head of the staff must, of course, work out for himself the system of general control best suited to the circumstances of his particular municipality, and it may perhaps be considered superfluous to say anything further on this point. It can, however, at any rate do no harm to complete our list of rules by adding to it two rules relating to this general control which have been proved by the practice of many municipalities to be of more or less universal application.

These two rules may be stated as follows :—

RULE 7—All work of a recurring nature shall be regula-

rised and controlled by a system of periodical reports and returns.

The heads of the staff arrange the system for the different departments of their respective sides in consultation with the heads of the departments concerned. As an example, let us take the Sanitary department; and let us suppose that its supervising staff consists of one sanitary inspector and four overseers working under him, each overseer being in charge of the sanitary work of one quarter of the municipal area. Then we may suppose that the system of routine control will run on some such lines as these :—

Each overseer to submit to the sanitary inspector : *Daily*—his rough pocket-book—his diary—muster-book of sweeper-staff—register of attendance of rest of staff—register of reports against sweeper-staff. *Weekly*—return showing progress and results of prosecutions. *Monthly*—statement shewing progress in slum improvement work—stock register—register of notices. *Half-yearly*—tools and plant register—report on half-yearly inspection of “improved” slums.

The sanitary inspector to submit to the Engineer : *Daily*—his diary. *Weekly*—the diaries of the four overseers, accompanied by his own covering report. *Monthly*—the weekly prosecution statements submitted to him by the four overseers accompanied by his own covering report—the monthly statement and reports (three for each overseer) submitted to him by the four overseers, each batch accompanied by his own covering report. *Half-yearly*—the half-yearly registers and reports submitted to him by the four overseers, each batch accompanied by his own covering report.

We may enumerate two or three of the more obvious advantages of having some such system of routine control working in each department :—

1. Neglect of regular duties, or unpunctuality in performing them, is brought at once to the notice of the supervising officer.

2. The heads of the staff by getting work of a similar nature put up to them for scrutiny at intervals, and in large masses

analysed and commented upon by their immediate subordinates, instead of in promiscuous daily dribblets, are better able to “codify,” so to speak, the work of the departments by working out rules for simplifying and regularizing procedure. It is as well however to remember that these rules should be few, and should be concerned with *principles* only; nothing paralyses initiative, or produces “dry-rot” in a department more certainly than a multitude of “standing orders” framed to meet the circumstances of particular cases and requiring constant alterations and additions.

3. Comparison of the work of one man with that of another in the same line, or of one man's work during a certain period with his own or his predecessor's work during a previous period, has much virtue in promoting efficiency. Suppose for instance—to take the Sanitary department again—the periodical registers, statements, &c., shew that overseer A gets through his work more promptly than the other three, that overseer B has his coolies more in hand, that overseer C keeps his cattle in better health, and that overseer D is more successful in prosecutions: then it should not be difficult for the sanitary inspector and the Engineer, by making careful and intelligent enquiries into the methods by which the good results were obtained in each case, to gradually “screw up” efficiency all round until the work in each circle attains A's standard of promptness, B's standard of discipline, C's standard of cattle management, and D's standard of success in prosecutions.

Codification of procedure, and the use of comparative results for the purpose of screwing up efficiency, are of course commonplace of business administration everywhere. But in municipal administration their importance is apt to be lost sight of; in the absence of the stimulating effect of competition, supervising officers are inclined to get into grooves, and to confine their energies to passing orders on particular cases as they come before them.

RULE 8—The arrangements for ensuring that the orders of superior officers are actually carried out must be effectual.

This also sounds like a commonplace, to be taken for granted in every system of administration. But any one engaged in administrative work in India will know to his cost that this is very far from being the case—his experience having taught him to place in the front rank of his many difficulties and trials the exasperating tendency of his subordinates to come to a halt just on the wrong side of performance. He will have learnt too that the East has its own way of doing things, and resents being hustled; and that the remarkable *vis inertiae* immanent in an Indian office can be overcome only by persistent driving on the part of its head.

But whatever amount of “driving power” a head of the staff may possess, he cannot feel certain that no order of his is being “hung up” in the office, or is being rendered futile by the neglect of some trifling but necessary detail, unless he insists on his staff “working to dates” whenever the work permits of it; compliance being secured by a system of register-keeping which traces from start to finish every stage in the execution of each of his orders. And whatever may be the arrangements he makes for this purpose, it is essential that they should be adhered to with the utmost strictness: every subordinate must be made to realise that to omit to make an entry in a register is a serious misdemeanour; while should a date have been fixed for the submission of a report or note or anything of the kind, to omit to put up the papers of the case on that date, *whether the order has been carried out or not*, amounts to a heinous crime.

CHAPTER V

Organization scheme for a large municipality.

A typical city municipality—Suggested scheme for the Secretary's side—
Suggested scheme for the Engineer's side.

A typical city municipality.

The Commissioners have now reached the final stage of their task of organizing their staff. They have complied with the first four conditions of successful organization enumerated at the beginning of the last chapter by adopting the dual system and formulating the rules necessary for its successful working. What remains for them to do is to differentiate the various departments, framing their constitution in conformity with the last two of the six conditions, namely, the condition of “adequate staffing” and the condition of “elasticity in the staffing arrangements;” or in other words, as we said above, “dividing among them in accordance with their relative importance, the men and money they are able to provide.”

Hitherto our typical town has been dealt with on general lines as “a large municipality of an advanced type.” Now however this is no longer feasible; we cannot attempt to fix the number of departments, and discuss them in detail, until we have provided our municipality with a definite income, and made some more or less definite assumptions with regard to such other factors of the problem as the situation of the town, the size and density of its population, its system of taxation, and its water-supply. To do this, let us take the statistics of the twenty largest municipalities in India. They will give us an average population of about 1,45,000, and an incidence of taxation ranging from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 per head of population per annum. So we shall be conforming closely enough to actual con-

ditions if we give our Commissioners a community of 1,50,000 persons to provide for, and an annual income *from all sources* of Rs. 4,50,000 to do it with.

We shall also be conforming more or less to average actual conditions if we assume, with regard to the other factors mentioned above, that the town is situated in the plains, that its population is mainly urban, that its system of taxation is based on rental values, and that its inhabitants are supplied with filtered water at the rate of eight to twelve gallons per head per diem.

The task before our Commissioners is therefore to decide what departments it is necessary to provide to carry on municipal work in a town of this description, and what staff it is necessary to give to each of these departments, in order to get the best value out of their four and a half lakhs of income, in the way of promoting the health, safety and comfort of its inhabitants. And they will find that before they can feel justified in deciding on the relative importance to the community of the various kinds of municipal services, and in allotting the funds and men necessary for the performance of each such service, they must institute searching enquiries in many directions, work out elaborate calculations of cost and value, and weigh and discuss many alternative policies, checking each stage of their deliberations by reference to the actual experience of their own and other municipalities.

It would, of course, be hopeless for us to pretend to follow these investigations step by step. What we can do, however, is to assume that the Commissioners *have* duly enquired, calculated, discussed, and checked; and that as a result of their labours they have obtained the particular scheme of organization that is best suited to the circumstances of a town of the description given above. We can then take the scheme as it stands, and "work backwards" from it, so to speak, discussing it department by department, and explaining, as we go along, the calculations and considerations on which the departmental distribution has been based.

Such a scheme has been prepared in two parts—one for

the Secretary's side of the office, and the other for the Engineer's side. Each part will be found below at the end of the section to which it refers. They have been printed on double pages, the inner halves of which have been left blank in order to allow of their being referred to when reading the explanatory notes now to be given.

Let us then deal first with the Secretary's side.

Suggested scheme for the Secretary's Side.

[*For scheme see below, opposite page 80.*]

The scheme shows the staff necessary for the performance of the nine duties noted on page 66 above as falling within the province of the Secretary, *viz.*, Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Correspondence, Records, Accounts, Elections, Collections, and Stores.

Let us examine it in detail, noting department by department the duties of the principal officers and the calculations on which the strength of the staff has been based.

1. General Department.

Head clerk—General supervision; specially responsible for the maintenance of files containing Government circular orders and Chairman's standing orders; attends General Meetings and sub-committees in the absence of the Secretary.

Four clerks—Work in this department is of so varied a nature that it is rather difficult to find a basis of calculation for the number of clerks required. The best basis is perhaps the number of letters issued and received. It is calculated that there should be one clerk for every 750 letters issued or received per annum. Estimated number of letters 3,000, (1,500 issued, 1,500 received). Registers kept are, (i) Register of letters received, (ii) Register of letters issued, (iii) Sorting register of current correspondence.

Petition clerk—Petition work only. Basis of calculation 1,500 petitions per man per annum. Estimated number 3,000. This excludes Assessment petitions.

Record-keeper—Keeps following registers—(i) Record-room register, (ii) Register of deeds and documents, (iii) Sorting register of old correspondence, (iv) Index register of building petitions.

2. Accounts Department.

Accountant—General supervision; specially responsible for the preparation of periodical statements and returns, the Budget, and the Administration Report; attends the Government Auditor when preparing Audit report. Drafts all correspondence connected with his department.

Five Assistant Accountants—Basis of calculation Rs. 1,00,000 of expenditure per man per annum. Estimated expenditure Rs. 5,00,000 (Rs. 4,50,000 Revenue and Rs. 50,000 Loan). Their work is the keeping of the thirty or forty registers prescribed by the Account Rules.

Engineer's Accountant—Deals with all accounts connected with the Engineer's side; checks contractors' bills, workshop accounts, and all registers kept by officers under the Engineer (nine altogether); keeps all stamp accounts, passes work-bills, and writes completion certificates, and drafts Budget estimates and annual reports for the Engineer.

3. Collection Department.

Tax-collector—General supervision; authorized to carry on routine correspondence with ratepayers; personally grants receipts for all taxes paid into the office.

Collection Inspector—Supervises the outdoor work of the bill-collectors. Special duties: (i) to explain to ratepayers challenged entries in their bills; (ii) to personally execute warrants in "difficult" cases; (iii) to make local enquiries for the purpose of checking reports submitted by bill-collectors on (a) "irrecoverable" warrants, (b) holdings to be sold, (c) holdings not in existence, (d) new and improved holdings; (iv) to make local enquiries in all mutation cases.

Fifteen Bill-collectors—Basis of calculation, 1,000 bills per man per quarter. Estimated number of bills 15,000 per quarter.

They serve bills, and notices of demand, and execute warrants; also submit quarterly lists of non-existent, new, and improved holdings.

Seven Clerks—Basis of calculation 2,000 ratepayers per head. Estimated number of ratepayers 15,000. Their chief work is to check in detail the work of the bill-collectors, and to keep up about sixteen registers prescribed by the Account Rules.

4. Cash Department.

Cashier—Receives all money, and grants receipts; pays out all cash, and keeps vouchers; keeps following registers—(i) Cash-book, (ii) Register of permanent advances, (iii) Court-fee account.

5. Stores Department.

The basis of calculation is Rs. 50,000 worth of stores per man. Estimated annual value of stores consumed is Rs. 1,00,000. The store-keeper and his assistant prepare the orders for all articles purchased through contractors, weigh, measure, and store them, granting receipts; also check indents from departments, and issue stores daily. This department keeps eight registers and ledgers in all.

6. Law Department.

Municipal Pleader—Gives his opinion to the authorities on all legal matters, conducts all cases in Civil and Revenue Courts, and specially difficult criminal prosecutions or cases for breach of the by-laws. Estimated number of cases 200, viz., suits for realization of arrears 150, regular civil suits 25, criminal and municipal prosecutions 25. The municipal pleader is, of course, not a whole-time servant. He gets a monthly retaining fee *plus* a fixed amount for each case in which he is employed.

Law Clerk—Writes out plaints and written statements, receives and deposits all money due to the municipality from the courts, takes copies of deeds, plans and other documents from the courts and public offices, keeps accounts of imprest cash and advances, and generally "looks after" cases before the courts.

Suggested scheme for the Engineer's side.

[For scheme, see below, opposite page 90.]

The scheme shows the staff necessary for the performance of the sixteen duties noted on page 66 above as falling within the province of the Engineer, *viz.*, Conservancy, Roads, Lighting, Drainage, Water-supply, Construction, Public Markets, Food Inspection, Vital Statistics, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations, Slum Improvement, Pounds and Ferries, Burial Grounds, Assessment, and Prosecutions.

It will be seen that he has a large staff to control—about 1,450 persons altogether. The chief point in connection with the organization of this large force is the distribution of responsibility among the heads of departments; and some explanation of the system of distribution adopted in the scheme may be given.

1. Eleven separate heads of departments are provided. This gives almost too large a number of officers dealing directly with the Engineer. However, it is difficult to see how the number can be reduced, without combining two or more departments under an *additional* officer of superior status, whose pay would, of course, be a considerable item in the establishment charges.

2. The Construction department is kept entirely separate from what may be called the “routine” and “maintenance” departments. This is an important point. Experience shews that where both construction work and routine work are given to the same officer (the Assistant Engineer for example), routine work makes so many and such urgent calls on his time, that the construction work—especially those parts of it that do not show, such as the preliminary survey, and the working out of engineering details—is likely to go to the wall.

3. Water-supply is dealt with by two separate departments. This is unavoidable. Where, as in most towns, the intake is some miles away from the distributing centres, a single officer cannot supervise the whole work satisfactorily, unless, of course, he is appointed as an *addition* to the staff shewn in the scheme.

4. The six remaining “routine” duties, namely, Assessment, Building Regulations, Roads, Conservancy, Drainage, and Lighting are divided among three departments—Assessment Building Regulations and Roads going to one department, Conservancy and Drainage to another, and Lighting to a third.

The reasons for this arrangement are as follows:—

(a) The Assessment and Building Regulation departments are closely connected; it is obviously desirable that the officer who scrutinises the plans of a new building, and watches its erection, should make the valuation of it when it is finished. Moreover, in view of the pecuniary interests involved, it is desirable that this officer should hold a high position in the staff, and be at least as well paid as any other head of a department. But the assessment and building regulation work taken together would not provide a sufficient amount of work for an officer of this stamp. Some other responsible work must be found for him; and it has been found in practice, that the road-repairing work, *i.e.*, the supervision of the work of the road overseers, is the most suitable in this respect, and fits in best with his other duties.

(b) In Presidency towns and some of the larger municipalities, it is the practice to divide up the sanitary duties, *viz.*, conservancy, drainage, street-cleaning, &c., among two or more distinct departments. All this work however is of much the same general character; and in practice, it is not always easy to decide whether a particular duty falls within the province of the Health Officer, the Conservancy Inspector, or the District Engineer. In an ordinary municipality, it will probably be found that the best way to prevent friction and the over-lapping of authority, and to fix responsibility, is to bring all these duties together, and make them over to a single department, as has been done in the scheme.

(c) It will be seen that the head of the Miscellaneous department is called the Lighting Inspector. The lighting of the town is his chief duty; but he will also be called upon to perform various other minor duties, such as the supervision of pounds and ferries, burning *ghats* and burial grounds, the preparation of

vital statistics, and the outdoor work connected with the granting of the various licenses for which fees are paid to the municipality. These miscellaneous duties are often entrusted to the Sanitary department, but that department has quite enough to do in attending to its own special work, and should be relieved of everything else if possible.

5. In some head-quarter municipalities the Food Inspector (who should, of course, be a qualified medical man) works under the direct supervision of the Civil Surgeon. There does not seem to be any valid reason for violating the fundamental principles of municipal administration by thus dividing responsibility and introducing an authority who is not accountable to the ratepayers. It is in no way derogatory to an Assistant Surgeon to work under the order of an experienced Engineer; and as a matter of fact, a Food Inspector, unless carefully controlled, is apt to be overzealous, and to cause hardship to the public by setting up unnecessarily high standards of food-purity and market management. It is therefore desirable that the ordinary procedure should not be departed from, and that the Food Inspector should work under some officer, who (paid or unpaid) is responsible directly to the Commissioners, and through them to the ratepayers. Moreover, in municipalities elsewhere than at head-quarters of districts, supervision by the Civil Surgeon is impossible.

Now let us take in order each of the departments shewn in the scheme, as we did in the case of the scheme for the Secretary's side.

1. General Department.

As in the case of the corresponding department on the Secretary's side, the number of letters issued and received is taken as the basis of calculation. The staff given is sufficient to deal with 1200 letters (600 issued and 600 received).

2. Construction Department.

Deals with construction work only. It is assumed that the

municipality is carrying out a large scheme of drainage, or water-supply, or both. If no such scheme is in hand, the department will be abolished altogether. The staff is provided for an estimated annual expenditure of, say, Rs. 50,000 a year on original construction work.

The minimum qualification for the Assistant Engineer should be that of an upper-grade subordinate.

3. Water-filtering & Pumping Department.

The staff is provided for the filtering and pumping of 1,50,000 gallons of water per diem, which is assumed to be effected by two engines consuming on the average three tons of coal per diem. The Water-works Superintendent should be a trained mechanical engineer. The fourteen coolies are mainly employed in spreading and washing the sand for the filters.

4. Filtered water Distribution Department.

The staff is provided to deal with ten miles of rising main, and forty-five miles of distributory pipes. The work of the department is as follows: laying and shifting of pipes; supervision of the work of the plumbers dealing with private connections; attending to and repairing leaks and bursts; up-keep of reservoirs and hydrants; detection and prevention of waste; recording of metre readings; detection and prosecution of offenders against the laws and by-laws affecting water-supply.

The minimum qualification for the Water-works Inspector should be that of an upper-grade subordinate.

5. Building Regulation and Assessment Department.

As noted above, this department is responsible for (a) the assessment of the town, (b) the regulation of the building of houses and huts, and (c) the construction and repair of roads. The staff has been provided in accordance with an estimate of (a) 15,000 holdings, (b) 400 building petitions for new and improved holdings per annum, and (c) 40 miles of roads.

Building Inspector and Assistant Assessor.—Deals with all

assessment work, enquiring personally into all assessment petitions, inspecting, measuring, and valuing new and improved holdings, inspecting vacant holdings, and checking warrants returned as non-realizable by the collection department. Is in general charge of building of houses and huts, making personal inspections before approving plans and sites, and periodically inspecting holdings in course of construction; also in general charge of petty construction and road construction and repair, personally checking all estimates and bills submitted by the road overseers.

The minimum qualification for this post should be that of an upper-grade subordinate.

Head Clerk.—Responsible for the whole of the clerical work of the department; also responsible for preparing for the collection department in triplicate every quarter 15,000 bills shewing the demand for holding-rate, lighting-rate, water-rate and latrine-fee. This department keeps the eighteen assessment registers prescribed by the Account Rules.

Road Overseers.—It will be seen that the division of work between the two overseers is made by *area*, and not by *duties*. With the latter method, *i.e.*, one overseer in charge of the building work and the other in charge of the roads work of the entire town, a good deal of time would be wasted by each officer in getting about from one end of the town to the other; moreover for four or five months in the year the "roads" officer would have practically nothing to do.

The duties of a road overseer are as follows: supervision of all work on roads including construction, renewal, and petty repair; keeping of the road-charts and preparation of annual road statements; road-watering; preparation of plans and estimates for culverts and other petty works, and supervision of their construction; preparation of preliminary surveys for building and assessment work; supervision of private buildings and huts under construction; preparation of plans for land acquisition; general charge of all public buildings, *ghats*, tanks, gardens and squares in his division.

8. Sanitary Department.

It is assumed that the bullock-cart system of conservancy is in force, and that the drainage system is mainly "kutchha." With a population of 1,50,000 it may be assumed that there will be 15,000 private privies, 18 public latrines, 6,000 sullage-water cesspools and, (as noted above) 40 miles of roads and streets.

Sanitary Inspector.—His main duties are the supervision of the work of the six sanitary overseers, and the maintenance of discipline and efficiency among the very large labour force for which he is responsible. Special duties: the working out of plans for the improvement of slums; the taking of measures for dealing with the owners of insanitary tanks; the maintenance of stock, tools, and plant; the monthly payment of the sweeper-staff, (he must be present throughout); and the preparation and submission to the Engineer of the draft Budget of his department. He should be an upper-grade subordinate.

Sanitary Overseers.—The town has been divided into six circles, each under an overseer. Each overseer therefore will on an average look after the sanitary requirements of a population of 25,000; and will deal with 2,500 private privies, 3 public latrines, 1,000 cesspools, and about 7 miles of roads and drains; this being the basis on which the menial staff has been calculated.

His main duties are those connected with the collection and removal of night-soil, sullage, and rubbish. Summarized shortly, they are as follows: to take early morning muster of sweepers, and distribute their work daily; to arrange for and supervise the cleaning of public roads, lanes, side-drains, ditches, channels and outfalls; and to arrange for the removing of trade-rubbish, and the cleaning of public and private latrines, privies and cesspools, and the disposing of sullage and night-soil at the sullage-filters and trenching-grounds; also to inspect all trenching-grounds, sullage-filters, incinerators, septic tanks, and skinning-platforms. Besides these conservancy duties, he is responsible for inspecting and reporting upon encroachments, dangerous buildings, dangerous and insanitary tanks, insanitary dairies and stables; he arranges for the killing of stray dogs, and the impounding of stray cattle;

he is responsible for the publication of all notices that have to be published by beat of drum ; and he prosecutes offenders against the laws and by-laws affecting sanitation.

His minimum qualification should be that of a lower-grade subordinate.

Peons.—Each overseer has under him on an average four peons, whose duties are to supervise in detail the work of the menial staff. The average circle will be divided into two sub-circles, in each of which there will be two peons, one in charge of the night-soil and sullage workers, (average number in each sub-circle being 50 night-soil workers, 8 night-soil carters and 8 sullage carters) ; and the other in charge of the rest, (average number in each sub-circle being 8 drain coolies, 5 wheel-barrow-men, 6 sweeping coolies and 4 rubbish carters). It is necessary to make this division between the work of the peons, because the night-soil work begins before day-break and is practically over by noon ; while the drain-cleaning and sweeping work goes on all day.

Trenching-ground staff.—Two trenching-grounds provided for. A trenching-ground will naturally be in general charge of the overseer in whose circle it lies. Each trenching-ground is in direct charge of a *jemadar*, who resides on the ground and is generally responsible. The trenching-clerk attends from day-break up to noon, to check the number of carts and buckets brought to the trenching-ground. He is independent of, and, in some measure, a check on, the *jemadar*.

7. Miscellaneous Department.

As noted above, this department is responsible for the lighting of the town, the control of burning and burial grounds, cart-registration, and all work in connection with the various kinds of licenses with the exception of the actual collection of the fees. It is assumed that the main streets of the town (say one-third of its area) are lighted by 450 gas lamps under contract with a gas company, the rest of the town being lighted by oil-lamps under the direct management of the Commissioners.

The staff has been provided for an estimate of 450 oil lamps, 250 carts, and 900 licenses, (horses and carriages 500 ; stables, dairies, &c., 350 ; dangerous and offensive trades 40 ; private markets 10).

Lighting Inspector.—Generally supervises the work of the two overseers. Special duties—strictly supervises the gas-lighting arrangements with the view of reporting any failure on the part of the gas company to carry out the terms of its contract ; receives oil from store ; personally enquires into petitions and complaints with regard to lighting received from the ratepayers ; makes occasional rounds of inspection at night ; personally registers carts and receives registering-fees ; carries on routine correspondence with the public with regard to licenses.

Lighting Overseer.—A night officer. Supervises the work of the lamp-lighters, (30 lamps to each man). He checks the amount of oil given to the lamps and is responsible that they are lighted, put out, and cleaned at the proper time ; keeps an account of all burners, chimneys, and pots issued ; goes on rounds of inspection every night.

License Overseer.—As regards licenses, his work is chiefly of a detective character, *i.e.*, he makes regular rounds with the object of discovering cases in which the taking out of a license is being avoided ; conducts license prosecutions in the courts ; inspects all burial and burning grounds daily, enquiring into complaints made by the public, and collecting death figures.

Clerk.—Does all the clerical work and keeps all the registers of the department. Specially responsible for writing out all licenses to be sent to the Collection department for collection of fees.

8. Cattle Department.

The municipality is assumed to keep 200 buffaloes (for the night-soil and sullage carts), 50 bullocks (for the drain-cleaning and rubbish carts), and 20 ponies (for the watering-carts), and the staff has been provided accordingly. In order to avoid unnecessary length of "lead," at least two cattle-yards should be provided

—one in “A” division and the other in “B” division—each of which takes half the staff. This department is responsible for the housing and feeding of the cattle, and for keeping them in health; the animals are actually worked by carters belonging to the Sanitary and Roads departments. Owing to this arrangement (which considerations of caste render necessary) one of the main duties of the department is to make a strict daily examination of the entire stock with the view of ascertaining whether they have been over-driven or maltreated.

Superintendent.—Should possess some veterinary qualifications, and have had experience of handling unskilled labour. Supervises both cattle-yards, and maintains discipline and efficiency among the staff: treats sick animals and segregates them when affected by contagious diseases: prepares daily fodder indent on the store-keeper: takes early morning muster at one or other of the yards, and distributes the animals among the carters: takes evening muster at one or other of the yards, and examines the condition of the animals returned.

Yard Jemadar.—In general charge of the yard. Receives fodder, &c., from the store-keeper, and is responsible for seeing that all the animals in the yard are fed, watered, groomed and littered down: takes morning and evening musters in the absence of the superintendent.

Assistant Jemadar.—A night officer and in general charge of the yard at night. Takes night muster (*see* below under “Conservancy”) and distributes animals, receiving them back in the early morning.

Eighteen cattle-men.—About one for every fifteen head of cattle will be found sufficient. They look after the buffaloes and bullocks, feeding, watering, and washing them, and keeping the sheds and enclosures clean.

Four syces.—Do the same for the ponies: one syce for every five ponies will be found sufficient.

9. Market Department.

The staff is provided for one municipal market with slaught-

er-house attached. The market revenue is estimated at Rs. 1,000 monthly (Rs. 600 slaughtering-fees and Rs. 400 stall-rents).

Market Superintendent.—Should reside on the premises. In general charge of the market: collects stall-rents and slaughtering-fees; inspects animals brought for slaughter; classifies and stamps the meat, and is responsible for the quality of the food-supply generally; investigates all complaints made by the public.

Market-keeper.—In general charge of the municipal property in the market, and preserves order.

Peon.—Works directly under the superintendent, and assists him in collecting fees and rents.

10. Food Inspection Department.

Food Inspector.—Makes daily rounds of inspection of markets and shops, seizing unwholesome food and drink and prosecuting vendors in the courts; performs analyses when necessary. Directs operations of disinfecting gangs in epidemics; and when ordered by the Engineer examines and reports on particular insanitary tanks, catchpits and drains. Examines medically municipal officers entering the service or applying for sick leave.

The minimum medical qualification for the post should be that of a *Licenciate of Medicine and Surgery*.

11. Fire Brigade Department.

Superintendent.—Responsible for the training and discipline of his force of firemen, and for keeping engines, pumps, etc., in a high state of efficiency. His arrangements must ensure the whole effective force being brought promptly to the scene of any fire at any hour of the day or night.

The number of fires occurring in the year may be estimated at ten.

Our Commissioners have now completed the task they set themselves in Chapter V. They have worked out in full detail a scheme of organization which satisfies all the six conditions

formulated in that chapter; and which besides admits of the application of all the eight working rules which we have found to be necessary for the translating of these conditions into actual practice.

ENGINEER'S SIDE.

*Heads of Departments.***I. General Department.**

HEAD CLERK { 1 Clerk.
1 Bill checker.
1 Messenger.

II. Construction Department.

ASSISTANT ENGINEER .. { 2 Clerks of Works.. { 2 Messengers,
2 Coolies.
1 Surveyor.. { 1 Draughtsman .. { 1 Tracer.
1 Leveller .. { 1 Chainman.
4 Coolies.

III. Water-filtering & Pumping Department.

WATER-WORKS SUPERINTENDENT. { 1 Door-keeper.
2 Keymen.
2 Filtermen.
2 Asstt Engineers.. { 2 Greasers
2 Firemen .. { 4 Coal trimmers.
5 Cleaners.
1 Blacksmith.
2 Filtermen.
14 Coolies.

IV. Filtered water Distribution Department.

WATER-WORKS INSPECTOR .. { 1 Sub-Inspector .. { 2 Pipe-layers.
3 Coolies.
1 Messenger.

V. Building Regulation & Assessment Department.

BUILDING INSPECTOR AND ASSISTANT ASSESSOR. { Head Clerk .. { 4 Clerks.
1 Head Bill-writer .. { 4 Bill-writers.
2 Office Messengers.
1 Road Overseer & Building Surveyor or "A" division. { 2 Road Foremen .. { 25 Coolies.
3 Carters.
4 Bullock roller drivers.
12 Watering cart syces.
1 Steam roller driver. { 1 Fireman.
1 Water-carrier.
2 Road Foremen .. { 25 Coolies.
3 Carters.
4 Bullock cart-drivers.
12 Watering cart syces.
1 Blacksmith.
1 Rivetter.
1 Carpenter.
1 Hammerman.
1 Bellows boy.
1 Road Overseer & Building surveyor or "B" division. { 1 Workshop Overseer
1 Draughtsman .. { 1 Tracer

CHAPTER VI.

Organization scheme for a small municipality.

A typical small municipality—Suggested scheme under the Departmental system.

A typical small municipality.

The lines of the scheme we have just considered are framed to suit the circumstances of a “city municipality,” *i.e.*, a town of 1,00,000 inhabitants and over. It is obvious however that the great majority of Indian towns cannot be reckoned in this class ; in the average municipality the population is much smaller, the incidence of taxation lighter, and the number of “optional” responsibilities assumed by the Commissioners less, than in the typical large municipality described in the preceding chapter.

But whatever may be the size of a municipality, the fundamental principles on which its efficient administration depends must be very much the same ; and the only reason for taking a town of 1,50,000 inhabitants as the example is, that the detailed application of these principles can be depicted on a large canvas more clearly and completely than on a small one. The difference between a municipality of 2,00,000 inhabitants and one of 20,000 is after all a difference of degree and not of kind : one may be a battleship and the other may be a gunboat, but both belong to the same fleet, and both draw their crews from the same service. In a gunboat discipline is as strict, the standard of efficiency as high, and the distribution of duties as well defined as in the biggest ship in the fleet ; these are the essentials, and it makes no difference to the essentials that in the small ship organization is not so complex, nor specialisation carried so far, and that the commander performs certain duties which in the big ship are left to his immediate subordinates.

So, in the administration of a small municipality, slackness,

incompetence, and uncertainty as to responsibility, are no more excusable than they are in the administration of a city ; defects of this kind are due to very much the same causes everywhere, and no town-administration is so small, or so poor, that it cannot manage to comply with all the six conditions of successful organization which we have found in the previous chapter to govern the working of the best among existing municipalities. The eight working rules too, based on these conditions, can be applied with very slight modifications to municipalities of the smallest size ; practically the only alteration required being the substitution of the word "Chairman" for the words "head of the staff," wherever they occur.

Suggested scheme under the departmental system.

[For scheme, see below opposite page 98.]

Let us therefore consider a practical organization scheme for a typical small municipality of, say, 20,000 inhabitants framed on the same lines as the scheme for the city of 1,50,000 inhabitants which we have just examined.

As before then, we will suppose the scheme prepared in accordance with the six conditions propounded in Chapter IV and "work backwards" from it in an explanatory note.

Note on the Scheme.

The main points in regard to which the organization of a small municipality will be found to differ from that of the city municipality we have just discussed are these :—

1. *The number of departments is decreased from nineteen to three.*

This decrease is rather less in proportion than the decrease in the size of the population. It would be however impossible to reduce the number of departments *below* three, without violating one or more of the three conditions to which a sound organization scheme should conform; *viz.*, (a) that outdoor work should be kept separate from office work as far as possible, (b) that the Accounts department should be independent both

of the spending departments and the Cash department, and (c) that the Assessment department should be independent of the Collection department.

2. *The Secretary and the Engineer disappear.*

In a small municipality of 20,000 inhabitants the office work can quite well be done by a ministerial officer, and a Secretary would be an expensive superfluity. A qualified Engineer too would demand a higher salary than most municipalities of this size could afford to give ; and, in any case, it would be undesirable to destroy the balance of authority by making the head of the outdoor department an officer of a higher status than that held by the heads of the two other departments, whose duty it is to check his work. Moreover, a change has been made from the dual system to the departmental system, which we found above (page 63) to be suitable to a "small municipality in which the amount of work to be performed by the staff is inconsiderable ;" and it is the essence of the dual system that any head of a department should be of equal status with the head of any other department and entirely independent of him.

3. *No provision is made for filtered-water supply, gas-lighting, building regulations, public markets, food inspection and fire prevention.*

The supply of filtered water is always an expensive item (the outlay both on the Capital and Revenue accounts being necessarily very heavy), and also, the smaller the municipality is, the higher proportionately will be the cost of the water. In the city municipality we have just discussed, an estimate based on the published figures of a number of large municipalities shews that the cost (Capital and Revenue combined) of supplying ten gallons of filtered water per head of population per diem would work out to about thirty per cent of the total municipal income. In a small municipality of 20,000 inhabitants the percentage would work out probably to something like 60 per cent—a prohibitive figure.

The other items noted above are omitted for reasons which are fairly obvious ; gas-lighting is out of the question except where there is a company supplying gas to private consumers ;

building regulations are necessary only where there is congestion and land values are high ; a public market would probably not hold its own sufficiently against private enterprise to pay its way ; a properly qualified Food Inspector would require a relatively big salary and would have only about two hours' work a day ; and a Fire-brigade would probably be called upon to deal with about three fires in the year.

4. The incidence of taxation is much lower.

In a city municipality it may be estimated that approximately half the municipal expenditure is devoted to what are called "general purposes," and the other half to three "special purposes," *viz.*, Filtered-water supply, Gas-lighting, and House conservancy, for each of which a separate account of receipts and expenditure has to be maintained (see below, "Taxation"). With regard to these "special" accounts, it may be estimated that the cost of the filtered-water supply will work out to about thirty per cent of the total expenditure of the municipality, gas-lighting to about two per cent, and house conservancy to about eighteen per cent.

Now, as we have seen, filtered-water supply and gas-lighting are omitted altogether in the case of the smaller municipality ; and we may fairly assume that in view of the more rural character of the town, the cost of house conservancy will be reduced by at least one-third. So the total reduction on expenditure for the three special accounts is 30 per cent *plus* 2 per cent *plus* 6 per cent, *i.e.*, 38 per cent.

From the "general purposes" account will have to be deducted the whole expenditure on Building Regulations, Public Markets, Food Inspection, and the Fire brigade, and also the diminution in the cost of public conservancy resulting from the more rural character of the town. The total reduction on these five heads may be estimated at about a quarter of the whole "general purposes" expenditure, *i.e.*, $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the total expenditure of the municipality.

So that in the smaller municipality, the reduction in expenditure due to the non-performance or less complete performance of

the above-mentioned municipal services will be 38 per cent *plus* $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent—say roughly half. Taxation being taken as approximately equal to income, it follows that the incidence of taxation will be Rs. 1-8 instead of the Rs. 3 per head of population per annum which we have found to be the rate prevailing in the city municipality. With a population of 20,000, this gives the municipality a yearly income of Rs. 30,000 from rates and taxes—say, an income from all sources of Rs. 32,000.

Now let us examine the scheme in detail, noting department by department the duties of the officers and the calculations on which the strength of the staff has been based.

1. General Department.

This department deals with all the work performed by the Secretary's side in the large municipality with the exception of "Collections," which has been given to an independent department for reasons noted above. The department is therefore responsible for all office work connected with the following eight duties of the Commissioners—Meetings, By-laws, Taxation, Correspondence, Records, Accounts, Elections, and Stores.

Head Clerk and Accountant—General supervision. As Head Clerk, attends General Meetings and sub-committees. As Accountant, is responsible for keeping about twenty-five registers prescribed by the Account] rules, for preparing periodical statements and returns, and for drafting the Budget and Administration Reports. As Store-keeper, indents for, receives, and issues stores of all kinds.

Two Clerks—Assist the Head Clerk generally, their work being mainly concerned with correspondence and petitions. Estimated number of letters issued and received 600, and estimated number of petitions 600 per year.

2. Cash and Collection Department.

Tax-collector and Cashier—Generally responsible for collections and for supervising the work of the collection staff

both outdoor and indoor; grants receipts for taxes paid at the office.

Four Bill-collectors—Basis of calculation 800 bills per head per quarter. Estimated number of bills per quarter 3,200. They serve bills and notices of demand and execute warrants; also submit quarterly lists of non-existent, new, and improved holdings.

Two clerks—Basis of calculation 1,500 to 1,800 ratepayers per head. Estimated number of ratepayers 3,200. They assist the tax-collector and cashier generally, but their chief work is to check in detail the work of the bill-collectors and to keep up the registers prescribed by the Account rules.

3. Overseer's Department.

This department deals with all the work performed by the Engineer's side in the large municipality with the exception of the seven items—Water-supply, Construction, Public Markets, Food Inspection, Fire Prevention, Building Regulations and Slum Improvement, which, as we have seen above, would not ordinarily be undertaken by a small municipality. This reduces the number of "duties of the Commissioners" to be performed by this department to nine, *viz.*, Conservancy, Roads, Lighting, Drainage, Vital Statistics, Pounds and Ferries, Burial Grounds, Assessment and Prosecutions.

Overseer—General supervision and maintenance of discipline and efficiency among the large force for which he is responsible. Special duties—Preparation of plans and estimates, maintenance of road-charts, preparation of the annual road statement, monthly payment of the sweeper staff, registration of carts, conduct of prosecutions in the Criminal Courts.

He should be an upper-grade subordinate.

Sub-overseer—The municipal area has been divided into two equal circles, each circle being assumed to have exactly the same mileage of roads and drains, and the same number of latrines, privies, cesspools, &c. Such a symmetrical division is, of course, impossible in practice, but it will be found generally that one sub-overseer to every 10,000 of the population is a fair

proportion. His duties may be classified under three heads, *viz.*, Sanitary, Roads, and Miscellaneous.

(i) *Sanitary*—Takes early morning muster of sweepers and distributes the work daily; supervises the cleaning of public roads lanes side-drains ditches channels and outfalls, the removing of rubbish, the cleaning of public and private latrines privies and cesspools, and the disposal of sullage and nightsoil at the sullage-filters and trenching-grounds; inspects trenching-grounds, sullage-filters and skinning-platforms.

(ii) *Roads*—Supervises construction, renewal and petty repairs of roads, and road-watering.

(iii) *Miscellaneous*—In direct charge of the lamp-lighting and cattle-yard staff. Inspects pounds, ferries, burial-grounds and burning-ghats, and collects vital statistics; makes enquiries with regard to licenses; and generally performs miscellaneous outdoor duties of every kind under the orders of the Overseer.

Road-Foreman—Each foreman is in direct charge of the men who do the road-repairing, lighting and cattle-yard work. Estimated number of miles of road 12 and of lamps 150.

Conservancy Foreman—Each foreman is in direct charge of thirty-nine night-soil and sullage workers. The work begins at day-break and is over by noon whereas the work of the men under the Rubbish foreman goes on all day. Estimated number of privies 1,200, public latrines 2, cesspools 300, and trenching-grounds 2.

Rubbish Foreman—Each foreman is in direct charge of the men who keep the roads and lanes clean, and sweep the drains.

Head Clerk—Responsible for all clerical work in the department. His two assistants' chief work is to prepare in duplicate and send to the Collection department every quarter 3,200 bills shewing the demand for the holding-rate and latrine fee, and to keep the Assessment registers prescribed by the Account Rules. They also write out licenses and keep the License registers.

Surveyor—Mainly employed in connection with Assessment work under the direct orders of the Overseer.

It will be seen that this scheme, like the two schemes for a large municipality given above, satisfies all the six conditions of successful organization formulated in Chapter IV.

PART III. THE EVERYDAY WORK.

CHAPTER VII.

The Work of the Secretary.

The position and qualifications of the Secretary—Elections—Taxation—
Collections—Complaints and petitions.

His position and qualifications.

The Secretary is brought into close and constant contact with both the Commissioners and the Chairman, and if he is a person of tact and discretion, he can do a good deal to ensure the smooth working of the municipal machine. This is particularly the case where the Chairman is an official, or where party feeling runs high among the Commissioners—an “unofficial” exchange of views, or a proposal for a working compromise made through the neutral agency of the Secretary will often avert a conflict which threatens to have serious consequences. For this reason, and for the reason that he is usually the person who has to explain things to ratepayers and others who make personal calls at the office, it is desirable, (especially where the Engineer is a European, as he should be wherever possible) that the Secretary should be an Indian rather than a European—and an Indian of sufficient social standing to meet on equal terms any Commissioner or member of the public with whom he may find himself called upon to have dealings.

His duties as head of the office require that he should be a man of business habits, with some knowledge of accountancy, and a thorough command of the English language ; and the Commissioners should have little difficulty in securing the services of

an Indian gentleman who possesses all these qualifications, at a salary very considerably lower than that which they would have to give to a European of anything like the same calibre.

A list of the duties to be performed by the Secretary's side of the office has been given in a previous chapter and need not be reproduced here.

As regards the greater part of them, there is no necessity to say anything at all—office work is much the same everywhere, and full instructions as regards the conduct of correspondence, the keeping of registers, and such-like office matters, are contained in the various manuals and circulars issued under the authority of Government.

Four "duties" however, lie rather outside the ordinary run of office routine, and may be briefly noted upon, *viz.*, (1) Elections, (2) Taxation, (3) Collections, and (4) Complaints and petitions.

Elections.

Except in a few municipalities of minor importance (marked with an asterisk in the list appended to the Act), two-thirds of the Commissioners are elected by the ratepayers at a general election which is held triennially.

The "property" qualification is not high; every male adult who has resided for twelve months in the municipality, and who has, within that period, either (a) paid to the municipal funds as taxes or in fees the sum of Rs. 1-8, or (b) paid as rent for a holding or part of a holding within the municipality the sum of Rs. 20, is entitled to vote.

The elections are conducted by the Chairman in accordance with the instructions contained in a set of Election Rules issued by the Local Government under the authority of section 15 of the Act. These rules which prescribe the procedure for the registration of votes, the nomination of candidates, the polling, and the other incidents of an election, should be studied very carefully by the Chairman and others responsible. Delay in the issue of a prescribed notice, or non-compliance with a

prescribed rule, is sufficient to invalidate the entire proceedings; and it is fairly certain that when anything of the sort takes place one or more of the defeated candidates will bring the matter to the notice of the executive authorities and demand that a fresh election be held.

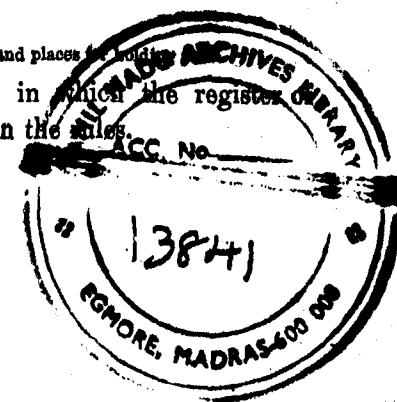
It is unsafe therefore to leave the carrying out of the preliminary arrangements to the ministerial staff; and the Secretary * (and when there is no Secretary, the Chairman himself) should see *personally* that each item of the prescribed procedure is strictly and punctually carried out. To ensure this, it will be found convenient to draw up a programme in which the latest dates for the issue of notices and for the other operations prescribed by the rules are shewn in chronological order. Suppose for instance that the date of the election is the 30th April, then the programme will be as follows—

Election Programme.

Date.	Last day for—
29th January	Issue of notice intimating that the Register of Voters is open to inspection.
28th February	Publication of Register of Voters.
Do.	Issue of notice giving the date up to which claims for registration will be received.
15th March	Receiving claims for above.
29th March	Issue of letters to Incorporated Companies asking them to appoint a delegate.
31st March	Publication of Form B calling for nomination of candidates.
5th April	Receipt of replies from Incorporated Companies appointing delegates.
8th April	Receipt of nominations of candidates.
9th April	Issue of notice for hearing of applications for the revision of Register of Voters.
18th April	Hearing applications as above.
14th April	Publication of the revised Register of Voters.
Do.	Publication of the list of candidates.
Do.	Publication of notice fixing the time and places for holding the election.

Registration of Voters.—The form in which the register of voters (Form A) is to be kept is given in the rules.

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The register has, of course, to be divided by wards; and it will be found convenient to further subdivide it by streets, *e. g.*,

WARD No. 4.

Muchipara Lane.

Serial No.	No. in the Assessment list.	Name of voter.	Father's name.	Age.	Period of residence.	Address.	Qualification.
1	19	Haridas ..	Lachmandas ..	34	2 years.	No. 4	Pays Rs. 2 for rates & taxes.
2	26	Abdul Shaik ..	Mahomed Shaik	28	2½ "	" 5	Pays Rs. 2 cart tax.

Panchanantola Road.

9	37	Sushil Chandra Mukerji ..	Charu Chandra Mukerji ..	40	15 "	" 1	Pays Rs. 2 house tax.
10	38	Atul Chandra Byragi ..	Gopal Chandra Byragi ..	22	1 "	" 1	Pays Rs. 80 yearly rent.

This arrangement will be found to facilitate the periodical revision of the register (voters' list), and also the detection of personation on the polling day.

The rules require that this register should be revised and published at least three months before the date of the general election. This date, which should correspond as nearly as possible with the date of the previous general election, is fixed by the Local Government and notified in the Gazette; and the application to Government to fix the date should be made, and the final revision of the register taken in hand, about the same time, *i. e.*, six or seven months before the end of the current triennium. For this final revision local enquiries by the collection staff or others are not necessary; all that need be done is to correct the registers in accordance with the information contained in the municipal records, that is to say, in the Tax-collection register, the Demand register and the License register. The clerk who re-writes the register (voters' list) should compare the old voters' list with

these registers, striking out and adding names in accordance with the payments noted therein. Persons who in the old voters' list are entered as qualified under the "annual rental clause" should only be re-entered if the collection registers show that they continue to pay the occupier's share of the taxes; but those that are not so shewn, and all new occupiers, should not be entered, and should be left to make their claims after the publication of the voters' list in the same way as persons claiming to vote as income-tax-payers or University graduates are required to do.

Again, the rules say that persons residing in the municipality and paying a certain amount to the municipal funds during the "twelve months immediately preceding the date fixed for election" are qualified to vote. The voters' list however can obviously include only the names of those persons found qualified at the time the revision is made; and any person not qualified then but qualifying subsequently, must put in his claim after the publication of the voters' list within the period prescribed by the rules.

Polling Arrangements.—The Chairman is required to fix a polling station, and to nominate a presiding officer and an election committee (consisting of not more than five and not less than three members) for each ward in which there is a contested election. Disorderly scenes are not uncommon at the polling stations, and special care should be taken to see that the presiding officers and the committee-men know their duties, and that proper arrangements, police and otherwise, are made to secure voters from molestation, and to record their votes without confusion or delay.

The following arrangements are suggested:—

(a) The polling-hours to be from 10 A. M. to 3 P. M.

(b) The executive authorities to be requested to depute police to maintain order both inside and outside the polling stations.

(c) The collection staff of the ward to be present inside the polling station to identify the voters, and to prevent personation.

(d) A set of rules designed to preserve order in the polling-

stations to be drawn up by the Chairman, and communicated personally to the presiding officers, the committee members, and the candidates.

The following rules have been found to work well in practice :—

POLLING RULES.

(i) Each member of the Election committee will record votes under the personal supervision of the presiding officer, whose duties are to decide references and disputes, to maintain order, and to take the place of any recording officer temporarily absent.

(ii) Each candidate will be permitted to nominate one agent to attend each recording officer. A candidate's agent has the power to object to the registration of a vote on the ground of personation *only*, and the matter must be settled then and there by the presiding officer.

N. B.—Candidates' agents will be provided with seats near the recording officers' tables and must sit quietly during the proceedings. Any agent making a disturbance, or attempting to canvass, will be removed from the enclosure, and the candidate will not be allowed to replace him.

(iii) The presiding officer will on no account permit within the voting enclosure any person other than the candidates, their duly nominated agents, and officers of the municipality or police on duty under the orders of the Magistrate or Chairman.

(iv) No voter will be allowed to remain in the enclosure for a longer period than that required for the recording of his vote.

(e) The polling-register (Form C) to be prepared so that the names of the voters for each ward appear in alphabetical order according to the initial letter of their "given" names; *e.g.*, Hari Das Bhattacharjee and Abdul Sheik will be shewn under H and A respectively, and not under B and S.

An extract from a polling register in a ward in which there were four candidates and two vacancies would read as follows :—

Serial No. as in Register A.	Names of Voters.	VOTES RECORDED FOR—				REMARKS.
		N. K. Das.	Abdul Kadir.	N. Chatterji.	S. N. Banerji.	
1465	Haridas ..	1		1		
1227	Haridas Bhattacharji ..		1			
986	Hem Ch. Ghose.			1	1	

To facilitate the recording of votes, each page of this register should be pasted on a strawboard and these strawboards should be distributed among the committee members. For example, in a ward in which the committee consisted of three members, one member may take the names from A to G, another those from H to N, and the third those from O to Z. Each member should sit at a separate table, on the front of which a large sheet of paper of a distinguishing colour should be pinned, say, white for the A to G table, red for the H to N table, and green for the O to Z table. A clerk should be stationed at the entrance to the polling-station with a supply of small slips of white, red, and green paper, and, as each voter comes in, he inquires his name and gives him a slip of paper of the appropriate colour. The voter shews the slip to a peon inside the polling station, and is directed to his proper table where his vote is recorded.

It must be understood that this polling register has no authority with regard to a claim to vote. If a man whose name is not on the polling register claims to vote, he must be referred to the presiding officer, who will decide, by referring to Register A (the register of voters), whether his claim is allowable, and if he decides that it is, his vote must be recorded.

The number of committee members will vary in accordance with the number of voters expected; with the procedure given above, 200 voters per man is a fair allowance.

Taxation.

Taxation has been included among the duties of the Secretary

for form's sake only : although such preliminary information as may be required is supplied from the Secretary's side of the office, the responsibility for deciding what taxes are to be levied, and at what rates they are to be levied, rests entirely with the Commissioners in meeting.

As far as Bengal is concerned all municipal taxation is direct. And although the nomenclature used in the Act is not perhaps very precise, we may say that any impost levied by the municipal authorities falls into one or other of the following five different classes, *viz.*, (1) Personal taxes, (2) Rates, (3) Fees for services rendered, (4) License fees and (5) Tolls.

Let us consider these five classes in this order :—

I. Personal taxes.

There is only one tax in this class, *viz.*, the "tax upon persons according to their circumstances and property within the municipality."

The section of the Act (section 85) dealing with this tax and the alternative tax on holdings runs as follows :—

"The Commissioners may, from time to time, at a meeting convened expressly for the purpose, of which due notice shall have been given, and with the sanction of the Local Government, impose within the limits of the Municipality one or other, or both, of the following taxes : (a) a tax upon persons occupying holdings within the Municipality according to their circumstances and property within the Municipality :

"provided that the amount assessed upon any person in respect of the occupation of any holding shall not be more than eighty-four rupees per annum ; or

"(b) a rate on the annual value of holdings situated within the Municipality :

"provided that such rate shall not exceed seven and a half per centum on the annual value of such holdings except within the municipalities of Howrah, Patna, Dacca and Darjeeling, in which it shall not exceed ten per centum on such annual value ; and provided also that no rate shall be imposed on an holding of

which the annual value is less than six rupees :

"provided further that both the taxes shall not be in force at the same time in the same ward."

This personal tax has always been regarded as being suited only to municipalities in a very elementary state of development, and has been discarded in favour of the holding-rate nearly everywhere. Its defects are well summarised in the following note in Collier's Bengal Municipal Manual. "The tax in question appears to be quite unsuitable to any very advanced municipalities. It is admittedly illogical and arbitrary, though it may work well enough as a rough-and-ready mode of assessment in small municipalities, where the incidence of taxation is very light. The most serious objections to it are that it is practically an income-tax without any machinery for ascertaining income, and that the low maximum laid down enables wealthy persons to escape due assessment."

The only remark that it seems necessary to make about this tax is that whatever may be the rate fixed, the principle of assessment followed should be that of an *apportionment*, *i.e.*, (to quote Collier's Manual again) "the amount of tax which each assessee has to pay must bear the same proportion to the total amount of tax required, as his circumstances and property in the municipality bear to the total circumstances and property of all the assesses in the municipality." But, as a matter of fact, for the reasons noted above in the preceding paragraphs, a proper apportionment on these lines is out of the question in a municipality of any size.

II. Rates.

A rate under the Bengal Municipal Act may be defined as a tax levied from the owner or occupier of a holding, the amount leviable being a certain percentage (to be fixed by the Commissioners at a meeting subject to a maximum prescribed by the law) of the annual value of such holding.

There are three such rates, *viz.* :—

- (a) The Holding-rate—maximum percentage leviable 7½ per cent (in four municipalities 10 per cent).

- (b) The Water-rate—maximum percentage leviable $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.
- (c) The Lighting-rate—maximum percentage leviable 3 per cent.

The proceeds of the holding-rate go into the general municipal fund, but the proceeds of the other two rates go into separate funds which can be expended only on water-supply and gas-lighting respectively.

Holding-rate.—This rate is the backbone of municipal finance and requires careful management. Given a fair and complete valuation of the town (and this is a very large assumption indeed), the rate should ordinarily be from one to two per cent below the legal maximum. If it is lower than this, it is fairly certain that the municipal services are falling below a reasonable standard of efficiency: while if it is put up to the maximum in a normal year, elasticity disappears, and the Commissioners have no reserves to call up to meet an emergency.

Water-rate.—This rate should be self-supporting, and in order that it should be so, it is necessary to fix the percentage at such a rate as will ensure a substantial annual surplus. These surpluses should be invested so as to form a reserve fund from which can be met any sudden call for a large capital expenditure on water-supply—for example, a new pumping engine, an additional reservoir, or an extension of the distribution system; any one of which items may easily swallow up six months' revenue.

Lighting-rate.—This rate stands on a rather different footing. It is not leviable throughout the municipality, but only in a certain area regularly notified as "the gaslighted area." Now, a progressive municipality will always desire to extend this area as widely as possible, not so much for the sake of public convenience, as for the sake of public security—for police purposes in fact. Following this policy, the municipal authorities will sooner or later proceed to include parts of the town where, even calculating the rate at its maximum percentage, the population is not dense enough to make it "self-supporting": and as the usual idea is that a special rate of this kind *should* be "self-supporting",

the imposition of the maximum percentage inevitably follows. Very possibly too, even with this maximum percentage, it will be found that the lighting fund runs at a loss, the deficit being made up out of general revenues.

But when this is the case, it is obvious that for practical purposes the lighting-rate has become part and parcel of the holding-rate as far as the gas-lighted area is concerned. And this being so, the consideration we applied above to the holding-rate will apply to the lighting-rate also, and we may say accordingly that the rate should be fixed not at the maximum, but, at say, $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent below it, so as to allow of a margin to be drawn upon in a case of emergency.

III. Fees for services rendered.

There are two taxes in this class—the latrine fee and the rubbish fee.

Latrine fee.—This rate is dealt with in Sections 320 and 321, which run as follows—"the Commissioners may issue a notice declaring that, from a date to be specified in such notice, they will maintain an establishment for the cleansing of private privies and cess-pools, within the limits of the municipality, or any part thereof; and the Commissioners shall make suitable provision accordingly."

"When such provision has been made, the Commissioners may levy fees, to be fixed on such scale, with reference to the annual value of holdings containing dwelling-houses within the limits of the municipality, or such part thereof as aforesaid, as the Commissioners at a meeting may, from time to time, direct: but the fee shall not exceed three rupees per annum where the valuation of the holding amounts to, or is less than, twenty-five rupees; and the fee on any one holding shall not exceed four hundred and eighty rupees."

It will be seen that instead of a percentage on the valuation as in the case of rates, the law prescribes "a scale with reference to the annual value, &c." The distinction is apparently due to the idea that, the cost to the municipality of this particular service

being very much the same for each householder in the town, to fix the fee as a percentage on the valuation would mean a disproportionately high tax on the big householder.

The scale in force in most municipalities is a more or less arbitrary one rising by more or less sudden "jumps." For example, to take the scale in force in an existing municipality one finds that a valuation of—

Rs. 18 pays *Rs. 0-6-0* and *Rs. 19* *Rs. 0-12-0* per quarter.

Rs. 60 pays *Rs. 1-14-0* and *Rs. 61* *Rs. 2-6-0* „

Rs. 84 pays *Rs. 2-6-0* and *Rs. 85* *Rs. 3-0-0* „

Rs. 200 pays *Rs. 3-8-0* and *Rs. 201* *Rs. 3-12-0* „

This arrangement is rather unscientific, and is likely to give rise to misunderstanding and dissatisfaction among the ratepayers. A better way to arrange the scale is to fix a diminishing percentage for successive hundreds of rupees of the valuation, *e.g.*, *Rs. 11* for the first hundred, *Rs. 3* for the second hundred, *Rs. 2* for the third and each succeeding hundred.

With this arrangement a valuation of—

Rs. 18 pays *Rs. 0-8-0* and *Rs. 19* *Rs. 0-8-3* per quarter.

Rs. 60 pays *Rs. 1-10-6* and *Rs. 61* *Rs. 1-10-9* „

Rs. 84 pays *Rs. 2-5-0* and *Rs. 85* *Rs. 2-5-6* „

Rs. 200 pays *Rs. 3-8-0* and *Rs. 201* *Rs. 3-8-0* „

The advantages of this arrangement are first, that sudden "jumps" are avoided, and secondly, that each ratepayer can calculate for himself from his valuation the amount of the fee that he will be called upon to pay.

The latrine fee like the lighting-rate is leviable only in regularly notified areas; and the proceeds go into a separate fund which can be used for the purpose of "private" conservancy only. In settling the details of the tax the Commissioners should bear in mind two points—

(a) The rate should be fixed so as to bring in an amount approximately equal to the annual expenditure. That is to say, the latrine fee fund should be self-supporting, but it is not necessary (nor indeed legal) to build up a reserve fund by means of surpluses as recommended in the case of the water-rate.

(b) In the interests of the health of the town it is very necessary to introduce this "private" conservancy service in all urban tracts, but caution should be observed in introducing it into outlying tracts where rural conditions prevail. It is unfair to notify rural areas in order to get in the extra taxes, and then neglect them on the plea that the sanitary needs of the urban areas are more pressing; and in no case should an extension of the latrine fee area be decided upon against the wishes of the ratepayers concerned, until the opinion of the Government medical and sanitary authorities on the necessity for doing so has been obtained.

Rubbish fee—The section applicable runs as follows:—

"The Commissioners at a meeting may, from time to time, by an order published as prescribed in section three hundred and fifty-four, appoint the hours within which only every occupier of any house or land may place rubbish on the public road adjacent to his house or land in order that such rubbish may be removed by the Commissioners: and the Commissioners may charge such fees as they may think fit in respect of the removal of such rubbish, with the consent of the occupier of any house or land, from such house or land, or in respect of the removal from such public road of any rubbish which has accumulated in the exercise of a trade or business."

The last part of the section is perhaps not very clear, and it is important to note that the "consent of the occupier" does not apply to the charging of the fee, but to the removal of the rubbish.

But the tax is a bad one under whatever aspect it is regarded. Its yield is small, it is difficult to collect, it affords great scope for petty oppression on the part of municipal subordinates, and it gives rise to all sorts of disputes with the ratepayers which are very troublesome to settle. How is the fee to be fixed? On the estimated amount of rubbish produced by each particular shop, or how? Is a goldsmith liable? Or a washerman? In the case of default by the occupier, who is responsible? And how is recovery to be effected?

The best course for the Commissioners to follow is to do the work and waive the payment of the fee. If however they cannot

afford to do this then the only way to avoid oppression, friction, and endless petitions is to give the subordinate staff no hand whatever in assessing the fee, but to lay down once for all a fixed fee for each kind of shop whatever its size may be—so much for a vegetable-seller shop, so much for a grocer's shop, so much for a smithy, and so on—and to have this fee collected by the Collection department along with the rates and taxes.

IV. License fees.

A municipality is empowered to grant licenses charging fees therefor, to (a) keep carriages and horses (scale of fees fixed by the Act); (b) keep carts (maximum fee Rs. 4 per annum per cart); (c) keep a stable of horses, ponies or cattle (maximum fee Rs. 2 per annum); (d) keep pigs, sheep or goats (maximum fee Rs. 2 per annum); (e) keep a market (maximum fee Rs. 25 per annum); and (f) carry on certain offensive and dangerous trades (scale of fees to be fixed by the Commissioners and approved by the Divisional Commissioner).

A license fee is a form of taxation very well suited to Indian conditions, and has the advantage of being easy to collect, as a defaulter knows that he is rendering himself liable to prosecution for a breach of the Municipal Act. The powers of the Commissioners with regard to license fees are so circumscribed that they cannot go very far wrong; and it will be sufficient to say, that there is no reason why they should not charge fees in all the six cases in which they are allowed to do so by the law, and, in cases where a maximum rate has been fixed, to charge them at that maximum rate.

V. Tolls.

Tolls may be levied from the public—(a) for the use of a bridge or metalled road (until the tolls have paid for the cost of construction and five years' maintenance); (b) for the use of municipal ferries; and (c) for the use of municipal markets.

Moderate tolls paid by persons using the ferries and markets are not felt as a hardship, and are quite allowable as a means of relieving the rates. But the Commissioners should make

every endeavour to keep their roads and bridges free; a toll-bar on a public road or bridge is felt as a hardship, and it is a serious obstacle to traffic and to trade generally.

This brings us to the end of our discussion of the sources of municipal taxation: and it will perhaps be convenient to summarise the results of this discussion as follows:—

A large and progressive municipality, which possesses a correct and complete valuation of its holdings will impose the following taxes only:—

1. A holding-rate at from $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the valuation.
2. A water-rate at such a percentage on the valuation as will provide for a substantial surplus over the current expenses of water-supply.
3. A lighting-rate in the gas-lighted area at $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the valuation.
4. A latrine fee imposed in urban tracts at a diminishing sliding scale fixed with reference to the valuation at such a rate as will just pay for the current expenses of "private" conservancy.
5. License fees levied at the maximum rate from owners of carriages, horses, carts, stables, markets, and businesses of an offensive or dangerous character.
6. Moderate tolls levied on persons using the municipal ferries and markets.

Collections.

In the previous section we examined the various sources of municipal income and found that they divided themselves into five main groups, namely, (1) Taxes on (a) personal property or (b) holdings, (2) Rates, (3) Service Fees, (4) License Fees and (5) Tolls. In the present section the arrangements for collecting this income have to be considered.

Now of all these imposts the tax on holdings is the most

important. The procedure prescribed for its collection applies also to the alternative tax on personal property, to rates, and to service fees ; and therefore governs the realization of by far the greater bulk of the municipal dues. We may therefore for the present confine our attention solely to the procedure prescribed for the realization of the holding-tax, reserving for subsequent consideration the two items to which it does not apply, namely, license fees and tolls.

Our first step then will be to give a summary of the law regarding its collection.

Summary of the law regarding collection of rates and taxes.

Two preliminary points may be noted—(a) the tax is due quarterly in advance, and is realizable on the first day of the quarter, and (b) if the Commissioners do not present their bill within six months of the date on which it first becomes due they are barred from recovering otherwise than by way of regular suit.

This being understood, the successive steps in realizing the demand prescribed by the law may be summarized as follows :—

1. A bill shewing the amount due must be served on the ratepayer.

N. B.—In practice, bills shewing the amounts due on account of all rates and taxes, namely, holding-rate, water-rate, lighting-rate, latrine fee and rubbish fee are all served at the same time.

2. If this bill is not paid on presentation, a notice of demand accompanied by a copy of the bill may be served on any subsequent date.

3. If the amount of the bill is not paid to the bill-collector on presentation of the notice of demand, or at the municipal office within fifteen days from the date of such presentation, a distress warrant for the realization of the demand (*plus* costs on a scale fixed by the Act) by seizure and sale of the defaulter's moveable property may be issued.

4. If the amount is still not paid, then on a day to be fixed by the Chairman not less than ten days after the date of seizure, the

property so seized may be sold by public auction and the proceeds applied to the satisfaction of the demand.

This is the ordinary procedure. Three other special provisions may be noticed.

(a) If the owner of a holding be non-resident, the taxes may be realized from the occupier, who may deduct from the rent he pays the owner the amount recovered from him by the municipality.

(b) Instead of proceeding by way of distress and sale, the Chairman may, in his discretion, proceed by way of regular suit.

(c) If insufficient moveable property is found on the holding, and it is ascertained that the defaulter has property elsewhere in the province, the District Magistrate will, on the application of the Chairman, order the distress warrant to be executed there, and the proceeds of the sale remitted to the municipality.

It will be seen that the law gives the municipal authorities ample power to collect their dues punctually ; and failure to do so argues slack administration, or an inefficient collection staff, or both.

Methods of collection of rates and taxes.

In any case the remedy is a simple one. It is to make the collection system authorised by the law work as rigidly and automatically as possible.

The first step towards this end is to make the responsible officers of the Collection staff clearly understand that they will be dismissed if it is found that in particular cases the various steps in the procedure noted above do not follow each other in due course : discretion in the matter of the collection of municipal dues is the prerogative of the Chairman alone—and a prerogative by the way which he will do well to exercise as rarely as possible.

The next step is so to arrange the routine work of the department that (a) all collections are made within the quarter in which they are due ; and (b) no tax-payer escapes payment altogether ; and the longer he delays payment the more he has to pay.

These two conditions consult the interest of the honest ratepayer no less than that of the municipality. The municipality on

the one hand avoids complication of accounts, minimises the risk of irrecoverable defaults on account of death or absence, and saves loss of interest; and, by taking away from the ratepayers all hope of ultimate remission, greatly facilitates the work of the collecting staff: the tax-payer, on the other hand, is spared the inconvenience of having to meet a sudden demand for two or three quarters' taxes at once, is relieved of the temptation to purchase a postponement of payment by tipping the bill-collector, and is not exasperated by the sight of his dishonest neighbours taking advantage of the slackness of the municipal authorities to evade payment altogether.

Once these conditions are thoroughly understood both by the ratepayers and the staff, the following series of rules should be found sufficient to secure the efficient and automatic working of the collection system.

RULES.

1. All bills are to be prepared by the Assessment department. They must all have been handed over to the Collection department by the 15th day of the month preceding the quarter to which they relate.

2. All bills must be served on the ratepayers by the 12th of the first month of the quarter to which they relate.

3. All notices of demand must be served by the last day of the first month.

4. Distress warrants will issue 15 days after the delivery of the demand notices to which they refer, and will be handed over as written to the bill-collector. They must all have been issued by the last day of the second month.

5. Warrants will be executed as soon as issued. They must all have been executed or reported irrecoverable by the 20th of the third month.

6. In any case in which a bill-collector reports that a warrant is irrecoverable, the Collection Inspector will make a local enquiry and report to the Tax-collector within three days. If the Collection Inspector endorses the report, the Tax-collector will send on the case to the Assessment department, and the Assistant Assessor will make a local enquiry within three days and will

either (a) realise the amount (in which case he will receive a bonus deducted from the general bonus fund of the Collection department), or (b) report as irrecoverable to the Vice-Chairman, who will either order remission or send the case to the municipal pleader to realise by way of civil suit.

7. On the 23rd of the last month of the quarter, the Secretary will put up to the Chairman a statement shewing (a) amount realized, (b) amount remitted, and (c) amount sent for realization to the municipal pleader. The total of these three amounts should exactly equal the current demand. The only legitimate heads for any balance that there may be, should be (i) "amount reported irrecoverable and still under enquiry," (ii) amounts covered by warrants and precepts actually executed. These amounts should be very small.

8. On the 12th of the first month of the next quarter the municipal pleader will put up to the Chairman a statement shewing (a) the number and amount of debts sent to him for realization through the civil courts, and (b) the number and value of civil suits actually instituted. These two sets of figures should tally.

Perhaps a programme would make the procedure clearer. The subjoined programme exhibits the complete cycle of collection operations for one quarter.

Collection Programme.

1st March	.. Assessment department begins delivery of April-June bills to the Collection department.
15th "	.. Assessment department finishes delivery of April-June bills to the Collection department.
20th March	.. Last day for execution of warrants of distress and sale for the January-March quarter and for reporting irrecoverable warrants.
23rd "	.. Secretary submits to Chairman statement shewing for January-March quarter (a) Collections, (b) Remissions and (c) Amounts sent to Municipal Pleader.
1st April	.. Service of bills for April-June quarter begins.
15th "	(1) Service of bills for April-June quarter ends. (2) Municipal Pleader submits to Chairman a statement shewing action taken on amounts for January-March quarter sent to him for recovery by civil suit.
12th "	.. Service of notices of demand for April-June quarter begins.

30th "	∴ Service of notices of demand for April-June quarter ends.
1st May	.. Issue of warrants of distress for April-June quarter begins.
31st "	.. Issue of warrants of distress for April-June quarter ends.
1st June	.. Assessment department begins delivery of July-September bills to the Collection department.

This is the working programme of the Howrah municipality where over 97 per cent of the quarterly demand is regularly realized within the quarter ; the amounts realized by distress, sales, and civil suits averaging less than 2 per cent of the total collection.

Miscellaneous points of Collection Procedure.

A few points in connection with the actual working of the system may be noted.

1. *Collection Routine.*—The bill-collectors should go round in the morning serving bills and notices, and receiving payment when it is offered ; and in the afternoon they should attend at the municipal office in order to pay in what they have collected, make up their accounts, write their reports, and do miscellaneous clerical work. At this time too they will receive amounts paid in by such ratepayers of their respective circles as prefer to pay at the office.

It may be noted that should a ratepayer offer payment at the office *at any time*, receipt cannot be refused ; if the bill-collector of his particular circle is absent, the Tax-collector must himself receive payment and grant a receipt.

2. *Exemption from payment of warrant-fee.*—The law provides a substantial fee recoverable from the defaulter in each case in which a distress warrant has to be issued. This must invariably be recovered, the only exception allowable being in the case in which the defaulter pays his dues *after* the issue of the warrant, but *before* the distress is actually effected. In this case half the warrant fee may be remitted in consideration of the municipality being saved the trouble and delay involved in seizing the property, making the inventory, and holding the sale.

3. *Civil Suits and Precepts.*—Some municipalities make a

practice of writing off as irrecoverable small sums which cannot be recovered by the ordinary procedure of distress and sale, on the ground that to realise them by precept or civil suit entails more trouble than they are worth. But if we accept the principles enunciated above, we must condemn this as a piece of shortsighted policy which, in order to avoid a little trouble at the outset, allows the public to see that there is a *chance* of escaping scot-free, and thereby greatly encourages systematic defaulting.

4. *Remissions.*—Those items of the demand which, for whatever reason, have to be written off as irrecoverable (the Chairman being the only authority who can sanction such writing off) are lumped together and shewn in the quarterly account statements as, "Remissions." But remissions differ a good deal in character, and in the interest of efficient administration it is necessary that their various classes should be carefully distinguished.

Administratively considered, remissions may be regarded as dividing themselves into three classes—(a) remissions of right, *i.e.*, remissions which *must* be granted under the law on account of vacancy, irregularity in the assessment, &c., (b) remissions of grace, *i.e.*, rates and taxes remitted by the Commissioners in meeting on the ground of poverty, hardship, &c., and (c) remissions of necessity, *i.e.*, dues which it is found to be impossible to recover owing to limitation, absence, death, non-existence of moveable property, &c. Now it is clear that it is only for the third class of remissions—the remissions of necessity—that the collection staff can be held in any way responsible ; and for the purpose of gauging the quality of the work of the Collection department the first two classes of remissions should not be taken into account at all.

5. *Check by the Assessment department.*—A slack or dishonest Assessment department may cause financial loss to the municipality by omitting to enter certain holdings or "improvements" in holdings in the Assessment register ; and a slack or dishonest Collection department may cause a similar loss by reporting in certain cases that rates and taxes are irrecoverable when they are not so. Both departments deal with exactly the same

materials, namely the holdings as they actually exist, and they can and should therefore be made to act as checks on each other. It was chiefly with this end in view, that in Chapter V so much stress was laid on the importance of combining the Assessment work with the Building work, and of putting the combined work under a head of a department on the Engineer's side, the Collection department being placed on the Secretary's side.

The operation of this cross-check is as follows: it must be arranged that any bill-collector who discovers and reports the existence of a holding or an "improvement" in a holding for which the Assessment department has not made out a bill, shall receive a substantial reward. Such a case must mean one of two things: either the owner has created a new holding, or has built a house on the old holding, without taking the permission of the municipal authorities, for which he can be prosecuted and fined; or else, the Assessment department has corruptly or carelessly failed to enter in the Assessment register a holding or an improvement which is noted in the Revaluation or Building registers, which are maintained by the department itself—a serious error which merits severe punishment.

On the other hand, it must be arranged that any bill which the Collection department reports as irrecoverable on the ground that the ratepayer is wrongly described, or that the holding is not traceable, shall be immediately sent to the Assessment department—not for report, (which would only lead to interminable correspondence between the departments)—but for *realization*. If the officer of the Assessment department succeed in realizing the demand, he is given a reward which is deducted from the bonus fund of the Collection department; if the demand is not so realized, then it is clear that it is the Assessment department which is in fault and measures must be taken accordingly.

It is not desirable that the relations between the Assessment and Collection departments should be of too cordial a nature; and a healthy antagonism between them can be maintained by a judicious use of these cross-checking arrangements,

Collection of Licenses and Tolls.

The arrangements for collecting the two remaining imposts, namely licenses and tolls are of quite minor importance. License-fees must be paid at the office in advance; if they are not so paid the defaulters are simply prosecuted before the Magistrate; and a few convictions and fines will very soon teach ratepayers that to attempt to evade or delay payment of their license-fees is not a paying game.

With regard to tolls, a system of counterfoil tickets coupled with systematic inspection by the Collection Inspectors should be sufficient to prevent leakage and fraud.

The Collection Staff.

For collection purposes the municipal area must be divided into a number of circles, a bill-collector being placed in charge of each circle. In practice it will be found that the maximum number of ratepayers which can be dealt with by one bill-collector is about 1,000. Circles should be grouped into divisions, each under the general control of a Collection Inspector. These officers supervise the outdoor work of the bill-collectors, their special duties being as noted above (page 78) to explain to ratepayers disputed entries in their bills, to personally execute warrants in difficult cases, to make local enquiries for the purpose of checking reports submitted by bill-collectors on (a) "irrecoverable" warrants, (b) holdings to be sold, (c) holdings not in existence, and (d) new and improved holdings, and to make local enquiries in all mutation cases.

Bonus system.—A very important factor in promoting efficiency is a system of bonuses or commissions for good work. The following system has been on trial for some years in Howrah, and has proved highly successful.

Collections to be calculated quarterly; remissions of right, and remissions of grace, but not remissions of necessity being deducted from the demand. Then if the collections are found to exceed 95 per cent of the current demand, a bonus equal to 10 per cent on the amount of their monthly salary to be paid to the

officers concerned for each 1 per cent by which it so exceeds ; the bonus of the Tax-collector being calculated on the total collection, that of each Collection Inspector on the collection of his division, and that of each bill-collector on the collection of his circle.

The great thing is to convince the staff that the best and safest method of earning a little addition to their pay is to work for a bonus, rather than to lay themselves out to take small tips from ratepayers who wish to delay or avoid payment. The two methods cannot be combined ; it must be one or the other ; and a misguided bill-collector who chooses the wrong one is very soon betrayed by his results, and can be got rid of forthwith.

Complaints and Petitions.

The popularity of a municipal administration depends a good deal upon the kind of spirit it displays in its dealings with the wants and grievances of ratepayers as set forth in complaints and petitions addressed to the authorities. A system that ensures a prompt and thorough enquiry into each case is what the public has a right to expect ; and it is very bad policy to allow the staff to treat this enquiry work as though it were merely an unnecessary and vexatious addition to their daily burden.

It should be remembered too that these complaints and petitions furnish the authorities with a means of checking the work of subordinate officers in a way which is hardly possible by any other method ; and for this reason, if for no other, the ratepayer with a grievance should have things made easy for him.

In dealing with complaints and petitions three conditions should be borne in mind :—

(i) A ratepayer must be given every facility for making his representation without paying either a regular fee to the municipality or an irregular “ gratification ” to a municipal servant.

(ii) Every representation must be carefully enquired into and reported on with reasonable promptness.

(iii) The order finally passed must be promptly communicated to the petitioner without demand for fee or “ gratification.”

The following working arrangements are suggested :—

1. *Receipt of petitions.*—There should be a fixed time for the receipt of petitions at the office on every working day. Petitions should be received by either the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, or (in their unavoidable absence) the Secretary, *personally*—the privilege of representing matters personally to the authorities being one that is highly valued by the public. Every petition should be registered forthwith, and the petitioner told the date on which he should come to have the final order communicated to him.

N. B.—For the convenience of ratepayers who cannot attend at the fixed time there should be a locked box furnished with a slit, and marked “ for receipt of petitions ” fixed on a verandah open to the public ; and the receiving officer should open this box daily. Petitions will also, of course, be received by post ; but under no circumstances whatever should they be received by or through a municipal servant.

2. *Enquiry into petitions.*—Petitions will be enquired into in the ordinary course by the departments concerned, promptness being secured by a strict system of register-keeping, the supervision of which will be one of the personal duties of the Chairman. In this connection two points may be noted—

(a) A complaint or petition which has been enquired into and endorsed by a Ward Commissioner should be investigated by an officer not lower in rank than the head of a department, and the order finally passed by the Chairman should be communicated to the Ward Commissioner by a letter.

(b) A petition charging a municipal servant with corrupt or oppressive conduct should be immediately inquired into *personally* by the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, the Secretary or the Engineer, as the case may be.

3. *Communication of orders passed to petitioners.*—For the purpose of communicating orders passed, petitions may be divided into three classes :

(a) Petitions personally presented, petitioners personally present on the day fixed.

(b) Petitions personally presented, petitioners absent on the day fixed.

(c) Petitions placed in the box or received by post.

Petitions of class (a) present no difficulty; the petitioner is told the purport of the order by the receiving officer and the matter ends.

As regards petitions in classes (b) and (c), printed postcard ($\frac{1}{4}$ anna) notices should be sent to each petitioner informing him that orders have been passed, and will be communicated by the receiving officer to any person presenting the postcard notice at petition-receiving time. If the card is not presented within a month, the petition is sent to the record-room as finally disposed of.

N. B.—In any case, if a petitioner wants a copy of the order he must pay a small copying fee.

CHAPTER VII.

The Work of the Engineer's side.

The position and qualifications of the Engineer—Assessment—Roads—Conservancy—Miscellaneous.

His position and qualifications.

A glance at the scheme for the Engineer's side will show how very little of his work is concerned with purely engineering matters. In fact, "Engineer" is rather a misleading title for the chief executive officer of a large municipality—"General Manager" or "Chief Superintendent" would be a more suitable appellation. He must, of course, have had a good engineering training (such as would entitle him to a certificate as a "District Engineer"), and possess a thorough practical acquaintance with sanitary work; but when the Commissioners are making the appointment, it is not so much a highly diplomaed civil or sanitary engineer that they should look out for, as for a trained and proved administrator—"a strong persevering man" who can control his temper, knows the country and the language, and will stand no nonsense from his subordinates.

Every effort should be made to secure a trustworthy man of this type: the Commissioners will find him a paying investment, even if they have to give him what may appear an excessive salary. They should too, if they can possibly afford it, appoint a home-trained European rather than any one else for the following among other good reasons:—

(a) The average home-trained "Britisher" usually has more "driving power" and administrative ability, and commands more respect from a mixed force of manual labourers than an average Eurasian or Indian of the same class. This view is endorsed by the almost universal practice prevailing in mills, factories, indigo

estates, tea gardens and industrial concerns generally—the proprietors, whether European or Indian, find that it pays them to put in a European as manager at double the salary they would give to an Indian.

(b) Sanitary work bulks very largely among the duties of an Engineer; and experience shows that it is as a practical sanitarian more than anything else that the Indian municipal officer is apt to prove a failure. Scientific sanitation is not an idea that appeals very much to the oriental mind; we have no training-ground for sanitary officers out here; and it is apparently difficult for a man who has never left India to realise that the abominations of the ordinary Indian *busti* or bazaar are not part of the order of nature, and can and should be done away with. At any rate one often finds an Indian-trained officer, with an excellent theoretical knowledge of sanitary principles, serenely ignoring a state of things that no decently energetic home-trained man could tolerate for an hour.

(c) It is a capital thing to “break the chain” by interposing an officer of a different race at some point or other in the process by which the municipal funds are expended. One sees rather too often in a municipality a “family party” of contractors, overseers, and accountants, all on the best of terms with each other for the best of reasons, and trusting to a public opinion which is always curiously tolerant in such matters, and to their caste and family connections in the town, to escape detection and punishment.

But if the Commissioners cannot afford to give a salary that will attract a *good* European, they should by all means appoint an Indian—an untrustworthy or incompetent European is the worst of all possible choices.

The duties of the Engineer have been enumerated on page 80 above and there is no necessity to recapitulate them here. For all the more important of them excellent text-books exist; and it is no part of the plan of this book to attempt to summarise the elaborate and often highly technical instructions to be found

in these text-books and manuals. Where a note on any of these duties is given it will be understood that the length of the note has no relation whatever to the importance of the subject in the municipal scheme, but is determined solely by the extent to which it has been thought possible to supplement the instructions of the text-books by criticisms and suggestions derived from actual experience.

A list of text-books which should be available for consultation by the Engineer and his staff in every large municipality may be given:

- (1) Roorkee Treatise on Civil Engineering, Section VI Bridges; VIII Roads; XI Sanitary Engineering; and XII Water-supply.
- (2) Manual of Hygiene, Sanitation and Sanitary Engineering (Jones).
- (3) Municipal Engineering (Silk).
- (4) Modern Methods of Sewage Disposal (James and Trentham).
- (5) Sanitary Handbook (McNally).
- (6) Sanitation of Mofussil Bazars (Disney).
- (7) Sanitary Engineering (Moore).
- (8) Water-works Distribution (J. A. McPherson).
- (9) Oriental Drainage (James).
- (10) Surface Drainage (Silk).
- (11) Health Officer's Pocket-book (Willoughby).
- (12) The more deadly forms of Cattle Disease in India (Hallen).

Assessment.

“Assessment” properly so called is a function not of the Engineer but of the Commissioners themselves. It is the Commissioners alone, that is to say, who have the power to decide what taxes should be levied, and at what rates, and what exemptions and reductions should be granted in particular cases. But their decisions on these points must, of course, be based on a Valuation

List of the holdings in the town prepared by some agency appointed for the purpose : and thus the word "assessment" has come to be commonly used to cover this operation of valuation as well as the assessment proper ; and when a special officer is appointed to make the valuation (as by the Act provided), he is called not the *Valuer* but the *Assessor*.

The reasons which make it desirable that the Engineer should be appointed Municipal Assessor also, have been given on page 65 above. Their force will be better appreciated when the system of assessment is explained in detail.

It is unfortunate that for this particular subject no text-book is available. No writer appears to have dealt with "Rating" under Indian conditions ; and the fundamental differences between these conditions and English conditions, as well as between Indian law and English law, make the many excellent English works on "Rating" and "Valuing" practically useless to the assessor of an Indian municipality—he must do his best with the Municipal Act and the Account Rules as his only guides.

Summary of the law regarding Assessment.

The prescribed procedure is by no means free from pitfalls, and the first thing for the Assessor to do is to get a clear idea of its main features—what it enjoins and what it prohibits.

The sections of the Act which refer to the imposition of the tax and the methods of valuation are so important that they may be given *in extenso* as follows :—

"96. When it has been determined that a rate shall be imposed on the annual value of holdings, the Commissioners, after making such enquiries as may be necessary, shall determine the valuation of all holdings within the municipality as hereinafter provided.

"97. Save as is herein otherwise provided, such valuation shall be valid for five years from the date on which it first takes effect in the municipality, and until the beginning of the year next after the date on which a new valuation may be made, or until the valuation be revised and amended.

"101. The gross annual rent at which any holding may be reasonably expected to let shall be deemed to be the annual value thereof, and such value shall accordingly be determined by the Commissioners, and entered in the valuation-list :

"Provided that, except in the Darjeeling Municipality, if there be on a holding any building or buildings, the actual cost of erection of which can be ascertained or estimated, the annual value of such holding shall in no case be deemed to exceed an amount which would be equal to seven and a half per centum on such cost, in addition to a reasonable ground-rent for the land comprised in the holding :

"Provided also that, where the actual cost so ascertained shall exceed one lakh of rupees, the percentage on the annual value to be levied in respect of so much of the cost as is in excess of one lakh of rupees shall not exceed one-fourth of the percentage determined by the Commissioners under section 102 :

"Provided further that, in estimating the annual value of a holding under this section, the value of any machinery that may be on such holding shall not be taken into consideration."

Some points about these sections may be noted :

1. Put shortly, the annual rental value of a holding is the amount of annual rent which the holding would be likely to fetch, or the amount obtained by adding a certain percentage of the cost of construction of the buildings comprised in the holding to a reasonable ground-rent, *whichever amount is less*.

2. The proviso in section 101 is imperative : where there are buildings, the actual cost *must* be ascertained or estimated, as also the "reasonable ground-rent."

3. It is the cost of construction *at the time that the building was constructed* that must be ascertained or estimated, not the present value of the building, or the cost of a similar building constructed at the present time. Therefore dilapidations or depreciations are not to be taken into account. The idea underlying this provision is apparently the idea, that only the capital originally sunk should be taxed.

The subsequent procedure may be described as follows:—

The Assessor having prepared his valuation statement in accordance with these sections submits it to the Chairman, (*not* the Commissioners in meeting) who alters it as he thinks fit, and then prepares from it a rating-list for the whole municipality, which he signs and publishes in the manner prescribed by law. Any deviation from this procedure will render the whole assessment null and void.

Appeals from individual ratepayers are then received up to a month from the date of publication. They are heard and disposed of by a Committee of "not less than three Commissioners who shall be appointed in that behalf by the Commissioners at a meeting. The Commissioners so appointed, after taking such evidence and making such enquiries as they may deem necessary, may pass such order as they shall think fit in respect of such application. The decision of such Commissioners, or of a majority thereof, in such cases shall be final." (Sec. 114).

N. B.—This provision bars the jurisdiction of the Civil Courts, except in cases where "there is a breach of the rules prescribed by law for making the valuation."

The Quinquennial Revaluation.

Now let us see how the Assessor is to set about the actual business of Revaluation. And let us suppose that it has been decided that he is to start with a clean slate—that he is to ignore the existing assessment, and existing arrangements generally, and make a complete and correct valuation of all the holdings in the town exactly as he finds them. In a town of any size, this obviously means a great deal of heavy and responsible work, which the officers of the Assessment department cannot possibly be expected to perform in addition to their ordinary routine duties. They will require the assistance of a temporary staff; and it will usually be found that the best arrangement is to put the regular staff on the special revaluation work, and employ the temporary staff on the ordinary routine work.

The outlines of a scheme which has proved successful in

practice is given below. It has been designed to meet the requirements of the typical municipality of 1,50,000 inhabitants which we have taken as our example in Part II above.

General Plan.—The Assessor first has prepared a map of the town on a scale of, say 300 feet to the inch, shewing every road, street, and lane, and divided up into assessment blocks or circles, say, two circles to the square mile. About six months before the expiry of the existing quinquennial period, the two Assistant Assessors and Building Inspectors (see Scheme opposite page 90 above) are placed on the special duty of revaluation, each man taking half of the total number of circles, and being given a staff of two surveyors and three peons to help him.

These two special officers will then proceed to work through the town methodically, circle by circle, in accordance with a fixed programme, measuring, valuing, and (when necessary) numbering each holding before proceeding to the next. Their work will, of course, be subject to close and constant check by the Assessor, who must approve and countersign each valuation. As each circle is finished, the valuations are sent into the office, where a special clerk prepares from them a valuation statement and a rating-list which is published over the signature of the Chairman. The two officers are kept on special duty for a period of three months after the publication of this list, in order that they may attend all meetings of the Appeals Committee, and make any further enquiries and reports that may be ordered by the Committee. At the end of this period of three months they revert to their ordinary work.

Sketch Books.—The results of their work are embodied in a series of sketch-books which contain *for each holding* the following particulars:—

1. The number of the holding (with old and new numbers when there has been a change), the street, the owner, and the occupier.
2. The existing valuation.
3. The dimensions in squarefeet of the entire holding.
4. An estimate of the reasonable ground-rent for the same.

5. A sketch-plan of every building on the holding on a small scale, shewing in every case its outside measurement, and, where entry is not objected to by the occupier, also the number of rooms it contains and their dimensions.

6. A very brief description of the materials of which it is composed, and an estimate of its cost of construction.

7. An estimate of the rental value of the holding taken as a whole, with a brief record of the materials on which such estimate has been based, *e. g.*, actual rent-receipts, evidence of neighbours, rent of similar houses in the neighbourhood, etc.

8. The valuation fixed. It must be signed and dated by the Assistant Assessor and countersigned and dated by the Assessor.

These sketch-books are valuable records and should be very carefully preserved.

Special responsibility of the Assessor.—The Assessor is, of course, generally responsible for the whole work of revaluation, but there are three duties in connection with it which he must perform personally.

First—He must issue detailed instructions to the special officers in order to ensure that all valuations shall be made on the same principles, and in conformity with the law.

This is a matter to which special attention must be paid. It will take a good deal of drilling and close supervision to make the Assistant Assessors understand the law and follow the methods it prescribes, especially in connection with the “cost of construction.” They will object (not unreasonably) that there are many cases in which the best valuer in the world would be puzzled to estimate the cost of construction; the age of a building is often quite unascertainable, and even if the approximate date can be given, the actual cost of labour and the various materials at that date and in that locality is very difficult to arrive at. They will want either to put down the present value, or else make calculations allowing for depreciation and dilapidation. Nothing of the sort must be allowed on any consideration. It would cause the valuation to be rejected by the Appeals Committee, or, supposing the Appeals Committee to pass it, would render the municipality

liable to a civil action on the ground of a “breach of the rules prescribed by law for making the valuation.”

Perhaps the best way out of the difficulty is for the Assessor to prepare beforehand, from an examination of all available data as to cost of labour and materials, a schedule shewing decade by decade for the last hundred years, the estimated cost of construction per square foot of the different classes of buildings commonly met with—dwelling-houses, shops, warehouses, etc., in their several varieties. The Assistant Assessor then, in order to estimate the cost of construction of a particular building, would simply have to take its “plinth measurement,” ascertain or guess the decade in which it was built, determine its class on the schedule, and work out his calculations accordingly.

The “plinth measurement” method is recommended in preference to either of the other two methods, *viz.*, (a) “cubing” and (b) making a detailed estimate. Cubing is the method usually employed in England, where a scale based on an estimate of fourpence per foot-cube for an ordinary cottage is recognized. But this method for various reasons which need not be detailed is unsuited to Indian conditions. And the remaining method—the making of a detailed estimate—though the most exact of all, is quite out of the question in view of the enormous labour and expense it involves.

The fixing of rental values does not present the same difficulties. Where (as in the case of owner and occupier being the same) the rent paid is not ascertainable, an estimate can easily be made by calculating from the rents actually paid by similar holdings in the neighbourhood.

The great point is to make the Assistant Assessors understand that in every case they must make two *independent* valuations, (1) by the rental-value method and (2) by the cost-of-construction-plus-ground-rent method, and must enter as the valuation whichever of the two amounts is the less.

Secondly—The Assessor must make frequent local inspections, and check as many valuations as possible. He should check on the spot not less than ten per cent of the valuations, and should

personally enquire into all complaints of malpractices on the part of the special staff.

Thirdly—In every case in which the holding includes a mill, a factory, a railway station, a public building, a hospital, etc., the Assessor should make the valuation himself.

There is no general practice of letting or hiring buildings of this character, and their annual rental value is a difficult matter to ascertain. The question is fully discussed in the judgment of the Madras High Court, *Secretary of State vs. Madras Municipality*, I. L. R. 10 Madras 38, which is quoted in Collier's Manual and which ought to be carefully read by the Assessor. In practice, however, in view of the great concessions made by the law in the case of buildings costing a lakh of rupees and over, it will usually be found that the valuation arrived at by the cost-of-construction method is in these cases so far below what the annual rental value might be assumed to be, that this latter figure has only an academic interest.

Routine work of Assessment department.

A complete revaluation on the above lines will make the routine work of the Assessment department a very simple affair indeed.

All that it will have to do is, (a) to value new buildings or improvements in buildings on information supplied by the Building department, (b) to enquire into applications made by the ratepayers for reduction of taxes on account of fire, demolition, vacancy and so forth, and (c) to revise accordingly the demand as set forth in the Assessment register.

Roads.

A "Roads" Policy.

The construction and maintenance of roads are among the first and most obvious duties of a municipality; but one rarely finds that the Commissioners' work in the direction is governed by anything in the shape of a definite "Roads Policy."

A new road usually owes its existence to a more or less clamorous demand made by a more or less numerous body of ratepayers living in a particular area; the support of some of the Commissioners is enlisted, the matter is brought forward in meeting, and the Commissioners after satisfying themselves that the road is "necessary" (which of course means very little), enquire whether the funds necessary for its construction are available; if this is found to be the case, they will very likely sanction the proposal. The same thing happens when the demand is for the conversion of a *kutchra* road into a metalled one; in each case, it is the immediate cost of construction or conversion that is considered, and not the resultant increase in the annual maintenance charges. The increase, it should be remembered, must remain a perpetual burden on the municipal revenues; for although the Commissioners may make new roads to any extent, they are forbidden by law from closing any road once opened to the public except with the special sanction of the Local Government.

Again, as regards road repairs, the arrangements are usually equally unsatisfactory; one rarely finds any standard of efficiency kept in view when the necessary allotment is made in the annual Budget. The amount allotted is usually based on "last year's figures," or else it is arrived at by the highly unsatisfactory method of providing for all other items of expenditure first, and leaving what is over "for the roads."

In a municipality where these haphazard methods of dealing with roads prevail, one is pretty sure to find that the Commissioners have more miles of road than they can afford to keep in a decent state of repair; and that "the disgraceful state of the municipal roads" has become a standing grievance, involving inconvenience to the public, worry to the staff, and friction all round.

This unsatisfactory state of things would be avoided to a great extent, if the Commissioners would frame a road policy on the simple principle that *a municipality should not construct more roads than it can keep in good repair.*

The first step towards putting this principle into practice is

obviously, to find out the annual cost of keeping in good repair the existing roads. And, if the Commissioners take sufficient trouble they can obtain *once for all* a very fairly accurate estimate of the amount required. They should appoint a special sub-committee (including, if possible, Commissioners with engineering experience), with instructions to report with regard to each existing road (a) the cost of its *entire* renewal and (b) the period that should elapse between such renewals.

Earth and gravel roads will give the committee little difficulty; they are remade and dressed in the same way every year, and the number of cubic feet of earth or gravel required can be easily ascertained.

With regard to metalled and brick roads however, more detailed enquiries will be found necessary. To arrive at the *cost* of renewal for each road, the Commissioners, after deciding what thickness of metal or brick is required in view of the character and extent of the traffic it has to bear, should work out carefully the rates for collecting, spreading, and consolidating the quantity of material it requires, taking into consideration its dimensions, its distance from the depôt, and any other circumstance they may consider relevant. In determining the *period* of renewal, the chief points to be considered are, the present condition of the road, the amounts spent on it in past years both for regular repair and "patch repair," and the traffic it will be called upon to bear in future. In this matter, as in all others requiring technical knowledge, the sub-committee will do well to check the facts and figures given by the municipal staff by "outside" professional opinion whenever possible; and the local officers of the Public Works Department and District Board will no doubt be found ready to give the sub-committee the benefit of their advice and assistance, when the importance of the enquiry is explained to them.

The list of roads submitted by the sub-committee will be in some such form as this :—

Serial No.	Names.	Class of Road.	Total cost of renewal.	No. of years.	Total cost of renewal per year.
1	2	3	4	5	6
6	Kali Mookerji Road ..	1st class (metalled).	6,000	2	Rs. 3,000
10	Haradev Chatterji Lane ..	2nd class (metalled).	500	4	Rs. 125
5	Kristoram Bosak Lane ..	3rd class (brick).	800	6	Rs. 50

N. B. (1) The amount in column 6 is arrived at by dividing the figure in column 4 by the figure in column 5.

(2) The total annual amount that should be allotted for road repairs will be the total of the amounts in column 6 *plus* a certain percentage (which should in no case exceed ten per cent) allowed for "patch repairs."

(3) It is of course not necessary that the amount noted in column 6 against each road should be spent on that particular road every year. The necessary condition is, that the whole length of each road should be renewed within the period noted against it in column 5; and this can be best ensured by the use of a system of Road Charts as described below under the head "Repair."

With this list before them, the Commissioners can compare the amount that they find themselves able to allot yearly for road repairs with the amount actually required by the roads. If the balance is on the right side, they can, of course, spend the excess in making new roads or raising the class of old ones; but if (as will generally be found to be the case) the balance is on the wrong side, they will themselves realize, and be able to explain to discontented ratepayers, that they are not justified in doing anything in this direction until more prosperous times, or a redistribution of the items of expenditure, enable them to make up the deficiency.

Private Contributions.

The possibility of obtaining contributions from members of the public should not be overlooked. Where (as often happens)

the Commissioners can provide funds for the construction of a badly needed new road, or the widening of an existing one and for its subsequent maintenance, but can do nothing owing to the heavy cost of the necessary land acquisition proceedings, an effort should be made to find some well-to-do citizen who will be willing to pay into the municipal funds the sum necessary for the acquisition, securing in return a permanent memorial of his public spirit in the shape of a road named after himself or some other member of his family. In many municipalities a good deal can be done in this way, if Ward Commissioners take an interest in the matter.

Anticipatory Alignment.

In a town where the population is growing more or less rapidly, it is the duty of the Engineer to survey the "rural area," and lay down (on paper) the lines of the new roads that will be required hereafter. It is unfortunate that the present law does not give municipal authorities the right to refuse to sanction the building of a house on the land covered by such "anticipatory alignments"; but, in practice, it will generally be found possible to keep the space free, by pointing out to intending house-builders the advantage of building along the line of what will eventually be a public road. If, however, they prove recalcitrant, it is difficult to see what can be done; very few municipalities can afford to adopt the alternative of acquiring the land, and thereby lock up their capital in property which they may not be able to put to a profitable use for years to come.

Encroachments.

Another important item of the Engineer's duties is to see that the roads are not obstructed or encroached upon by private owners. The municipal roads should be demarcated by permanent boundary-marks set up at such intervals as seem necessary; and a list of roads and paths over which the public have a right of way should be kept, and arrangements made to have them inspected at least twice a year in order to bring to light cases of encroachment.

As soon as an encroachment is reported, the Engineer should visit the spot and submit a full report to the Chairman. In cases where the encroachment or obstruction is of recent origin, and the municipal records shew clearly that it interferes with a public right of way, the Chairman need feel no hesitation in disregarding any plea of title or right, and should direct the Engineer to remove the obstruction forthwith, and should sanction at the same time the prosecution of the offender under section 217 of the Act. Where, however, the obstruction appears to be of long standing, or where there is any doubt whatever as to the public right in the matter, this summary method of dealing with it will not be advisable, and the regular procedure laid down in section 233 of the Act should be followed. Under this section, notice must be given to the party to remove the obstruction within a certain period, and if he fails to comply, an application must be made to the Magistrate to order its removal.

In any case, prompt action should be taken, and no suggestion as to "compromise" should be entertained. Slackness or weakness on the part of the municipal authorities in this respect is likely to be followed by the making of encroachments on a wholesale scale; and the experience of many municipalities proves, that when encroachments have been general, and have been tacitly acquiesced in for any considerable period of time, the problem of their removal becomes a peculiarly difficult one.

Construction and Repair.

Roads in India are commonly considered as falling into two classes: *Kutchra*, i.e., roads made of the natural soil of the locality; and *Pucca*, i.e., metalled roads; the metal being stone, (trap or granite), *kunkar* (nodular limestone), laterite, or *jhamra* (broken vitrified brick), according to local circumstances.

Complete instructions covering every step in the process of construction of each class of road will be found in the *Roorkee Treatise*, Section VIII; *Jones' Manual*; *Silks' Municipal Engineering*; and the schedules and circulars of the Public Works Department.

The municipal system, however, does not provide for any *professional* supervision of the Engineer's work on the roads; and in view of the large proportion of the municipal income allotted yearly for their upkeep, it is very necessary that the *lay* supervision by the Chairman and the Works sub-committee should be of as thorough and close a character as possible.

It is not necessary or desirable that this supervision should extend to the Engineer's professional dealings with particular items of his work. But in every department of municipal working, some sort of compromise between the interests of efficiency and the interests of economy has to be made; and it should be the duty of these supervising authorities to satisfy themselves, that the Engineer's working system of road construction and repair is based on the particular compromise that best suits the local circumstances. Moreover, by periodically examining the progress of the actual work, they can do a good deal to check slackness and procrastination on the part of the Engineer and his subordinates.

The general lines of such a system suited to the needs of the average municipality in lower Bengal, where the roads are of three classes, *viz.*, earth, *jhama*, and stone-metal, might be somewhat as follows:—

1. *Earth Roads*.—Tenders should be called for, and the whole work given out on contract. The specification should be that laid down for district roads by the Public Works Department authorities for the particular district to which the municipality belongs, and any deviation suggested in the interest of economy should be carefully examined by the Works sub-committee before being sanctioned. The rates will usually be higher than the Public Works rates, as the contractor must not be allowed to cut "borrow-pits" on the sides of the roads. Such "borrow-pits" greatly obstruct drainage, besides forming ideal breeding-places for mosquitoes.

2. *Metalled Roads*.—The main point to be considered in the construction of a metalled road is, of course, the amount of traffic it will be called upon to bear. Dividing on this principle,

one may say, that there are roughly three classes of metalled roads: (1) *first class* roads, which have to bear a very heavy and continuous cart-traffic (usually to be found only in cities); (2) *second class* roads, which have to bear an ordinary amount of cart-traffic; and (3) *third class* roads, on which there is a small amount of cart-traffic, but in which it is desirable to have a strip of metalled causeway in order to render it passable for carts all the year round.

First class roads.—Roads of the first class *must* be made of stone-metal. *Jhama* metal, however well laid, will not stand heavy and continuous traffic without breaking up in a few months. Fourteen feet (*i.e.*, the space sufficient for two carts to pass each other) should be the minimum width of the metalling, and the full Public Works specification for district roads should be followed throughout.

Second class roads.—The question whether roads of this class should be made of stone-metal or of *jhama* must be decided by the comparative cost of these two materials. It may be taken roughly that a *jhama* road carrying ordinary traffic will require regular renewal twice as often as a stone-metalled road; and if stone-metal is not more than twice as expensive as *jhama*, it should be used. In some towns however, which are off the line of rail and distant from the quarries, the cost of stone-metal will be found to be three or four times that of *jhama*. In such cases, of course, *jhama* must be preferred. As in the case of first class roads, the strip of metalling must have a minimum width of fourteen feet.

In the case of second class roads, it may be found possible in the interests of economy to fall rather below the standard of the Public Works specification, *e.g.*, four inches of metal may be used instead of the regulation six, etc. But all such departures from the standard should be sanctioned by the Works committee.

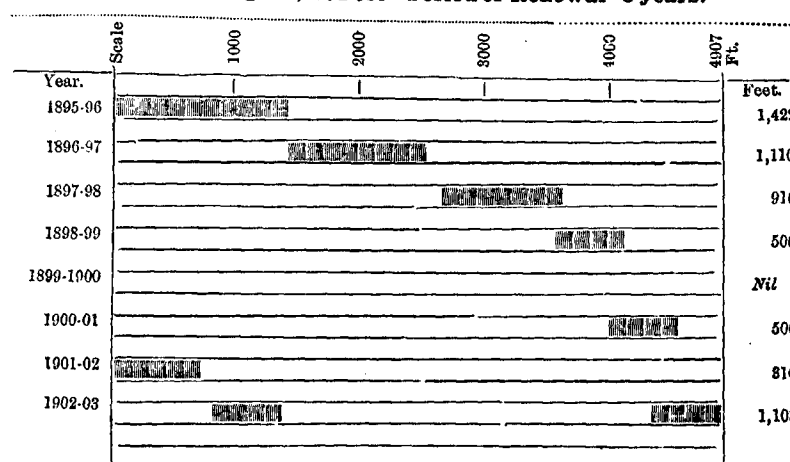
Third class roads.—The strip of metalling should be eight feet wide—no more and no less. This width is sufficient for one cart, and to give extra width between eight feet and fourteen feet (the width necessary for two carts to pass), is simply waste of

money. The strip should be either *jhama* or stone whichever is cheaper in the long run.

In constructing metalled roads, it will be found economical to give out to contract all the work except the watering and consolidating, and it will usually be found better to have these done departmentally. Where the municipality possesses a steam-roller, it should invariably have the consolidating work done by its own servants and should not lease it out to contractors.

Repairs—The annual Repairs Estimate submitted by the Engineer should be carefully scrutinized by the Works sub-committee, and compared with the Road List (see page 137 above) and the Road Charts. The Road Charts give in graphic form the past history and future requirements of every road on the list, *e.g.*,

No. 15, PUNCHANANTOLA ROAD (STONE METAL).
(Class 2)—Length 4,907 Feet. Period of Renewal—5 years.



The shaded portions represent the length metalled every year.

The Repairs Estimate will probably shew a persistent tendency to increase year by year. But from what has been said above in connection with the Road List, it will be clear that no increase in expenditure will be justified, unless there is reason to believe that there has been a corresponding increase in the *total* amount of

traffic in the town. If this is not the case, and the reason given for the increase in the estimate is the usual "increase of traffic on such-and-such roads," it is evident that there has been a diversion of traffic from some road or roads to some other road or roads; and that what is wanted is merely a revision of the "period of years" given to the roads in question in column 5 of the Road List. The roads which bear less traffic than before will have this period increased, and those which bear more traffic than before will have this period reduced, with the effect of reducing and increasing correspondingly their respective annual allotments in column 6—the total of column 6 remaining at the same figure as before.

As regards the actual work of repair full instructions are to be found in the text-books. But, however well the work may be done, money will be wasted and the public inconvenienced, if the various operations are not carried out *at the proper time*. This is a matter which should have the Chairman's special attention. For the preliminaries, *i.e.*, the allotting of the funds, and the passing of the estimates through sub-committee and meeting, the Secretary's side is responsible; the supplying of the necessary information and, of course, the actual work itself are the duties of the Engineer's side. When delay occurs therefore, each side is inclined to throw the blame on the other, and unless the Chairman has a clear idea of times and seasons he will find it difficult to decide between them. He should therefore, in consultation with the Secretary and Engineer, frame a road-repair programme or calendar; and satisfy himself by occasional inspections both of office papers and the roads themselves that it is being properly worked up to.

A specimen calendar suitable to a town in Lower Bengal is given below.

Road Repair Calendar.

January	Engineer inspects all metalled roads and gives instructions for preparation of Repair estimates. Repair of earth roads continues.
February	Repair estimate of metalled roads placed before Works sub-committee by the middle of this month. Earth roads as in January. <i>N.B.</i> Annual Budget framed by the end of this month.

March	Repair estimate of metalled roads passed by General Meeting. Earth roads as in January and February.
April	Commissioner's sanction to Budget received by the middle of the month. Tenders for supply of road-metal called for and contractors appointed by the end of the month. Earth roads finally dressed; and turfed where necessary.
May	Collection of road-metal begins. Side-drains and slopes of all roads cleared of jungle and graded where necessary in anticipation of the rains.
June	Collection of road-metal continues. Spreading begins with the first burst of the monsoon.
July August September	Collection, spreading and consolidation in full swing. Detailed estimates for repair of earth roads framed and passed by the General Meeting about the end of September.
October	
November	
December	Earth roads as in November.

Conservancy.

"Conservancy" as applied to municipal work is a term of wide application which covers many important duties, the chief being—(a) the regulation of the building of private privies and septic tanks, and the supervision of their working, (b) the collection and disposal of night-soil from public latrines and private premises, (c) the construction and maintenance of public sanitary conveniences, (d) the collection and disposal of sullage water, (e) the collection and disposal of house-refuse and street-sweepings, and (f) the cleaning and filling-up of insanitary tanks.

There are many text-books dealing with this branch of the Engineer's work, the chief Indian authorities being the following—*Jones' Manual*, *Silk's Municipal Engineering*, *McNally's Sanitary Hand-book*, and *Disney's Sanitation of Mofussil Bazaars*. Besides these works, there are, of course, the many useful notes and circulars issued from time to time by the Local Governments and the provincial Sanitary Commissioners.

The following few practical hints on points not specifically dealt with by these text-books are meant to be merely supplementary to the instructions they contain.

Management of the Sweeper staff.

The sweepers will require the constant personal attention of the Engineer who must be particularly on the look-out for attempts on the part of the subordinate staff to oppress or blackmail them. He must make a point of personally investigating their grievances, real or imaginary, as soon as they are brought to his notice; and do everything in his power to prevent a successful strike bringing home to them the exceptional strength of the position they are placed in by the peculiar conditions of their calling.

Some points may be noted :—

(a) Recommendations for fines on account of bad work or non-attendance submitted by the gang foreman must be carefully scrutinized, first by the sanitary overseer, and then by the Superintendent. If this is not done, every gang foreman will certainly obtain a substantial contribution from each sweeper working under his orders.

(b) Careful arrangements must be made for paying the sweepers punctually every month, and the Superintendent must be present throughout. Otherwise, the pay-office staff will do its best to levy a percentage on the payments.

(c) If possible, the entire sweeper staff should be provided with quarters rent-free. In any case, this should be done for the trenching-ground staff. A good supply of drinking-water at every depôt and trenching-ground is absolutely necessary, if sweepers are strictly prohibited (as they should be) from using public hydrants and wells.

Collection of Night-soil.

Working arrangements.—In a large municipality a "Conservancy map" of the town is absolutely necessary. It will show the circles under each sanitary overseer, the public latrines and depôts, and the numbers of each class of conservancy workers—male sweepers, female sweepers, night-soil carters, sullage carters, rubbish carters, and wheel-barrow men—allotted to each circle. The proper allotment of night-soil workers can only be determined by experiment; in thickly populated areas, one male sweeper can

deal with thirty or forty privies per day, and a female half the number. These are maximum figures ; where privies are difficult of access and far apart, the number will have to be considerably reduced.

Besides the circle map, the sanitary overseer will have an Index Register for his circle shewing *by name* each person working under his orders ; and he will work his staff on a system of morning, afternoon, and night musters, checked by tallies at the depôts and trenching-grounds. The sweeper staff will require careful and continuous watching by peons, and must be made to use the main roads leading to the trenching-grounds and depôts. If they are allowed to go by by-lanes they will empty their buckets into the nearest ditches or pieces of waste land.

People often ask, why an attempt is not made to do away with what is an undoubted nuisance to the public by getting the work of cleaning privies done *at night* instead of in the daytime. But this is practically out of the question in India. The following are the main reasons :—

1. In most Indian houses the privies are in the back-yard, and can only be reached by way of the front door. A householder naturally objects to leaving his front door open all night.

2. Sweepers enjoy a very poor reputation for honesty, and householders object to their being given authority to be on their premises at night.

3. Sweepers themselves object strongly to night-work, and will not do it except in gangs. They are afraid of snakes, scorpions, and ghosts, and do not want to run the risk of being taken for thieves and knocked on the head.

4. When they work in the dark proper supervision is impossible, and they cannot be prevented from emptying their buckets into the drains and tanks.

The best plan is to muster them just before day-break so that they can start work as soon as it is light. Their work should be over by noon when they can be dismissed for food and rest. They can be mustered again in the afternoon, and put on other work such as cleaning depôts, tarring buckets, etc. ; or they

can be used as emergency gangs to do the work of the morning's absentees. A few carters must be deputed for night work, *i.e.*, for removing to the trenching-grounds at night the loaded carts which have been stored in the depôts during the day.

Public Latrines.

The large masonry latrines seen in most Indian towns are not really of a convenient type. They are usually dark and very badly ventilated, and often raised to an absurd height from the ground. What is wanted is not one or two large structures of this kind, but a fair number of small (ten or fifteen-seated) sheet-iron latrines distributed evenly throughout the town. These sheet-iron conveniences may be slightly dearer to build than the masonry ones, but they are indisputably cleaner, healthier, and more appreciated by the public. Nor need their service cost more. A single sweeper, if he is given quarters near by, can easily look after two or even more of these small latrines.

The Horbury pattern is as good as any, but whatever pattern is selected it should conform to the following specification :—

- (1) The floor to be impermeable (asphalt or cement), and to be fitted with catchpits for urine and washings.

- (2) The seats to be glazed earthenware or iron, and to be made on the separation system.

- (3) The side walls to terminate about eighteen inches below the roof, in order to ensure proper ventilation and lighting,

- (4) The roof to have eaves projecting far enough to throw rain-water clear of the drain leading to the catchpits.

- (5) Cross-ventilation at the bottom of the latrine to be provided for.

A perfectly efficient latrine on these lines can be put up "departmentally" at a total cost, including cement floor, iron seats, catchpits, etc., of about seventy rupees per seat. This is a good deal cheaper than the rates quoted by the engineering firms.

Disposal of Sullage.

"Sullage" is the term applied to the liquid refuse and wastes

of a town—kitchen and privy washings, and drainings from cow-houses, stables, etc. With a complete system of graded masonry drains its removal presents no difficulty. The householders must be made (as provided by the Act) to connect their premises directly with the municipal drains, and thus all foul liquids are carried away out of the town as soon as they are produced.

It is a very different matter with a *kutchra* drainage system—the familiar arrangement of a network of stagnant roadside ditches communicating more or less freely with the tanks and ponds that hold the town's domestic water-supply. With this system, each house has (or is supposed to have) a masonry catchpit, into which the sullage drains, and from which it has to be removed periodically by the municipal conservancy service. But the quantity of sullage produced is usually so large, that to remove it completely and regularly, as nightsoil is removed, would mean an absolutely prohibitive expenditure on carts and cartmen. So one finds that in most municipalities the "sullage service" is a very perfunctory business indeed, and that practically the whole of the sullage water is allowed to overflow into the ditches and drains, and thence either to percolate through to the subsoil, or to find its way into some neighbouring tank or pond.

The only real remedy for this insanitary state of things is a scientifically-designed system of graded masonry surface drains. But if a municipality cannot afford this, it should certainly do its best to minimize the nuisance by providing a regular sullage service for at any rate the more thickly populated portions of its area. Moreover a great deal can be done in the way of limiting the quantity of sullage produced by making arrangements to exclude bathing water, and by insisting on the rims of the catchpits and the edges of the connected house-drains being raised an inch or so above ground level. This will exclude storm-water and surface drainage. Also, where filtered water is laid on, special care must be taken to prevent the possibility of waste tap-water finding its way into the catchpits.

Having got the sullage into the carts, the question is, how to

get rid of it? It is highly offensive stuff, and is subject to very rapid decomposition owing to amount of organic matter it contains. Moreover, unlike night-soil, it does not contain within itself the elements necessary for its own destruction, and therefore trenching, or spreading on the ground—the methods usually employed—are not satisfactory ways of disposing of it.

By far the cheapest and most effectual method is to pass it through what is usually called a "bacteriological filter," and to use the effluent to raise crops of grass for the use of the municipal cattle. Bacteriological filters have been used with very satisfactory results for some years past in the Howrah Municipality; but from the number of enquiries as to their construction and method of working which have been received, it would seem that they are not in general use in India, and a brief description of one of the Howrah filters is therefore given below:—

THE HOWRAH SULLAGE-FILTER.

(See plan opposite page 152).

The filter shewn in the plan disposes daily of 20,000 gallons of really bad sullage at a nominal cost. It will be seen that the "upward" system of filtration is adopted, and that the filter works automatically, gravity being the only force employed. The effluent is slightly turbid and quite inoffensive.

Construction.—The three chief features of the filter are the settling tanks (marked D D on the plan), the main filters F F, and the series of subsidiary filters H H. They are constructed as follows:—

The settling tanks (each 15' × 15') are made of masonry. It will be noted that the floors slope slightly towards the sludge outlet.

The main filters (each 9' × 6') are also made of masonry. Each filter has a false bottom or grating of iron bars (old wheel tyres will do) placed about two inches apart, and raised about twelve inches from the floor; the space below the false bottom being left empty. The space above (1' 6" thick) is filled with pieces of hard clinker, vitrified brick, or other impervious material, each piece being about the size of a tennis ball. The rougher

the surface of these pieces the better for the growth of the bacteria ; smooth pebbles or pieces of granite are useless.

The subsidiary filters are constructed of the same materials as the main filter, and on the same lines, except that there is no false bottom, the feed pipe being led down to about three inches above floor level and supported on a stand. The larger the number of these filter chambers the clearer and purer will be the effluent. In practice, however, a series of four chambers as shewn in the plan has proved quite sufficient.

Method of working.—The sullage is brought in carts to the ramp A, and is emptied into the receiving sump B. From there it passes through the feed-pipes C C to the settling tanks D D where it remains about an hour. Valves are then opened and the sullage passes through the pipes E E to the empty spaces at the bottom of the filter F F. It then gradually rises through the filtering material to the surface, where it overflows and passes in a thin sheet over the aerating slope G, and is conducted by a pipe to the bottom of the first of the series of subsidiary filters H H. It rises through the filtering material and overflows at the surface, and is again conducted to the bottom of the next chamber and so on, until it finally emerges as a fairly clear effluent through the outlet I, and is conducted by a system of movable pipes and troughs to the grass-beds by which the filter is surrounded.

Some notes on the practical working of the filter may be given.

1. The flow of sullage into the main filter should be regulated so that the settling tank is emptied entirely before it is required for a fresh supply. The sludge should be removed daily through the sludge outlet. When dried it forms a very powerful fertiliser.

2. The settling tank should be scummed occasionally in order to prevent rags, corks, plantain leaves, etc., passing into the filter.

3. The filtering material should be changed every six months.

4. A bucket of night-soil should occasionally be thrown into settling tanks in order to neutralize the acids and make the liquid more alkaline.

5. For a filter of this size, dealing with about 20,000 gallons of sullage daily, a grass-bed (*doob* grass) of four and half bighas will be found sufficient—the yield of grass being about 6 maunds per 100 square feet per annum.

Miscellaneous.

The six chief duties of the Engineer may be said to be *Assessment, Roads, Conservancy, Water-Supply, Drainage, and Lighting.*

In the case of the first three on this list, some notes intended to supplement the information supplied by the text-books have already been given in this chapter. In the case of the last three it is not proposed to make any attempt in this direction. They are strictly technical subjects, and the text-books mentioned on page 127 above give all necessary information and instruction with regard to them.

But besides these six chief duties, there are many minor matters which claim a share of the Engineer's attention ; most of them being quite adequately dealt with by one or more of the text-books aforesaid. A few supplementary notes based on practical experience may however be given in connection with three of them—(1) *Cattle management*, (2) *Tramways*, and (3) *Destruction of noxious animals.*

Cattle management.

In Chapter V it was estimated that a municipality of 1,50,000 inhabitants would require to keep 200 buffaloes (for the night-soil and sullage carts), 50 bullocks (for the drain-cleaning and rubbish carts), and 20 ponies (for the watering-carts). It will be seen therefore that in any municipality "purchase and keep of cattle" will form a very considerable item on the expenditure side of the Revenue account.

The natural "wastage" *i. e.* losses among the stock by death and disablement may be put down at about twenty per cent annually. But this percentage may be enormously increased if the animals are overworked, ill-treated, and underfed; if they are not effectively protected from being poisoned by the local *chamars*; and if prompt action is not taken as soon as cattle-disease appears among them.

Yard Superintendent.—The chief safeguard against loss from these preventible causes is an honest and efficient Yard Superintendent. The qualifications and duties of this officer are summarized above (page 88) as follows:—

"He should possess some veterinary qualifications, and have had experience of handling unskilled labour; supervises both cattle-yards and maintains discipline and efficiency among the staff; treats sick animals and segregates them when affected by contagious diseases; prepares daily fodder indent on the Store-keeper; takes early morning muster at one or other of the yards, and distributes the animals among the carters; takes evening muster at one or other of the yards, and examines the condition of the animals returned."

Now the best means of ensuring honesty and efficiency on the part of the Superintendent is to make it to his pecuniary interest to keep the stock healthy and in good condition, rather than the other way, as in those municipalities where the Superintendent is given opportunities of taking commissions from the grain-contractors on the amount of food "saved," and from the cattle-dealers on the new stock bought. The Commissioners should fix a fairly high percentage of "natural wastage"; and should give the Superintendent a substantial bonus for every point below that percentage which he is able to shew at the end of the year. And he should on no account be allowed to have anything to do with the supply of food and straw, or with the purchase of new animals. The food and straw should be supplied to him *daily* by the Store-keeper (an officer on the Secretary's side of the office); and new animals should invariably be purchased in the open market by the Engineer himself.

Housing—Protection from both rain and sun, ventilation, and proper drainage, are the three main points to be considered.

A double shed, with two rows of masonry feeding-troughs in the middle, separated by a passage wide enough to allow of a man passing, is a very convenient arrangement. The floor should be of some impervious material and not too smooth, and should be slightly sloped towards a drain connecting with a catch pit. The shed should be open on all sides, and covered by an overhanging corrugated iron roof with a straw ceiling. Height (from tie-rod to floor) about eight feet; breadth (between pillars) about twenty four feet..

Feeding—The following table shows the daily amount of food which has been found sufficient to keep in good condition animals in full work :

Kind of Food.	AMOUNT (IN SEERS) REQUIRED BY EACH.			
	Buffalo.	Bullock.	Horse.	Pony.
Green	1	1	4	3
Bran	8½	1½	1	1
Straw	8	5	1	1
Oil-cake	4	½	6	4
Hay	1/12th	1/12th	As required.	As required.
Salt				

N. B.—If green grass is given instead of hay, it should be provided in the proportion of 3 to 1.

Animals should be fed twice a day; and a plentiful supply of clean drinking water is a necessity. Refuse food should be at once taken away and buried.

General—A few other points may be noted :—

1. Every animal should have at least twelve hours' rest out of the twenty-four. Buffaloes will require a couple of hours' wallow daily in some pond or stream.

2. With neck-galled animals, the usual practice is to take them off work altogether and reduce their rations. This is bad both for the work and the animal itself. The animal should be worked in a saddle, the shaft of the cart being altered accordingly.

3. A small segregation or observation shed should be built

well away from the stables and sheds ; and any animal going off its feed, or found to be suffering from fever, (the usual preliminary symptoms of most epidemic cattle-diseases), should be segregated at once.

4. The courts have held that a buffalo is a "dangerous animal" kept at the owner's risk. An unruly or vicious beast should therefore be got rid of at once ; otherwise it may get the persons responsible for it into serious trouble.

Tramways.

In European towns the tramway systems are usually owned by the towns themselves and often yield handsome profits. In India however, this particular form of municipal trading is not likely to be seen for some time to come—the initial cost of construction being too heavy for an Indian municipality to incur as a speculative investment.

However, there is no reason why municipalities should not do their best to stimulate private enterprise in this direction. A tramway is an undoubted public convenience, and in large cities often affords the most satisfactory solution of problems connected with the congestion of population.

The relations between the municipality and the Tramway Company are settled by the Indian Electricity Act of 1903 and by Local Acts. There are however certain practical aspects of the question which are not dealt with by these Acts, and which may therefore be briefly referred to.

1. The concession to the Company should be for as short a term as the Company can be induced to agree to. One does not know what improvements in traction may not take place in the course of the next few years, and the municipality should reserve to itself the right to take over the system at a valuation at the end of a reasonably short period.

2. The agreement with the Tramway Company must provide that full specifications and detailed drawings of all structural work shall be submitted to, and approved by, the municipal authorities before the work is actually taken in hand.

3. The track-rent paid by the Company should be fixed at a moderate rate. But on the other hand, it should be arranged that the Company pays the municipality a substantial bonus in years in which the dividend exceeds a certain percentage.

4. The minimum width of the road on which a double track is laid should be thirty-two feet. This will allow of four lines of wheeled traffic—the two tramcars, and two lines of vehicles moving in opposite directions.

5. The municipal authorities should shew themselves generous in the way of widening the streets so as to secure the minimum breadth where it is deficient. For instance, they might reasonably agree to bear half the cost of any Land Acquisition proceedings that may be necessary for the purpose. In most Indian towns the streets are far too narrow.

6. The track and the cable should be laid in the *middle* and not on the side of the road. This is a very important point, for the following among other reasons :—

(a) Gas-pipes and water-pipes are usually laid at the sides of the roads, and the laying of an electric cable near them may affect them injuriously by setting up electrolytic action.

(b) Bursts and leaks in gas-pipes and water-pipes can be attended to without interrupting the tramway service.

(c) A central tramway-track regulates traffic by making cartmen and hackney-carriage drivers keep to the proper side of the road—a phenomenon rarely seen in Indian towns.

Destruction of Noxious animals.

The Municipal Act allows the Commissioners to spend money on the "destruction of noxious animals," and some municipalities take advantage of this provision to the extent of paying out small sums as rewards for the destruction of poisonous snakes and superfluous pariah dogs. But recent researches into the origins of epidemic diseases are making it quite clear that there are many towns where a very much wider application of this particular provision may be made with the greatest possible advantage to the health of the community. It has now been established that the

anopheline mosquito is indispensable to the existence of malaria, and that the rat-flea if not similarly indispensable to the existence of plague, is at any rate mainly responsible for its dissemination; while the importance of the common house-fly as an infection-carrier in the case of typhoid, cholera, small-pox and other epidemics is becoming more and more clearly recognized.

These insect-pests are certainly "noxious animals" in the strictest sense: and no hesitation need be felt in devoting a substantial portion of the amount allotted in the Budget under the head "Public Health" to a systematic campaign against them, their hosts, and their breeding-places. An infective rat-flea is obviously impossible in the absence of an infected rat; anopheline mosquitoes require ponds and marshy places as breeding grounds; and the maggots that turn into blue-bottles and flies must have carrion or undisturbed filth to live in and feed on.

These facts indicate the main lines which such a campaign should follow, namely:—

Rats—To be destroyed by poison, or trapping, or by inoculating them with virus. Their multiplication to be checked by passing, and strictly enforcing, a by-law requiring all granaries and other warehouses likely to become the haunts of rats to be made "rat-proof" by means of cement or stone floors.

Mosquitoes—(a) That ideal breeding-ground for mosquitoes, the *kutcha* drainage system of tanks and stagnant ditches usual in Indian towns, to be replaced by a system of shallow open masonry drains properly graded. This is of course a big and expensive business, and must be done gradually as funds permit.

(b) The municipal sanitary staff to be reinforced by a "mosquito-brigade" working on the lines which have proved so successful in South and Central America, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Ceylon, Ismailia, and elsewhere; its work being to "kerosine" ponds and marshy places, and to fill up hollows and depressions which may become breeding-grounds for mosquitoes in the rains.

Flies—(a) The municipal trenching-grounds (the great breeding-place for flies) to be very carefully looked after. Dusting with lime as the trenches are filled has been found most effica-

cious in the way of preventing the appearance of maggots; and it should be remembered that a fly-grub cannot borrow down to the filth on which it feeds through more than four inches of superimposed earth.

(b) Town-refuse and offal from the slaughter-houses and markets to be removed without delay and burnt in incinerators or buried.

(c) By-laws prohibiting the accumulation of filth on private premises to be framed and strictly enforced.

A municipality that is really in earnest in its efforts to deal with pests of this kind, cannot do better than affiliate itself to the newly-formed Society for the Destruction of Vermin which has its head-quarters in London, and is establishing branches everywhere.

Four Suggestions.

(1) Aldermen—(2) Plural Voting—(3) Valuation by the District authorities—(4) Easier borrowing terms.

The following suggestions advocating certain changes in the existing municipal system are offered for what they are worth ; they have been framed with special reference to the conditions prevailing in Bengal.

1. Aldermen.

In a first-class municipality, one-third of the Commissioners should be nominated by Government, one-third elected by the ratepayers, and one-third elected from among their own number by the elected members of the retiring Board.

This arrangement would leave unchanged the existing proportion between Government representatives and popular representatives, (namely, one-third nominated to two-thirds elected), and would endow the policy of the municipality with an element of stability which is sometimes lacking under existing conditions.

The members elected by the retiring Board would correspond almost exactly to aldermen on Town Councils at Home ; and according to a very competent and unprejudiced American observer—Professor Lowell—the provision of a class of aldermen is one of the best features of the business-like English municipal system. His remarks on this subject apply so well to Indian conditions that they may be quoted in full.

He says, (*The Government of England*, Vol. II, p. 200)
“... the institution of aldermen, which allows a man who has served the town faithfully, and acquired experience in municipal affairs to remain in the council without submitting to a re-election,

One is told that in this way many valuable councillors are retained who would be unwilling to throw themselves again into an electoral contest. Thus a number of the senior members of the council have been kept from retiring, and even if not of the largest caliber when first elected, they have attained a position of prominence, have become proud of the good name of their town, and perpetuate the administrative traditions."

All this is entirely in accordance with Indian ideas. The methods of a popular election are even more distasteful to the respectable classes in India than they are to the same classes at Home; and there can be little doubt that a change in the system of representation on the lines advocated would be welcomed by the best elements among the urban population, and would go a long way towards raising the status of municipal councils in the eyes of the public.

2. Plural Voting.

Every ratepayer should have, instead of a single vote as at present, a number of votes (subject to a fixed maximum) proportionate to the amount of municipal rates and taxes he pays.

The voting qualification is so low (the payment of Re. 1-8-0 yearly to the municipality in rates and taxes giving a man a vote), that in an ordinary Indian town the upper and middle classes are quite swamped by the mass of voters belonging to the lowest social grades—cartmen, sweepers and so forth; and in contested elections the actual votes of the educated section of the community count for very little. The successful candidate will be the man who has managed to secure the majority of the voters belonging to the lowest classes; and this he must do, not by convincing them of the soundness of his views on points of municipal policy (these being matters which they neither understand nor take the slightest interest in), but by becoming what is called "a good canvasser"; the two main ingredients of good canvassing being first, a free distribution of *baksheesh*, and second, the bringing to

bear of all the influences—official, social and religious—which can induce a voter to give a favourable vote through fear of future unpleasant consequences to himself.

It may be said that unsatisfactory features of this kind are incidents of popular government everywhere, and that the weight of latter-day opinion is in favour of considering them as more than compensated for by the great benefits conferred on the community by a "broadening of the base of representation." But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that town government on elective lines is something entirely new to India; and no one who has had practical experience of its working out here will find it easy to persuade himself that the simple formula of "one man, one vote" is the best of all possible recipes for producing efficiency and progress in the administration of Indian municipalities.

The existing "broad-based" representation is responsible for at least two serious defects in the present system: *first*, the fact that the undignified electioneering methods it entails repel many of the very best men from coming forward as candidates for seats on the municipal committees; and *second*, the fact that the voting strength of the only section of the community which is in any way amenable to the teachings of modern sanitary science is too small.

The first defect is a patent one, and has perhaps been sufficiently dwelt upon earlier in the book. But the second is less generally recognized owing to its consequences having been hitherto neutralized in a great measure by "official influence," and is bound to assume greater and greater prominence as this official influence decays. That this decay, gradual in the past, is likely to be very much accelerated in the near future, no one who studies the signs of the times can doubt. And it is therefore worth while to consider how a more or less complete "emancipation" of Indian municipalities would be likely to affect their policy *considered from the standpoint of the sanitarian*.

Now in discussing questions of Indian sanitation, one must never lose sight of the fact that it is not so much that the Indian standard is inferior to the Western standard, as that the Indian

way of looking at such matters as scientific conservancy, building rules, and vaccination and plague regulations, is fundamentally different from our own. The social customs of the Indians, the fatalistic cast of their religions, and their strongly-rooted sentiment of the right of every householder to order the affairs of his house as seems to him best, combine to produce an attitude of mind towards European sanitary methods which is apathetic where it is not actively hostile. In fact, it is not too much to say, that in the opinion of nine Indians out of ten these methods are merely useless and meddlesome attempts to interfere with the settled order of things in general, and the liberty of the individual in particular.

Nor is it too much to say, that nine out of every ten schemes of sanitary reform which have been carried into effect in Indian towns have been pushed through by the official influence afore-said (*i.e.*, the influence of the executive and medical authorities of the district), in the face of more or less active opposition on the part of the communities they were designed to benefit. It is true that the good results which have followed the introduction of these reforms have furnished a series of object-lessons which are beginning to produce a certain effect. But this effect is confined entirely to certain sections of the rich and educated portion of the community. The great bulk of the population remains absolutely unimpressed; and the proletariat of any ordinary Indian town (supposing it to be made to understand the issue) would not have the slightest hesitation in rejecting the finest drainage scheme in the world, if it involved an addition of a pice in the rupee to the holding-rate.

Now whatever may be said, from a philosophical point of view, in favour of this popular attitude towards the science and art of sanitation, one thing is clear; and that is, that the Government of this country stands quite definitely committed to an attitude that is diametrically opposed to it. The Government holds the view, that is to say, that the ravages of pestilence and disease *can* be mitigated by human endeavour, and that the individual *ought* to be restrained from making himself a danger to the

life and health of his neighbours; and has expended much labour and money in translating this view into practice. The question therefore, whether one of the results of the elimination of official influence on the lines suggested by the recent Commission on Decentralization and other authorities would not prove to be a sharp reaction against the "forward" sanitary policy inculcated by Government, is one that needs serious consideration. To the writer, it certainly seems that, if, as proposed, official Chairmen are to be abolished wholesale, and the financial control exercised by the executive authorities is to be materially relaxed, the Government view of sanitation has but a slender chance of holding its own against the popular view, *inside* the municipal committee in any circumstances; and absolutely no chance whatever, unless the municipal administration is in the hands of the most independent and public-spirited among the citizens, and the preponderant voice in the municipal councils is the voice of the educated and well-to-do section of the community. This state of things can scarcely be expected if the voting qualifications and methods of election now in force remain unchanged.

3. Valuation by the District authorities.

In municipalities where taxation is based on rental values, the valuation being subject to periodical revision, this revision should be made by the Revenue authorities of the district, the Commissioners having no concern with it whatever.

Under the existing system the control exercised by the Commissioners over the revision of the valuation is a very real and effective one. The Chairman as their representative modifies as he thinks fit the revaluation statement submitted by the valuing agency *before* publishing it; and the Appeals committee of the Commissioners which deals with it *after* publication, reduces individual valuations to any extent it pleases.

It is not surprising therefore that a suggestion of this kind should always meet with strong opposition from the municipalities.

The argument invariably brought forward is that to take away from the Commissioners the right of controlling the assessment of their towns is to violate one of the cardinal principles of local self-government, namely, the right of the community, to tax the community, for the benefit of the community. But an analysis of the facts will reveal the unsoundness of this argument; the fallacy lying in the ambiguous word "assessment." "Assessment" is the term commonly used to denote both of the two processes essential to taxation by rate, namely, first the *valuation*, and secondly what one must call for want of a special name the *assessment proper*—two operations which are really entirely distinct and different in character.

To make a valuation of a holding means simply to make an estimate of its annual rental value—a strictly scientific operation from which any personal or arbitrary element is (or ought to be) entirely excluded. The actual rental value of a particular holding in a particular town in a particular year may possibly be very difficult to determine, but still it is *ex hypothesi* some exact sum of rupees, annas and pies; a fixed and not a variable quantity; the *x*, so to speak, of an equation, each of whose other factors can theoretically have its value exactly calculated.

An assessment properly so called on the other hand is an operation of an entirely different character. It involves *first* a decision as to the kinds of taxes to be levied, *secondly* a decision as to the percentage on the valuation (previously ascertained) at which each such tax should be levied, and *thirdly* a decision as to the exemption or reduction in the amount of the taxes realizable that should be granted in particular cases where exaction at the full rate would cause undue hardship to the ratepayers concerned. Now, in this operation the personal and arbitrary elements obviously figure very largely: at each of its stages perfectly legitimate differences of opinion may arise among the Commissioners as to the course which will best serve the present and future interests of the municipality; and the law provides that in each such case the decision arrived at by the majority of the Commissioners shall be carried into effect.

To put the matter into a nutshell, the valuation of a municipality is a scientific operation with which the feelings of the ratepayers and the opinions of individual Commissioners have *nothing* whatever to do; the assessment on the other hand is an operation which is controlled mainly by considerations of policy, with which the feelings of the ratepayers and the opinions of individual Commissioners have *everything* to do. A correct valuation is, of course, the indispensable basis of a good assessment: but a good assessment means an assessment which, besides being based on a correct valuation, is, in addition, adequate, well-balanced and considerate. A valuation is a valuation and nothing else, and absolutely the only virtue possible to it is to be correct.

If this distinction is borne in mind, there will be no difficulty in perceiving that a suggestion which affects the operation of valuation only, and leaves untouched the operation of assessment (as above defined), cannot be said to infringe any principle of local self-government. And it follows therefore that the only reasonable question to ask with regard to the suggestion now under discussion is—*Does it offer a practical means of securing a more correct valuation than is possible under present conditions?*

Now there are certain conditions which any particular method of valuation must comply with if the resultant valuation statement is to be accepted as complete and correct. The more obvious of these conditions may be formulated somewhat as follows—*first*, the valuing agency must possess expert knowledge; *secondly*, no local influences must be brought to bear upon it when engaged on the valuation; *thirdly*, its working must be subject to some supervision or check; and *fourthly*, the final results of its work must not be liable to modification by any "outside" (i. e. non-expert) authority.

This combination of conditions, even if it is not exhaustive, covers the field sufficiently well to serve quite adequately as a test of the merits of different methods of valuation; and in order to compare the proposed method of valuation with the existing method, it will be sufficient to take each of these four conditions

in turn and see how far it is complied with by the existing method and the proposed method respectively.

The procedure of the existing method has been described in the article "Assessment" above (pp 130-4). It is briefly as follows : Every five years the Commissioners appoint a valuing agency which may be either, (a) the Ward Commissioners (each Commissioner valuing his own ward), or (b) a sub-committee of Commissioners (to value all the wards), or (c) the ordinary municipal assessment staff, or (d) an officer or officers borrowed from the Local Government—this last being an agency very rarely employed. The valuation statement submitted by this agency, whatever it may be, is scrutinized by the Chairman, who can, and generally does, make reductions either wholesale, *i.e.*, so much per cent all round, or in detail in connection with the valuation of individual holdings, or both. "Reduction" is said advisedly ; enhancement being practically impossible, as a valuation enhanced by the Chairman could scarcely be upheld before the Appeals committee in the face of the opinion of Commissioners' own valuing authority. The statement thus modified is then published as the official valuation statement, and every ratepayer has the right of appeal against his valuation. These appeals are heard by a specially appointed committee of the Commissioners called the Appeals committee, which deals with them individually, and reduces the valuation as it thinks fit (enhancement being prohibited by law). The order of this Appeals committee is final.

Now to turn to the proposed method—the method of valuation by the District Revenue authorities.

An obviously suitable agency lies ready to hand in the shape of the "Land Acquisition" establishment which forms part of the staff of every District Officer. In every district there is a Deputy Collector specially empowered to exercise the function of a valuer with regard to property acquired from private owners for Government and public bodies and companies under the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act. He is assisted by a more or less numerous trained subordinate staff, and could under-

take a municipal valuation without the slightest difficulty, the work being of precisely the same character as his local investigation work preliminary to the making of an award in a Land Acquisition project.

The outlines of a practical scheme might be as follows. At the time of the quinquennial revision an officer of the District staff subordinate to the Land Acquisition Deputy Collector to be appointed the Municipal Assessor (or more properly speaking the *Municipal Valuer*). In a small municipality he would be a *Cauungo*, and in a large municipality a Sub-Deputy Collector. This officer's duty to be, to make a valuation of all the holdings in the municipality in the manner prescribed by the Municipal Act. The valuation made and published, appeals to be received from individual ratepayers (as now) on the ground of over-valuation, and also from the Chairman of the municipality on the ground of *under-valuation*. These appeals to be decided locally by the Deputy Collector, sitting with two municipal Commissioners to help him, it being understood that the functions of these Commissioners are merely advisory, the responsibility for the decision resting with the Deputy Collector alone. The decision of the Deputy Collector is to be final, in the same way as the decision of the Appeals committee of the Commissioners is final under the law at present, the Civil Courts having no jurisdiction.

The valuation having been finally fixed by the Deputy Collector, the Commissioners would then enter the field and proceed to perform their function of making an *assessment* ; that is to say, to decide what taxes should be levied, and at what rates they should be levied, and what exemption from, or reduction of, taxation should be made in the case of individual ratepayers. The first two important matters would naturally be discussed and decided upon by the whole body of Commissioners in General Meeting ; the last matter, being concerned with details, would conveniently be considered by a special Assessment sub-committee whose recommendations would require the ratification of the General Meeting. And in regard to this last matter, it may be suggested that it would be advisable to give the Commissioners rather more

latitude than the law allows them at present. Suppose for instance, that there was a general feeling among the Commissioners that owners of residential premises residing on their own property should not be taxed as highly as tenants of rented properties, or that cultivated lands should not be taxed as highly as lands used for building sites, or that specially lenient treatment should be given to institutions of an educational or religious character; then it should be open to them, after recording their opinion to that effect, to reduce the amount of taxes realizable from the holdings in question. But it must be the *assessment* that would be reduced—not the *valuation*. The valuation would stand permanently on record; and when, on the holding changing hands or otherwise, the particular circumstances which led to the reduction of the assessment ceased to exist, the full assessment on that valuation would be automatically reverted to.

With the outlines of both methods of valuation—the existing and the proposed—before us, we may now proceed to take in turn each of the four conditions of correct valuation noted above, and see how far it is complied with by each of the two methods respectively.

1. *Expert knowledge*—Where the valuing agency is either a Ward Commissioner working singly or a general sub-committee of Commissioners, the existing system is out of court altogether under this head. As we have seen, a valuation is essentially a scientific operation, and in carrying it into effect no amount of local knowledge can make up for want of training and experience. The municipal staff too, must be pronounced decidedly inferior to the Land Acquisition department as an expert valuing agency; they are not in such constant practice, they are less strictly supervised and controlled, and the field from which they collect their data is a more restricted one. It is only in the rare case where a Government valuer is employed, that the existing system is not pronouncedly inferior to the proposed system under this head.

2. *Freedom from local influences*—Here we come upon one of the chief defects of the existing system. At the time of the quinquennial valuation local self-government exhibits itself in its

very worst aspect. Whether the valuing agency be the Commissioners themselves, or their staff, the pressure of local influences—religious, social, and partisan—exerted in order to induce it to reduce the valuations of individual ratepayers is so heavy and persistent, that the strongest and most conscientious find it almost impossible not to give way to some extent; while where the Commissioners or the staff are weak, the results are often nothing more or less than scandalous. Both the Land Acquisition staff and the Government valuer are however independent “foreign agencies,” and can afford to ignore improper influences of this description.

3. *Check on the valuing agency*—The absence of a proper check on the valuing agency is another serious defect of the existing system. A ratepayer may appeal to the Assessment committee against over-valuation; but no machinery whatever is provided for detecting or dealing with the not uncommon cases, in which through the carelessness or deliberate fraud of the valuing agency—Commissioners, municipal staff, or Government valuer, as the case may be—a holding is under-valued, or even omitted from the valuation list altogether. The suggested procedure on the other hand does supply this necessary check: the valuation made by the Sub-Deputy Collector or Canungo would be scrutinized by the permanent Assessment staff of the municipality, and cases of omission or apparent under-valuation reported to the Chairman; while *per contra* the routine work of the Assessment department would be, so to speak, placed on its trial every five years before an independent expert agency. This cross-check would render fraudulent under-valuation almost impossible.

4. *Arbitrary alteration of the Valuation Statement*—This condition is habitually violated by the Commissioners themselves when, sitting as an Appeals committee, they reduce individual valuations on illegitimate grounds, *i. e.*, grounds which have nothing to do with rental value, but which concern the circumstances, considered in their personal, social, or religious aspects, of the persons owning or occupying them at the time.

In every such case the figure left after the reduction has been effected stands as the actual rental value of the holding *for good*; the considerations which led to the reduction being unauthorized by the law, and therefore not capable of being placed on record. The result is, that where, as in most towns, this practice has been in force for a certain number of years, the "Valuation Statement," *quâ* valuation statement, is perfectly useless, and is, quite rightly, entirely disregarded by Civil and Revenue Courts when determining the values of houses and lands within municipal limits.

The existing system provides no means of checking this practice, the effects of which are highly detrimental both to the municipal finances and to the moral tone of the administration. The suggested procedure on the other hand would make such a practice impossible.

And herein lies the real explanation of the strong opposition invariably offered by municipal Commissioners to any suggestion to have the valuation carried through by an outside agency. They feel that it would mean depriving them of the power which, irregular and unauthorized though it be, they undoubtedly do possess and freely exercise at present, of alleviating in their discretion the burden of taxation for certain classes and certain individuals of the community.

And it was for this reason that in the suggested procedure, provision was made for giving the Commissioners an extended power of modifying the assessment in particular cases or classes of cases. It is after all not altogether unnatural that the Commissioners should wish to be in a position to discriminate in favour of deserving or necessitous ratepayers. At any rate, to allow them to do so in an open and aboveboard way, by the use of methods which permit of some check on their proceedings being exercised by public opinion, would surely be better policy than to force them, as at present, to have recourse to an irregular and utterly unsound expedient which seriously compromises the financial future of the municipality.

We may now sum up the results of this comparison, and we

may say that, as regards the last two of these four conditions, it is clear that the suggested procedure is superior to the existing procedure, whatever the valuing agency employed may be. And, as we have seen, it is equally superior as regards the first two conditions—except where an assessor borrowed from Government is employed. In this case (a very rare one), there would be nothing to choose between them.

There can be little hesitation therefore in coming to the conclusion that the proposed procedure would result in a much more correct valuation than is obtainable by the existing method: and this, of course, is the main point.

Further, the suggested procedure has been shewn not to conflict with any recognized principle of local self-government: and it is eminently practicable, inasmuch as it requires only a very slight alteration of the law, and employs a valuing agency which is already in existence. Nor would the cost be higher than that of a valuation under existing conditions properly carried out. On the contrary, it is reasonable to suppose that the Government would be able to give such concessions as would make it decidedly the cheaper of the two. In any case, the only appreciable cost would be the cost of the *original* valuation: the keeping-up of the routine Assessment registers, (see page 84 above) in a proper and systematic way, would make each succeeding quinquennial valuation a very simple and inexpensive business.

It may perhaps be thought that the question of valuation has been given too prominent a place among these suggestions, and has been discussed as too great a length. The writer's excuse must be, that his experience has convinced him that no single element of the municipal economy affects the success or reputation of a municipality so vitally as the valuation. A correct valuation, honestly given effect to, is the indispensable basis of the sound finance which can alone make a high standard of efficiency possible; whereas a sham "assessment" of the type which is too common under existing conditions, besides endangering the financial resources of the municipality, lowers the tone of the departments all round by the bad example it sets, and causes the pub-

lie to doubt (very reasonably) the general good faith of the administration.

4. Easier borrowing terms—

The rate of interest charged by the Local Government on loans taken by municipalities for expenditure on "permanent improvements" should be reduced, and the period of repayment extended.

The sentiment of local patriotism is still in an undeveloped state in India. There are very few signs of the existence of that feeling of pride in the town of one's birth or of one's adoption, which, in most other civilized countries, has led successive generations of citizens to impose burdens on themselves in order to make their towns finer and more convenient places of residence for their successors.

From the point of view of the Indian ratepayer, an increase in taxation for any purpose whatever is an abomination: it is bad enough when it yields an immediate return in the shape of more lamp-posts, more sweepers, and more watering-carts; but to raise his taxes in order to pay for a scheme of drainage or water-supply which may not be in working order for five years or so, is a manifest and intolerable piece of injustice. Among municipal Commissioners too—even among the most enlightened of them—very similar views prevail. There is a general feeling that the average municipality is so poor, that it can only just manage to provide the municipal "services" which are absolutely necessary—road repairing, conservancy, lighting and so forth—and that it is unreasonable to expect it to cut down the scanty amounts allotted to these services, in order to pay for a "permanent improvement" which the town has hitherto been very well able to do without.

The researches of the Decentralization Commission have recently brought into prominence this general disinclination on the part of Indian municipalities to contract Improvement loans;

and various theories have been put forward to account for it. Sir F. P. Lely in a note on municipalities printed as an addendum to the report of the Commission says " ... Mr. Meston, whose opinion is followed on this subject, lays stress on the desire of the tax-payers to reduce present burdens as far as possible. He might also have given them credit for a reluctance to tie up their surplus revenue in one or perhaps two projects, so as to deprive themselves of the power to undertake other, even minor, improvements in the interval." And again " ... the obligation of paying off a necessary loan in twenty years is crippling and unjust to the men of the present day."

As regards the origin of this feeling of reluctance to borrow, opinions may differ: one may hold, that its principal cause is either poverty (as municipal Commissioners themselves would say), or a disinclination to burden themselves for the benefit of posterity (as Mr. Meston thinks), or a prudent resolve not to embarrass their finances (as Sir F. Lely thinks), or perhaps (as the writer ventures to suggest), a vague disbelief in, and dislike of, the methods of modern sanitary science. But as regards the existence of the feeling, and of its universality, there can be no question at all. And it may fairly be said of permanent improvement schemes in general, as it has been said above of schemes of sanitary reform in particular, that "nine out of ten schemes which have been carried into effect have been pushed through by the official influence aforesaid (i.e., the influence of the executive and medical authorities of the district), in the face of more or less active opposition on the part of the communities they were designed to benefit."

Now although this official influence is on the wane, and has apparently been doomed by the powers that be to a more or less rapid extinction, it is noteworthy that nothing has been provided to take its place. When it goes therefore, and municipalities are left to work out their own salvation on their own lines, one may expect to find a considerable decrease in the rate of expenditure on permanent improvements, unless the raising of the necessary capital is made a much easier matter than it is at present.

The Decentralization Commission has recognized this difficulty, and proposes to solve it by putting into force a scheme, in which a wholesale abolition of the contributions now demanded by Government from municipalities is combined with a liberal system of subventions and grants-in-aid—the whole additional cost to be borne by Government.

The Commission summarizes its proposals as follows:—
 “... the Government should relieve them,” *i.e.*, the municipalities, “of any charges they now have to incur in regard to secondary education, hospitals at district head-quarters, famine relief, police, veterinary work, &c., nor should they contribute for services which are made Provincial, or be made to devote specific proportions of their income to particular objects. We do not propose to relieve them from plague charges, but where these are heavy the Government should contribute substantially. While we do not propose that municipalities should receive any regular subvention from Government, corresponding to the twenty-five per cent on the land cess given to rural boards, they should receive assistance in respect to specially large projects, such as those concerned with drainage or water supply; and in the case of the poorer municipalities some subvention for general purposes will probably be required. Grants of this latter description should, as in the case of rural boards, be of a practically permanent character.”

Now it is quite obvious that the additional expense which the acceptance of this scheme would entail upon Local Governments would be very heavy indeed—heavier perhaps than they would be willing to bear. Moreover, (if one may venture to criticize so high an authority) it is doubtful whether the advantages resulting from the scheme would prove to be at all commensurate with its cost. Two unsatisfactory features of the scheme strike one at once.

First—There is nothing to ensure that the additional funds placed in the hands of the municipalities by relieving them of all financial responsibility for secondary education, famine relief, and medical and veterinary work, and by paying them regular subventions, shall be spent on permanently improving the town,

or even improving what the Commission calls “its normal services.”

From what one knows of the ways of Indian municipalities, one may prophesy with a good deal of confidence, that in a great many cases practically the whole of this extra amount would go, in one way or another, towards reducing the existing rates and taxes.

Second—The scheme proposes not only to perpetuate, but also to regularize and extend the existing system of Government doles.

Surely this is a move in the wrong direction? Even as it is, Indian municipalities tend to rely on Government assistance to an excessive degree. One knows of many cases in which the municipal authorities have sat with folded hands, watching their affairs go from bad to worse without making an effort to improve them, in the comfortable expectation that sooner or later a visit from the Head of the province would give them an opportunity of representing their desperate condition, and of extracting from him an eleemosynary grant. This attitude of “mere mendicancy” (as it has been termed by the present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal) is entirely out of harmony with the “self-government” idea. And it is very doubtful whether the cause of self-government would be advanced by “emancipating” the municipalities with one hand, while pauperizing them with the other: for the proposals of the Commission, especially the proposal to grant “in the case of the poorer municipalities some subvention towards normal services” undoubtedly does tend in the direction of pauperization, *i.e.* of granting pecuniary relief in proportion to the degree of poverty claimed and proved by the recipient.

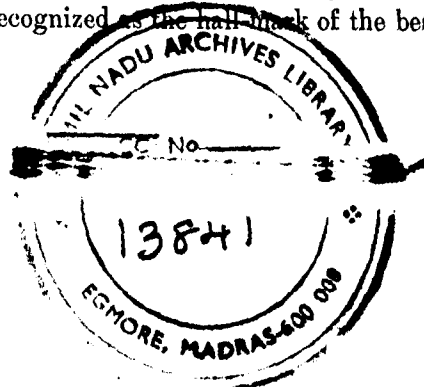
It must be remembered too, that the actual degree of poverty to which any particular municipality has sunk is practically unascertainable under the present system; the device of a “sham assessment” described above rendering it quite possible for a municipality shewing a taxation of three annas in the rupee to be in reality more lightly taxed than a municipality which shews a taxation of half that amount. Even under existing conditions

the inducements offered to a municipality to be virtuous, and thrifty, and to tax itself for its own good, rather than to be improvident, and slack, and to trust to Government's eventually pulling it out of the hole, are not as strong as they might be. The scheme proposed by the Commission would make them very much weaker still.

In the writer's opinion, the adoption of a policy of making regular subventions *towards normal services* would be a serious mistake. An ordinary municipality in ordinary circumstances, *i. e.*, when not suffering from the effects of some natural calamity such as a flood, a fire, or a pestilence, should undoubtedly be able to find the money necessary for the performance of these services. If it professes itself unable to do so, the presumption is that there is something badly wrong with its assessment, or with its method of dealing with the municipal funds, or with both.

Permanent improvements stand on a different footing altogether. Everywhere there is urgent need for them—for broader roads, better drains, an increased water-supply, and more public gardens and squares. And in assisting municipalities to provide themselves with these good things, the Local Governments need set no limit to their generosity. But their assistance should be given, not so much in the form of *gifts, i. e.* grants-in-aid, as in the form of *loans* on the easiest possible terms. The present rate of interest on such loans is four per cent; let it be reduced to two, or even one, per cent: the present maximum period for repayment is twenty years; let it be extended to thirty, forty, or even sixty years, in accordance with the character of the improvement concerned.

Such a policy would consult the truest interests of the cause of local self-government. It would encourage municipalities to form the habit of sacrificing the interests of the present to the interests of the future; and at the same time, it would not stand in the way of the development of that spirit of sturdy self-reliance which has always been recognized as the hall-mark of the best sort of civic administration.



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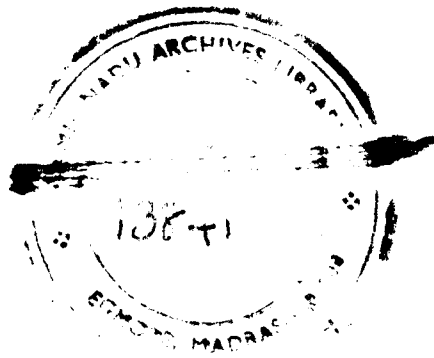
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PREFACE.

This little work, which embodies the results of the author's ten years' experience of municipal administration in various parts of the two provinces of Bengal, has been written in the hope that it may be found useful by Municipal Commissioners and others who are engaged in working out the many problems incident to the operation of European methods of local self-government under Oriental conditions.

The book has no pretensions to giving anything more than the outlines of the theory and practice of Indian municipal administration as it exists to-day ; and the only merit the author claims for it, is that of setting forth honestly and without reservations both the facts as he has found them, and the conclusions to which they have led him.

His best thanks are due to his friends Mr. A. Hale, M.I.C.E., Engineer of the Howrah Municipality, and Mr. K. N. Tagore, B.A., Secretary of the same Municipality, for much valuable assistance and advice—always most freely and cheerfully given.

MAGISTRATE'S HOUSE, HOWRAH

30th November, 1909.

H. S. F.

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