

CHAPTER XIII

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

DISTRICT BOARD

EXCLUSIVE of municipal areas the area of the district is 2,669 square miles, inhabited by 1,438,443 persons, and within this the management of local affairs, such as the maintenance of roads, bridges, ferries, and pounds, the control of village sanitation and water-supply, and the provision of medical relief, is vested in the District Board with the Local Boards and Union Committees under it. The Burdwan District Board consists of 19 members including the Chairman, who is the Magistrate of the district. Of the remaining 18 members 6 are elected and 12 nominated by Government, 4 of whom hold their appointment *ex-officio*. The Board is thoroughly representative and at present 6 members are pleaders or mukhtars, 6 are Government servants, 4 representative of the landed interest and 3 are classified as miscellaneous.

INCOME

For the period of ten years ending 1902-03, the average annual income of the Board was Rs. 3,03,000; and by 1906-07 this had risen to Rs. 3,86,000. This income was mainly derived from the local rate (road cess) Rs. 1,62,000; pounds Rs. 9,000; ferries Rs. 9,000; and other sources Rs. 60,000, and included Rs. 1,44,000 contributed by Government. The Government contribution, however, includes the allotment for Government works executed by the District Board. Excluding the opening balance the receipts for the year 1907-08 amounted to Rs. 3,80,000, including Rs. 1,70,000 realized from road cess, Rs. 1,59,000 contributed from Provincial revenues as contribution to the Board and on account of Government works executed by it, Rs. 10,000 obtained from ferries, and Rs. 10,000 from

pounds. Here, as elsewhere, the road cess is the principal head of receipt, but the taxation is not heavy, amounting to annas two per head of the population.

EXPENDITURE

The average annual expenditure during the ten years ending 1902-03 was Rs. 2,98,000 of which Rs. 1,88,000 was spent on civil works, Rs. 51,000 on education and Rs. 4,000 on medical relief. During the five years ending in 1906-07, it amounted to Rs. 3,91,000 the chief heads being civil works (including Government works undertaken by the Board) Rs. 2,58,000, education Rs. 60,000 and medical Rs. 10,000. In 1907-08 the expenditure was Rs. 3,28,000, of which about two-thirds, Rs. 2,32,000, was expended on civil works (including Government works); education Rs. 55,035 and medical Rs. 12,857 being the other principal heads of expenditure.

The maintenance of communications is the heaviest charge on the income of the District Board, which now maintains 203 miles of metalled and 298 miles of unmetalled roads, in addition to a large number of village tracks with a total length of 654 miles. The cost of maintenance in 1907-08 was Rs. 327, Rs. 67 and Rs. 14 per mile for these three classes of roads, respectively. Besides these about 100 miles of Provincial roads are maintained by the Board, the cost being met from funds allotted by Government. The Board also maintains 8 Middle schools, and aids 78 Middle, 218 Upper Primary, and 1,005 Primary schools, and employs 14 Inspecting Pandits to supervise the management and expenditure of the schools. It also maintains a technical school at Burdwan, under its direct management, with annual contributions of Rs. 240 from the Burdwan Municipality and of Rs. 360 from Government. In all a little more than 6 per cent of the ordinary income of the Board was expended during the year on medical relief and sanitation. Ten permanent dispensaries and five temporary fever dispensaries are entirely maintained by it, and grants-in-aid are also made to four Municipal dispensaries. The expenditure includes

the cost of special measures taken to provide gratuitous medical relief to the people on the outbreak of epidemic diseases. A veterinary dispensary is also maintained at Burdwan.

LOCAL BOARDS

Under the District Board there are four Local Boards in this district, which are entrusted with the maintenance of the village roads, pounds, ferries and primary education within each subdivision of the district. For these purposes they receive fixed allotments from the District Board. The Burdwan Local Board consists of 15 members, and the three other Local Boards of 9 members each. Of the members two-thirds are elected and one-third nominated by Government, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Boards being elected by the members. At present the Chairman of the Asansol, Katwa and Kalna Local Boards are the subdivisional officers, who have been elected *ex-officio*, while the Chairman of the Burdwan Local Board is a non-official.

UNION COMMITTEES

There are at present six Union Committees in the district at Memari, Mankur, Srikhanda, Sribati, Baidyapur and

Name of Union Committee	Area in square miles	Population.	Bagnapara. The marginal table shows the area and population of each union. Each of these committees is administered by a Board of 9 members, and they are entrusted with the administration of the village roads within their jurisdiction.
Memari	... 12	10,323	
Mankur	... 12	10,473	
Srikhanda	... 8	8,500	
Sribati	... 10	11,300	
Baidyapur	... 10	5,922	
Bagnapara	... 10	7,160	

Hitherto the Union Committees have not displayed much activity and their income and expenditure had been in many years merely nominal. But the scope of work of the Union Committees has been much widened by the recent amendment of the Local Self-Government Act, and much useful work may be expected from them in the future.

MUNICIPALITIES

There are at present six municipalities in the district, Burdwan, Katwa, Kalna, Dainhat, Raniganj and Asansol. The Burdwan Municipality was established in 1865; and the municipalities at Kalna, Katwa and Dainhat in 1869; that at Raniganj was established in 1876, while the Asansol Municipality, which is now the second largest in the district, was established so recently as 1896.

BURDWAN

The Burdwan Municipality covers an area of 8.4 square miles and includes 38,691 people, of whom 8,076 or 20.87 are rate-payers. It is administered by 22 Commissioners, 15 of whom are elected and 7 nominated by Government, 2 being appointed by virtue of their office. During the ten years ending in 1902-03, the average annual income and expenditure of the municipality was Rs. 1,02,000, and Rs. 1,14,000, respectively, and by 1906-07 they had risen to Rs. 1,32,000 and Rs. 1,32,000. In 1908-09 the income amounted to Rs. 1,29,000 the principal heads of receipt being the tax on houses and lands, which is here levied at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent Rs. 41,000; water-rate, Rs. 26,000; conservancy Rs. 18,000; and grants and contributions from Government and other sources Rs. 15,000. The incidence of taxation and of income per head of population was Rs. 2-8-9, and Rs.3-5-6, respectively. During the same year the total expenditure amounted to Rs. 1,20,000, which was distributed mainly under the following heads: Establishment 7.41 per cent.; Lighting 4.46 per cent.; Water-supply 15.53 per cent.; Drainage 1.6 per cent.; Medical 11.8 per cent.; Public Works 15.07 per cent.; and Education 6.69 per cent. Burdwan, which was formerly considered one of the healthiest and most prosperous towns in the Province, suffered very severely from the epidemic of fever which ravaged the district between 1862 and 1874. It has been estimated that more than half of the inhabitants died or left the town during these disastrous years. Although the health conditions are now much improved, the town is still badly drained and,

at certain seasons of the year, suffers severely from fever. The houses for the most part drain into the shallow tanks and depressions from which the materials for their construction were excavated and these tanks in many cases become veritable cess-pools, obstructing the natural drainage, and are a great source of danger to the public health. A surface drainage scheme which will cost some 6 lakhs of rupees has been prepared for the town. The Maharaja has promised to contribute Rs. 50,000 towards the cost of the work and Government has promised to make a similar contribution. The municipal finances, however, are not very prosperous, and it is improbable that the scheme will be taken up soon.

The most successful feature of the municipal administration is the water-works. These were constructed during the year 1884-85 at a cost of Rs. 2,35,500. Of this amount Government contributed Rs. 50,000 as a grant, and Rs. 11,000 as the price of the old sluice at Jujuti which was taken over from the Municipality, and the Maharaja of Burdwan made a similar contribution while the balance of Rs. 1,24,500 was raised by loan in the open market. Most of the loan has now been repaid. The management is in the hands of a special sub-committee of the Municipality, which includes among its members the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Civil Surgeon, the District Superintendent of Police, and an Engineer of the East Indian Railway. The supply is drawn from the Damodar river. The pumping station is situated some $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-west of the town and has four engines, three boilers, one intake with a roughing filter, five high level settling tanks, two low level settling tanks, five filter beds with a daily capacity of 875,000 gallons. The average daily consumption is 413,000 gallons or 12.9 gallons per head; and the total income and expenditure during 1908-09 was Rs. 26,000 and Rs. 18,000, respectively. Generally speaking the quality of the water supplied is good, but when the Damodar falls during the hot weather, the supply has occasionally to be taken from the Banka. At this season of the year this river is practically

an open drain and receives all the drainage of the villages on its banks, and in addition the supply of water is often very insufficient. In order to ensure a constant supply of Damodar water, it would be necessary to construct a weir across that river below the sluice. This project has frequently been proposed, but there are very serious engineering difficulties to be overcome and the cost would be prohibitive. In spite of this defect the water-supply has been of enormous benefit to the townspeople and is undoubtedly the chief cause of the recent marked improvement in their health. The only portion of the town which is not supplied with water is that lying to the south of the Banka river and a project for extending the water-supply to this quarter is under discussion.

RANIGANJ

The total population of Raniganj at the last census was 16,398 and of this number 1,692 or 10.3 are rate-payers. The Municipality is administered by 12 Commissioners, eight being elected and four nominated. The town is a busy centre of trade and contains, besides a small Railway settlement, Messrs. Burn and Company's pottery works which employ nearly a thousand operatives, the Bengal Paper Mills, and several oil and flour mills. Formerly it was the centre of the coal industry and the Bengal Coal Company still has its head office at Egara near the town and works several mines in the immediate neighbourhood. Some workings which have been made over to Messrs. Burn & Company are actually being carried under the town itself. The town is thickly populated; almost all the buildings are of brick and in good order, and the roads are well maintained. The water-supply is derived from a large number of wells, both private and public, and the Municipality has also leased several tanks in different parts of the town in order to provide water for the public as the present supply is inadequate. The income and expenditure for 1907-08 were Rs. 18,528 and Rs. 21,249. The income is principally derived from the rate on holdings, which is levied at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the annual valuation, and the conservancy rate. Nearly one-third of the

expenditure is spent on conservancy, and about one-fifth on medical relief. For the past 15 years the income and expenditure have practically balanced each other and the Municipality has no funds to spare for new projects.

KATWA

The Municipality of Katwa, which was established on the 1st April 1869, is administered by a Municipal Board composed of 12 Commissioners, of whom eight are elected and four nominated by Government, one of the latter being appointed *ex-officio*. The area within municipal limits in 1908 was one square mile, and the number of rate-payers was 2,385 or 33.03 per cent of the whole population, with an average incidence of taxation of Re. 1-1-2 per head of the population.

During the five years ending in 1906-07, the average annual income and expenditure of the Municipality were Rs. 10,200 and Rs. 10,800 respectively, and in 1907-08 the annual income excluding the opening balance amounted to Rs. 12,500. The chief sources of income are the tax on persons levied at twelve annas per cent on the circumstances and properties of the rate-payers, from which Rs. 4,700 was realized in 1907-08, and the conservancy rate which brought in Rs. 2,100 in the same year.

The expenditure for the same year was Rs. 13,000, excluding Rs. 2,400 expended on the repayment of loans, advances and deposits, the principal heads being conservancy and medical, which accounted for 39.59 and 11.83 per cent of the total expenditure. The Municipality maintains a charitable dispensary. The roads are mostly metalled, but very narrow and skirted by masonry drains. A drainage scheme, which is estimated to cost Rs. 77,000 has been prepared for the town and will be taken up as soon as funds permit.

KALNA

The Kalna Municipality was established in 1869 and is administered by a Board of 15 Commissioners, of whom

ten are elected and five are nominated. The area within municipal limits in 1908 was two square miles, and the average incidence of taxation in 1907-08 was Re. 1-13-7 per head of the population. The average annual income and expenditure of the Municipality during the five years ending in 1906-07 were Rs. 14,000 and Rs. 13,900, respectively. In 1907-08, the income was Rs. 15,000; the chief sources being the tax on persons which brought in Rs. 4,900 and the conservancy rate which brought in Rs. 3,500. During the same year the expenditure was Rs. 14,000, of which sum Rs. 4,700 was spent on conservancy and Rs. 2,100 on road repairs. A drainage scheme for the town, which is estimated to cost Rs. 36,000, has been prepared under the supervision of the Assistant Sanitary Engineer. The northern portion of the town is thickly populated, and is better provided with roads and drains than the southern and interior portions. In these quarters the waste lands, and depopulated homesteads, the silted up tanks and depressions full of rubbish of all sorts bear eloquent witness to the decline of trade and the decay of prosperity. The trade is now, however, increasing, and the Municipality may expect better times.

DAINHAT

The Municipality of Dainhat, which was established on the 1st April 1869, is administered by a Municipal Board composed of 12 Commissioners, of whom 8 are elected and 4 nominated by Government, 1 being appointed *ex-officio*. The area within municipal limits was nearly 4 square miles in 1908, several villages with a total area of 2 square miles having been included within the Municipality in 1900. The number of rate-payers is 1,270 or 22.6 per cent of population, and the average incidence of taxation in 1907-08 was annas 1-10 per head. In 1907-08, the income aggregated Rs. 4,870 excluding an opening balance of Rs. 713. The income was mainly derived from the tax on persons, which brought in Rs. 2,379, and the conservancy rate which brought in Rs. 429. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 4,743, the principal heads being general establishment, conservancy,

medical and public works, which accounted for 15.6, 31.6, 24.3 and 11.2 of the total expenditure, respectively. The supply of drinking water is mainly from the river Bhagirathi and when the stream dries up in the hot season, is very deficient. Most of the roads are unmetalled. The Municipality maintains a charitable dispensary.

ASANSOL

Asansol is the second largest Municipality in the district and is administered by a Municipal Board composed of 12 Commissioners nominated by Government, of whom 7 are appointed *ex-officio*. The Municipality was established in 1896, and in 1904 an additional area of 1.48 square miles was included in it. The area within municipal limits at present is 3.73 square miles. The number of rate-payers in 1908 was 2,312 or 12.8 per cent of the population, and the average incidence of taxation was Re. 1-2-1 per head of population. The average annual income during the five years ending 1907-07 was Rs. 19,000, and the expenditure was Rs. 18,000. In 1907-08, the income excluding the opening balance amounted to Rs. 24,000 and was mainly derived from the rate on holding at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the annual value of the holding, which brought in Rs. 14,000, and the conservancy rate which brought in Rs. 4,900. The expenditure in the same year was Rs. 26,000, the principal items of expenditure being drainage, conservancy, and public works, which accounted for 12.04, 56.0, and 13.6, respectively, of the total amount. Drainage and water-supply schemes are awaiting adequate funds.