

may be said of the villages of the hills, which are in reality only groups of hamlets, loosely held together by certain common interests and joint rights of grazing or pasture in the forests. In these latter cases village self-government has naturally never existed, but the true village community has from time immemorial administered its own affairs with little outside help or interference. The landowners of the village, connected by common descent, real or fictitious, form among themselves a democracy, which rules its dependent priests, artisans, and menials with oligarchic authority. The informal assembly of the village, comprising every adult male of the proprietary body, is presided over by a headman, *chaudhri*, *mukhia* (lit. 'spokesman'), or, to use the modern term, *lambardār*. Often there are several headmen. The headman of a village is appointed by the Deputy-Commissioner, and, if he is recognized by the community as its natural leader, his influence equals his authority. If not, his authority is limited to such legal powers as are conferred on him, and in the South-East Punjab a leader of the opposition is regularly chosen. The headman transacts the business of the community, including the management of its common fund, to which all contribute, and to supplement which, in many villages, a hearth or door tax is imposed on all residents who are not members of the proprietary body. The communal body has no legal powers; but it is in its power to inflict on recalcitrant members of the community the punishment of social excommunication, and on the menials and artisans various inconveniences. Only the village banker is beyond its authority; and he, by virtue of being the creditor of every man in the village, is able to bring considerable pressure on the council to order things according to his pleasure. There is, however, but little prospect of the village council being utilized as a part of the machinery of Government. As being essentially a tribal organization, it can never be entrusted with legal powers in a community that is daily approaching the industrial stage, and the spread of education makes it increasingly difficult for it to exercise its unauthorized powers of control.

In some form or other municipal administration has existed in the Punjab ever since annexation. In its earliest stage committees of townsmen were formed to administer the surplus of the funds raised by cesses or duties for watch and ward purposes. This system worked well, but it lacked the essentials of municipal government, the funds being vested in official trustees. A more regular form of municipal adminis-

Municipal
adminis-
tration.

tration was introduced in Simla and Bhiwāni under the Act of 1850 ; and in 1862 the head-quarters of Districts were formed into regular municipalities, with committees, mostly elected, invested with control over local affairs and power to regulate taxation. In 1864 there were 49 committees, of which 28 had elected members. Hitherto the municipalities had been constituted under the executive authority of Government ; but in 1866 doubts arose as to their legal status, and more especially as to the validity of the octroi tax from which their funds were mainly derived. Accordingly, the first Municipal Act for the Punjab was passed in 1867, and renewed for a year in 1872. In 1873 a new enactment, which made election permissive, was passed ; and under it 190 committees were constituted, 8 of these (Simla, Dharmśāla, Dalhousie, Murree, Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar, and Multān) being of the first class, 17 of the second, and 165 of the third. They were controlled by the Local Government, the Commissioner, or the Deputy-Commissioner, according to their class. The Local Bodies Loans Act of 1879 empowered the Local Government to make loans to approved municipalities for improvements ; and in 1884 a new Municipal Act was passed, with the object of restoring the elective principle and widening the sphere of municipal activity. Two classes of committees were recognized, the first having greater latitude to incur expenditure on public works than the second. The Act of 1867 had, however, been too widely applied, and between 1885 and 1887 no less than 41 committees were *abolished*. *In 1891 was passed an amended Act, which reformed the system of taxation, and provided a simple form of municipal administration for towns which it is inexpedient to constitute regular municipalities. The towns to which this form has been applied are termed 'notified areas.'*

Constitution of committees and incidence of taxation.

In 1904 the Province contained 8 municipalities of the first class, 131 of the second, and 48 'notified areas.' Three of these (Lahore, Delhi, and Amritsar) contained over 100,000 inhabitants, 47 more than 10,000 but less than 100,000, and 137 less than 10,000 inhabitants. The average incidence of municipal taxation in 1903-4 was Rs. 1-8-0 per head. The population within municipal limits was 2,299,893, including 210,223 in 'notified areas,' according to the Census of 1901. In 1903-4 the members of municipal committees numbered 1,503, of whom 229 were *ex officio*, 495 nominated, and 779 elected. The committees in the 'notified areas' were composed of 186 members, 84 *ex officio* and 102 nominated. *Only 126 Europeans sit on all these committees.*

The principal source of municipal income is octroi, which in 1903-4 realized as much as 30 lakhs out of the total of Rs. 55,48,000. Direct taxation of houses and lands is virtually confined to the hill municipalities and Delhi. Water rate is levied only in Ambāla, Simla, Kasumpti, Dhartnsāla, Lahore, Dalhousie, and Murree, in all of which water-supply schemes have been carried out. The main features of municipal finance are shown in a table at the end of this article (p. 161).

Local self-government of the District likewise dates from the early days of British rule. Prior to 1871 each District had a District committee, but it was merely an advisory body. The rules under the Local Rates Act of that year made these committees administrative bodies, and they did excellent work. In 1883 Lord Ripon's Act extended the elective principle to District boards, and under it local boards were also established in *taksils*. The system of election at first promised well; but it was soon found that membership of a board was not sought for public ends, and men of good position and local influence were reluctant to stand. It is now an accepted fact that the best men prefer nomination by Government to canvassing for election. Local boards were soon found to be superfluous, as the business of the District boards could not with advantage be delegated, and they are rapidly being abolished. In 1903-4 the Province possessed 26 District boards, excluding Simla, where the Deputy-Commissioner exercises the powers of a District board. These boards were composed of 1,077 members: 207 *ex officio* (the Deputy-Commissioner being nearly always *ex-officio* president), 495 nominated and 375 elected. Only 7 Districts had local boards, 28 in number, with 531 members: 28 *ex officio*, 161 nominated, and 342 elected.

The District fund is mainly derived from the local rate—a cess ordinarily of 1 anna 8 pies per rupee, or Rs. 10-6-8 per cent.¹ on the land revenue of the District, supplemented by grants from Provincial funds. The expenditure of a District board is chiefly devoted to the maintenance of schools and dispensaries, vaccination, roads and resthouses, arboriculture, ferries, cattle-pounds, horse-breeding, and horse and cattle fairs. Its expenditure on education, medical relief, and office establishments is largely of the nature of fixed establishment charges. Famine works have been readily undertaken by District boards in time of necessity; and large expenditure under this head, coinciding as it always must with little or

¹ Now reduced to Rs. 8-5-4 per cent. by the abolition of the cess for famine (1906).

no income from the local rate, has frequently necessitated financial aid from Government. District boards have afforded invaluable assistance to Deputy-Commissioners as consultative bodies, but the necessity of conforming to the rules of the educational, medical, and other departments leaves little scope for local initiative. Even in the case of public works, six-sevenths of the sum available is ear-marked for maintenance and establishment. The income and expenditure for a series of years are shown in a table at the end of this article (p. 162).

Public
works.
Irrigation.

The Public Works department is divided into two branches: Irrigation, and Buildings and Roads. The former has hitherto been an Imperial branch under a Chief Engineer, who is also *ex-officio* secretary to the Provincial Government. According to the Provincial settlement which came into force in 1905, the Provincial Government participates in the profits earned by the branch, and bears a share of the working expenses. Under the Chief Engineer are Superintending Engineers, who control circles formed of one or more canals. These circles are again divided into divisions, each in charge of an Executive Engineer. The size of a division varies according to circumstances; but, excluding head-works divisions, it usually comprises an irrigated area of about 350,000 acres. The Province is divided into 6 circles and 26 divisions. Each division is further divided into 3 or 4 subdivisions in charge of a subdivisional officer, usually an Assistant Engineer. Not only does the department maintain all the canals in its charge, but its officers are responsible for the registration and measurement of the irrigation and the assessment of the revenue levied on it. For canal revenue purposes each subdivision is divided into sections, generally three in number, each in charge of a *siladār*, and each section is again subdivided into *patwāris*' circles. For maintenance purposes, a subdivision is divided into sections, in charge of overseers or sub-overseers. The revenue establishment of a whole division is further supervised by a Deputy-Collector, who is also a second-class magistrate. When the supply of water is less than required, the Superintending Engineer controls inter-divisional distribution and the divisional officer that between subdivisions. The internal distribution of water and regulation of supply is primarily in the hands of the subdivisional officers. The *siladār*, who is constantly in touch with all his *patwāris*, indents for water at distributary heads. The subdivisional officer receives reports for all his channels daily and thus controls the distribution. The Executive Engineer supervises the internal distribution by subdivisional

officers, and controls the inter-divisional distribution; and a report on the general state of crops is submitted weekly by each divisional officer direct to the Chief Engineer, who thus controls generally the distribution throughout the Province. The efficient distribution on Punjab canals is mainly due to the very extensive canal telegraph system. The Chief Engineer also controls the irrigation works of the North-West Frontier Province, and is *ex-officio* secretary to the Agent to the Governor-General and Chief Commissioner of that Province.

The Buildings and Roads branch is under a Chief Engineer, who is likewise *ex-officio* secretary to Government. It is divided into three circles, each under a Superintending Engineer. The number of divisions varies from time to time according to the funds allotted for expenditure, but is ordinarily between twelve and thirteen, each under an Executive Engineer. Each division embraces from one to four civil Districts. A division is again divided into subdivisions, usually controlled either by Assistant Engineers or by upper subordinates. This branch is maintained from Provincial funds, and its primary object is the construction and maintenance of Imperial and Provincial works; but it also assists municipalities and District boards with advice and the loan of its officers when they can be spared, and all important sanitary works are carried out for such bodies by the branch, a percentage being charged for establishment, tools, and plant, though this charge is frequently remitted.

The appointment of Sanitary Engineer to Government was created in October, 1900, for a period of five years in the first instance, with the rank of Superintending Engineer. The cost of his pay and establishment is met from Provincial revenues, which are credited with the fees recovered from the local bodies which utilize his services. The Sanitary Engineer is a member of the Provincial Sanitary Board, and is its executive officer and expert adviser to Government and the Board in all matters relating to sanitary engineering.

The only railway built from Provincial funds was the 65 miles of line from Amritsar to Pathānkot. Its capital cost up to March 31, 1896, was: direct, 55 lakhs; indirect, 5 lakhs. The actual cash paid from Provincial funds was 6 lakhs, the balance having been advanced on loan at 4 per cent. from Imperial funds. As the net earnings barely exceeded 1 per cent. on the capital cost, the undertaking proved a serious financial loss; and the Government of India took over the proprietorship of the line, including its management, in 1897, the Local Government forgoing the 6 lakhs it had spent on it.