

CHAPTER XIV

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT

The municipalities of Sitapur, Khairabadi, Biswan and Nimsar-cum-Misrikh and the Town Areas of Laharpur and Mahmudabad comprise the urban areas, and the jurisdiction of the District Board (now called the Antarim Zila Parishad) extends to the rural area.

MUNICIPAL BOARDS

Sitapur

Early History—The Sitapur Municipal Board came into existence on July 14, 1868. It was constituted with the main object of improving the sanitation of the town. It was more or less an official body with the commissioner, and later the deputy commissioner, as its chairman, and the non-official members were nominated. An attempt was made to extend the elective principle by the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Municipalities Act, 1873 (Act XV of 1873), but in practice the nomination system continued to remain in force. Certain far-reaching changes were brought about by the North-Western Provinces and Oudh Municipalities Act, 1883 (Act XV of 1883), which gave a wide extension to the elective system. The annual report of the Municipal Board for the year 1895-96 shows that it consisted of two wards, the North and the South. There were twelve members of whom nine were elected and three nominated. Of the elected members six represented the South ward and three the North. The year 1916 is an important landmark in the history of the Municipal Boards, for in that year an Act was passed which was comprehensive and as it provided for a non-official chairman and elected minorities, it was a great step forward towards local self-government. But the continued existence of the nominated element and the introduction of communal electorates were two of its major defects. In pursuance of the United Provinces Municipalities Act, 1916 (Act II of 1916), the town of Sitapur was divided into two wards with a total number of twenty-five members, all elected, the term of the members being three years till 1953 when it was extended to four years, after which fresh elections took place in 1957. The chairman of the Board was elected by the members. The elected Board continued functioning till November 24, 1960, when it was superseded by the government, the district magistrate of Sitapur exercising the powers and performing the duties of the Board.

The Municipal Board of Sitapur has an area of 6.6 square miles. Its jurisdiction extends to both sides of the river Sarayan on the banks of which the town is situated. Till 1932, the areas at present included in Lohar Bagh, Vijai Lakhshminagar, Station Road Colony, Sadar Bazar, Regimental Bazar (popularly known as Lal Kurti Bazar) and that in the occupation of the XI Battalion P. A. C. constituted the Cantonment Board, Sitapur. When the Cantonment Board was abolished, the civic administration of these areas passed into the hands of a Notified Area Committee, which also merged in the Municipal Board, Sitapur, on December 29, 1949. The total population of the municipality in 1951 was 44,397.

The town is divided into eleven wards : Alamnagar, Thompsonganj, Tarinpur, Chaube Tola, Sheikh Sarai, Kot, Nai Basti, Parade, Civil Lines, Vijai Lakhshminagar and Sadar Bazar. Of these the first two return three members each, the next eight wards return two members each and from the last ward three members are returned, including one from the Scheduled Castes. The president is elected by the members of the Board by a single transferable vote. All the twenty-five members are elected.

Finances—Sitapur is a growing town and the Municipal Board with its limited resources cannot meet the basic requirements of the increased population or provide all these amenities to the people which are expected of a civic body. It has, therefore, to look to the government for assistance for the implementation of different schemes for the development of the town. The government gave loans amounting to Rs 10,83,000 and grants totalling Rs 3,26,800 to the Board during the period 1950 to 1960. The total unspent balance of the government grants, as on April 1, 1960, was Rs 90,582. These loans and grants have assisted the Board in putting up waterworks of its own in addition to effecting improvements in the town in diverse ways.

The year 1959-60 opened with a balance of Rs 33,996 and the total receipts of the Board within the year were Rs 8,81,664, making a total of Rs 9,15,660. The total expenditure for the year was Rs 8,44,296; leaving a balance of Rs 66,668 (excluding a sum of Rs 4,696 on account of deposits); but since the total receipts included a sum of Rs 1,47,230 on account of the fixed minimum working balance of Rs 12,000, unspent government grants of Rs 90,582, unpaid claims of Rs 40,579 and the dead amount of provident fund amounting to Rs 4,069, the year actually closed with a deficit of Rs 80,562. The defaults in payment of dues, especially the water tax, is one of the causes of the adverse financial position of the Board and of its dissolution by the government with effect from November 24, 1960.

