

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT.

#### DISTRICT AND LOCAL BOARDS.

##### *District Board.*

*History.*—The provisions of the Bengal Local Self-Government Act were extended to the district of Champaran in 1887 and in the same year the District Board was first established here. The Board then consisted of 17 members. The District Magistrate was *ex-officio* a member of the Board and was its Chairman up to 1924. In 1905-06 Government servants and the European planters predominated on the Board, 35 per cent being Government servants and 57 per cent planters while the land holding class accounted for the rest. In 1923-24, the Board consisted of 21 members of whom 6 were *ex-officio*, 5 nominated and 10 elected and altogether there were 10 Europeans on the Board. In 1924 the provisions of the Bihar and Orissa Amendment Act, 1923 came into force and the first election took place. This time the strength of the members was raised to 36, of whom 4 were *ex-officio*, 5 nominated and 27 elected. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman were non-official and elected. By this time the local branch of the Indian National Congress had come into prominence as a political body and a number of Congress men got themselves elected to the Board and had a predominating influence on it up to 1930. In the election of 1930 the Board was captured by non-Congressmen and the Board remained under them till 1940. In 1941 the Congress members again captured the Board, but resigned enblock in the same year in December, according to the directive of the High Command of the Indian National Congress. In the bye-election that was held in 1942 the Board went back to the hands of non-Congressmen. In the election of the Board in June, 1947 it was captured by Congressmen. The present strength of the Board is of 36 members, of whom 27 are elected, 6 nominated and 3 *ex-officio*. There has been no general election since 1947 and the same Board as constituted in 1947 had continued till the Board was vested in Government in 1958.

The District Board has the responsibility of construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, its own buildings for hospital and staff. It also maintains pounds and ferries, runs hospitals and dispensaries for men and animals both and maintains a public health department for the benefit of the people. Earlier it also used to construct and maintain school buildings and impart education up to Middle standard but since May, 1954 the management of education has been taken over by the Government, from the District Board to a great extent.

In 1956-57 the Board maintained 49 miles and 5 furlongs of metalled, 3 miles and 2 furlongs of black top roads and 1,127 miles

and 1 furlong of unmetalled roads. It maintained 4 allopathic hospitals, 23 allopathic dispensaries and 24 *Ayurvedic* dispensaries and 4, homeopathic dispensaries. Besides, it was subsidising 3 allopathic, 62 *Ayurvedic*, 5 *Unani*, 1 naturopathic and 42 homeopathic dispensaries. The Board also maintained 8 veterinary dispensaries in that year. The number of educational institutions maintained by the Board in 1954 was 54 Managed Middle Schools and 16 aided schools, including those which were receiving only Government dearness allowance. In 1956-57 the Board maintained 69 wells and 22 tube-wells. There were two Dak Bungalows and 16 Inspection Bungalows under the Board, a list of which is given at the end of this chapter as Appendix 'A'.

*Income.*—The average income of the Board during the ten years ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 1,41,000, of which Rs. 89,000 were derived from rates, and during the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 it amounted to Rs. 1,48,000. In 1905-06 the income was Rs. 2,28,000, including Rs. 87,000 from Provincial rates, Rs. 13,500 contributed from Provincial revenues, Rs. 11,000 from tolls on ferries and Rs. 10,000 from pounds.

In 1922-23 the income from rates had increased to Rs. 3,05,035, since when it appears to have shown decrease till 1941-42, and the total income went up to Rs. 4,52,739. The income from ferries after 1924, when it was Rs. 29,680, increased to Rs. 46,018 in 1931-32, the reason being the transfer of control of six valuable ferries to the Board. In 1931-32 income from pounds had also increased to Rs. 15,866.

In 1929-30, which is chosen as being the last year before the Civil disobedience campaign and economic depression, the total receipts of the Board were Rs. 6,50,697, the most important items being rates Rs. 3,01,563; pounds Rs. 16,786; school fees Rs. 22,600; Government grant, educational, Rs. 1,95,340; Government grant, medical, Rs. 18,185; Medical, other contributions, Rs. 10,819; Ferries Rs. 32,724 and Government grant for Civil Works Rs. 15,000.

In 1941-42, the total receipts of the District Board were Rs. 6,96,218, the most important items being rates Rs. 2,79,732; pounds Rs. 11,760; school fees Rs. 35,240; ferries Rs. 33,782; Government grant, educational, Rs. 1,95,340; Government grant, medical, Rs. 24,966; medical, other contributions, Rs. 13,920; and Government grant for Civil Works Rs. 39,221.

The total receipts of the Board in 1941-42 were although more than 1929-30, but the receipt under the head 'rates' showed a considerable drop, the reason for which may be ascribed to the lamentable depression of the preceding thirties.

In 1951-52 the total receipts of the Board were Rs. 23,69,102, an increase of more than three hundred per cent over that of 1941-42. The most important items of receipts were rates Rs. 5,65,004, ferries

and pounds Rs. 1,16,352; school fees Rs. 70,812; Government grant, educational, Rs. 7,57,262 Government grant, medical Rs. 41,587 and Government grant for Civil Works Rs. 2,68,836.

The most spectacular increase was noticeable in the items of rates, pounds and ferries, school fees and Government grant for education and civil works. The income from rates increased because the cess rate was increased from one anna to two annas in a rupee during 1944 and 1949, the increase from pounds and ferries is subject to wide fluctuations as they are settled by auction. The increase under the school fees was chiefly on account of increased number of scholars with the opening of more schools. The Government grant for education had to be increased as the pay of the teachers had been increased, and the increased grant for civil works was the necessary outcome of the post-war road reconstruction programme.

The average annual receipts of the Board during the quinquennium ending in 1955-56 were Rs. 19,00,628, the receipt under the most important items being Rs. 5,30,866 for rates; Rs. 4,90,451 for education; Rs. 88,191 for pounds and ferries; Rs. 1,32,727 for medical; Rs. 2,64,858 for civil works; and Rs. 3,33,800 for deposits and advances.

The average receipts of the Board had fallen down as compared to that of 1951-52 on account of the fact that there has been a steep fall under certain major heads of receipt such as pounds and ferries, education, and civil works and deposits and advances. In 1953-54 all the important ferries of the District Board were taken over by the Government, which resulted into a sudden drop in the receipt from Rs. 1,01,230 in the preceding year to Rs. 36,064 in that year and since then it has continued to be low excepting in 1955-56. Similarly, in 1954-55 the responsibility of education was taken over by the State and there was a receipt of only minus Rs. 303 in the year, which came to nil in 1955-56, as against Rs. 8,61,343 in the preceding year. The deposits and advances fell down to Rs. 1,07,740 in 1954-55 from Rs. 5,26,232 in 1953-54 and was only Rs. 1,39,204 in 1955-56. This is an amount deposited mainly by the contractors for civil works programme. In 1953-54 the amount under this head was very heavy as compared to the value of actual works programme and naturally it fell in 1954-55. In 1955-56 the value of the works to be executed was itself very low and did not attract much money under this head. So far the head civil works is concerned, there has been spectacular fall in the years 1953-54 and 1955-56, the amount in the former being Rs. 1,34,619 as against Rs. 4,62,838 in the immediately preceding year, and that in the latter being Rs. 80,766 as compared to Rs. 3,21,778 in the immediately preceding year. The drop in 1953-54 is the reflection of coming to a close of the post-war road reconstruction programme and that of 1955-56 is the outcome of the stoppage of a lump sum grant in 1954-55 for road reconstruction under the First Five-Year Plan.

*Expenditure.*—The average annual expenditure during the year ending in 1901-02 was Rs. 1,39,000 of which Rs. 82,000 were expended on civil works, Rs. 5,000 on medical relief and Rs. 19,000 on education. During the quinquennium ending in 1904-05 the expenditure averaged Rs. 1,44,000 per annum, and in 1905-06 it amounted to Rs. 1,80,000 leaving the large balance of Rs. 1,09,000. By far the largest income of the Board was spent on civil works, the amount being over Rs. 1,27,000 in 1905-06. After civil works education was the main head of expenditure, the amount being Rs. 28,000 in 1905-06.

In 1929-30 the heaviest expenditure was on education, the amount being Rs. 2,59,000; next item was civil works, the amount being Rs. 2,33,000, the third item was medical and sanitation, the amount being Rs. 83,066; and the fourth item was office establishment and contingencies, the amount being Rs. 27,013. The heavy expenditure on education and public health was partly because the district needed them badly, and partly because there was a fundamental change in the constitution of the Board, the influence of the official nominees being replaced by the elected representatives, most of whom belonged to the Congress Party which had evinced a keen interest in the welfare of the people.

In 1941-42 education continued to take the largest share of the total expenditure the amount being Rs. 2,52,777. The expenditure on civil works was Rs. 1,77,492, on medical and public health Rs. 1,24,000, on office establishment and contingencies Rs. 28,501, on superannuation including provident fund Rs. 11,893 and on printing Rs. 5,370. The amount of total expenditure was Rs. 6,85,725.

As compared to 1929-30 there was no particular change in the amount of any item of expenditure excepting public health and civil works, the former having been increased and the latter decreased. With the opening of a separate public health section under the District Board in charge of a District Health Officer since 1930, it was only natural that the expenditure on this item should have increased. So far civil works is concerned, it had already had enough share previously and the limited resources of the Board was applied towards other urgently needed services.

In 1951-52 the total expenditure of the Board was Rs. 25,61,187, of which Rs. 8,24,172 were spent on education; Rs. 6,49,932 on civil works; Rs. 4,33,447 on medical and public health; Rs. 4,74,628 on debts, deposits and advances; Rs. 80,389 on office establishment and contingencies; Rs. 40,201 on pension and provident fund; and Rs. 12,115 on printing.

There was a spiral rise in the total expenditure of the Board as compared to the expenditure of 1941-42. This heavy expenditure was partly an outcome of the post-war inflationary period and partly

on account of other reasons. The pay of the teachers had been enhanced and there had also been considerable increase in the number of schools during the past decade. These two factors were responsible for the increase in the expenditure on education. The post-war road reconstruction programme to bring roads to the pre-war level necessitated enhanced expenditure on civil works. On the medical and public health front an Interim Urban and Rural Public Health Organisation programme was launched in 1951-52 to combat epidemics, which necessitated increased Public Health Staff for mass inoculation and disinfection of wells in greater number and hence, the heavy expenditure. The increased expenditure on office establishment was partly on account of enhanced pay of the staff and partly on account of expansion in the number of staff itself.

The average expenditure during the quinquennium ending in 1955-56 was Rs. 19,78,266, the amount of important items being Rs. 5,29,930 on education; Rs. 4,40,863 on medical and public health, Rs. 4,95,928 on civil works; Rs. 3,43,364 on debts, deposits and advances; and Rs. 75,324 on general administration.

The average quinquennial expenditure on every item, excepting medical and public health, was lower than 1951-52. All the factors responsible for lower average income were also responsible for lower average expenditure.

#### *Local Boards.*

There are two Local Boards in the district, that is Bettiah Local Board and Motihari or Sadar Local Board. Both the Local Boards are under the supervision of the District Board. The Local Boards manage pounds and look after the more important village roads which have been taken on the schedule as Local Board Roads. Prior to May, 1954, they also managed primary schools but since then they have been relieved of this duty.

Prior to 1924 the Motihari Local Board consisted of 3 *ex-officio* and 7 nominated members and the Chairman was the Subdivisional Officer, Sadar who was elected. In 1924 the Motihari Board consisted of 15 elected, 5 nominated and 1 *ex-officio* members. At present it consists of 15 elected and 5 co-opted members. The last election of the Board was held in 1948.

In 1956-57 the Motihari Local Board had 965 miles of *katcha* roads under it, and managed 59 pounds. At the time when education was taken away from the Board it had 626 primary schools under it.

The total income and expenditure of the Motihari Local Board in 1951-52 were Rs. 5,34,176 and Rs. 5,71,339, respectively. The average income and expenditure of the Board during the quinquennium ending in 1956-57 were Rs. 2,37,714 and Rs. 2,21,555,

respectively. The average income and expenditure showed a considerable decline as compared to the income and expenditure of 1951-52. This was the result of education having been taken away from the Board, which was the chief head of its allotment as well as expenditure.

Prior to 1924 the Local Board of Bettiah consisted of 3 *ex-officio* and 8 nominated members; the Subdivisional Officer, Bettiah being its elected Chairman. In 1924 it consisted of one *ex-officio*, 3 nominated and 12 elected members and at present it consists of 12 elected and 4 co-opted members.

In 1956-57 the Bettiah Local Board had 500 miles of *katcha* roads under it, and managed 50 pounds. At the time when education was taken away from the Board it had 514 primary schools under it.

The total income and expenditure of the Bettiah Local Board in 1951-52 were Rs. 2,60,856 and Rs. 2,60,259, respectively. The average income and expenditure of the Board during the quinquennium ending in 1956-57 fell down to Rs. 1,10,811 and Rs. 1,06,242, respectively as the education was taken away from the Board in 1954.

*Present control and management of the District and Local Boards.*

The National Development Council appointed a committee on Plan Projects to ensure maximum possible economy and avoidance of wastage owing to delays and inefficiency, for the successful implementation of the Second Five-Year Plan. This committee appointed a team under Shri Balvantrai Mehta to study and report on the Community Projects and National Extension service. The report was subsequently published in November, 1957. In this report the Balvantrai Mehta Committee submitted a number of recommendations specially with regard to the future set-up of the District Boards. Owing to various reasons there were complaints against the management of the District Board. The last election of the Board had taken place in 1947. The Education Departments of the Board had already been taken over by the State Government. It was being felt that the District Board was not able to function properly and that a complete reorientation was indicated. The State Government decided to implement the recommendations of the Balvantrai Mehta Committee.

Bihar Ordinance no. VI of 1958 was published in an extraordinary issue of the *Bihar Gazette* on September 12, 1958, under which the Governor of Bihar was pleased to direct that all the members of the Champaran District Board including the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman shall vacate their respective offices with effect from the 15th September, 1958. The Ordinance conferred on the State Government powers to appoint a person to exercise and perform with effect from the 15th September, 1958, the powers,

functions and duties conferred or imposed by or under the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act of 1885. The State Government appointed the District Magistrate, Champaran to exercise that authority for the Champaran District Board. Accordingly the District Magistrate of Champaran took over the management of the District Board.

Later the Minister Incharge of Public Works Department introduced in the State Legislature a Bill to take over control and management of District Boards and Local Boards in the State of Bihar. The Statement of objects and reasons of the Bill runs as follows :—

“The District Boards and Local Boards constituted under the provisions of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act of 1885, have outlived their utility under the completely changed circumstances. On attainment of independence, there have been developments on a very large scale in the various fields of activities, viz., Agriculture, Industry, Co-operation, Gram Panchayats, etc. These developments call for a complete reorientation in the conception and constitution of District Boards and Local Boards so that these bodies could fulfil their role effectively in the changed circumstances. This is not possible unless the existing law is carefully examined in the light of these developments and amended suitably to meet the present needs of the society.

The Balvantrai Mehta Committee on the Community Development and National Extension Service have made a number of recommendations specially with regard to the future set-up of District Boards. These recommendations require detailed examination and careful consideration before the State Government could come to a definite decision in the matter, which will obviously take some considerable time. Besides, some of the sister States in India are considering legislation regarding the constitution and powers of these local bodies and it is necessary to examine the provisions of these laws and their actual working for some time before we embark on a comprehensive amendment of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act.

It is, therefore, clear that the new set-up of District Boards will undoubtedly require comprehensive amendment of the Bihar and Orissa Local Self-Government Act, 1885. It was, accordingly decided by the State Government, to take over temporarily for three years, the control and management of District Boards and Local Boards, pending consideration of their future set-up. The Bihar District Boards and Local Boards (Control and Management) Ordinance, 1958 has been promulgated to give effect to this decision.

The Bill seeks to convert the Ordinance into an Act of the State Legislature as the Ordinance will cease to have effect after six weeks.

from the commencement of the present session of the State Legislature."

The Bill was duly passed by the Houses.

#### *Union Boards.*

Earlier seven Union Boards, namely, Sugauli, Shikarpur, Bagaha, Mehsi, Ramnagar, Chanpatia and Raxaul, were functioning. Of these Mehsi, Sugauli and Raxaul were in the Sadar subdivision and Chanpatia, Shikarpur, Ramnagar and Bagaha were in Bettiah subdivision. All the Boards were constituted under the Village Administration Act of 1922 and were vested with powers under parts III, IV and V of the Act. However, Bagaha, Chanpatia and Mehsi were already Unions under Act III (B. C.) of 1885.

Bagaha and Chanpatia Boards were constituted in 1925, Mehsi, Sugauli and Shikarpur in 1926, Ramnagar in 1944 and Raxaul in 1946.

The area of the Boards varied from 4 square miles in respect of Ramnagar to 38 square miles in respect of Raxaul. The population in 1951 varied from 6,600 in Mehsi to 23,928 in Shikarpur. The number of tax-payers varied from 484 in Ramnagar to 1,855 in Shikarpur, while the number of voters varied from 400 in Ramnagar to 8,707 in Chanpatia. The number of members of all Union Boards was 70, of whom 62, including 2 Harijans, were Hindus and 8 were Muhammadans.

In 1951-52 the total receipts including the opening balance of all the Union Boards were Rs. 1,04,618, of which *chaukidari* tax was responsible for Rs. 6,072; Union-tax for Rs. 14,973; pounds for Rs. 3,865; contributions from the Government for Rs. 1,456; contributions from the District Board for Rs. 54,039 and other sources for Rs. 3,281.

In the same year all the Boards spent Rs. 52,648 on education; Rs. 8,156 on conservancy; Rs. 3,638 on sanitation; Rs. 240 on water-supply; Rs. 1,510 on drainage, Rs. 2,389 on roads; Rs. 12,655 on establishment other than *daffadars* and *chaukidars* and Rs. 1,545 on collection.

With the establishment of Gram Panchayats the Union Boards proved to be a superfluous body. Therefore Sugauli, Mehsi and Ramnagar Boards have already been abolished and it was reported in May, 1957 that the Union Boards of Shikarpur and Bagaha were likely to be abolished soon. The remaining two Union Boards of Chanpatia and Raxaul will also be gradually replaced by the Gram Panchayats.

#### *Municipality.*

The district has two municipalities, namely, Motihari and Bettiah. Both these municipalities were established in 1869 previous

to the passing of the Bihar and Orissa Municipal Act VII of 1922. Each Board consisted of 12 Commissioners, of whom 2 members were *ex-officio* and 8 in Motihari and 8 in Bettiah were nominated. Since 1923 there had been a change-over when each board was constituted of 20 members, of whom 16 were elected. In Motihari one and in Bettiah two members were *ex-officio* and the balance were nominated. At present the Bettiah municipality consists of 22 members, of whom 18 are elected, 3 *ex-officio* and 1 nominated. The Motihari municipality consists of 27 members of whom 22 are elected and 5 nominated including the *ex-officio* members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of both municipalities are elected non-official right from 1923. A description of each of the municipalities is given below :—

#### *Motihari Municipality.*

*General.*—The area of the municipality originally consisted of  $6\frac{1}{4}$  square miles but now the municipal limits extend over an area of  $7\frac{3}{4}$  square miles. The total length of roads within the municipal limits is 20 miles and 3 furlongs, of which excluding 6 miles 4 furlongs, the entire road length is owned and maintained by the municipality. Of the total mileage of municipal roads 11 miles 3 furlongs are metalled and the rest are *katcha*. In 1956-57 the municipality maintained 24 Primary and 2 Middle schools. The Primary education is free and compulsory within the limits of municipality since 1939. The municipality maintains 12 miles and 700 yards of drainage of which 12 miles are *pucca* and the rest are *katcha*.

The scheme for the electrification of the town was sanctioned in the late forties and since then the town has slowly been electrified. The main thoroughfares of the town have already been electrified. A water-supply scheme through pipe was also sanctioned in November, 1954, the estimated cost of which is Rs. 11,54,000. Two water towers have already been constructed and one more is to be constructed. Half the amount of water-supply scheme has been met by the Government and the half amount has been given to the municipality as loan. The town is expected to get piped water-supply soon. There are also several tube-wells sunk by the municipality to supply drinking water to the citizen.

The municipality has passed through many vicissitudes. In 1930 the municipality suffered a severe blow in the loss of its office buildings and most of the collection registers by fire. This fire occurred at the time of audit and was due to deliberate incendiarism and consequently the municipality found it impossible to collect a large proportion of arrears. The office buildings of the municipality have not been rebuilt since 1930 and at present it is being held in a temporary structure which was built after the earthquake of 1934. Then there was the disastrous earthquake of 1934 and many changes

occurred in the old town. All the Government offices, including the courts, were shifted to a distance of two miles where later a Notified Area Committee was constituted, a description of which will be given later.

The total population of the municipal area, according to the census of 1951, is 24,489 as against 17,545 in 1931. The percentage of rate-payers to the total population is 16.00 as against 13.8 in 1931 and 12.6 in 1901. The average incidence of tax per head of population is Rs. 3-5-9 as against annas 11-10 in 1907. The taxation of the municipality mainly consists of holding tax and latrine tax at the rate of 10 and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, respectively, of the annual value.

*Income.*—The average annual income of the municipality was from 1895 to 1900 Rs. 16,200, from 1900 to 1905 Rs. 20,400 and in 1905-06 Rs. 24,000.

In 1930-31 the total income of the municipality was Rs. 37,157, the main sources being holding tax at the rate of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the annual value (Rs. 18,036), tax on animals and vehicles (Rs. 1,122), conservancy tax at the rate of 4 per cent of the annual value (Rs. 6,991), markets and slaughter houses (Rs. 3,573), grants from the Government (Rs. 5,489).

The average receipts of the municipality during the quinquennium ending in 1955-56 was Rs. 4,34,731, of which municipal taxes accounted for Rs. 72,767; fees and licenses for Rs. 12,012; power apart from taxation for Rs. 11,999; Government grants for Rs. 1,91,158; loans for Rs. 1,15,400; advances for Rs. 20,466; deposits for Rs. 5,649; and miscellaneous for Rs. 4,983.

It will be seen that there has been a tremendous increase in almost all the items of receipts as compared to 1930-31. Receipt under municipal taxes has swelled up chiefly because of increased trade and population as will be evident from the increase in population within the municipal limits as well as from the increase in the ratio of tax-payers to the total population. Government grants have increased mainly to finance some of the projects taken up by the municipality such as construction of water towers (although it is being executed by Public Works Department), repairing of roads, etc. Similarly prior to 1954-55 the municipality had no loan, but in 1954-55 and 1955-56 it had to incur a huge loan to finance its projects.

In 1956-57 the total receipts of the municipality amounted to Rs. 2,50,153 of which municipal taxes were responsible for Rs. 86,308; license and fees for Rs. 15,305; power apart from taxation for Rs. 6,007; Government grants for Rs. 93,638; miscellaneous for Rs. 5,929; loans for Rs. 5,300; advances for Rs. 29,843; and deposits for Rs. 7,804.

The total receipts in 1956-57 were considerably less as compared to the average receipt during the quinquennium 1951-52 to 1955-56 and the chief items showing heavy drop were Government grants and loans, the reason for which could be ascribed to the stoppage of grant for the projected scheme of water-supply.

*Expenditure.*—In 1905-06 the total expenditure of the municipality was Rs. 24,000, of which medical relief, public works, and conservancy accounted for 37, 14.1 and 12.6 per cent, respectively.

In 1930-31 the total expenditure of the municipality was Rs. 34,502, excluding advances, etc., and the main heads of expenditure were general administration, office establishment, etc. (Rs. 1,693), collection of taxes (Rs. 1,692), lighting (Rs. 2,389), other establishment charges (Rs. 892), drainage repairs (Rs. 610), latrines (Rs. 5,827), road cleaning (Rs. 5,700), medical (Rs. 2,600), and building repairs, road repairs, stores, education, etc., accounted for the rest.

The average total expenditure of the municipality during the quinquennium ending in 1955-56 was Rs. 4,38,999, of which general administration accounted for Rs. 17,025; public safety for Rs. 6,500; public health for Rs. 3,02,122; medical for Rs. 4,703; public convenience for Rs. 32,862; public instructions for Rs. 41,739; miscellaneous for Rs. 10,379; loan payment for Rs. 1,581; advances for Rs. 16,438 and deposit for Rs. 5,249.

It will be seen that the average expenditure of the municipality during 1951-52 to 1955-56 has considerably gone up as compared to the total expenditure in 1931-32. Many of the factors responsible for increased receipts were also responsible for increased expenditure.

In 1956-57 the total expenditure of the municipality was Rs. 2,40,838, of which general administration was responsible for Rs. 19,099; public safety for Rs. 4,732; public health for Rs. 83,400; medical for Rs. 4,974; public convenience for Rs. 18,452; public instruction for Rs. 56,962; miscellaneous for Rs. 15,915; payment of loan for Rs. 1,356; advances for Rs. 29,933 and deposits Rs. 6,015.

It will be seen that the expenditure in 1956-57 was considerably less than the average quinquennium expenditure during 1951-52 to 1955-56. The drop was quite spectacular under the head public health, the reason being the completion of expenditure on the projected water-supply scheme.

#### *Bettiah Municipality.*

*General.*—The limits of the municipality extend over an area of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  square miles. The total population of the municipality according to the census of 1951, is 35,634 as against 27,941 in 1931 and 24,693 in 1901. The percentage of rate-payers is reported to

be considerably less now than in 1901 and 1931, the percentage being 15.5, 20.1 and 21.0, respectively. This fall in the percentage of rate-payers is partly on account of the earthquake of 1934, when numerous buildings fell and partly on account of the fact that the rate-payers have not increased in the same proportion in which the population has increased. The municipality levies a holding tax and a latrine tax at the rate of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  and  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, respectively, of the annual value. The tax on latrine is not levied in certain areas of the municipality, viz., Baswaria Tola, Mirja Tola, Chawani Jamadar Tola, Basant Tola, Ramnagari Tola and Hazari Tola. It also levies a tax on animals, vehicles, professions and trades.

The municipality helps manage, in one way or the other, altogether one Middle School, 9 Upper Primary Schools and 17 Lower Primary Schools.

The municipality altogether maintains  $44\frac{1}{2}$  miles of roads of which,  $36\frac{1}{2}$  miles are *pucca* and the rest are *katcha*. Besides, there are 29 roads of Bettiah Raj within the municipal limits, the length of which is not known. They have not been repaired since the ex-Bettiah estate has vested in the State and may be thoroughly repaired. They have not yet come under the control of the municipality. It has altogether 43 miles of drains, of which  $31\frac{1}{2}$  miles are *pucca* and  $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles are *katcha*.

Earlier the Bettiah Municipality was considered to be in a fortunate position on account of the ex-Bettiah estate which used to assist it greatly in the past by subscribing generously to all kinds of projects. This has now ceased since the said estate has vested in the State. The municipality now only gets the amount of holding and latrine taxes levied on the buildings of the ex-estate, in the collection of which the municipality has no difficulty. Since the last 20 to 25 years there has been a stupendous increase in the vehicular traffic and the modern petrol-fed vehicles with heavy tonnage are seen running on the roads day in and day out and tell heavily upon the condition of roads. Incidentally, it is interesting to note that the Bettiah railway station is probably the biggest sugarcane loading station in India and has 5 weigh-bridges of different sugar mills. Transportation of sugarcane from field to the station causes a great damage to the roads. Some of the roads under the municipality have been repaired recently out of the funds made over to the municipality under the First and Second Five-Year Plans.

The drainage system in the municipal area cannot be said to be satisfactory and it now presents a very insanitary picture.. All the drains need reorientation as they are too narrow and congested to drain off the entire waste fluids of the municipal area. Congested drains have proved to be the breeding ground for mosquitoes. Some of the drains and culverts have been repaired and reconstructed

recently. A water-supply scheme is being executed within the municipal limits of Bettiah by the Public Health Department of the State Government.

*Income.*—The average annual income of the municipality was from 1895 to 1900 Rs. 16,000, from 1900 to 1905 Rs. 21,600 and in 1905-06 Rs. 25,000. The incidence of tax per head of population was annas 12 in 1905-06.

In 1930-31 the total income of the municipality was Rs. 53,647 of which the main items were tax on holdings at the rate of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent on the annual value of holdings (Rs. 26,463), conservancy tax at  $3\frac{3}{4}$  per cent on the annual value of holdings (Rs. 10,402), tax on animals and vehicles (Rs. 4,235), pounds (Rs. 1,182), fees, educational (Rs. 1,235), markets and slaughter houses (Rs. 3,442), Government grants, educational (Rs. 2,916), grants from other sources, general (Rs. 788) and medical (Rs. 537). The incidence of tax per head of population was Re. 1-3-11 in 1930-31.

In 1951-52 the total receipts of the municipality amounted to Rs. 1,93,295 of which Rs. 76,059 was realised from various fees and taxes, Rs. 5,654 from property and powers. Apart from taxation, Rs. 78,112 from Government grants, Rs. 1,880 from miscellaneous sources, Rs. 16,000 as loan from the Government, Rs. 15,530 from extraordinary advances and deposits.

The reasons for the increase in receipt as compared to 1930-31 are many, the chief being the increase in the rate of taxation, increase in population, increase in Government grants, etc.

The average annual receipt of the municipality from 1953-54 to 1956-57 was Rs. 4,53,897, of which municipal taxes accounted for Rs. 1,04,153, revenue from properties and powers apart from taxation for Rs. 10,558, Government grants and contributions for Rs. 1,88,539, miscellaneous sources for Rs. 2,625 and extraordinary debts for Rs. 1,47,022. The increase as compared to 1950-51 was chiefly because of increased Government grants for special purposes, that is, for repairing roads and also because of a very huge amount of extraordinary debt (Rs. 4,56,610) in 1955-56. The incidence of tax per head of population in 1956-57 was Rs. 2-7-1.

*Expenditure.*—In 1905-06 the total expenditure of the municipality was Rs. 24,400, the principal items being conservancy, public works and medical relief which accounted for 24.9, 21.9 and 28.5 per cent, respectively, of the total disbursements.

In 1930-31 the total expenditure, excluding advance and deposits, was Rs. 54,738 and the main items of expenditure were general administration and office establishment (Rs. 1,295), collection charges (Rs. 2,094), lighting (Rs. 4,506), drainage repairs (Rs. 2,544), water-supply repairs (Rs. 1,064), latrines (Rs. 11,480),

roads cleaning (Rs. 10,011), markets and slaughter houses (Rs. 2,948), road repairs (Rs. 6,714), schools (Rs. 6,716) and contributions for public instruction (Rs. 1,469).

The total expenditure in 1951-52 excluding advances and deposits amounted to Rs. 1,29,054, of which general administration accounted for Rs. 2,384, collection charges for Rs. 7,873, fire for Rs. 57, lighting for Rs. 2,794, epidemics for Rs. 362, vaccination for Rs. 567, drainage for Rs. 210, water-supply for Rs. 85, latrines for Rs. 40,818, road watering for Rs. 314, road cleaning for Rs. 27,950, markets and slaughter houses for Rs. 1,388, medical for Rs. 120, veterinary charges for Rs. 178, public works for Rs. 22,697, public instruction for Rs. 20,170 and miscellaneous for Rs. 1,087.

During 1953-54 to 1956-57 the average annual expenditure amounted to Rs. 4,34,215, of which general administration and collection charges accounted for Rs. 14,409, public safety for Rs. 10,609, public health for Rs. 85,672, medical for Rs. 730, public convenience for Rs. 41,825, public instruction for Rs. 30,382, miscellaneous for Rs. 7,327 and extraordinary debts for Rs. 2,43,263. The amount of expenditure was considerably swelled up on account of payment of huge extraordinary debts in 1956-57, which amounted to Rs. 8,68,610.

#### *Town Planning and Public Health.*

The two old towns of the district are Motihari and Bettiah and they have slowly urbanised themselves without any pre-planning. Even now there is no regular town planning scheme before the municipal authorities. The municipalities do not control the construction of new houses but permissions are given liberally and there is hardly any attempt to align houses of proper and similar design in one locality. Although the municipalities have got the authority to pull down old and damaged buildings, this action is very seldom taken. Slum areas have been allowed to grow without any restriction. The bazars at both these places are very much congested with extremely bad arrangement for drainage or sewerage and the condition of the roads is also poor. Both the towns are expanding and the vegetable belt areas or the slum areas at the fringes are being pushed back.

In 1934 the Great Bihar Earthquake caused serious damages to the town of Motihari. As mentioned elsewhere Motihari is within the zone very vulnerable to earthquakes. There were Expert Committees which had given their considered opinions that the town of Motihari may be liable to earthquakes in future and that large constructions within the municipal limits of Motihari should be controlled. One of the recommendations was that there should be no big building by the side of the lake at Motihari town. Engineering researches have since progressed and probably that is

the reason why there are now large buildings in that area built after the earthquake.

As a large number of Government buildings were extensively damaged it was felt that the administrative headquarters should be shifted to a more open space. It was decided to have a new township close to the old town of Motihari in the area locally known as Begampur. There was a proper investigation regarding availability of water, suitability of site, etc., before the lands were acquired and then a large number of Government buildings were constructed. A very large area was available and it was much easier to lay down a proper scheme for urbanisation of a plan, leaving ample spaces for lawn, roads, parks, etc. This area is now controlled by Lautaha Notified Area Committee and has become a part of Motihari town. A separate section has been given for Lautaha Notified Area Committee.

This is the only instance of planned urbanisation in this district. The very large oval shaped lawn and the wide termacadamised broad roads with a good arboriculture consisting of species like Gold Mohar, *Amaltas*, Kusum, Mango, etc., indicate forethought and aesthetic sense. It is unfortunate that the excellent opportunity afforded by the Great Earthquake was not utilised for making the town of Bettiah cleaner or to build up a new satellite area. It may, however, be said that the new houses of the more affluent persons are re-inforced buildings of modern design.

Public health is the responsibility of the State and the bodies like the District Boards and Municipalities. The measures taken for maintenance of a proper level of public health have been covered in this chapter separately and also in the chapter on Medical and Public Health Services. It may be mentioned briefly that the rapid increase in population is a problem that complicates the responsibility of maintaining a certain standard of public health measures. Fortunately the people are becoming more responsive and appreciate the steps taken by State in this direction. Many of the epidemics like plague, cholera and pox have now been controlled. The use of antibiotics has become quite common and the expectation of life has gone up. In February, 1959, there was an investigation by a panel of doctors from Delhi at the instance of the Indian Council of Medical Research for looking into the cases of the high incidence of goitre near Bettiah. It is understood that they had a wide response and were able to collect specimens of blood, urine, etc., from the affected villages near Bettiah as well as from some places in a control area.

*Lautaha Notified Area Committee.*

The ravages of the earthquake of 1934 caused great damage to the Government buildings. The earthquake was followed by an

enquiry by some experts who condemned the old site of the collectorate as well as the area in the vicinity of Motihari lake. Consequently a new area for Government offices and officials residence was acquired at a distance of about three miles from the Motihari main market and Motihari railway station.

Luataha is the healthiest and most elegant part of Motihari urban area. The area is marked by a beautiful circular *maidan* encircled by a road with a selective arboriculture, along side which stand officers' residential quarters. There are as many as 18 (eighteen) quarters for officers and 117 (one hundred and seventeen) for ministerial staff. None of the other district towns of North Bihar is so fortunate in having such cleanly and specially built residential quarters. Besides, the Collectorate, Civil Court, Judge's Court, Police office, Police line and most of the other Government offices are situated within this area.

The Notified Area Committee came into existence with the opening of the Collectorate in the new buildings at Luataha on 3rd November 1936. On the proposal of the District Magistrate, the Government granted a sum of Rs. 3,000 for the establishment of the Notified Area Committee. The Committee was then put in charge of a Deputy Magistrate and Collector with 14 sweepers, one feeder, one zamadar and one part-time Sanitary Inspector.

The area afterwards was brought under the administrative control, vide Government notification no. 652-L.S.-G., dated the 11th February 1937, which was subsequently amended by Government notification no. 6093-L.S.-G., dated the 3rd November 1938, and a regular committee was constituted to carry out the purposes of Municipal Act with Executive Engineer, Public Works Department as *ex-officio* Secretary. The Executive Engineer subsequently submitted his resignation and thenceforward the Subdivisional Officer, Sadar is acting as the *ex-officio* Secretary. The District Magistrate is the *ex-officio* Chairman and the Civil Surgeon and Subdivisional Officer, Public Works Department, are *ex-officio* members. Besides, there are three non-official members on the Committee.

The total area of the Committee extends over 0.89 square miles. The population of the Committee, according to the census of 1951, is 1,417, out of which 182 were tax-payers in 1956-57.

The Committee owns 1,350 feet of roads out of which 935 feet have recently been made *pucca* and the rest are *katcha*. Besides, 5 miles 3 furlongs and 104 feet of roads belonging to the Public Works Department are cleaned by the staff of the Notified Area Committee, although their maintenance is entirely in the hands of the Public Works Department. The area has a water-supply system through pipe and is also well-served with electricity. The Committee

has no office building of its own and has its office in the local Collectorate buildings.

There is an upper primary school maintained by the committee.

The main sources of income of the committee are the holding tax at the rate of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, latrine tax at the rate of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the annual value of holding and Government grants.

The average annual income of the committee during the quinquennium ending in 1956-57 was Rs. 20,067, of which holding tax accounted for Rs. 12,060, latrine tax for Rs. 3,588, license fee for dangerous trade for Rs. 6, sale of property for Rs. 10, conservancy receipts for Rs. 80, fees for market, etc., for Rs. 5, and Government grant for Rs. 4,319.

The average annual expenditure of the Committee during the same period was Rs. 19,614, the items being general administration (Rs. 2,622), public health (Rs. 11,828), medical (Rs. 456), public conveyances (Rs. 2,690), public instruction (Rs. 1,541), miscellaneous (Rs. 178) and depreciation fund (Rs. 300).

#### *Gram Panchayats.*

The Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, 1947 received the assent of the Governor-General on 12th January 1948. The Act was enforced in the district of Champaran with effect from 1st July 1948, vide Government notification no. 129-L.S.-G.R., dated the 11th June 1948. At the first instance, to experiment the scheme the Government of Bihar set a programme to implement the Act in 25 villages in each civil subdivision. At first in the district of Champaran actually 26 Gram Panchayats were constituted which began functioning officially with effect from 8th April 1950.

The establishment of the institution of Gram Panchayat was felt a necessity to restore the institution of Local Self-Government in villages and to organise and improve the social, cultural and economic life of the village community. The idea to decentralise the administration has also been an important factor responsible for the establishment of Gram Panchayats.

The Gram Panchayats have many duties to perform. It deals with both the aspects of public administration, namely, the executive and the judiciary and consists of a number of *panches*, one *Sarpanch*, a *Mukhiya* and a Gram Sevak all being elected personnel, excepting the last named who is a Government servant. The Gram Sevak occupies a key position in the Gram Panchayat, although his duty is that of a mere clerk in the office. A village volunteer force is also maintained by each Gram Panchayat under a chief officer, who is selected from amongst the members of the force

and sent up for training. He is ordinarily an honorary officer, although certain Gram Panchayats give him a small salary. This village volunteer force is required to perform the following duties :—

- (1) Prevention of commission of crime.
- (2) Protection of life and properties.
- (3) Suppression of disorders.
- (4) Reporting and checking of rumours likely to disturb peace.
- (5) Fighting fire, famine and epidemics.
- (6) Rendering first aid and helping in the removal of casualties to the hospital.
- (7) Organising and regulating *melas*, markets and *hats*.
- (8) Serving notices and summons and execution of the orders of *Mukhiya* and *Sarpanch*.
- (9) Collecting statistics of all kinds.
- (10) Discharging any function that may be assigned to them by the Panchayat or the Government for carrying out the purposes of the Act and Rules made thereunder.

In order to qualify itself for official notification a Gram Panchayat is required to do certain amount of constructive work such as improvement of village communication, repair and construction of irrigational sources, construction of wells, bore-hole latrines, introduction of drainage system, mass literacy, etc. Even after being notified as an official Gram Panchayat the main constructive functions of a Gram Panchayat remain the same.

So far the district of Champaran is concerned, 597 notified Gram Panchayats had been established till the *middle* of 1957. They covered altogether 2,470 villages and a population of 23,72,562 souls. Out of these 597 Panchayats, general election had been held in 560 Panchayats. There is a scheme to have two Gram Panchayats in each revenue *halka*. With the implementation of this scheme there will be altogether 677 Gram Panchayats in the district. There were altogether 500 trained chief officers in the district and the number of village volunteers enrolled was 2,38,800.

As has already been mentioned earlier, these Gram Panchayats have already covered some of the Union Boards which have been abolished, and the remaining ones are expected to be abolished soon.

It is reported that till 1955-56 the Gram Panchayats in the district had constructed and repaired several hundred miles of roads and had constructed and repaired hundreds of culverts, *pynes*, *ahars*, tanks, wells, latrines, etc. Gram Panchayats also took part in vaccination, inoculation and giving first aid and education (Primary).

As regards judicial functions, the Gram Katcheries are vested with the statutory power of a third class magistrate. The first batch

of 26 Gram Katcheries started functioning since 8th April, 1950 and by the middle of 1957 there were 560 Gram Katcheries functioning in the district. A statement of cases, civil and criminal both dealt with by the Gram Panchayats from 1951-52 to 1956-57 is given at the end of this chapter as Appendix "B".

So far the financial aspect of the Gram Panchayats is concerned, they are vested with the statutory powers to raise local funds such as labour tax, property tax, etc., for their own benefit. As a rule Government does not give any financial help to the Gram Panchayats excepting an initial help of Rs. 50. However, Gram Panchayats are helped in several ways by the Government as a certain portion of revenue collected as commission for the benefit of the Gram Panchayats. Sometimes contracts for the construction of projected embankments are given to the *Mukhiyas* on the condition that they would pay certain percentage of a total cost to the Gram Panchayat as profit. Besides, the Gram Panchayats get schemes for execution from the Development Department, in respect of which 50 per cent cost is met by the Panchayat itself. A statement is given below to show the receipts of Gram Panchayats in the district from 1951-52 to 1956-57 :—

| Year.   |    |    | Income from<br>labour tax. | Income from<br>property tax, fees,<br>donations. |
|---------|----|----|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
|         |    |    | Rs.                        | Rs.                                              |
| 1951-52 | .. | .. | 88,664                     | 8,898                                            |
| 1952-53 | .. | .. | 2,15,117                   | 18,784                                           |
| 1953-54 | .. | .. | 4,07,885                   | 66,426                                           |
| 1954-55 | .. | .. | 3,20,303                   | 47,919                                           |
| 1955-56 | .. | .. | 4,30,469                   | 46,829                                           |
| 1956-57 | .. | .. | 4,09,186                   | 60,991                                           |

All the amounts have been spent over different rural development schemes of different Gram Panchayats.

The establishment of the Gram Panchayat Administration at the district level is under a gazetted officer of the rank of Sub-Deputy Collector who is designated as the District Gram Panchayat Officer. Besides, there are 12 Panchayat Supervisors, one Head Instructor, two Second Instructors and seven ministerial officers. The supervisors supervise the work of Gram Panchayats and are placed over the Gram Sevaks. The Instructors are to train the village volunteer force.

A statement of expenditure over Gram Panchayat establishment is given below :—

| Year.      | Pay of Officer. | Pay of Establishment. | Cost of living allowance. | Travelling allowance. | Contingencies. | Grants-in-aid. | Cost of training of Gram Sevaks. | Miscellaneous grants. |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1          | 2               | 3                     | 4                         | 5                     | 6              | 7              | 8                                | 9                     |
| Rs. a. p.  | Rs. a. p.       | Rs. a. p.             | Rs. a. p.                 | Rs. a. p.             | Rs. a. p.      | Rs. a. p.      | Rs. a. p.                        | Rs. a. p.             |
| 1951-52 .. | 2,520 0 0       | 90,176 1 0            | 3,410 8 0                 | 6,160 12 0            | 2,005 2 6      | 3,800 0 0      | 21,113 13 0                      | ..                    |
| 1952-53 .. | 2,632 15 0      | 1,34,028 8 0          | 3,415 0 0                 | 4,709 5 0             | 1,950 0 0      | 5,200 0 0      | 34,676 10 0                      | 2,000 0 0             |
| 1953-54 .. | 2,887 0 0       | 1,74,257 3 0          | 5,324 10 0                | 7,620 3 0             | 2,446 0 0      | 3,650 0 0      | 34,250 7 0                       | ..                    |
| 1954-55 .. | 3,019 6 0       | 2,07,135 13 0         | 7,142 13 0                | 10,954 9 0            | 2,867 10 6     | 3,000 0 0      | ..                               | ..                    |
| 1955-56 .. | 4,614 8 0       | 2,67,816 4 0          | 7,055 7 0                 | 18,981 4 0            | 14,406 12 9    | 7,950 0 0      | ..                               | 125 0 0               |
| 1956-57 .. | 3,100 0 0       | 2,86,979 4 0          | 7,235 2 0                 | 13,790 3 0            | 4,522 6 0      | Nil            | ..                               | ..                    |

\*As no training camp was organised since 1954-55 no expenditure on the training was incurred.

## APPENDIX A.

*List of Dak and Inspection Bungalows maintained by the District Board.*

| Name of bungalows.                         | Distance from the district headquarters. |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
|                                            | Miles.                                   |
| (1) Motihari Dak Bungalow .. ..            | 1                                        |
| (2) Bettiah Dak Bungalow .. ..             | 31                                       |
| (3) Bagaha Inspection Bungalow .. ..       | 67                                       |
| (4) Ramnagar Inspection Bungalow .. ..     | 59                                       |
| (5) Narkatiaganj Inspection Bungalow .. .. | 55                                       |
| (6) Sumeswar Inspection Bungalow .. ..     | 78                                       |
| (7) Mainatand Inspection Bungalow .. ..    | 56                                       |
| (8) Lauriya Inspection Bungalow .. ..      | 46                                       |
| (9) Semri Inspection Bungalow .. ..        | 47                                       |
| (10) Raxaul Inspection Bungalow .. ..      | 31                                       |
| (11) Sugauli Inspection Bungalow .. ..     | 15                                       |
| (12) Arreraj Inspection Bungalow .. ..     | 18                                       |
| (13) Barharwa Inspection Bungalow .. ..    | 25                                       |
| (14) Madhuban Inspection Bungalow .. ..    | 23                                       |
| (15) Dhaka Inspection Bungalow .. ..       | 17                                       |
| (16) Ghorasahan Inspection Bungalow .. ..  | 22                                       |
| (17) Mehshi Inspection Bungalow .. ..      | 27                                       |
| (18) Kessariya Inspection Bungalow .. ..   | 24                                       |

## APPENDIX B.

## Statement of Civil and Criminal Cases dealt with by Gram Panchayats.

| Year.   | No. of cases pending from previous years and instituted during the year. |                             |       |       |       |       |       |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|         |                                                                          | 1                           | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     |
|         |                                                                          | <i>Criminal cases.</i>      |       |       |       |       |       |
| 1951-52 | ..                                                                       | 4,072*                      | 1,928 | 462   | 663   | 1,019 | 425   |
| 1952-53 | ..                                                                       | 1,883                       | 933   | 240   | 285   | 1,069 | 1,062 |
| 1953-54 | ..                                                                       | 5,609                       | 2,788 | 956   | 796   | 1,399 | 1,798 |
| 1954-55 | ..                                                                       | 8,152                       | 3,659 | 2,811 | 620   | 1,399 | 1,798 |
| 1955-56 | ..                                                                       | 9,106                       | 4,806 | 2,026 | 875   | 1,399 | 1,798 |
| 1956-57 | ..                                                                       | 11,172                      | 5,702 | 2,389 | 1,283 | 1,798 | 1,798 |
|         |                                                                          | <i>Civil Suits decreed.</i> |       |       |       |       |       |
| 1951-52 | ..                                                                       | 732*                        | 261   | 51    | 250   | 170   | 70    |
| 1952-53 | ..                                                                       | 458                         | 207   | 50    | 131   | 70    | 478   |
| 1953-54 | ..                                                                       | 1,510                       | 587   | 96    | 354   | 343   | 406   |
| 1954-55 | ..                                                                       | 2,121                       | 646   | 292   | 840   | 343   | 406   |
| 1955-56 | ..                                                                       | 2,307                       | 948   | 295   | 658   | 406   | 655   |
| 1956-57 | ..                                                                       | 2,588                       | 725   | 397   | 811   | 655   | 655   |

\* Separate figures of previous years' pending cases are not available.