TOWN ADMINISTRATION IN FRANCE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY,
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO A GROUP OF TOWNS
IN THE DEPARTEMENT DE L'YONNE.

by

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The administration of French towns in the eighteenth century was in the hands of two bodies, the corps de ville and the assemblée générale des habitants, which were usually dominated by a close, well-to-do oligarchy. Although municipal elections were organized in a host of different ways, there were two characteristics common to many towns - indirect elections and representation based on class or profession - both of which were conducive to oligarchy. Opposition to this municipal oligarchy was led by baillage officials, whose political importance and economic power suffered a marked decline in the eighteenth century.

The essentials of municipal finance were similar in all towns. The most usual source of revenue was taxation on consumer goods, though some towns also levied personal taxation. The disbursement of this revenue was not at the municipal officials' discretion, but decided either by the royal council or by the intendant. Colbert had restricted the towns' financial independence in order to prevent misappropriation and peculation of municipal revenue. The government's less altruistic reason for controlling municipal expenditure was that in times of crisis it looked to the towns for extraordinary financial assistance. This it extorted principally by means of rachats des offices.
and dons gratis.

The effect of this policy on a town's finances is well illustrated by the history of Auxerre. This town's relations with the intendants of Burgundy suggest that the government's direction of municipal finance was not in practice as efficient as it was intended to be in theory. The archives of Auxerre and Avallon also contain valuable information about municipal elections in the eighteenth century, the conventions which governed them, the passions they aroused, and the part played by intrigue and influence.
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INTRODUCTION.

Any general study of the administration of French towns, prior to the Revolution, poses grave problems. For, like their English counterparts, French towns were remarkable for the diversity of their "constitutions", each being governed according to its own special set of usages, often inherited from some medieval charter. This fundamental dissimilarity was further accentuated by the persistence of regional traditions and loyalties, and by inconsistencies in the royal administrative and judicial system. Or, in more concrete terms, how a town was governed depended on its own particular "constitution", the province in which it was situated, whether it came within a pays d'état or a pays d'élection, which généralité it came under, and within which parlement's jurisdiction it fell. And of course, a town's geographical and economic conditions always had bearing on its situation and development. With so many variable factors to take into account, it is difficult to make generalizations about municipal administration which are not meaningless.

However, during the eighteenth century, some of this diversity was ironed out, as a result of certain policies adopted by the royal government. From 1683, the financial
administration of all towns was subjected to close supervision by the intendents. Although the value of towns' financial resources continued to vary enormously, as did the size of their expenditure, from that time, all towns had to observe the same procedure in conducting their financial affairs. Similarly, all towns suffered from the royal government's practice of treating them as reservoirs from which could be drawn extraordinary financial assistance when its normal sources of revenue were inadequate. The introduction, at the end of the seventeenth century, of these two policies - the control and exploitation of municipal finance by the government - marked the end of the towns' independence, and gave a rather different character to municipal administration in the following century.

In addition to their relationship to the royal government, certain developments in their internal administration were common to all towns. The duties and functions of municipal officials were basically the same throughout France, whether the officials were known as maire and échevins in the north, or consuls in the south. This uniformity was unconsciously promoted by the government when it made municipal offices venal, for, in order to attract
buyers, the attributes of these offices were, for the first time, clearly defined. The decline of the assemblée générale des habitants and its replacement by a representative assemblée des notables, was a phenomenon manifested almost everywhere in the eighteenth century; so too was the hostility between the bailliage and the corps de ville. What was not common to every town, what indeed typifies their dissimilarity, was the mode of electing municipal officials. Almost every town enjoyed its own special electoral system, which was the heart of its "constitution", and the methods of procedure were so varied that it is well-nigh impossible to generalize about municipal elections before the Revolution.

Notwithstanding, towns were sufficiently alike in the eighteenth century for a general survey of municipal administration to be pertinent. This has been undertaken in the first part of this thesis. The second part contains a detailed study of the administration of two towns in particular, in order to reveal how important local differences were in fact.
PART ONE.

THE CORPS DE VILLE.

With the exception of unusually large towns, such as Paris, Toulouse, Marseille, and Bordeaux, whose area and population demanded more complicated arrangements, the administration of French towns in the eighteenth century was conducted through two bodies, the corps de ville, and the assemblée générale des habitants. The relationship between these two was more or less that of executive and legislature, but indubitably the corps de ville - the executive - was the senior partner. For the role of the assemblée générale des habitants, the election of municipal officials aside, was limited to the authorization of exceptional measures - extraordinary financial transactions, litigations and deputations, for instance — proposed by the corps de ville. The assemblée générale des habitants was at a disadvantage, because when it met, and what it discussed, rested with the corps de ville; whereas the activities of the assemblée générale des habitants were intermittent, the corps de ville was in almost daily contact with municipal affairs; and whereas the assemblée générale des habitants was, as its name suggests, a populous and
rather unwieldy body, the corps de ville was a small and intimate committee. It usually consisted of a maire, a number of échevins, a procureur syndic, a receveur, and a greffier.

It has often been claimed that the maire was a mere primus inter pares, and such indeed was his status in theory. But being chairman of the corps de ville and chief representative of the town, made him in fact the most important municipal official. The most succinct exposition of the duties and privileges of the maire, or indeed of any of the other municipal officials, is to be found in the royal legislation which made these posts venal. For in order to attract buyers, the attributes of venal offices had to be precisely defined, so as to lessen the risk of expensive quarrels over competence. These definitions of their functions were not only enforced when municipal offices were venal, i.e. 1692-1717, 1722-1724, 1733-1764, 1771-1789, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, but

1. To avoid clumsy and tedious repetition, I shall use the terms maire and échevins throughout, but it must be remembered that what in the north was called the échevinage, was known as the consulat in the Midi, where the premier consul was the equivalent of the maire.
C. Normand: Saint-Quentin et la royauté, p.11.
3. This has been recognized by more recent writers on municipal history, e.g. M. Bernard: La municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, p.56.
came to be accepted as the norm. The maire's functions were set forth principally in the edicts of August 1692 and December 1706. It was he who summoned and presided at all communal assemblies, including those for the election of municipal officials; the échevins could advise him when assemblies ought to be called, but he was not obliged to follow their advice unless it was unanimous. He also presided at the auction of leases of municipal property, and at the auditing and closure of the accounts of the receveur de la ville, and of the accounts of hospitals founded by the municipality. His signature was required on all orders authorizing the receveur to make payments out of the municipal treasury, and on all taille rolls, which had to be drawn up in his presence in the town-hall. He dealt personally with all correspondence addressed to the municipal officials, even lettres de cachet, and was obliged to consult the échevins only about replies to letters addressed to les maires et échevins. It was the maire who received the oath of office from and installed all other municipal officials - échevins, procureurs syndics, substituts, greffiers, assesseurs, receveurs, officiers de la milice bourgeoise. He appointed and dismissed all sergents and tambours de ville, and his prior consent was

necessary to all public announcements (except for the
ordonnances of the lieutenant général de police) made by the
tambour. The maire's approval had also to be obtained by
the greffier before depositing any document in the municipal
archives, one of the three keys to which the maire always
held. Until the creation of the office of lieutenant général
de police in October 1699, the maire enjoyed a certain
authority over guilds and manufactures in the town: he judged
all contraventions of guild regulations, he installed master-
craftsmen, and the jurés and syndics of the guilds, and it was
he who authorized "foreign" merchants to trade in the town.
The maire played a not insignificant part in the billeting of
troops: he reviewed the soldiers on their arrival in the town,
and signed a statement that all were present and correct;
then, in conjunction with the commissaire aux revues, he
assigned the men to their billets, watched by the échevins,
who were not allowed to participate, but could report to the
intendant any favouritism or unfairness. It was the maire
who issued lettres d'habitants to persons wishing to settle
in the town, first assuring himself as to the applicants'
faith, good behaviour and morals. In brief, the maire
enjoyed the right to have his finger in every municipal pie.
His presence was even more widely felt in pays d'états: he
was ex-officio deputy to the états of Brittany and Burgundy, where the tiers états were composed exclusively of maires, while in Languedoc, too, it was traditional for the premier consul to represent his community at the états.

Such were the special functions of the maire. In addition, as a member of the corps de ville, he was involved, together with his colleagues the échevins, in the day-to-day running of the town, which entailed responsibility for the water supply, the upkeep and cleaning of the streets, the maintenance and repair of municipal property, the administration of hospitals, orphanages, and workhouses, and the welfare of the poor, among other things. In the eighteenth century, the municipal officials rarely had a professional staff at their beck and call, to assist them in these manifold tasks; they themselves had to both formulate their policy and put it into execution, so that in an important or developing town, being an échevin was an exacting job. Some corps de ville acted always as a group and tackled all their activities corporately; others divided their duties among their members, making each échevin specially responsible for a certain aspect of municipal administration. The corps de ville of Lyon followed the second procedure, and divided its work thus:
the prévôt des marchands took charge of the assemblées du consulat, the police des spectacles, and military affairs; the premier échevin the upkeep of the roads, the street-lighting, and the fire-fighting service; the second échevin - the inspection and supervision of the mills, laundry-boats and factories on the Rhône and Saône; the troisième échevin - education; the quatrième échevin - petty police contraventions. 2.

In Bordeaux, an effort was made to assign to municipal officials, tasks for which they were specially qualified; thus the two jurats gentilshommes were responsible for hospitals, theatres and billeting troops; the two jurats avocats for prisons, legal proceedings, town property and schools; while the jurats négociants took care of octrois, markets, financial accounts, and the maintenance of the quays and roads. 3. In Arras, where of the nine échevins, two were gentilshommes, five avocats, and two notables, functions were split up in this manner: one of the gentilhommes and the senior avocat constituted the commission aux honneurs; the second and third avocats supervised the water-supply; the fourth and fifth avocats were responsible for the administration of hospitals,

1. Like the prévôt des marchands of Paris, he was the equivalent of maire.
2. Procès-verbaux des séances des corps municipaux de la ville de Lyon, vol I, p.3.
schools, and other public establishments; billeting soldiers
was the work of the other gentilhomme; and the notables
organized public works and building. ¹

What it meant to be an échevin, and how demanding
were the responsibilities attached to the post, can be
gathered from the following passage, taken from the "Journal
d'un Echevin d'Abbeville au XVIIIe siècle (25 aout 1759 –
20 janvier 1760)" :

"dimanche 2 septembre 1759.....étant arrivé en
la chambre du conseil, M. le Maieur proposa la
distribution des charges pour MM. les Echevins:
les quatres anciens gardèrent la leur, et les
nouveaux prirent celles des quatres sortis, de
sorte que je fus chargé de la maîtrise des ouvrages,
que j'avois jusqu'alors refusé d'accepter, attendu
les peines et l'embarras que donne cette place.....
j'étois determiner de tirer au sort toutes les
charges pour eviter celle-la, ce que je leur proposai;
mais les instances polies et gracieuses que me firent
M. le Maieur et MM. les Echevins.....me firent
determiner a l'accepter.

Après la distribution des charges, il fut

¹ E. Lecesne: Notice historique sur l'échevinage d'Arras,p.22.
propose de distribuer les quartiers. Je priai MM. les Echevins de ne me point mettre dans les quartiers Marcadé et du Bois pour éviter toutes difficultés et contestations avec mes voisins de l'un et l'autre quartier pour raison de logement et imposition, ce qui fut approuvé et trouvé juste par toute la compagnie.\(^1\)

Thus, being a municipal official was paradoxically both a fiercely contested honour, and a dreaded burden. It was probably those unpleasant tasks attached to municipal office, such as billeting soldiers, and collecting taxes, in performing which one might so easily arouse the hostility and resentment of one's neighbours, that made some men contemplate membership of the *corps de ville* with loathing:

"Malgré tous mes efforts," wrote Jean Laroche of Brive-la-Gaillarde to a close friend, "j'ai été nommé consul de Brive pour cette année 1723. Vous entrez trop dans mes intérêts pour ne pas me plaindre de ce malheureux emploi."\(^2\)

The amount of time consumed by municipal business was another prohibitive factor. In 1774, one of the men whose name had been put forward for the mayoralty of Brest, begged to be excused, because it was "un malheur que d'être nommé

2. H. Delsol: *Le consulat de Brive-la-Gaillarde*, p.266.
maire, car cette place ne permet pas a Brest d'avoir d'autres fonctions." It was also an extremely expensive honour: of the fourteen men chosen to be maire of Brest between 1750 and 1790, twelve were négociants, for only these rich trading merchants had sufficient fortune to support the costs attached to this office. When in 1774, the town unanimously asked that Le Normand, the most brilliant and highly esteemed of its citizens, should be continued for a further term as maire, he agreed only on condition that he was spared a second installation ceremony, the expense of which he could not afford.

It was partly because wealth and leisure were so often indispensable to a municipal official, that the administration of many towns fell into the hands of an oligarchy, and the composition of corps de ville changed so slowly. Since the supply of willing talent was limited, one man had perforce to hold in succession several posts on the corps de ville. And it was because the members of the corps de ville so often came from the same rich and leisured group, spoke the same language, and indeed were usually friends, if not

1. M. Bernard: La Municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, p.77.
4. Instances of lengthy municipal careers can be found in R. Poidebard: La vie agitée d'Imbert-Colomes, pp.28-30, and in M. Bernard: op. cit. p.84.
related, that meetings of the *corps de ville* were normally calm, and decisions were reached speedily and with the minimum of fuss. Discussions were sometimes so calm as to be positively boring, attendance at such meetings naturally dropped, and business had frequently to be postponed.

The other members of the *corps de ville*, the *procureur syndic*, the *receveur*, and the *greffier*, were somewhat unlike their colleagues in that, although voluntary, part-time officials, their functions were of a more specialized, semi-professional nature. While they attended the discussions of the *corps de ville*, and could be called upon to give information and advice concerning their own particular department of municipal administration, rarely were they allowed to vote, to participate in the formulation of policy. They were quasi-civil servants, and their exceptional status was often recognized by making them virtually irremovable, and by paying them a real, and not merely a token, salary.

Although inferior to the *échevins* in precedence, the *procureur syndic* was undoubtedly the most important member of the *corps de ville* after the *maire*, and for much the same reason: he had cognizance of all public business.

1. Called *procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville*, when the office was venal.
No meeting, whether of the corps de ville or the assemblée générale des habitants, could be held unless he was present, and no decision could be taken without first his opinion being heard. He was the town's ministère public. He had to bring to the attention of the maire and échevins any problem or situation calling for action on their part, he had to advise them as to what the law allowed or required them to do. It was the procureur syndic who was responsible for seeing that the decisions of the corps de ville were put into effect. He was especially charged with ensuring that the best possible use was made of the town's financial resources, that debts owed to the town were recovered, that farms of octrois were promptly renewed, that the receveur collected the revenue properly. He had to have access to all documents belonging to the town, and was one of the three officials who had a key to the archives.  

2. The edict of February 1755 suppressed all unbought posts of procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville (created in 1733), and united their functions to the procureur du roi of the local royal court. Code municipal de Dauphiné II, p.368.
The work of the procureur syndic was so closely associated with the financial administration of the town that the edict of May 1765 amalgamated this office with that of receveur. The aim of the union was to make the receveur responsible, not only for collecting municipal revenue as hitherto, but also for taking legal action, if necessary, to exact its payment. Previously, when the receveur and procureur syndic shared these two functions, shifty municipal debtors had sometimes been able to exploit to their own advantage, disagreements between the officials about their respective competence. However, the customary division of labour had this to recommend it: it allowed the procureur syndic to act as a check on the receveur, and perhaps for this reason, the amalgamation of the two offices did not survive the suppression of the 1765 edict in 1771.

The receveur de la ville, or trésorier, as he was alternatively called, played a somewhat passive role in the financial administration. He was, in truth, nothing more than the custodian of the town's treasury: he received municipal revenue, he made payments from it, on the written order of the maire and échevins, he submitted an account of

1. In Breton towns known as miseur.
his receipts and expenditure at fixed intervals, usually once a year. But it is significant that if ever the intendant found any aspect of the financial administration not to his liking, he invariably tackled the maire and échevins, not the receveur, about it. Fear of peculation and misappropriation had reduced the receveur to a cipher. Yet in spite of the innumerable precautions hedging the management of municipal finance, the receveur occasionally did wax rich at the town's expense. He could make a profit out of his office, only if the town had surplus wealth, which was rare, and if the other municipal officials were stupid, trusting, lazy, or accomplices; he was more likely to be digging into his own pocket to help the town to meet current expenses during the year, as many sources of revenue, the farms of the octrois in particular, were not payable until Christmas. For example, in March 1787, the town of Lyon owed its receveur 355,000 l. This explains why prosperous merchants were always the first choice for the office of receveur.

The greffier was usually the most retiring, not to say the most lowly, member of the corps de ville, though at the same time, one of the most hard-worked. All documents

connected with a town’s administration were drawn up by him. He took down the minutes of all meetings of the corps de ville and assemblée générale des habitants; he drew up the tax rolls for both royal and municipal impositions, and copied extracts from these for the benefit of the collectors levying the taxes; he acted as clerk at the auditing of accounts; he wrote out all leases of town property, farms of octrois, contracts for public works, all forms connected with billeting of soldiers; he made fair copies and duplicates of all formal letters sent by the corps de ville to the government; he acted as archivist, and was supposed to store the documents in a systematic order and keep an inventory of them;¹ depending on the legibility or otherwise of his handwriting, he draws either sighs of relief or tears of rage from the historian. The greffier might or might not have clerks to assist him, according to the size of the town and the amount of municipal business; if he did, their wages came out of his own salary.

¹ Isambert etc: Anciennes lois françaises, vol.20, pp.106-110 — edict of July 1690.
THE ACTIVITIES OF MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS.

Towns have been a feature, not only of French, but of European life for centuries, and the basic ingredients of a pleasant and successful urban civilization have always been much the same. Consequently it is not surprising to discover that the preoccupations of present-day municipal officials were also a source of concern to their eighteenth century predecessors. They too were responsible for ensuring that there was always an adequate supply of water, that the streets were kept clean and in good repair, that public buildings were properly maintained, and that certain educational and welfare services were available. In addition, they had to perform certain duties which are not associated with municipal office today, for example, billeting troops.

This was perhaps the most unpopular, the most dreaded of municipal officials' tasks. They were usually given no more than three or four hours' warning that the town had to find hospitality for troops, by an officer sent on in advance of the main party. ¹ As soon as the soldiers arrived, the maire,

one échevin, and the commissaire aux revues1 reviewed them, to check that their numbers agreed with those on the extrait de la revue.2 The troops disliked having to stand under arms, generally at the end of an exhausting march, while they were inspected by the municipal officials, who, as a result, sometimes did not finish allotting lodgings before nightfall. Consequently the ordonnance of 30 November 1729 allowed this preliminary review to be dispensed with, if the extrait de la revue was believed to give a sufficiently accurate guide to numbers, although recruits and extra soldiers who had joined the unit en route, and were therefore not listed on the extrait de la revue, had still to be counted.3

1. The full title of this official, created in 1692, was conseiller commissaire particulier aux revues et logements des gens de guerre. He was a semi-military, semi-municipal official. Attached to the corps de ville of a town, he ranked after the échevins; but his wages were included in the états de l'ordinaire des guerres and paid by the receveur des tailles, and the fees of 5s. per extrait de revue which he collected from the étapier, were debited to the état de liquidation des étapes. Edict of August 1692, Bib. nat., collection Blondeau, A.F.F. 26464, fol. 27. See Appendix A.

2. The movement of troops was decided either by the secrétaire d'état de la guerre, or by the gouverneurs and commandants of provinces, and the journey plotted on a map known as la route, on which were marked all the places in which they were to stay. On the back of this map, was the extrait de la revue, a list with the names of officers and the number of soldiers.

Code municipal, ou analyse des règlements concernant les offices municipaux, p. 209.

The commissaire aux revues kept a register of these reviews, sending certificates of each to the secrétaire d'état de la guerre, to the intendant, and to the entrepreneur des étapes. 1.

The actual billeting was then arranged in the town-hall, by the maire and the commissaire aux revues only. Although the échevins could attend to see that no one was unjustifiably exempted from lodging soldiers, and could complain to the intendant if they suspected abuses, they were forbidden to interfere in the actual assignment of lodgings, and the maire alone signed the billeting tickets. 2. The officers in charge of the soldiers were also present, but theirs, too, was a passive role. 3. Municipal officials were recommended to canvass the houses in the town at least once a year, to find out which families could provide lodgings. 4. Such an investigation was in fact performed annually in Brest, Nantes, and Rennes, by the milice bourgeoise. 5. Lodgings had to be arranged so that soldiers belonging to the same company were billeted together in one quarter of the town, to facilitate discipline. 6. All that a soldier could legally demand was a bed and bedding, and a seat by the fire; 7. officers expected

a private room, but the ranks had to share their accommodation. Both the officer in charge of the company and the maire kept a list of the lodgings, which, once arranged, could only be altered by the commissaire aux revues and the maire; soldiers who boarded elsewhere than in the billets officially assigned to them, could be imprisoned, officers reported to the secrétaire d'état de la guerre.

The natural dislike of accommodating soldiers was intensified by the number of exemptions from this obligation. That the very poorest should escape was just and accepted; it was the innumerable exemptions attached to social status or office which caused resentment and increased the municipal officials' difficulties. Billeting troops was virtually impossible in some towns: in Bar-sur-Seine in 1755, when privileged and poor had been deducted, only 234 households remained out of 410, to lodge 120 cavalry, 216 fusiliers and 59 officers. Sometimes there were abuses in the allotment of billets: it was not unknown for the maire to ignore the

3. The rule that no host could be turned out of his own bedroom, let out the poorest, and restricted billeting to two-bedroomed houses. Code municipal, p.232.
principle that the burden of accommodating troops was to be borne alternately by all inhabitants, so that no one lodged them twice before all had lodged them once.¹ There were frequent complaints that the maire with the connivance of the échevins, illegally exempted the friends and relations of the corps de ville, and overburdened its enemies. When this happened, the commissaire aux revues had authority to take complete charge of all lodging arrangements, altering those he thought unfair, and billeting soldiers on the guilty municipal officials, if need be. Sometimes even the commissaire aux revues' impartiality could not be relied on as a safeguard:

"Sur les représentations qui furent faites au Roi, que dans la plupart des villes de Dauphiné, les consuls et autres personnes qui composent le corps des dites Villes, non-seulement exemptoient leurs parens et amis qui étoient sujets au logement de gens de guerre, mais aussi qu'après qu'ils en avoient fait et rempli les billets ils retiroient ceux que bon leur sembloit pour exempter encore en cette sorte par des voies deshonnêtes et défendues, un grand nombre d'Habitants, ce qui tournaient à la foule et surcharge des autres qui étoient

ordinairement les plus pauvres, et faisoit que les gens de guerre s'y trouvoient mal logés; il fut ordonné que les Consuls desdites villes tiendroient Registre des logements, et demeureroient responsables en leurs propres et privés noms des dommages et intérêts de ceux desdits Habitants qui auroient logé deux fois des gens de guerre, avant que ceux qui auroient été exemptés indûment en eussent logé une fois.....auquel Commissaire deparuti ou à ses subdélégués, les consuls de chaque ville seroient tenus de remettre chaque année un Rolle des Bourgeois et Habitans, et tous les trois mois, un Controle des logemens qui auroient été faits...."  

And of course, it was not only the malpractices of the municipal officials that increased the vexation of billeting soldiers; their officers too, were often racketeers. Indeed, the French army, both officers and rank and file (who were after all, chiefly foreign mercenaries) was notorious for its gross and barbaric behaviour. This explains why exemption from the obligation to lodge soldiers was so sought-after; why householders would strip their spare rooms

of furniture, smash in the windows, and tear down the stables, rather than have troops billeted on them; why so many towns endeavoured to build barracks to house soldiers.

Louis XIV's long wars caused barracks to be built on the frontiers, and almost immediately inland towns asked for them too. In 1716 they were allowed to rent houses and stables suitable to be used as barracks provisionally, while the royal government drew up plans and estimates for erecting permanent quarters in all the more important towns. But since its financial situation never permitted the royal government to realize this ambitious program, towns were instead authorized to build barracks at their own expense.

The construction of barracks was not a project to be undertaken lightly. It involved building accommodation for the soldiers, stabling for their horses, and utensile. This was the furniture for the barracks: beds (the regulation army bed consisted of a bunk, straw paliasse, bolster, quilt, and a pair of sheets to be changed every twenty days), benches, tables and shelves, for the men's quarters; shovels, forks and buckets, for the stables. Rarely could the cost of these buildings and equipment be met from a town's ordinary

revenue. The municipal officials usually had to get the intendant's permission to levy a special tax on those inhabitants normally liable to billet soldiers, in order to finance the building of barracks.¹

Sometimes, the accommodation of troops, whether in barracks or in private lodgings, was organized on a provincial basis.² Typical of such schemes was that authorized in 1765 for the généralité of Moulins: 30,000 l.p.a. was to be levied from the inhabitants of the généralité, in proportion to the amount of capitation paid by each, to raise money for barracks, which were to be built in certain specified towns in the généralité.³ In Brittany too, a special impôt en argent du casernement was levied by the états to pay for accommodating soldiers, both in barracks and in private lodgings. Under this system, the corps de ville of Breton towns, in addition to arranging the billeting of troops, also organized the collection of this tax,⁴ and the distribution

4. This impôt en argent du casernement was levied up to 1725 by répartiteurs nominated by the corps de ville; the amount paid by each individual was based on his assessment for capitation. After 1725 the procedure was greatly simplified by incorporating the impôt en argent du casernement in the capitation.
of grants allotted from it by the états, to reimburse those who had lodged soldiers. For example, the town of Pontivy, which usually had two companies of cavalry quartered on it, was paid by the états 2,100 l. in 1721; 2,669 l. in 1723. The répartiteurs divided this lump sum among the inhabitants. This was a most difficult operation, because in Pontivy few could put a whole bed at the disposal of the military: six persons usually made a joint effort to provide a bed, and estimating the exact share of each, in order to reimburse them, was tricky. To avoid such difficulties, the corps de ville in 1723 decided to use part of the 2,669 l. grant to buy seventy-two beds and bedding. Troops were still lodged in private houses, but householders could borrow the "town beds" if necessary. In 1740 the corps de ville resolved to go a step further, and rented two buildings from the hospital to use as barracks, at a cost of 800 l.p.a. This was a singularly heavy and barren expense; consequently the town built its own barracks and stables, which were opened in 1768. Their upkeep was, owing to the incessant wars of the eighteenth century, a constant source of worry to the corps de ville, which decided, in 1784, to farm it to an entrepreneur - a carpet manufacturer, in fact - in return for one-third of the
reimbursement paid annually to the town. Some small towns, dreading the burden of a permanent garrison, were at first reluctant to build barracks, but gradually the population came to appreciate their advantages and demanded them. The only drawback was that the soldiers preferred home comforts, and persuading them to move into barracks was sometimes difficult.

When troops left a town, their commanding officer had to obtain from the maire a certificat de bien-vivre, attesting that they had committed no crime or violence during their stay, and that they had left their lodgings or barracks in as good condition as they had found them; any damage for which the soldiers were responsible had to be repaired by them. This certificate could only be delivered twenty-four hours after their departure, so that the townspeople had time to send in their complaints to the maire, without fear of reprisals.

Soldiers had not only to be housed during their marches, they also needed feeding. In the eighteenth century, this was accomplished by means of étapes - dépôts of food

and fodder set up along the most frequented routes. Contracts to provide *étapes* throughout a *generalité* were auctioned by the intendant to whichever entrepreneur made the best offer. When, as not infrequently happened, no one was willing to undertake the supply of *étapes*, the onus of organizing these stores fell on the *maire* and *échevins*. The initial expense of furnishing provisions was borne by the townspeople, who were reimbursed a year later by the *receveur des tailles* of the *élection*.

The establishment of *étapes* was no doubt an improvement on the arrangements of the previous century, when soldiers were supposed to live off their wages, but, since the payment of these was invariably tardy, in fact pillaged the countryside like an invading army; nonetheless, the *étape* system was impaired by serious abuses. The indemnity paid to a town by the *receveur des tailles* was often insufficient to compensate the inhabitants for their expenditure on feeding the soldiers, for whereas the indemnity was calculated according to the official rations scale, the soldiers were rarely content with official rations:

"le Roy rembourse sur le pied réglé par les intendans des provinces; mais il en couste toujours en pure perte à ceux qui logent au moins autant que ce que le Roy
rembourse.... Ce n'est pas que les troupes fassent aucun désordre ni violence; mais elles veulent estre bien traitées, et la crainte qu'ont les habitants d'attirer quelque mauvais traitement les oblige de donner du vin et de la viande en plus grand quantité et d'une qualité beaucoup meilleure qu'ils ne sont obligés. Cela est tout ordinaire, et toute l'exacte discipline qu'on fait observer aux troupes ne peut jamais aller jusqu'à empescher ce mal. "

The reimbursement given to the inhabitants was further diminished in some places, where the receveurs des tailles quite illegally deducted fees for its payment. Occasionally the townspeople received no indemnity for the cost of food and fodder, because the money was embezzled by the municipal officials responsible for its distribution: "Ce qui a ruiné les habitants des lieux de passage, c'est que l'étape ne leur a jamais été remboursée, et les consuls profitaient seuls du remboursement." Indeed, the profits

that could be made by the municipal officials were so considerable that some of them strenuously opposed the feeding of the troops being taken out of their hands and given to étapiers. The contrôleur général wrote to the intendant of Tours in 1688:

"Les étapiers se plaignent de ce que les maires, échevins et autres officiers, chagrins de ce qu'ils ne sont plus chargés de faire les fournitures, sur lesquelles ils faisaient des profits excessifs, font tout ce qu'ils peuvent pour traverser les établissements des étapiers particuliers et les obliger à tout abandonner, qu'ils prennent les routes des mains des officiers, et les font sortir des lieux sans prendre leur quittances d'étapes, et que de plus ils ne veulent point remettre à l'étapier les routes ni les revues, si on ne leur paye un droit de 30 sols pour chacune...."\(^1\)

However, the reputation of the étapiers was no better than that of the municipal officials, but their abuses were more often committed at the expense of the soldiers, than the civilians. In collusion with the officers, who were responsible for checking the quality of the supplies,

\(^1\) A.M. de Boislisle: Correspondance des contrôleurs généraux des finances avec les intendants des provinces, vol. I, no. 556.
The étapiers foisted rotten food on the soldiers, or else gave them money instead, which was strictly forbidden. The officers, for their part, were not averse from cheating the étapiers, if they could, by passing off beggars as soldiers, and selling the extra provisions they thus collected. The royal government tried to prevent these and other frauds, when it reintroduced the étape system in 1727, by requiring the municipal officials to supervise the distribution of rations by the étapier. When they had inspected and counted the soldiers to be billeted on the town, the municipal officials gave the étapier a copy of the extrait de la revue, so that he should know for how many men he had to find rations. On his copy of the extrait de la revue, and on those sent by the commissaire aux revues to the intendant and the secrétaire d'état de la guerre, the amount of food supplied had to be certified by the corps de ville and the officers in charge of the troops. Thus when the étapier submitted his monthly accounts to the intendant, they could be checked against the certificates sent in by the municipal officials.

One further change in the étape system was introduced

1. The étape system was suppressed by the ordonnance 15 April 1716; soldiers had to live on their pay, which was increased. Aubert de la Chénaye des Bois: Dictionnaire militaire, p. 213.
sometime during the eighteenth century. Instead of negotiating a separate contract for each généralité, a general farm of all the étapes throughout France, called the entreprise générale des étapes, was established. This general farm was auctioned in the royal council to a company which appointed a directeur to each généralité to supervise the service. The company did not itself supply the étapes, but sub-let them to sous-étapiers, who were responsible for furnishing provisions to all troops within an agreed area, usually an élection.

If organizing the billeting of troops was an activity not intrinsically connected with municipal affairs, neither was the levy of royal taxation; yet this too was one of the corps de ville's most important tasks. Although in some towns, - Auxerre was one of them, - municipal officials were forbidden to interfere in the collection of royal taxes, their exclusion was not characteristic. It was to the government's advantage that municipal officials should be in charge of raising taxation, because, in the event of non-payment, pressure and coercion could be much more effectively used against them, the "city fathers", persons of substance and standing, than against some miserable and anonymous collecteur

1. Contrary to general belief, most towns paid not only capitation and vingtièmes, but also taille. Those towns which escaped taille, listed by M. Marion: Les impôts directs sous l'ancien régime, p.22-23, were exceptions.
ordinaire. As the intendant of Dauphiné pointed out in 1684, by treating the levy of royal taxation as one of the corps de ville's inescapable cares of office, the royal government thereby avoided the often troublesome business of persuading some unwilling individual to undertake the collection of taxes. Experience proved that in some towns the respect and obedience commanded by municipal officials was indispensable to the recovery of taxation. Even in Auxerre, where the levy of taille was ostensibly organized on a popular basis, each parish in the town electing its own collectors and assessors, nevertheless, it was the maire and échevins whom the élus généraux blamed for negligence in 1710 when the tax returns were tardy.

Although responsible for its successful levy, municipal officials did not themselves collect royal taxation - exemption from this burden being one of the privileges of their office - they nominated special collecteurs to do the job. The procedure followed in Senlis was typical: there the corps de ville appointed four collecteurs to each of the eight

1. A.M. de Boislisle: Correspondance des contrôleurs généraux des finances avec les intendants des provinces, vol I, no.98
4. One of the few exceptions to this rule was the town of Brive-la-Gaillarde, where the consuls actually levied royal taxation in person. H.Delsol: Le consulat de Brive-la-Gaillarde, p.265.
parishes in the town. To ensure that suitable, solvent persons were chosen, the royal government held the corps de ville jointly responsible with the collecteurs for the taille. In some towns of the Midi - Sisteron, Clermont, and Lodève, for instance, the work of collecting royal taxation was normally auctioned to whoever would do it for the lowest percentage of the takings; but if no one offered, then the corps de ville had the disagreeable duty of nominating a collecteur forcé. Inevitably the municipal officials incurred unpopularity by appointing collecteurs, because the functions attached to these posts were so often extremely distasteful: friends and neighbours might have to be forced to pay their taxes by billeting troops on them, or by seizing their belongings, for if the collecteur did not raise all the taxation due within the time allotted, he himself would be constrained by the receveur of the élection. The work was onerous and ill-rewarded. The capitation collector of Pontivy had to keep his bureau open from 8 a.m. to 12 noon, and from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., every day, from 1 April to 1 May, and from 1 October to 1 November, to receive payments, while in 1745, for instance,

2. E.de Laplane: Essai sur l'histoire municipale de la ville de Sisteron, p.67.
E. Appolis: Le diocèse civil de Lodève, p.310-311.
his commission for collecting 6,644 l. was only 87 l.16s. This resentment and unrest inherent in such a situation led the corps de ville of Pontivy to appoint a salaried official to collect both capitation and vingtièmes in the town. This solution was frequently adopted by towns, which indeed, were encouraged to do so by the royal government. Its attitude is manifest in the arrêt of 18 July 1779, which authorized corps de ville in the généralité of Moulins to employ salaried collectors. Owing to the number of persons exempt from the obligation to collect taille, runs this arrêt, this task is invariably pushed on to the poor, who can least afford to take the time from work to perform it properly, and as a result, the king's revenue diminishes. To remedy this deplorable state of affairs, the municipal officials were to appoint, subject to the intendant's approval, commis to levy both the taille and the vingtièmes; as well as the usual fees, they would be paid wages, which would vary in amount according to the demands of their work. This change was not intended to lessen the corps de ville's responsibility: it would still be answerable for the collection of taxation, and for the conduct of the commis.

3. Isambert etc: Anciennes lois françaises, vol 26, p.115-117.
Making the municipal officials responsible for the collection of taxation was probably a sound arrangement; the same cannot be said for their participation in its assessment. Complaints about their scandalous and corrupt practices are legion, the chief charge against them being that they assessed too lightly their relations and associates, and deliberately overestimated the wealth of their enemies. How the corps de ville of Dijon abused its power has been vividly described by Marcel Marion.\(^1\) Although legally debarred from interfering in the assessment of taxes, the municipal officials of Dijon nonetheless drew up the taille rolls, and did so in secret, to escape the vigilance of the élus généraux and the intendant. They were reputed to favour members of the governor's entourage with illegal tax exemptions and reductions; some even claimed that the municipal officials levied more taxation than authorized by the élus généraux, and pocketed the difference. The élus généraux were powerless to correct these abuses because the corps de ville of Dijon enjoyed the protection of the local parlement, which was the competent court for fiscal disputes, and the parlement was usually at loggerheads with the états. The corps de ville of Cravant,

\(^1\) M. Marion: Histoire financière de la France depuis 1715, vol. I., p. 56.
another, but very much smaller town in Burgundy, enjoyed no such powerful protection, and so the élus généraux were able to put a stop to the iniquities it committed in assessing taxes. The history of this affair is worth retelling, because it reveals how municipal officials could exploit their authority to promote their own selfish interests.

In 1774, the élus généraux, following reports that the rich were being undertaxed, and the poor overtaxed in Cravant, sent a commissioneer to the town, to draw up a new pied de rôle de taille. This was a guide for the assessment of taxation. A hypothetical sum of 1,000 l. was divided among the taillables, in proportion to their wealth, so as to establish what percentage of taille was due, in any year, from each; the percentages thus obtained were embodied in the pied de rôle de taille, according to which standard, taxes were to be assessed in the future. The operation was based upon financial statements submitted by each tax-payer, which were scrutinized by five asséeurs nominated by the assemblée générale des habitants. The result of the commissioneer's work was a reduction in the taxes paid by the poor, and an increase in those paid by the wealthy. Two copies of

1. It is to be found in the Arch.nat., H l. 169, 2e dossier.
the pied de rôle de taille were made out, one was given to the premier échevin to be deposited in the hôtel de ville, the other to the collecteur de taille.

As soon as the collecteur began levying taxes calculated according to this new standard, the disgruntled well-to-do approached the bailliage of Auxerre, cunningly suggesting that the new roll was invalid because it had not been verified by the bailliage. Susceptible to the idea that its authority had been slighted, the bailliage imprisoned the collecteur and seized the tax rolls. It took two royal arrêts to persuade the bailliage to retract this high-handed treatment. The wealthy clique in Cravant tried another tack: they petitioned the élus généraux to lower their taxes. After careful investigation, the élus decided that there was no justification for any reduction. Undaunted, the malcontents sought to achieve their ends by getting some of their adherents elected aséeurs in charge of imposing the taille. Their intention was revealed to the provincial

1. When in 1668 the comté of Auxerre had been incorporated in the province of Burgundy, the états de Bourgogne had made this union conditional upon the suppression of the election of Auxerre, the judicial competence of which was therefore transferred to four commissaires sur le fait des aides et tailles who were made members of the corps du bailliage. This was the foundation of the bailliage's claim to interfere in matters concerning taxation.
administration by the secrétaire de l'hôtel de ville:

"il est bon de vous observer, Monsieur, que ces asséeurs sont du parti des insolents et des mutins et que les chefs de ce parti se proposent de les faire agir à leurs désirs, il y a même un de ces asséeurs qui est le Sieur Vincent qui s'est déclaré en ma présence qu'il recevroit toutes les plaintes qui lui seraient faites contre le rolle de 1774 et qu'il instruirait sur le champ le ministre."^2.

Ignoring the 1774 pied de rôle de taille, these reactionary asséeures arbitrarily reduced their own taxes and those of their sympathizers by half. To punish this selfish defiance, the élus généraux inflicted côtes d'office on them, and ordered that the following year, 1777, the tax assessments should be based on the pied de rôle de taille of 1774. Still loath to accept defeat, the rebellious group engineered the rejection of the pied de rôle de taille by the assemblée générale des habitants. How this was accomplished is disclosed in a vivid description of the meeting, recorded by the procureur syndic. He explains that he had not been informed in advance, as was normal, that a meeting

1. He was second échevin of Cravant.
2. Arch.nat., Hl.169, 81.
of the assemblée générale des habitants was to be held, and was most surprised when the curé announced it at High Mass. Attendance was very poor - in all only 28 of the 220 inhabitants turned up - even though the opening of the proceedings was delayed for half an hour, while the tambour beat his drum through the streets to remind the townspeople of their civic duties. Those who did attend were asked by the échevins whether they approved of the 1774 or the 1776 rôle de taille:

"La pluspart des voix s'éléverent et on entendu: MM. vous êtes assez sages pour faire le bien de la communauté. Le second échevin fit selon l'usage sur une feuille de papier, deux lignes, au commencement de la première fut inscrit 1776 et sur la seconde, 1774; c’est ainsi que se recueillent les voix dans les assemblées à Cravant, et il est d’usage que chacun des habitants fait lui-même un trait qui coupe la ligne et il la pose sur celle qu’il juge à propos, cette fois ci ce fut le second échevin qui tenoit la plume et indiquoit pour les habitants qui, pour la pluspart lorsqu’on les interrogeoit, ou voulez-vous que je marque repondoient comme les autres à la premiere barre.....et alors led. Sieur Regnauldin procureur1. tira de sa poche un cahier

1. One of the leaders of the reactionary clique.
de papier de cinq a six feuilles ou était l'acte de
l'assemblée tout dressé et que les S. Regnauldin
dictait tout bas au secrétaire qui le transriroit
sur le registre. Comme cette transcription dura très
longtemps et on ne disoit plus rien aux habitants,
ceux ce s'ennuyèrent et s'en allerent presque tous.
MM. les échevins et les procureurs qui restoient
dirent en les voyant se retirer, ceux qui savent
signer, signeront ce soir ou demain matin, ainsi la
lecture ne fut pas faite aux habitants de cette
ville....."1.

When apprised of this new development, the élus
généraux sent the secrétaire en chef des états to Cravant to
make a full enquiry. The facts unearthed by his investigation
led the intendant to recommend to the royal government that
the two procureurs who had instigated this agitation should
be exiled from Cravant permanently, and the second échevin
forbidden to participate in municipal affairs in future.

The legal basis of interference by municipal
officials in the assessment of taxes was slender. In theory,
the task of apportioning the taille due from a town among
those liable to pay it, was performed by asséeurs nominated

by the parish assemblies. But the *asséeurs* were obliged to work in the townhall, which gave the municipal officials an excuse to meddle, since all meetings whatsoever held in the town hall could be attended by the *échevins*, and presided over by the *maire*. The privilege of being present at the assessment of taxes was readily interpreted by the municipal officials as the right to supervise and control this work. Indeed the intendant of Auvergne shrewdly conjectured that it was an incentive to the purchase of municipal offices when they were venal:

"Il m'a paru qu'il n'y a que la nécessité de vendre les charges qui puisse faire accorder aux maires des villes la faculté d'assister à la confection des rôles....Ils ne demandent d'assister aux rôles des tailles que pour obliger les consuls à les faire comme les maires le souhaiteront. Il me paroist dangereux d'accorder cette prérogative aux maires, qui feront décharger leurs parens et amis...."¹.

But to prevent municipal officials, venal or otherwise, from influencing the assessment of taxes, was no small matter. Their audacity and persistence was sometimes remarkable. For instance, the *consuls* of Tulle, so the

intendant of Limoges reported to the contrôleur général in 1699, altered the rôle de taille, after it had been verified and signed by the intendant, in order to favour their relations. In Auxerre, according to complaints received by the élus généraux of Burgundy in 1697, the corps de ville, although strictly forbidden to do so, habitually took charge of the assiette, which was performed by four assesseurs nominated by the municipal officials, instead of by the twenty, popularly chosen, prud'hommes. Dreadful injustices were said to result from these irregularities. An assemblée générale des habitants, summoned by the intendant, confirmed the accusations. To terminate these abuses, a royal arrêt, revising the procedure for drawing up the rôle de taille, was issued. But an affidavit laid before the cour des aides of Dijon three years later, attesting that the assesseurs in Auxerre were reducing the taxes of all those connected with the hôtel de ville, indicates how unsuccessful was this attempt to eradicate the municipal officials' ascendancy. The municipal officials of Brest did not have to rely on covert influence to achieve their ends: they openly organized the

assessment of taxes. Each year the corps de ville was notified by the commission intermédiaire of the états of Brittany, how much taxation was required of the town. One of the municipal officials was then chosen by his colleagues to draw up the tax roll, which he did on the basis of information furnished by the capitaines of the milice bourgeoise, who had canvassed the houses in the town, estimating, chiefly by their appearance and the quality of the furnishings, the amount of taxation each inhabitant could afford to pay. Appeals against tax assessments, demands for reduction and exemption were decided by the corps de ville, which was therefore judge in its own cause. Inevitably its members were accused of exploiting their position to favour their friends and relations; with what justice cannot, at this remove, be estimated.

That the royal government itself harboured doubts about the integrity of municipal officials is shown by the innovations introduced with the assemblée provinciale system at the end of the century.

Although the relationship between the towns and the assemblées provinciales was never precisely and finally worked out, at least fresh rules for assessing taxation in towns

situated within the jurisdiction of the assemblées provinciales, were instituted. Where previously municipal officials had arrogated to themselves sole responsibility for dividing up the taille, they were to be assisted by adjoints. However, as the latter were to be chosen among the forty most highly taxed inhabitants, and had to be at least thirty-five years old, chef de famille, and domiciled in the town for not less than six years, it seems unlikely that their interests were essentially opposed to those of the municipal oligarchy, and the reformatory value of the decree is doubtful.

Though important and onerous, the billeting of troops and the levy of royal taxation were not activities special to town administration. Within the strictly municipal sphere, public works and amenities were undeniably the corps de ville's most vital concern. But while municipal officials were ultimately responsible for such things as the water-supply, road repairs, street-cleaning, the erection and maintenance of public buildings, the actual provision of these utilities was farmed out to private enterprise. The corps de ville's functions were, in the main, limited to negotiating contracts, raising capital; and obtaining governmental

1. Arrêt 30 September 1788, Arch. nat., Hl. 1605, 311.
sanction for public works, and therefore this aspect of municipal administration can be more conveniently discussed in its financial context.

Public works apart, the corps de ville's largest single charge was, in many towns, police. This too was an extra-municipal concern, and not necessarily in the hands of the corps de ville. Responsibility for public order in a town belonged to whoever bought the lieutenance général de police, a venal office created in 1699,¹ to which was attributed police authority. For the most part this office was acquired either by the bailliage (or sénéchaussée) or by the corps de ville of towns.² There was much to be said for the corps de ville being responsible for upholding public order, because many of the activities which came within the sphere of police were closely connected with municipal administration. This was especially true of police materielle and police économique.

In the eighteenth century, the multitudinous objects which came within the scope of police were divided into three categories — police morale, police materielle, and police

². The états of Provence and Burgundy, for instance, purchased all the offices of lieutenant général de police assigned to their provinces, and incorporated them in the corps de ville. Arch.nat. H l. 144, l.
The first connoted the enforcement of religious and moral law, and included compelling the observance of Sundays, feast-days, and the Lenten fast, suppressing gambling and prostitution. More important was police matérielle, which comprised public hygiene, fire precautions, and the regulation of traffic. Or, in more concrete terms, it signified discouraging the breeding of pigs, hens, ducks, and rabbits in houses, the building of manure heaps in the streets; seeing that roads were not obstructed by carts and horses, traders' stalls, builders' rubble, and that they were regularly cleaned; preventing the outbreak of fires by making obligatory roofs of slate or tiles, by inspecting and sweeping chimneys; organizing a fire-fighting service. Most important of all was police économique, which entailed regulating food supplies, running fairs and markets, and fixing the price of prime necessities; supervising trade and manufactures, co-operating with guilds and corporations. These tasks were so akin to municipal administration that, when police powers were not vested in the corps de ville, friction almost inevitably resulted. For example, the rules governing street-cleaning were drawn up and enforced by the police authority, while the

1. Police is, in itself, an enormous subject. There have been two important studies on it: G. Sautel: Une jurisdiction municipale de police sous l'ancien régime — le bureau de police en Aix-en-Provence, and J. Ricommand: La lieutenence général de police à Troyes au XVIIIe siècle. I am much indebted to the latter.
actual removal of the dirt was arranged and paid for by the corps de ville; the police authority controlled the supply and price of food, but the purchase of extra grain and flour in time of famine was the corps de ville's liability. That this division of labour was inconvenient and provocative, and to be avoided if possible, by uniting the lieutenancedépôt de police with the corps de ville, was eventually recognized by the royal government. Tarbé wrote in 1787:

"La police est contentieuse et administrative; mais sur quelques objets la nuance est difficile à établir. De la rivalité des pouvoirs il résultait des débats continuels entre le lieutenant de Police et les officiers municipaux des villes. Cette consideration a déterminé le gouvernement depuis nombre d'années à réunir l'office de lieutenant de Police aux corps municipaux."¹

But like so many of the reforming projects of the ancien régime, this resolution to make police authority an attribute of the corps de ville, remained a project.

However, the union recommended by Tarbé was in practice realized in those towns where the corps de ville had

¹. Arch. nat., H 1. 1600. 50. Tarbé was chef du bureau in the département des finances.
bought the venal office of *lieutenant général de police*: it meant a considerable increase in the work of the municipal officials. There were no general police regulations applicable throughout France; legislative powers on these matters belonged to the local police authority, so, as *juges de police*, the *maire* and *échevins* had to formulate regulations designed to promote public order, morality, hygiene, and all the other many qualities enumerated above. Of course, municipal officials could not themselves execute these regulations and arrest those who infringed them; *commissaires de police* were engaged to do this. Frequent meetings of the police court were held, often at weekly intervals, to try offenders. When the *corps de ville* enjoyed police authority, the task of acting as *ministère public* fell to the *procureur syndic*. Consequently he had to attend all police court sessions, study the evidence adduced in each case, evaluate the gravity of the crime, and demand the appropriate penalty. He was inevitably the most knowledgeable person on police affairs, and the ordinances and regulations issued by the *juges de police* usually embodied the fruit of the *procureur*’s experience. Just as the *procureur syndic* acted as *procureur du roi de police*, so, under similar circumstances, the *greffier de la ville* performed the functions of *greffier de police*.
That municipal office in the eighteenth century was no sinecure can be appreciated from the foregoing account of some of the activities undertaken by the corps de ville. The variety and complexity of the functions involved, and the demands made upon the time of municipal officials, must be given due weight in any attempt to explain why the administration of a great many towns fell into the hands of an oligarchy.
That the assemblée générale des habitants survived at all in the eighteenth century was due to Colbert: he revived it in order that it might act as a restraint upon the financial administration of the corps de ville. The lack of such a restraint explains how, in the seventeenth century, municipal officials had been allowed to over-tax towns and dissipate or embezzle their revenues. The situation complained of by the inhabitants of Pont-Audemer was typical:

"Il n'y a ville en la province, où il y ait plus de désordre qu'en celle-ci, et qui soit plus surchargée d'impositions ordinaires et extraordinaires; ce qui réduit les habitants dans la dernière pauvreté.....
La cause d'un tel désordre est que les échevins et receveurs depuis quarante ans n'ont rendu compte aux habitants de leur administration et recette, telles plaintes qu'ils en aient faites."

When the assemblée générale des habitants tried to redress these abuses, the corps de ville spiked its guns:

"En une assemblée obtenue pour nomination d'un échevin, voyant que les habitants, au nombre de plus de deux cents,
ne se portaient pas à nommer une personne à leur dévotion, mais recherchaient d'y mettre un homme d'honneur pour remédier aux abus du passé et en empêcher de semblables à l'avenir, ils se seraient levés de sièges et retirés sans avoir voulu recevoir les voix des habitants, qui sortirent fort scandalisés de l'affront, et jugèrent qu'on ne leur faisait cette insulte que pour les faire rebuter de plus se trouver aux assemblées de ville, et donner lieu aux échevins et autres officiers d'en être seuls les maîtres."¹.

To prevent municipal officials running towns in this way, as though they were private exploitations, Colbert made the consent of the assemblée générale des habitants an essential prerequisite of all major financial enterprises. All projects to supplement town revenue by octrois or personal taxation, to sell town property, to raise loans, to initiate litigation, and to undertake deputations, had to be authorized by a majority vote of the assemblée générale des habitants.²

This limitation on the corps de ville's power was effective from 1683, when it was introduced, until 1789, but during this period, the institution which operated it, the assemblée

générale des habitants, suffered a radical transformation.

The supersession of the assemblée générale des habitants by a "representative" conseil was one of the most striking developments in town administration in the eighteenth century. There are various explanations of this change. Delsol concludes from his study of Brive-la-Gaillarde that apathy was the enemy of the assemblée générale des habitants. In Brive-la-Gaillarde itself, it became increasingly difficult to persuade the populace to play its part in municipal administration, until finally, in 1784, the assemblée générale des habitants eagerly divested itself of responsibility, and voluntarily handed over its powers to a conseil politique. This unauthorized move was immediately reversed by the intendant. But the status quo was too unsatisfactory to continue, and the following year the subdélégué had to inform the intendant that municipal business was being dislocated because the échevins could not get their plans discussed by the assemblée générale des habitants: "On peut dire qu'il n'y a plus d'assemblée de ville et par cette raison plus de deliberation." The intendant requested further details on the suggested conseil politique, and though there is no record of a decision being taken, permission to institute the desired conseil must have been granted, because in July 1788 it was certainly functioning, its
members chosen by the intendant. Le Lay, on the other hand, suggests that responsibility for levying royal taxation was the main factor determining the changeover from direct to representative assemblies. Only a wealthy, leisured minority could afford the time required for the highly technical business of organizing the assessment and collection of capitation and the dixième. The bourgeoisie of Pontivy legalised their monopoly by a coup d'état in 1717. Taking advantage of an arrêt of 1681, which gave the maison de ville the privilege of drawing up a constitution for the town, and which had hitherto been neglected, it was decided to replace the general assembly by the following group of persons: four officials from the sénéchaussée seigneurial, two clergy, three gentilshommes representing the local nobility, the procureur syndic, secrétaire, and miseur from the hôtel de ville, four avocats, four procureurs, four notables, and four marchands. The method of election was not at this time determined, but in 1724, when death had created seven vacancies, this narrow clique decided to co-opt new members.

Though in some towns the replacement of the assemblée générale des habitants by a conseil politique may have been

1. H. Delsol: Le consulat de Brive-la-Gaillarde avant 1789, pp. 301-305.
induced by apathy and the increasing complexity of municipal business, in most it was the result, not of any indigenous evolutionary process, but of direct governmental interference, provoked by the turbulence and perversity of the assemblée générale des habitants. This body was not sacrosanct; Colbert had revived it for purely utilitarian reasons: it was a convenient institution for checking the ambitious selfishness of municipal officials. Almost any other body which could perform this function as efficiently was to be preferred, for it is evident that the royal government had little faith in the political wisdom of these large general assemblies, in which artisans and tradesmen predominated. The sentiments expressed in 1784 by Amelot, intendant of Burgundy, in a letter to the contrôleur général were characteristic: "Ces Assemblées ou tout le monde est admis, ou les gens les moins dociles font taire les citoyens sages et instruits, ne peuvent être qu'une source de désordre."1. This view was reiterated in the arrêts du conseil suppressing assemblées générales des habitants.

"Les Assemblées Générales des habitants que l'on a coutume de convoquer dans la ville de Guéret, occasionnent

1. Arch. nat. H l. 1469, 181."
souvent du tumulte, et les affaires y sont mal discutées."

"Le Roy étant informé du désordre et de la confusion causé par la multitude du peuple qui se trouvent aux assemblées des habitants de la ville de Cosnes..... ces sortes d'assemblées ayant été jusqu'à présent irrégulières et tumultueuses, comme abandonnées aux suffrages prédominants de la populace."\(^2\)

"Les Assemblées Générales des habitants que l'on a coutume de convoquer dans la ville d'Aubusson sont moins utiles que prejudiciables aux intérêts de la ville; parce que la crainte des troubles en éloigne les principaux habitants, et que les affaires ne peuvent pas y être discutées avec toute l'attention qu'elles meritent."\(^3\)

Mistrust of the lower orders was by no means confined to hide-bound bureaucrats, but even infected those who, according to eighteenth century standards, were reformers and liberals: Delaverdy, for instance, hastily amended his

1. Cited in J. de Montenon: Un corps de ville provincial à la veille de la révolution - Poitiers, p. 52.
edict of May 1765 when he realised that it gave the working classes predominance in municipal elections. Because article 34 of this edict\(^1\) assumed equality between the trade guilds and professional associations, requiring each one to depute one member, who would participate in the election of notables, the deputies of the judicial and commercial associations were swamped by those from the more numerous artisan guilds. To rectify this preponderance, an amendment was issued in 1766: by allowing those artisan guilds with eighteen or more members to elect one deputy each, and obliging those with fewer than eighteen members to amalgamate to elect a deputy, Delaverdy weakened the artisan representation. His reason for doing so is most illuminating:

"nous avons remarqué que les corps et communautés des artisans, en s'assemblant séparément et nommant, conformément à l'article 34 du dernier de ces édits, chacun un député, donnaient une si grande quantité de députés dans toutes les villes, que leur nombre se trouvait, dans plusieurs endroits, excéder celui des députés des compagnies et autres classes des habitants, et leur assurait conséquemment la prépondérance dans les élections; qu'il en pouvait résulter un inconvénient,

\(^1\) Isambert etc., *Recueil des anciennes lois françaises*, vol.22, p.442.
en ce que le concert entre ces députés des artisans, et même quelquefois les briques et les cabales entre eux, pouvaient anéantir le choix le plus éclairé, et donner, contre notre gré, à l’administration, des officiers municipaux mal choisis, même souvent absolument incapables...

There was probably some justification for the royal government’s distrust of the assemblée générale des habitants. Its members were, for the most part, stupid, uneducated, easily corrupted or intimidated, and too often dependent for their livelihoods on those very municipal officials whose conduct they were supposed to supervise. In Auxerre, for instance, the corps de ville was able to dominate the assemblée générale des habitants, because the latter was largely composed of the tenants and employees of the municipal officials. The astonishing subservience of the assemblée générale des habitants of Cravant, described above, was attributable to the tyranny exercised over the townspeople by certain lawyers:

"ces procureurs exercent une espèce de despotisme sur les autres habitants, qu’ils s’en font redoutés par

la crainte des procès qu'ils leur suscitent et des frais dont ils les menaient, que la partie la plus saine de ces habitants n'ose paraître aux assemblées parce qu'ils savent qu'on n'écouterà pas leur avis ou qu'ils seront vexés s'ils en proposent un contraire à celui de ces petits tyrans qui voudraient s'arroger toute l'autorité."¹.

The royal government's remedy for such a situation, where one or two powerful persons found it only too easy to manipulate general assemblies and exercise undue influence on municipal affairs, was to abolish the assemblée générale des habitants, and replace it with a representative conseil. In 1782 it tried by this means to liberate the town of Givry from the sway of M. de Nansouthel, seigneur of Givry and conseiller au parlement.² Similarly, when the town of Asson in Béarn asked permission to summon an assemblée générale des habitants for the election of municipal officials, - it had just secured the right to hold elections by purchasing the venal municipal offices created in 1771 - the local intendant refused, because "des habitants aisés qui ont espéré au moyen de cette réunion d'être élu pour les charges municipales l'ont principalement provoquée." He explained that in Asson there

¹. Arch. nat. H 1. 169, 104.
². Letter 19 July 1784 from Amelot, intendant of Burgundy to the contrôleur général, Arch. nat. H 1. 1469, 181
were 500 chefs de famille and that if they all met, the assembly would be tumultuous and a prey to intrigue from well-to-do inhabitants wishing to get themselves elected. He therefore proposed that the assemblée générale des habitants should be superseded by a conseil politique nominated by the king.

This tendency to replace assemblées générales des habitants by conseils politiques was most pronounced in the second half of the eighteenth century. In this respect, Delaverdy's edict of May 1765, which abolished assemblées générales des habitants in all towns throughout France, and set up assemblées des notables in their place, was in keeping with contemporary developments. The composition of these assemblées des notables was also characteristic. One notable had to be chosen from each of the following: the cathedral chapter, the ecclesiastical order, nobles and military officers, the corps du bailliage, the bureau des finances, the officers of any other royal jurisdiction, the communauté des notaires et procureurs; two notables had to be chosen from among the officiers communaux, avocats, médecins, and bourgeois vivant noblement, two from the artisans; three notables from among the wholesale and retail merchants, surgeons, and members of

of the liberal professions. In brief, the assemblée des notables was dominated by local bigwigs. The same was true of all comparable bodies — conseils généraux and conseils politiques — established in place of the assemblée générale des habitants.

The royal government no doubt hoped that a fairly small committee composed of men of property and standing would be less easily bullied by the corps de ville, and in particular, that it would examine the financial administration of the municipal officials more critically than had the assemblée générale des habitants. This was certainly what Delaverdy expected of his assemblée des notables. It is not yet possible to draw any firm conclusion as to whether the assemblée des notables did in fact live up to his expectations, but its conduct in Saint-Quentin and Auxerre may have been typical. In Saint-Quentin the assemblée des notables was quite carried away by enthusiasm, and its attacks on the corps de ville had to be moderated by Delaverdy, who wrote on 3 September 1766:

"Je ne puis qu'approver le zèle que vous témoignez tous pour concourir à la bonne administration des revenus communs; mais je désirerais voir plus d'union

2. See appendix B.
et de ce concert entre le corps des notables et celui des officiers municipaux. Il ne s'agit point de faire de règlements pour limiter le pouvoir de ces derniers. Les édits du mois d'août 1764 et de mai 1765 ont réglé ce pouvoir, et si ces officiers font des dépenses sans y avoir été autorisés par l'assemblée des notables, elles ne seront point allouées dans les comptes que le receveur rendra chaque année à cette assemblée des notables. Ceux qui auront expédié des mandements pour les payer en demeureront garants. Vous devez donc vous attacher les uns et les autres à suivre exactement les règles prescrites par les édits, sans chercher à en faire de nouvelles....."

But the enthusiasm and contentiousness of the assemblée des notables cannot have been translated into that searching supervision of finances required by Delaverdy, for on 22 August 1771 he had to reprove the maire and échevins of Saint-Quentin for unauthorized expenditure and for their attempts to exclude the assemblée des notables from municipal administration as they had previously excluded the assemblée générale des habitants:

"Je resterai toujours prévenu contre votre administration, tant que je verrai que vous voudrez vous rendre

indépendent des notables. Je sais que vous n'avez souvent aucun égard à ce qui a été arrêté à la pluralité des suffrages dans leurs assemblées. Vous augmentez les dépenses à votre gré; celle du pavé qui avait été autorisée jusqu'à 1800 livres, a été portée à une somme bien plus forte et encore n'a-t-on pas rendu un compte exact de ce qui restait à faire. Vous entreprenez des réparations considérables dans devis ni adjudication et sans aucune autorisation des notables. Vous avez fait travailler aux remparts sans représenter d'autre détail qu'un mémoire d'ouvrier qui porte qu'il a commencé par la droite et fini par la gauche, et vous avez eu le secret de faire alloyer en dépense par le bailliage dans le compte du receveur tous ces objets, quoique contredits par les notables.\(^1\).

In Auxerre, the assemblée des notables was at one with the corps de ville and made no attempt at all to check the municipal officials' expenditure.\(^2\). This collusion was not very surprising; since the assemblée des notables chose the municipal officials, it was natural for it to trust them.

The members of the assemblée des notables and the conseil général were chosen not merely as the most outstanding

1. C. Normand: Saint-Quentin et la royauté, p. 211.
2. See below, part II.
local men, but as representatives of important interests — the Church, the law, commerce, and so on, — for it was both traditional and prudent to associate all social classes and professions with municipal administration. The representation of all important interests was the principle which not only determined the composition of the conseil général, but also governed the election of municipal officials.
The consequences of the government's repeated transformation of municipal charges into venal offices must not be distorted. Because so many towns purchased these venal offices, either voluntarily, in order to retain their control over municipal administration, or under pressure from the royal government, elections and electioneering activity did not disappear from town life in the eighteenth century. However, to describe municipal elections in general is virtually impossible, because prior to the Revolution there was no comprehensive law in accordance with which elections in all towns were organized; on the contrary, each town enjoyed its own special electoral arrangements which varied tremendously from place to place. All that a general survey of municipal elections in the eighteenth century can do is to illustrate this sometimes bewildering variety, and indicate the few tendencies common to elections in all towns.

By the eighteenth century most towns had lost the tortuously complex electoral systems favoured in the middle ages. The royal council, when disputed elections were referred to it for settlement, often amended the constitutions of the towns concerned to prevent a recurrence of the trouble, and in doing so seems to have simplified and streamlined them.
An exception to this rule was Charité-sur-Loire, which in 1760 the royal government endowed with the following electoral system. Fifty leading inhabitants of the town were to be nominated notables by the king. Fifteen of these would then be chosen by lot to elect twelve prud'hommes from among their fellow notables. The twelve prud'hommes were to select the municipal officials from the remaining thirty-eight notables.¹ This very gothickly contrived constitution was a rarity; it was more usual for municipal officials to be chosen in a more straightforward and familiar way, either by a direct or by a two-stage system of election.

Of towns where the corps de ville was quite simply elected directly by all adult male inhabitants - towns such as Noyers, Saint-Maixent, and after 1760, Joigny,² - little more need be said. It is the two-stage system of election which requires explanation. There were, broadly speaking, two types of indirect election. In one, all adult male inhabitants elected a certain number of prud'hommes, who nominated the municipal officials: Chalons-sur-Marne and Brive-la-Gaillarde followed this practice.³ In the other, the

¹ Arrêt du conseil, 7 juillet, 1760. Arch. nat., E.2390.
municipal officials were chosen by an electoral college composed of deputies elected by the parishes or quarters in the town, and/or deputies elected by professional associations and trade gilds.

This second type of indirect, two-stage election—perhaps the most typical electoral system—obtained in the towns of Laon, Etampes, and St. Denis, among others, and an analysis of the membership of their electoral colleges is very instructive. The electoral college of Laon comprised four deputies from the cathedral chapter, two deputies from the bailliage, one deputy from each of the following organisations—the maîtrise des eaux et forêts, the élection, the grenier à sel, and the traitez, one deputy from each of the following professions—avocats, procureurs and merchants, and three deputies to be elected by each of the ten parish assemblies in Laon.¹ The members of the electoral college of Etampes were the lieutenant général and procureur du roi from the bailliage, the current corps municipal, six former municipal officials chosen by all those who had ever been maire, échevin, or conseiller, two deputies from each parish in the town, and eighteen deputies representing the leading citizens—six ecclesiastics chosen by the cathedral chapter,

¹ Edict of May 1731. Bib.nat., A.F.F.11063, fol.216.
six gentilshommes chosen by a meeting of all gentilshommes at the house of the most senior, and six judicial officials chosen by the members of local royal courts.1. The electoral college of Saint-Denis consisted of all existing and former municipal officials, the members of all royal courts, all curés in the town, and one deputy from every merchant and artisan gild.2. The chief characteristic of these and comparable electoral colleges was the dominant influence of what may be called the bourgeoisie - royal officials, lawyers, merchants, etc., - with its inevitable concomitant, the meagre representation of the working classes.

In towns where municipal officials were elected directly by all male inhabitants, or where the first stage of the election was organized through parish assemblies, artisans and labourers did have a fair share in determining the outcome of the election. This was not so where representation of the populace was limited to deputies elected by gilds and corporations, since the working classes seldom belonged to gilds, which were the special province of the more prosperous tradesmen and shopkeepers. Moreover, in some places the little influence enjoyed by the lower classes in municipal

elections declined during the eighteenth century. In Saint-
Quentin this was the result of a deliberate manoeuvre by the
bourgeoisie. Up to 1738, four of the six échevins of Saint-
quen tin were elected by deputies from the following twelve
corps — the bailliage, the grenier à sel, the élection, the
avocats, the procureurs, the notaires, the médecins,
chirurgiens and apothicaires, the marchands drapiers et de
soie, the marchands merciers, the Marchands de vin non vendant
à l'assiette, the marchands de toiles et toilettes, the
orphèvres and marchands de fer, i.e. by the wealthy and
respectable bourgeois: the other two échevins were elected by
the mayeurs d'enseigne and prud'hommes, who were the hereditary
leaders of the quarters in the town and represented the
working classes. Friction between these two social groups was
endemic until 1738 when the bourgeois majority on the corps de
ville obtained an arrêt from the royal council which deprived
the mayeurs d'enseigne and prud'hommes of their right to elect
two échevins, on the grounds that they caused disorder and
turbulence at municipal elections. The two échevins hitherto
chosen by the mayeurs d'enseigne and prud'hommes were thence-
forth appointed by the corps de ville, the deputies from the
twelve corps listed above, plus one deputy nominated by the
mayeurs d'enseigne and prud'hommes.\(^1\) In Brest, on the other

\(^1\) C. Normand: *Saint-Quentin et la royauté*, pp. 57 & 78.
hand, apathy, not bourgeois machinations, accounted for the feeble role played by the lower classes in municipal elections. For although each of the corps des métiers was entitled to send two deputies to the assemblée générale des électeurs, in fact, few did: in 1750 only nineteen out of a possible fifty-six deputies of the corps des métiers attended the assemblée générale des électeurs. Their attendance remained at this low level until the end of the century: in 1789 the deputies of the corps des métiers numbered only twenty. As a result of the trade-gilds' indifference, the assemblée générale des électeurs was inevitably dominated by its ex-officio members: the commandant, the subdélégué, the juges royaux, the procureurs, the officiers de la milice bourgeoise and other local bigwigs.¹

The electoral ascendancy of the bourgeoisie undoubtedly contributed towards oligarchy in town government; so too did the participation of the corps de ville in municipal elections. There were very few towns in which the municipal officials did not themselves exercise some control over the choice of their successors, though the extent of their influence varied considerably. In Brest the municipal officials co-opted new members to the corps de ville when

¹ M. Bernard: La municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, pp. 62-65
vacancies arose; as municipal officials held office as long as they pleased, and as retired échevins were often invited to return to office, the membership of the corps de ville changed very gradually. ¹ The assemblée générale des électeurs of Brest elected the maire only, and even he had to be selected from among the members of the corps de ville. ² But the municipal officials' power was rarely so open or so complete as this; it was more usual for them to determine indirectly who would succeed them. Thus in Clermont the retiring consuls chose the twelve electors who appointed the new consuls. ³ In Troyes, during the first half of the century, the échevins in effect controlled the elections, since they decided who should be proposed as candidates for municipal office. ⁴ Similarly in Tarbes, the last task of the retiring consuls was to nominate the candidates from whom the new consuls would be chosen. ⁵ But probably the municipal officials' most common means of influencing the elections was through their membership of electoral colleges, in which the corps de ville, like any other corps or communauté, was usually represented. As just one of many cliques in an electoral college, the corps de ville's chance of managing

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¹ M. Bernard, La municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, pp. 84-85
² M. Bernard, op. cit., p. 57.
³ E. Appolais, Le diocèse civil de Lodève, p. 157.
⁴ J. Paton, Le corps de ville de Troyes, 1470-1790, p. 137.
⁵ Arrêt du conseil, 5 juillet 1783. Arch nat., E. 2591.
an election were obviously much weaker than in those towns where it controlled the nomination of candidates, for instance; notwithstanding, the municipal officials still attempted by underhand methods, to further their own interests. It was for this reason that in 1754 the duke of Orleans procured the repeal of an arrêt issued by the royal council in 1731, which gave the municipal officials of Laon, a town within his appanage, the right to vote in elections. Arguing that they tried to perpetuate themselves, and quarrelled with the other electors, the duke had the municipal officials excluded from the electoral college of Laon. But the Duke's attitude was exceptional; the electoral influence of municipal officials was rarely challenged.

Though the size of the electorate varied enormously, the number of persons eligible for municipal office was usually small. This was seldom due to a stiff property or tax qualification, restrictions not known to most towns. Arles was one of the few exceptions. There, to qualify for the consulat or conseil, gentilshommes and ennoblis were required to have at least 10,000 l. property listed on the cadastre du communauté, avocats 6,000 l., bourgeois, notaires and procureurs 4,000 l., marchands, apothicaires and chirurgiens

3,000 l. Each year, before the municipal elections, the consuls and four conseillers de ville drew up a list of those whose estate was sufficient to meet these requirements, and posted it outside the hôtel de ville. Residence was a much more common qualification than property; Troyes was one of the many towns which restricted municipal office to natives and other inhabitants of long-standing. But the qualification most often demanded of municipal officials was membership of a certain profession or social group. The maire of Saint-Maixent, for example, was always a judge of the royal court; the maire of Asson could be chosen from the noblesse, gradués, retired army officers and bourgeois only; the maire and lieutenant de maire of Tarbes had to be either nobles or bourgeois vivant noblement, or gradués. The principle underlying this apparently arbitrary regulation becomes evident when the mayoralty of Joigny is considered. This post

4. Arch. nat. H 1. 82, 20-25. The term bourgeois was not used so loosely during the eighteenth century as it is nowadays. It seems to have connoted one whose fortune was sufficient to free him from the necessity of engaging in commerce or following a profession: he was often more explicitly described as bourgeois vivant noblement or bourgeois sans profession. See A. de Tocqueville: Œuvres complètes, ed. J.P. Mayer, vol.II - L'ancien régime et la Révolution, p.233.
had to be filled alternately by a member of the **corps des officiers de justice** and a member of the **corps des marchands**, and when the offices of both *maire* and *premier échevin* were declared venal, it was decided that the remaining post of *échevin* should alternate between the same two factions.¹ For the *ancien régime* held that interests, rather than people, should be represented in municipal administration, and to ensure that a healthy equilibrium was maintained, seats on the **corps de ville** of a great many towns were allocated to various important interests. In Chalons-sur-Marne, for instance, the *premier échevin* had to be an *avocat*, the second *échevin* a *procureur*, the third *échevin* a *bourgeois*, and the fourth *échevin* a *marchand*.² The *premier consul* of Cahors was always a *conseiller en l'élection*, the second *consul* a *procureur du roi en la prévôté de Guyenne*, the third *consul* an *avocat en parlement*, though the choice of fourth *consul* was unrestricted; of the *conseillers* of Cahors, eight had to be chosen from among the nobles, twelve from the *bourgeois*, *avocats, médecins, and négociants*, and four from the *artisans*.³ In La Rochelle, the **corps du présidial** and **bureau des finances**

3. J. de Montenon: *Un corps de ville provincial à la veille de la Révolution* - Poitiers, p. 73.
two from the royal courts, two from among the bourgeois sans
depart profession, avocats and médecins, two from the commerçants en
gros, and two from the marchands détaillleurs and notables artisans.¹ Three of the nine échevins of Amiens had to be
officiers du roi or magistrats de robe longue, two had to be
nobles, or bourgeois vivant noblement, and the remaining four
wholesale merchants.² This list could be lengthened to
include Grenoble, Langres, Puy, Sisteron, Troyes, Aubusson,
Etampes, etc.

This custom of allotting municipal offices to
specified classes and professions certainly limited the
electors' choice and restricted service in town administration
to a close circle of people. But experience proved that it
was eminently suitable for eighteenth century conditions: in
towns where the constitution did not ensure that each important
interest was represented on the corps de ville, there seems to
have been a tendency for one faction to monopolize the
administration, and for the excluded groups to demonstrate
their resentment in futile quarrels over precedence and
extravagant litigation, there being no provision under the
ancien régime for lawful opposition. The most bitter feuds

¹ Déclaration du 2 octobre 1703. Bib.nat., A.F.F. 21,761,
fol.446.
² J.N.A. Thierry: Recueil des monuments inédits de l'histoire
were engendered when, as not infrequently happened, the bailliage officials were excluded from municipal administration.

The dangers inherent in the system of assigning each place on the corps de ville to certain, necessarily small, social or professional cliques - nepotism and perpetuity - were mitigated by two rules, the one forbidding close relations to hold office contemporaneously,¹ the other prohibiting re-election to the corps de ville except after an interval usually equal in length to the years in office.² The latter rule did not apply to the semi-professional officials: the secrétaire-greffier and procureur-syndic remained in office as long as they discharged their functions satisfactorily. Nonetheless, a degree of oligarchy was inevitable in the eighteenth century, when only a small minority had the leisure, background and education which fitted them for the responsibilities of municipal administration. How to make the best use of all available talent seems to have been a constant problem. Lengthy terms in office with an opportunity for re-election was one solution, though fraught with the hazards of perpetuity. It was this anxiety which led the royal council

1. The following relationships were those most often prohibited on the corps de ville: father-son, brothers, father-in-law - son-in-law, uncle-nephew, brothers-in-law, in Charité-sur-loire even cousins german.
2. This was so in Asson, Etampes, Sisteron, Tarbes, and Troyes, for example.
to stipulate that the consuls and conseillers de ville of Arles should be eligible for re-election only after a fallow period of three years. But ten years later this prohibition had to be removed because there were not enough capable persons in the town to make it workable.\textsuperscript{1}. To solve this same problem in Étampes it was decided that municipal officials could be continued after their first term in office for a further period of four years, provided they had a two-thirds majority in the elections; moreover, anyone who joined the corps de ville to fill an extraordinary vacancy created by death, not only saw out the rest of his predecessor's term of office, but also automatically served an extra period of four years on his own account.\textsuperscript{2}.

To ensure that municipal officials were not all green at the same time, it was usual to renew corps de ville partially. In some towns, Auxerre, Grenoble, La Rochelle, Saint-Maixent, and Saint-Quentin, for instance, half the municipal officials were replaced annually; in some, Langres, Charité-sur-Loire, Aubusson, and Asson, elections to renew half the corps de ville were held every two years; in Troyes, after 1781, when the échevins' term of office was extended to

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Arrêt du conseil}, 23 décembre 1786. Arch. nat., AD I. 14.
\end{itemize}
four years, one échevin was replaced annually. This method of partial renewal guaranteed that there were always anciens to instruct the nouveaux, and continuity was fostered in municipal policies. In many towns in Provence these same ends were achieved by translating consuls to the conseil de ville on their retirement. This was not to the liking of the intendant of Provence, who, attempting to prevent the introduction of this practice in Toulon, wrote to the contrôleur général in 1709:

"je crois qu'en ce pays-ci on ne peut trop souvent faire maison neuve dans les hôtels de ville, où la cabale s'introduit très aisément, parce que la génie de la nation y est naturellement porté," and claimed that former municipal officials were not necessary to instruct new ones, because:

"les consuls qui entrent dans la suite en fonction pourront, comme on a fait jusqu'à présent, s'instruire des affaires de la communauté dans le registre des délibérations et les archives. Tout dépend de s'y appliquer et d'avoir bonne intention."

Another expedient which ensured that municipal administration was ably managed was to admit to the corps de

only those who had served in some other branch of local
government. Hospital administration was a favourite training
ground: four years' experience on the hospital boards was
obligatory for all candidates for the conseil de ville of
Iyon; those who aspired to municipal office in Chalons-sur-
Marne were required to have served both as administrator in
the local hospital and as churchwarden. In some towns the
corps de ville was recruited exclusively from its advisory
committee, the conseil politique or assemblée des notables:
this rule applied in Asson and Troyes.

The organization of municipal elections was further
complicated by the fact that the royal government was by no
means a disinterested onlooker, for it was often vital for it
to have amenable and co-operative men in charge of the adminis-
tration, especially of large towns. The intendant of Bordeaux
explained to the contrôleur-général in 1709 how important it
was that he (the intendant) should nominate to that post of
jurat reserved for the merchants.

"Le choix du marchand est, dans ces temps-ci, le plus
important: il est chargé de tout le détail des blés et
de la subsistance du peuple; c'est lui qui m'en rend
compte immédiatement, avec lequel je travaille tous

1. R. Poidebard: La vie agitée d'Imbert-Colomès, p.29.
Troyes, 1470-1790, p. 167.
les jours, et qui prend soin de me faire exécuter ce qui me paroit nécessaire pour la nourriture des habitants."1.

It was obviously essential for the government to have its adherents in charge of towns in conquered provinces. For this reason all municipal officials in Artois were appointed by the intendant from 1692-1764.2 In certain other extraordinary circumstances the government assumed the responsibility of nominating municipal officials. When the towns of La Rochelle and Rochefort, which had been deprived of their constitutions in 1629 as a punishment for their rebellion, were in 1718 restored to their former status, the government cautiously denied them absolute freedom of elections. Instead it stipulated that for each vacant municipal office, three candidates should be elected and presented to the governor, who would be instructed by the government which to appoint.3 This same procedure was sometimes imposed on towns where one faction had gained control of the corps de ville, and those which had been excluded were indulging in such bitter and

2. Arrêt du conseil, 27 avril 1776. Arch. nat., E.2526. In fact, with the exception of the years 1764-1773, municipal elections were unknown in Artois, for the venal municipal offices created in 1771 were purchased by the états, which, as a result, nominated all maires and échevins in the province. Two deputies from each order in the états chose the échevins from lists of suitable persons drawn up by the corps de ville of each town; the maire (Artesian equivalent of maire) was selected by the king from three candidates.

P.T.O.
presented by the états.

3. Arrêts du conseil, 5 février 1718 & 5 mars 1718. Bib. nat.,
A.F.F. 21,761, fol. 446 & 450.
persistent opposition that the conduct of municipal business was dislocated. The government was able to end the strife by selecting, from the candidates presented, a balanced corps de ville, representative of all shades of opinion and interests in the town. This remedy was applied to Troyes in 1773 and Givry in 1782. Another, more drastic solution was for elections to be temporarily suspended and municipal officials to be nominated outright by the government. This was often done when, to put an end to a period of turmoil and contention, a town was granted a new constitution: its inauguration was more likely to be successful if not bedevilled by electoral conflicts. The introduction of new constitutions in Asson in 1771, in Aubusson in 1786, in Tarbes in 1780, and in Auxerre in 1772, was marked by the suspension of elections and the appointment of municipal officials by the royal government.

Clandestine methods were also used by the royal government to control municipal elections. Its tactics, of course, varied from place to place and depended on the constitution of the town concerned; one of the few cases which have been thoroughly investigated is that of Toulouse. Elections in Toulouse were organized in the following manner. The outgoing capitouls nominated forty-eight candidates for the

1. Règlement 2 avril 1782, Arch. nat., H 1. 1469, 176.
From these candidates twenty-four were chosen by électeurs appointed by the sénéchal and viguier of Toulouse, and presented to the king, who selected eight of them to be capitouls. The royal choice was in fact determined by the secrétaire d'État, who, in his turn, relied on the intendant for guidance and advice. It was generally recognized that "le véritable maître des élections" was the intendant, and patrons pestered him to get their protégés appointed to the capitoulat, because the Crown nominated without hesitation those whom the intendant recommended: the secrétaire d'État wrote to him in 1718, "Votre avis ayant été entièrement suivi et S.A.R. n'ayant précisément nommé pour Capitouls que les sujets que vous avez proposés...." If the intendant was not enthusiastic about the official candidates, the Crown would circuit legality and appoint as capitouls persons not included among the twenty-four presented to it: "Le Roi nomme ordinairement les 8 Capitouls dans le nombre des vingt-quatre. Il arrive quelquefois cependant qu'on sort de cette règle et qu'on en nomme quelqu'un du nombre des quarante-huit quoique non compris dans les vingt quatré." The intendant was always reasonably certain that at least one capitoul would be prepared to nominate as his six candidates for the capitoulat persons actually chosen by the intendant himself: there was
almost invariably one capitoul who owed his office to the intendant, and so the chain of obligation was continued from year to year.¹

In Grenoble, municipal elections were controlled, not by the intendant, but by the gouverneur de la province. He could usually prevail upon the retiring consuls, whose privilege it was to nominate the candidates for the consulat, to propose two persons of his choice, and four others so outrageously unfit for municipal office that there was no risk of the electors voting for them. The governor's protégés were rarely unsuccessful.² The governor of Burgundy, by tradition always a Conde, was instrumental in disposing of municipal offices in that province.³ But the governor's influence seems to have been purely personal, and he did not exercise it to promote the royal government's interests.

Some private individuals, usually by virtue of their status as seigneurs, were able to determine the outcome of elections in certain towns. The seigneur haut justicier of most towns in the diocese of Lodève nominated the consuls from

1. R. Sicard: Toulouse et ses capitouls sous la régence, p.12-23. Other instances of interference in municipal elections by the intendants can be found in A.M. de Boislisle: Correspondance des contrôleurs généraux des finances avec les intendants des provinces, vol.1,913,1110; vol.11, 360,1073
3. See part two.
candidates elected by the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{1}. This system was also practised in Corbie, to the advantage of the abbé comte of Corbie.\textsuperscript{2}. Occasionally a local notability was so important and influential that he could dictate to a town whom it should elect as municipal officials, witness the following letter from the secretary of the bishop of Lodève to the consuls of Lauroux:

"Monseigneur l'Evêque me charge, Messieurs, de vous mander de sa part qu'il souhaite que le sr. Louis Arrazat de Labeil soit élu premier consul de Lauroux; il fait choix de lui préférablement à tout autre par la connaissance qu'il a qu'il est homme de probité et qu'il gérera bien les affaires de votre communauté; Monseigneur ne se détermine sur ce choix que parce qu'il est persuadé que le sr. Louis Arrazat de Labeil est la personne de Lauroux qui convient le mieux pour le premier chaperon. Il compte que vous aurez égard à ce qu'il souhaite, et il vous en prie...."\textsuperscript{3}

The foregoing analysis of the factors in municipal elections might be meaningless, or even misleading, if not accompanied by some account of actual elections. The following

\begin{enumerate}
\item E. Appolis: \textit{Le diocèse civil de Lodève}, pp.155-156.
\item E. Appolis: \textit{Le diocèse civil de Lodeve}, p.155.
\end{enumerate}
two examples may also help to correct the prevalent belief that during the eighteenth century genuine electoral contests were unknown in French towns.

The municipal officials of Chalon-sur-Marne were elected by the bishop, the conseillers de la ville, and eighty deputies nominated by the parish assemblies. On 11 November 1752 they met to elect a lieutenant, three conseillers, and two gouverneurs de la ville. At first proceedings went very smoothly: a M. Domey was chosen as lieutenant de la ville, and MM. Bertin Le Gentil and Dury as conseillers. But after only two of the parish deputies had cast their votes for the gouverneurs, the bishop angrily broke up the meeting. He did this, according to the parish deputies, in an attempt to deprive them of their right to participate in municipal elections. The lieutenant particulier du baillage, M. Fournière, maintained that the bishop's action was intended to prevent him (Fournière) from becoming premier gouverneur. The conseillers de la ville, who supported the bishop, claimed that he had rightly suspended the meeting, since only thirteen of the eighty parish deputies were qualified to take part, i.e., only thirteen of them donated the 5s. a month to the hôpital général which qualified them to be deputies. They asserted that the meeting was out of order on another score: not only had the parish deputies intrigued to secure the election of Le Gentil, although he had been neither a churchwarden nor a hospital
administrator, and only those who had held both posts could be members of the conseil de ville, they had also intended to re-elect Fourniere as gouverneur de la ville, thus violating the regulation which required gouverneurs municipaux of Chalons sur Marne to be changed every two years. These conflicting claims were submitted to the royal council, which, in an arrêt of 20 October 1754, upheld the contention of the conseillers de ville, declared the 1752 elections invalid, and confirmed the regulations which stipulated that no one could be a parish deputy unless he contributed alms to the hôpital général, and that no one could be chosen as conseiller de ville unless he had previously been both a churchwarden and a hospital administrator.

Two years later, in 1756, the royal council issued another arrêt, the content of which seems to indicate that a campaign had been organized to exclude the lower classes from municipal elections. For the arrêt provided that the same qualifications were to be required of parish deputies as of conseillers de ville, i.e. experience as churchwardens and hospital administrators, and further, that only those persons who paid 6 l. p.a. capitation were to be admitted to the parish assemblies to elect deputies. In addition, the royal council suggested that thirty-six municipal officials were not needed
to run the town, and that the number of parish deputies ought to be reduced, because an electoral college of a hundred and sixteen persons was inevitably disorderly and discordant. To discuss these and other questions—whether it was expedient for the conseillers de ville to continue to be irremovable, or whether a limit should be set to their tenure of office, whether elections ought not to be arranged so that municipal officials were not all replaced at the same time,—the intendant of Champagne would hold a series of meetings with persons representative of local opinion: the seigneurs temporel of Chalons-sur-Marne, the municipal officials, two officers from the bailliage, one from the grenier à sel, and a trésorier de France, all to be nominated by their respective corps, plus one gentilhomme and thirty-three of the leading bourgeois and merchants, to be selected by the intendant himself. There is perhaps no need to remark that such a hand-picked assembly was hardly likely to offer much opposition to the government's projects. On May 14, 1757 an arrêt was issued revising Chalons-sur-Marne's constitution along the lines proposed earlier. The conseillers de ville were reduced to eighteen, and the parish deputies to forty-four; the conseillers were to hold office for nine years only, and six of them were to be replaced every three years. Of the first
eighteen conseillers elected under this new constitution, twelve were to be chosen from among those who had already held that office, the other six were to be newcomers to municipal administration. 1.

About the same time, the constitution of Langres was also overhauled. Here too the exclusion of the lower classes from municipal elections was one of the aims of the revision, and here too the royal government went through the motions of consulting popular opinion, the intendant conferring with a carefully selected group of local bigwigs. From 1668 to 1755 the municipal officials of Langres were chosen by seventy-two notables bourgeois et marchands elected by the inhabitants in assemblées de quartier. This system was condemned by the royal council in 1755 on the grounds that the assemblée de quartier had been choosing, not notables bourgeois, but artisans, "faciles à seduire, incapables de connaître par eux-mêmes ce qui peut être utile à la ville et qui quelques fois ne savent pas écrire le nom de celui a qui ils donnent leur suffrage."

To correct this, the royal council suggested that each assemblée de quartier should nominate one elector only, and that it ought to be made impossible for any but the plus notables bourgeois ou marchands to be chosen. This proposal was to be considered

Arrêt du conseil, 14 mai 1757; Arch. nat., E.2383.
in a meeting to which the bailliage was invited to send two representatives, and the duché pairie, the maréchaussée, the élection, the grenier à sel, the juges de police, the avocats, and the procureurs, one representative each. The meeting would also be attended by various local notabilities nominated by the intendant, including one gentilhomme, one privilégié, one ancien maire, one ancien échevin, and seventeen notables bourgeois et marchands. They would discuss, under the intendant's presidency, not only the desirability of cutting down the number of electors, and how to avoid any but notables bourgeois being appointed, but also whether the maire and premier échevin ought not to be chosen alternately from the officials of the royal jurisdictions, and the notables bourgeois and merchants, and whether it would not be wise to require candidates for the mayoralty to have had four years' experience as échevins.

The conclusions of this meeting were presumably incorporated in an arrêt issued by the royal council in 1756. It reduced the number of municipal electors to thirty-six, all of whom were to be notables bourgeois ou marchands, or artisans who with paid 10 l. p.a. capitation or were capitaines or lieutenants de dixaine. The maire, whose term of office was henceforth limited to two years, was to be chosen
alternately from the following three groups: gentilshommes and officiers du bailliage: privilégiés and officials of the other royal courts; notables bourgeois and marchands en gros who had been juges consuls. In future there were to be not eight, but only four échevins, each post being allocated to a certain class or profession. No bourgeois or merchant was eligible for municipal office unless he had paid at least 10 l. p.a. capitation for three consecutive years.¹

These two episodes evince rather strikingly the royal government's mistrust of the lower classes, and its determination that municipal administration should be entrusted to men of substance and standing. Exactly the contrary might be concluded from an incident which happened in Tonnerre, and which indicates how difficult and dangerous it is to generalize about municipal elections.

A dispute arose in Tonnerre as a result of there being both venal and elected municipal officials on the same corps de ville. In 1743 a Paul Callot had bought the post of maire, created ten years earlier, and in 1747, at the royal government's insistence, the town had acquired the remaining venal offices, including that of maire alternatif. The latter, which did not normally form part of the corps de ville

¹. Arret du conseil, 1 aout 1755; Arch. nat., E.2347. Arret du conseil, 14 juin 1756; Arch. nat., E.2357.
was neglected until 1756, when, in order to check Callot's arrogance and abuses - he was suspected of peculation - some of the leading citizens of Tonnerre conceived the idea of appointing a maire alternatif and thus obliging Callot to relinquish power every other year and providing an opportunity to investigate his administration. Accordingly, at a general assembly held on 25 July 1756, twenty-eight of the plus notables habitants formally proposed that a maire alternatif be elected. They were, of course, opposed by Callot and his cronies among the échevins, who broke up the meeting. Undaunted, the twenty-eight rebels swore an affidavit before a notary in which they nominated sieur Girardin for maire alternatif, and sieurs Carteron, Roze, and Hanson fils for échevins. (The échevins were due to be replaced). The next day, a further ten notables habitants joined the movement and testified before the notary that they too supported the nomination of Girardin as maire alternatif. Ignoring this revolt, Callot and his adherents proceeded to elect three échevins and referred the question of a maire alternatif to the intendant of Paris, announcing that if he thought it necessary, they would summon a general assembly and take a vote on whether or not a maire alternatif should be appointed.
The intendant tried to steer a middle course between the two factions: he ordered the convocation of a fresh assembly to elect both a maire alternatif and three échevins. With this Callot and the échevins refused to comply, alleging that the election of the three échevins had already been held and that there was no reason to invalidate it. When ordered to withdraw his refusal and carry out the intendant's command, Callot instead defiantly installed the three échevins chosen by his party. Indeed he had the audacity to request that their election be confirmed by the intendant, and that each of the thirty-eight notables habitants be fined 3,000 l. as a punishment for their sedition.

When this pretty pickle was brought before the royal council, it naturally supported the intendant. The échevins' election was nullified; the intendant was authorized to appoint someone other than the maire to hold a general assembly to elect a maire alternatif and three échevins; and Callot was ordered to give the intendant an account of his entire administration and financial dealings.

This was not quite the end of the affair, for one of the three échevins eventually chosen was the aforementioned Hanson fils, a tailor, whose status and profession offended the sensibilities of the premier échevin, Edme. Gauthier
Rougemont. He petitioned the royal council to annul Hanson's election because

"l'Echevinage est la recompense des notables bourgeois et des principaux marchands des villes, qu'Hanson est un tailleur d'habit travaillant dans une boutique ouverte dans la rue, qu'il a été cavalier de la marechaussée et ne fait que sortir de cette troupe parcequ'il a été reformé par le Sieur Intendant, que ce serait degrader les officiers municipaux que de les faire exercer par des artisans de l'espece d'Hanson, que les bourgeois notables croiroient s'avilir en conferant avec lui, que son etat de simple ouvrier n'en imposerait pas assez dans les assemblées, et encore moins lors de logement des troupes, et que bientot l'Echevinage passerroit sur la tete des vignerons et des plus vil artisans....

la ville, qui renfermant un nombre considerable de bourgeois notables et de bons marchands lesquels n'ont pas encore rempli la place d'Echevins, n'est pas reduite a la necessite d'un pareil choix...."

In view of the royal council's attitude towards artisans in Chalons-sur-Marne and Langres, one could be excused for expecting it to share these sentiments, but surprisingly
enough, it was unmoved by Gauthier Rougemont's assertions, and confirmed Hanson's election.¹

¹ Arret du conseil, 13 novembre 1756. Arch. nat., E.2354; Arret du conseil, 26 avril 1757. Arch. nat., E.1321B.
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN

THE BAILLIAGE AND THE CORPS DE VILLE

No student of town life in eighteenth century France can fail to remark the friction which was endemic between the corps du bailliage and the corps de ville. The two were continually embroiled in petty, but nonetheless passionate quarrels about procedure: which was entitled to take the lead in processions and religious ceremonies, which should play the major role in public celebrations, and even which should give orders to the town-crier. Such issues are now so remote and unfamiliar that to recall their importance and the intensity of feeling they once aroused, it is perhaps necessary to describe the kind of disputes they occasioned. The history of Auxerre furnishes some striking examples.

In Auxerre, as in other towns, it was customary for the corps du bailliage and the corps de ville to participate in the processions held during the ancien régime to mark important feast days and holy days. Since these magistrates and municipal officials were of almost equal rank, they walked in two parallel lines, the corps du bailliage, led by the lieutenant général, always on the right, the corps de ville, with the maire at its head, always on the left. To
regain these positions at the end of High Mass, the officials of the bailliage and the corps de ville had somehow to change places; this was most smoothly negotiated by a manoeuvre called le pas croisé. On leaving the choir of the cathedral of St. Germain, the members of the bailliage crossed alternately with the members of the corps de ville, thus: the senior judges of the bailliage moved from the left-hand side of the choir, to the right-hand side of the nave, in front of the maire, who then crossed from the right of the choir to left of the nave, followed by the conseillers du bailliage and the échevins, one at a time, in a similar intersecting movement. The success of this rather intricate step obviously depended on harmony and polite co-operation between the two corps, and the least hitch or difficulty produced chaos. It provided an excellent opportunity for either body to manifest its antagonism toward the other, as happened on 10 April 1695.

It was the feast of Quasimodo, celebrated in Auxerre as a thanksgiving for the town's deliverance from the Huguenots in 1568. At the end of the Mass, the corps de ville, led by the maire, marched towards the door of the choir, where it paused to allow the président du présidial and the lieutenant général du bailliage to cross in front from left
to right. The maire next tried to cross as usual from right to left, in front of the rest of the bailliage, but Octave Seurrat, conseiller au bailliage, caught hold of the sleeve of the maire's robe and pulled him back, asserting that he had no right to precede the conseillers. Astonished, Baudesson, the maire, reproached Seurrat for this insult, and for causing a scene in church during such an august ceremony. To avoid a brawl, the maire, and échevins stood back and allowed the bailliage to pass in front of them; they returned at once to the town-hall, where they committed their hurt and angry feelings to a procès-verbal.

Both parties to the dispute appealed to the royal council for vindication. The bailliage asked the royal government to forbid the municipal officials to cross in front of the magistrates, to restore the distribution by the corps de ville of one pound of white wax to each bailliage official on the feast of the Purification, which had been stopped in 1670 for economy's sake, to require all who attended the assemblées générales des habitants to sign its register, not merely the maire and the procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville, and finally, to oblige the municipal officials to wear shorter robes than the magistrates. The corps de ville's sole petition was that its right to cross in front of the bailliage officials
should be confirmed, in addition alleging that "des vingt-six officiers qui composaient le Présidial, dix ou douze seulement avaient signé la délibération, qui même avaient été revoquée par le lieutenant général et le lieutenant criminel."¹ The corps de ville's claim was upheld in an arrêt du conseil of 30 June 1695, which ordered "que les suppliants et les officiers du Présidial d'Auxerre marcheront dans les processions et cérémonies publiques comme ils ont fait par le passé, leur fait défense de rien innover et d'enuser autrement."² This naturally did not satisfy the bailliage, which announced that being "la plus illustre compagnie de la ville..... l'usage du croisé était non seulement un abus, mais qu'il était indécent."³ Continuing the debate, the municipal officials in reply pointed out that "si l'on ne croisoit pas, il faudrait attendre que 36 personnes fussent passées et qu'ensuite le Maire et sa suite courussent avec une précipitation aussi indécente que peu possible, pour aller reprendre leurs places à la gauche du Présidial."⁴

The bailliage officials, since they could not participate in public ceremonies on their own terms, decided

not to attend at all. Their absence was rightly interpreted by the corps de ville as a calculated insult. On 15 August 1695, only three members of the bailliage were present at the procession for the feast of the Assumption; none of them appeared at the Jubilé universelle pour demander à Dieu la paix entre les Princes crétiens, held on 16 April 1696; and only two or three at the Quasimodo and Assumption celebrations of that year. The following year, the président du présidial, the lieutenant particulier au bailliage, and one conseiller honoraire turned up at the Quasimodo procession; again, for the festivities for the fête Dieu, on 6 June 1697, the bailliage officials were conspicuous by their absence. The magistrates continued their campaign of nerves at the Te Deum en actions de grâces de la prise de la ville d'Ath: the whole corps du bailliage attended, but walked so quickly that it was impossible for the municipal officials to keep up with, let alone cross in front of them. On each of these occasions, procès-verbaux complaining of the bailliage officials' scandalous ill-manners were drawn up by the corps de ville.

At the end of 1697, friction developed into open warfare. The occasion was the celebration of the Peace of Riswick. A special firework display had/bought in Paris by the corps de ville, and was timed to start at seven o'clock in the evening, in the square in front of the cathedral. The
privilege of setting off the fireworks and lighting the bonfire belonged to the maire, but as this was a very important celebration, he asked the bishop to perform the ceremony on his behalf. What ought to have been a happy event was ruined by the lieutenant général du bailliage, André Marie, who interrupted the proceedings, claiming that he too had the right to light the bonfire and firework display, jointly with the bishop. He based his claim on the improbable argument that there were two kinds of bonfires: those set up in front of the town-hall, and those held in front of the cathedral; the first, he admitted, were no concern of his, but he was entitled to set fire to the second. The maire dismissed this distinction as illusory; the bonfire and fireworks belonged to the corps de ville, no matter where they were held, and the privilege of lighting them was indisputably one of the maire's attributes. During these altercations, the fireworks mysteriously went off; it was suspected that the lieutenant général had secretly given a pre-arranged signal to one of his supporters. The municipal officials hastily put the blaze out, and retired to the town-hall with the surviving fireworks, to draw up an angry procès-verbal. Tempers were indeed running high by this time, for earlier in the day, at the end of the Te Deum in the cathedral, which all the bailliage
officials had attended, the magistrates had again played a low trick on the corps de ville. The pas croisé manoeuvre at the end of the ceremony had been foiled by the corps du bailliage so arranging its procession, that the conseillers, who normally brought up the rear, headed the corps, while the lieutenant général and the président were last. Consequently, since etiquette forbade the corps de ville to cross in front of these two magistrates, the municipal officials had been obliged to wait until the whole bailliage procession had passed.

A few weeks later, at the beginning of 1698, more public celebrations were authorized when the peace treaty was ratified by the Emperor. The people of Auxerre were again deprived of their firework display, when the argument as to who should set it off developed into a street battle between the partisans of the lieutenant général and the maire. The situation was not improved by the lieutenant général ordering the gardes de la ville, and young Pierre Baudesson, who had ably defended his uncle, the maire, in the fighting, to be flung into prison. Once again the royal council was inundated with petitions and protests from both sides. While the royal council considered this scandalous affair, the bailliage continued to think up new stratagems with which to harass the corps de ville. The magistrates absented themselves from the
Quasimodo procession held on 16 April 1698; they all attended the feast of the Assumption of the next year, and prevented the maire and échevins from intersecting their column, by arranging themselves in a double file, and marching out of the cathedral at top speed. Terrible disorder and confusion resulted.

The royal council tried to pour oil on these troubled waters with a compromise solution embodied in its arrêt of 13 May 1699. This ordered the officers of the bailliage and the corps de ville to march in two parallel lines as usual; but to get out of the cathedral with the magistrates on the right and the municipal officials on the left, there was to be no pas croisé: instead they were to reform their parallel lines just as they had entered, and continue their procession up to the high altar, where, still in two columns, with the bailliage on the right and the corps de ville on the left, they were to wheel round and proceed down the length of the choir and nave out of the cathedral. The abolition of the pas croisé salved the bailliage officials' pride. The maire's right to light celebration bonfires and fireworks was confirmed, and the lieutenant général forbidden to hinder him in this duty. Further, except in solemn processions, when the unity of the bailliage was not to be broken, the maire was to take precedence.

1. The judicial and municipal officials of St. Esprit were for over a century embroiled in a similar dispute over le pas croisé. Its history can be plotted in four arrêts du
conseil - 1 juin 1682, Arch. nat., E.1814; 8 février 1683, E.1820; 24 mars 1739, E.1157B; 19 mai 1781, E.2572.
over the lieutenant criminel and all lesser bailiage officials, when they met as individuals. Still this compromise did not satisfy. The maire reported to the royal council that he was prevented from walking on the lieutenant général’s left by the lieutenant particulier walking next to the chief magistrate, and the rest of the bailiage following in a double file. Exasperated, the royal council not only ordered its previous arrêt to be enforced to the letter, but directed the bailiage to pay the corps de ville 1100 l. in costs and damages. This penalty fortunately brought the magistrates to their senses, and for a while relations between the two corps were at least polite, if not amicable.

Yet from time to time during the eighteenth century, the latent hostility between the bailiage and the corps de ville erupted. In 1721, on the eve of the Quasimodo procession, the procureur du roi au bailiage, Laurent Regnauldin, ordered flags and pennants decorating houses along the route to be pulled down on the grounds that they would obstruct the procession. The municipal officials protested against his action as it invaded their rights as juges de police: if some of the decorations needed to be removed, only they were competent to do so. Again in 1759, the Quasimodo celebrations, which were the most important event of the year in Auxerre, were the
occasion for another dispute between the magistrates and the municipal officials. In defiance of all previous decisions on this topic, Briand de Fortbois, ancien président, walked next to the lieutenant général, and the rest of the baillage followed in a double file. Once more the municipal officials took legal proceedings to oblige the corps du baillage to march in the traditional single column, thus allowing the maire to walk along-side the lieutenant général. The next year, the baillage sought to exclude from the pas croisé manoeuvre, (which must have been restored since the beginning of the century) three lesser members of the corps de ville - the receveur, the procureur ad lites, and the greffier à l'hôtel de ville. The corps de ville complained indignantly to the avocat général du Parlement "il y aurait même une sorte d'indecence à separer le Receveur et le Secrétaire du Reste du Corps de ville dont ils sont membre." The royal council agreed with the municipal officials, who won their case and were awarded damages against the baillage.

Again at the end of the century there was a repetition of the kind of persistent mischief-making that had wrecked relations between the corps du baillage and the corps de ville during Louis XIV's reign. This time, however, it was

the corps de ville which took the initiative. At an assemblée générale des habitants, held on 25 June 1779, the bailliage officials were disconcerted because the maire heard the opinions of the municipal officials before asking for theirs, and after the meeting the magistrates were conducted out of the town-hall by only one member of the corps de ville, instead of the usual two. The next day a deputation from the bailliage complained to Baudesson, the maire, about these innovations; their hurt feelings were assuaged with kind apologies and promises of better behaviour in the future. The following year, on 7 April, during the Quasimodo procession, the bailliage was again insulted: the tambour de la ville, who saluted each corps as it went past the town-hall with a roll on his drums, was shatteringly silent as the bailliage went by. Of course, Baudesson again apologised profusely to the magistrates, claimed that he was in no way responsible for the tambour's omission, and that he had already rebuked the man for his misconduct. Yet the next month almost the same thing happened again: when the Rogation procession passed the town-hall, the tambour not only refused to beat out a drum-roll in honour of the bailliage officials, but ostentatiously turned on his heel and made as if to retire into the building. Once again the maire told the unlikely story that all this was quite contrary
to his instructions; the guilty tambour was not only strongly reprimanded by Baudesson, but forced to ask the bailliage’s pardon for his offence. The corps de ville changed its tactics. On 24 June 1780, an assemblée générale was held in the hôtel de ville. This time the bailliage officials were most certainly escorted out by the traditional two échevins, but they were accompanied only as far as the top of the staircase inside the town-hall, instead of being ceremoniously conducted right out to the street. There were more complaints and more ingratiating apologies. In 1785 the bailliage found an entirely new cause for complaint: it had been invited to send deputies to the assemblée des notables by a mere note from the secrétaire de la ville, whereas it was customary for the maire in person to request that they attend. ¹.

These almost pathetically ridiculous and undignified squabbles, far from being a phenomenon special to Auxerre, were a feature of life in many towns. What is difficult for the modern mind to comprehend is why disputes over precedence and etiquette were invested with such importance, why they generated such intensity of feeling. The short answer is that under a despotic regime, social and economic antagonisms normally vented in political action, have to find other outlets,

and assume strange garbs. But before elaborating on this point, some discussion of the position of the bailliage in the eighteenth century is called for.

The ancien régime, which was a time of decadence for the bailliage, terminated a long period of steady decline. The medieval bailliage was not only a law court, it was also an administrative agency with considerable supervisory powers. During the sixteenth century it developed a personnel commensurate with its responsibilities, but ironically enough, the invasion of its authority also dates from this time. The successive creation of élections, bureaux de finances, généralités, gabelles and eaux et forêts, gradually robbed the bailliages of all but their purely judicial powers. The final blows came in 1692, when venal maîres were given the right of presiding over all town meetings, a privilege formerly enjoyed by the premier juge du bailliage, and in 1699, when all urban police functions, including those hitherto performed by bailliage officials, were amalgamated in a new post, the lieutenancedéral de police. Even as a court of justice, the activity of the bailliage was severely limited. Broadly speaking, the bailliage fell between two stools: a host of minor jurisdictions - prévôts, vigueries, châtellenies,

1. Understand "and sénéchaussée" throughout.
vicomtés, sergenteries, jugeries, and seigneurial courts - had
cognizance of ordinary, everyday, petty crimes, while cases of
any importance went to the parlements, leaving the baillages
very little with which to deal. Présidial powers, enjoyed by
100 of the 700 baillages in France, enhanced their authority
to but a slight degree.\footnote{Figures given by E.A. Combier: Les justices seigneuriales du
baillage de Vermandois sous l'ancien régime. 1898.p.2.}

The royal government was not blind to the unhappy
plight of the baillages, and during the eighteenth century
various efforts were made to revive their judicial importance.
Daguesseau's remedy was to suppress the prévôtés royales, thus
making the baillages the royal courts of first instance.\footnote{An ever-increasing number of individual prévôtés royales
were suppressed each year up to June 1749, when their
general abolition was decreed.}

Towards the end of the century, the problem was tackled from
the other end of the scale: there was a movement to transform
all baillages into présidiaux, and at the same time, to
enlarge the competence of the présidiaux. This second aim
at first received more attention. In 1763 a bureau de législation
was set up in Paris to investigate the state of the
présidiaux. Daguesseau, Trudaine, Barberie de Courtelles,
and Joly de Fleury were members of this bureau, which invited
each présidial to submit a memoir on its situation, and suggestions as to what could be done to halt the general decline. Most présidiaux demanded an increase in their jurisdiction, and nobility for their judges. The latter was never granted, and for the former they had to wait until Louis XVI's reign. Even then their competence was but slightly enlarged: in 1774 the présidiaux were declared competent to pass final judgment on all civil lawsuits involving no more than 2,000 l. It was Lemoignon who at last subjected the judicial hierarchy to the complete overhaul it needed. He established forty-seven grands bailliages with power to pass final judgment on all civil cases of up to 20,000 l., and on all criminal cases except those in which ecclesiastics and nobles were involved. All other bailliages were either suppressed or converted into présidiaux, with cognizance in the first instance of all criminal cases, and final jurisdiction over all civil cases not exceeding 4,000 l.

The chief fault of this scheme was the date of its introduction 1788 was too late.

Fewer and fewer lawsuits meant less and less épices

for the bailiages officials, and although they were paid a nominal salary by the royal treasury, épices were their main source of income. These épices, which were pooled into a central fund for the whole bailiages and at the end of the year divided among the judges according to rank, have been wildly exaggerated. Those of the présidial of Beauvais totalled 2,925 l. 12s. for the period 6 June 1690 to 31 Decembre 1694, 2,079 l. 12s. 6d. for 1 January 1695 to 5 March 1699, and 340 l. 5s. 4d. for the year 1707-1708. This penury coincided with the extraordinary fiscal measures adopted by the royal government in order to finance Louis XIV's foreign policy. Like so many other institutions, the bailiages suffered dons gratuits, confirmation of privileges, augmentations des gages, rachats d'amuel, and so on. Like the towns, they tried to maintain their integrity by purchasing, if possible, all the useless venal offices attributed to their corps - présidants, chevaliers d'honneur, conseillers honoraires, gardes scels, enquêteurs et commissaires examinateurs, lieutenants généraux d'épée, conseillers de police.

1. E. Everat: La sénéchaussée d'Auvergne et le siège présidial de Riom au XVIIIe siècle, p. 15.
In December 1689 bailliage officials were obliged to buy exemption from taille, in October 1693, from billeting soldiers. Both privileges were cancelled in October 1698, only to be restored, in order to extort more cash, four years later. After the peace of Utrecht was signed, the bailliage officials lost all their exemptions, and their salaries were slashed.¹

Throughout the eighteenth century the magistrates complained that the profits of their office did not cover the expenses they had to pay to the royal treasury.² A private income was essential to a judge,³ or alternatively, several posts. The lieutenant général of a bailliage might also be bailli in a seigneurial jurisdiction, and procureur du roi in a third court. The evil of this plurality is obvious, and it was not unknown for a judge to hear appeals from his own sentences.⁴ Rossignol, intendant of Auvergne, summed up the grievances of the bailliage officials when he stated in 1742

2. E. Everat: Le sénéchaussée d'Auvergne et le siège présidial de Riom au XVIIIe siècle, p. 57.
4. E.A. Combier: Les justices seigneuriales du bailliage de vermandois sous l'ancien régime, p. 16. The notoriety of judicial pluralism can be inferred from a speech in Voltaire's play, Le droit de seigneur:

"Car je suis le magister d'ici
Je suis bailli; je suis notaire aussi
Et je suis prêt dans mes trois caractères
À te servir dans toutes tes affaires."
that they "achetèrent chèrement la permission de travailler pour rien."¹. He argued that although offices in bailliage courts cost considerably more than comparable posts in other branches of the judiciary and administration, their holders were poorly remunerated, and enjoyed no privileges, not even tax exemption. According to Rossignol, bailliage officials "n'ont pas même des gages suffisants pour payer le prêt et l'annuel de leurs charges," and what was probably even more galling to their pride, they "n'ont pas la moindre distinction sur les plus simples bourgeois."². Just how poverty-stricken the magistrates were can be gauged by the decision of the bailliage of Auxerre, 11 February 1783, that it could no longer afford either gifts when its members married, nor even candles for their funerals - this in an age which set great store by such ceremonial courtesies.³. The falling-off in the demand for the posts of bailliage officials was further proof of their sorry state. The parties casuelles experienced great difficulty in selling bailliage offices, even at greatly reduced prices,⁴ and vacancies on the judicial bench remained

¹. E. Everat: La sénéchaussée d'Auvergne et le siège présidial de Riom au XVIIIe siècle, p.59, note 1.
Some bailliages were so understaffed that they could not muster enough judges to try the more serious cases, and had to be granted a special dispensation freeing them from the normal requirements. The bailliages were the only royal courts so affected: there was tremendous competition for the elections, bureaux des finances, cour des aides, parlements, etc., "il n'y a de dégoût que pour les offices auxquels est attachée l'administration de la justice ordinaire." The touchy arrogance of the baillage officials was due to the fact that although they were the foremost members of the tiers état and ranked immediately after the nobility, they had neither the wealth nor the power to match their social status. The municipal officials, on the other hand, enjoyed considerable administrative authority — some of which had but recently belonged to the baillage — and yet their social standing was inferior to that of the baillage officials. It was the humiliation of watching men of lower social status exercise the power denied to them that provoked the baillage officials.

1. E. Everat: La sénéchaussée d'Auvergne et le siège présidial de Riom au XVIIIe siècle, p. 52.
2. The parlement de Bordeaux issued in 1726 an arrêt "servant de règlement général pour le nombre des officiers qui doivent assister au jugement de procès pendans aux bailliages et sénéchaussées de l'étendue de son ressort" which authorized the courts "de juger les procès pendans en leurs sièges au plus grand nombre qu'il pourra, du moins au nombre de trois juges soit en l'audience soit par rapport; et s'il n'y en a pas un pareil nombre de trois en leurs sièges, ce nombre sera supplié par des anciens avocats non suspects aux p.t.c.

*My* italics.

3. *Intendant of Auvergne in a letter to the Chancellor, 1742.*
Cited by E. Everat: *La sénéchaussée d'Auvergne et le siège présidial de Riom au XVIIIe siècle*, p. 54.
It would be an unpardonable exaggeration to assert that bailliage officials were excluded from the administration of all towns, but that they played no part in the affairs of many, is indisputable. After 1692, when they lost the right to organize assemblées générales des habitants, the bailliage officials' sole means of influencing municipal policy was to get on to the corps de ville. Venality seriously prejudiced their chances of achieving this; it also allowed prosperous tradesmen and shopkeepers to buy the posts which bailliage officials coveted but could not afford. That this should be so incensed the magistrates of Nerac, for example, who vented their spleen in a memoir to the bureau de législation:

"Vis-à-vis des conseillez représentez-vous par exemple un barbier qui, de ces profits mercenaires, a acheté une charge municipale. Il est vu chaque matin, cet homme poudreux, chés ces conseillers en posture et en fonction d'un domestique, et bientôt après changeant de decoration, il est vu donnant à ces mêmes officiers des ordres par écrit pour qu'ils aillent travailler avec pèle, hache, et pioche aux grands chemins, pour qu'ils logent des gens de guerre, pour qu'ils envoyent des lits ou des linges aux cazernes. Mais ce qui marque que tout cela est l'effet de la supériorité, que cet artisan revêtu a sur ces conseillers, c'est qu'on le
voit tantôt les précédant dans les églises, tantôt aux processions et autres cérémonies publiques, et se comporter en tout et partout avec des airs aussi insupportables que déplacés. Si cet artisan, nouveau geai superbe, bien réel et non fabuleux, était au moins obligé de quitter son métier lorsqu’il entre en possession de sa charge, les conseillers des Présidiaux souffriroient plus tranquillement ces humiliations.  

It is significant that the contest in Auxerre over le pas croisé and the lighting of bonfires and fireworks occurred just after Jean Baudesson acquired the venal office of maire. Since this office was the only municipal post for which the senior members of the bailliage, e.g. the lieutenant général, were eligible, they were thus deprived of their only opportunity of serving on the corps de ville. Baudesson himself belonged to a family of unimpeachable respectability, but the other venal officials on the corps de ville were scathingly described by the bailliage as "gens ramassez et non lettr ez ... artisans qui à la sortie de la Maison-de-Ville retournent dans leurs boutiques y continuer leur travail."  

1. Cited by E. Everat: La sénéchaussée d'Auvergne et le siège présidial de Riom au XVIIIe siècle, p.61.
In some places, it was not venality, but the town's constitution which prevented the bailliage officials from participating in municipal administration. This was so in Troyes, where, during the first half of the eighteenth century, the corps de ville was monopolised by merchants and manufacturers. In vain the gens de justice agitated to get a proportion of the seats on the corps de ville assigned to them. They complained to the royal council in 1718 that for thirty of forty years the corps de ville had been dominated by the leading merchants in the town: "la première Classe composée de 20 ou 30 marchands, tous parens ou alliés, presque également avides de l'autorité; ce qui a rempli souvent l'Hôtel de Ville de familles entières." They petitioned the royal council to break their monopoly by determining "par un Règlement général la proportion qui doit être gardée dans l'exercice des Charges municipales de la Ville de Troyes entre tous les habitants capables d'y être admis...ces charges municipales seront distribuées pour les trois quarts aux suppliants et l'autre quart aux marchands."1 Their petition was without avail. Ten years later, in an effort to secure a reform more acceptable to the merchants, the bailliage officials abated their demands.

They suggested that once in three years the maire should be a judge, that two of the six échevins, and five of the fifteen conseillers should be gens de robe longue. Nothing came of the plan, and it was not until Delaverdy introduced his municipal reform edicts in 1764 and 1765 that the bailliage officials of Troyes, as of so many other towns, were allowed to participate in the management of local affairs. The right of organizing municipal assemblies was restored to them, but only for a short time, since they lost it again in 1771 when Delaverdy’s measures were repealed. However, in Troyes, the bailliage officials did not return to their former state of total exclusion, because the town was granted, in 1772, a new constitution, the kind for which they had agitated earlier, which guaranteed that all the major interests in the town were represented on the corps de ville.

But representation on the corps de ville did not always satisfy the bailliage officials. The rivalry in Auxerre between the law and trade infected even the corps de ville itself, where it found expression in battles over precedence between the premier échevin, who was always a

conseiller au bailliage, and the gouverneur du fait commun, a merchant. Until 1748 the latter ranked next to the maire and acted as his deputy, to the annoyance of the conseiller au bailliage, who resented being preceded in public by a social inferior. In 1731 when the corps de ville was drawing up plans for the ceremonial entry of the Marquis de Lambert, gouverneur of Auxerre, Nicolas Marie, premier échevin, disputed the gouverneur du fait commun's right to follow immediately after the maire in the triumphal procession. This challenge was unsuccessful, but the bailliage officials did not relax their efforts. In 1748 the conseillers au bailliage petitioned St. Florentin, the secrétaire d'état de la maison du roi, to demote the gouverneur du fait commun in favour of the premier échevin, and in spite of strong protests from the rest of the corps de ville, St. Florentin agreed. Responsibility for this strife did not rest entirely with one side: the merchants too could be aggressors, given the chance. In 1735, when they found themselves in a majority at the parish meeting for the nomination of premier marquillier of St. Eusèbe, a post traditionally reserved for a conseiller du bailliage or an avocat, they exultantly elected a marchand des bois. The

Arch. d'Auxerre, BB.44.(Pq.98, pc.15); B880. (Pq.82, pc.6).
bailliage promptly complained to the parlement of Paris, and the lengthy lawsuit which followed resulted in an order to elect a conseiller or an avocat to the disputed post. ¹.

Because circumstances varied so much from one place to the next, sweeping generalizations about the nature of the conflict between the corps du bailliage and the corps de ville are as suspect as sweeping generalizations about any other aspect of town life in France. But I think that one can safely assert that the basic factor, common to all these conflicts, was the bailliage officials' discontent. Men of intelligence and education, who usually came from families with a long tradition of public service, the bailliage officials were, in the eighteenth century, either totally excluded from or allowed only a very minor part in public affairs. Local administration, which they had once dominated, had passed into the hands of their social inferiors, who, to add insult to injury, were often richer and more prosperous than the bailliage officials. They were reminded of this shift of power every time they came into contact with the corps de ville, but public processions and ceremonies, when the fact that they had been supplanted was evident to all, were their greatest mortification. By 1789 the bailliage officials were, like the

¹. O. J. Chardon: Histoire de la ville d'Auxerre, p. 441.
nobility, eager for power, and perhaps just as unfit to exercise it; unlike the nobility, they were not inescapably associated with the Crown, and so were in a much better position to profit by the Revolution. But that is another story.
MUNICIPAL FINANCE.

A. Municipal revenue.

The eighteenth century classification of municipal revenue into two categories, deniers patrimoniaux and deniers d'octroi, - the first signifying revenue from property and assets which belonged absolutely to a town, the second, revenue from taxes conceded by the king for a specified period of years only, - is not very enlightening. Its legalistic simplicity totally ignores the enormous variety of municipal resources and their relative importance; a more factual analysis is therefore called for.

The main sources of municipal revenue were, in ascending order of importance, landed property, direct taxation, and taxes on consumer goods. Landed property was rarely a major asset. Most towns owned nothing more than the ramparts, walls and towers which had once protected them from their enemies, both French and foreign; in the eighteenth century their value was chiefly picturesque and decorative, although sometimes the slopes of the ramparts were leased for grazing.

1. The financial administration of Breton towns has been thoroughly investigated by A. Dupuy, to whose work *Etudes sur l'administration municipale en Bretagne au XVIIIe siècle*, I am deeply indebted.
and accommodation in the towers was let. Among the few towns which did enjoy a sizeable income from landed property were Avallon and Joigny, both of which possessed large tracts of timber.

Direct taxation was a prime source of revenue for the towns of Languedoc only; elsewhere it was usually levied merely as a supplement to other income. Possibly the royal government was chary of allowing towns to impose direct taxation because it was almost certain to provoke the antagonism of the Church and the nobility. Both of these two privileged bodies rejected personal taxes of any kind, and although neither had any just or legitimate cause for exemption from municipal taxation, nonetheless they would fight to evade it. Only where municipal taxation was levied as a percentage of the royal taille - as in Languedoc, for instance,1 - was the opposition of the privileged classes avoided. Yet that the expense of urban amenities should be borne solely by the tailliables was manifestly inequitable: hence the preference for taxes on consumer goods, which all paid.

These taxes, or octrois, as they were called, were levied on the basic necessities of life - food and fuel. On some goods, such as wine and spirits, hay, wood and charcoal,

octrois were collected on their entry into the town, on others, such as meat and bread, they took the form of an excise duty payable by the retailer. Octrois fell most heavily on the poor. This is true of any purchase tax, but in the case of octrois, this basic characteristic was intensified by a special circumstance. It was customary for the produce of country estates and farms belonging to the townspeople to be exempt from octrois, if brought into the town for their own personal consumption. This exemption benefited only the wealthy bourgeois - none but they were likely to own country properties, - who were thus able to provision themselves much more cheaply than could the poor. In a circular letter to all intendants, dated 28 September 1774, Turgot severely criticised what he described as:

"l'injustice avec laquelle presque tous les bourgeois des villes auxquelles on a cru pouvoir accorder des octrois, ont trouvé moyen de s'affranchir de la contribution aux dépenses communes, pour la faire supporter aux moindres habitants, aux petits marchands et aux propriétaires ou aux pauvres des campagnes......

........aussi est-il arrivé presque partout qu'on a chargé par préférence les denrées que les pauvres consomment. Si, par exemple, on a mis des droits sur les vins, on a
eu soin de ne les faire porter que sur celui qui se consomme dans les cabarets et d'en exempter celui que les bourgeois font entrer pour leur consommation. On a exempté pareillement toutes les denrées que les bourgeois font venir du cru de leurs biens de campagne; ainsi, ceux qui profitent le plus des dépenses communes des villes sont précisément ceux qui n'y contribuent en rien, ou presque point. Ces dépenses se trouvent payées dans le fait, ou par ceux qui n'ont pas de biens-fonds dans la ville, et que leur pauvreté met hors d'état de s'approvisionner en gros, ou par les habitants des campagnes, dont les denrées de droits se vendent toujours moins avantageusement."

Wine was the occasion of the most outrageous injustices. In viniferous areas the wealthy bourgeois escaped paying duty on wine as a result of the rule which exempted their own produce from octrois: elsewhere it was not uncommon for taxation on liquor to be levied exclusively on the retail trade, and so while the rich man, who bought his wine wholesale, stocked his cellar duty-free, the poor man, who usually bought his wine retail, paid the octrois. This discrimination caused

much hardship in Brittany, for example. In that province, drink alone was subject to octrois, and in all but three or four towns the duty was levied on the retail trade. Rather than extend the octrois to other merchandise, and thereby oblige the bourgeois to contribute, the Breton municipal officials preferred to increase taxation on the retail wine trade to a prohibitive level. This situation angered Caze de la Bove, intendant of Brittany, who wrote in 1783:

"Tel est l'éloignement qu'on a dans cette province pour toutes les taxes, que les officiers municipaux aiment mieux laisser en souffrance les ouvrages publics les plus intéressants, que de demander un octroi sur les consommations. On se porte volontiers à surcharger les débits de boissons, parce que cette charge ne tombe que sur les étrangers ou sur le menu peuple qui ne logeant pas de vin, va boire au cabaret; mais on ne veut pas établir des taxes auxquelles tout le monde soit obligé de contribuer. Un droit de 30 ou 40 sous par barrique de vin ne seraient rien moins qu'onéreux, parce qu'il n'y a que les gens aisés qui logent du vin." 1

The intendants of Brittany, and Bertrand de Molleville in particular, did their utmost to enlarge the tariff of goods

liable to octrois, but their efforts were fruitless because the towns were supported in their opposition by the états provinciaux.

Inevitably, in order to avoid paying these oppressive dues, the townspeople took to smuggling. Indeed, this was fostered by the very anomalies and exemptions in the octroi tariff: who could say whether the wine had been produced in the inhabitant's own vineyard or had been acquired from elsewhere, whether wine was sold retail or wholesale? Often the only evidence was the inhabitant's own statement. How to deal with smuggling was one of the municipal officials' most trying dilemmas: if allowed to continue unchecked the town's revenue would decline, but if combated vigorously many influential persons and interests, the wine-trade above all, would be displeased. Any attempts to stamp out smuggling were usually half-hearted and ineffective.

The collection of octrois was normally farmed out to the highest bidder. The farm was auctioned sometimes every three years, sometimes every six years, either by the intendant, or by a trésorier from the local bureau de finance. It appears that, generally speaking, octrois originally authorized during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries came within the purview of the trésorier, while the intendant was responsible for those
granted in the eighteenth century. The towns preferred the services of the intendant, because they were free of charge, to those of the trésorier, who demanded fees and expenses. The fee was a percentage of the price fetched by the farm of the octrois and varied from place to place: 18d. per livre in Pontivy, 6d. per livre in Brest, for example. The farmer of the octrois was supposed to pay the price of the farm into the municipal treasury at six- or twelve-monthly intervals. Sometimes, if smuggling or scarcity or changes in the laws regulating commerce appreciably diminished the product of the octrois, the farmer would ask for the price of the farm to be reduced in proportion. To this the municipal officials rarely agreed, arguing that such fluctuations were a tax-farmer's occupational risk, for which he ought to have made allowance in his original bid. The conseil d'État however, occasionally adopted a more sympathetic attitude towards the tax-farmer's predicament: it lowered the price of the farm of the octrois of Rennes several times. On the other hand, if there was a considerable increase in trade and consumption and therefore in the product of the octrois, the intendant could terminate the farm prematurely and put it up for auction again, in order to take advantage of the improvement and secure a better price.

In a few towns octrois were not farmed out, but instead mise en régie, - i.e. the responsibility of collecting them was assumed by the municipal officials themselves. They appointed a regisseur to do the actual work of collection, but were answerable for his conduct and for the taxes. In theory this system had much to recommend it, but the royal government seldom allowed it to be put into practice: to be a success it required an honest and energetic regisseur and vigilant municipal officials - a rare combination. One town where it did prove satisfactory was Guingamp. There the octrois were most efficiently collected for twenty-five years by a woman, the Veuve de Menimande, who received 1s. per livre for her pains.¹

Although in some towns certain octrois were technically patrimoniaux, and the town's right to collect them was therefore unqualified, the levy of most of these taxes depended on royal sanction. This was a serious disadvantage, because the royal government authorized octrois for brief periods only, usually nine years, at the end of which time the expensive business of obtaining a continuation had to be undertaken. The renewal of octrois was conditional upon the payment of a droit de marc d'or, calculated at a fortieth of the product of the octrois over the previous nine years, plus 8s. per livre. Thus

¹ A Dupuy: Etudes sur l'administration municipale en Bretagne au XVIIIe siècle, p.334.
for the continuation of octrois worth 56,500 l. p.a., the town of St. Malo paid in 1774 a droit de marc d’or of 23,730 l.
Although the heaviest, this was not the only item of expenditure; a town had also to pay for the arrêt du conseil and letters patent authorizing the imposition of octrois, the registration of these decrees by the local parlement and chambre des comptes, and the fees of the lawyers who acted for the town before these courts. 2. The expense of obtaining permission to levy octrois usually swallowed up a considerable portion of their product – the continuation of octrois which brought in only 3,166 l. 3s. 4d. p.a. on average cost Guerche 1,519 l. 10s. 7d. in 1772, 3 – and was particularly oppressive because it recurred at such frequent intervals.

The product of octrois varied tremendously according to the size of the town and the dues levied. A memorandum on municipal octrois in Burgundy in 1778 indicates the range of their value: at one end of the scale, the octrois of Dijon were worth 98,500 l. p.a., at the other, those of Semur en Brionnais were worth 140 l. p.a. 4.

2. A. Dupuy, op. cit., p. 325.
B. Municipal expenditure.

The disbursement of its revenue was not left to a town's discretion, but was determined by the royal government. The conseil d'état drew up for each town in France a budget of expenditure. Dépenses ordinaires, i.e. those items of expenditure, such as salaries and donations to charity, which did not vary from year to year, were detailed precisely, while the amount to be spent on dépenses extraordinaires, such as the cost of road repairs, which could not be budgeted in advance, was stipulated in round figures. Municipal officials were required to adhere unswervingly to the plan of ordinary expenditure prescribed for their town by the conseil d'état, and to seek the intendant's prior authorization before embarking upon any extraordinary expenditure. It was Colbert who introduced this practice of regulating municipal expenditure, and the budgets prepared during his ministry, although modified from time to time to meet changing circumstances, continued in the main to be the groundwork of municipal finance until the Revolution. The object of this stringent government control was to ensure that municipal resources were employed wisely and for the general good; the record of municipal officials in the first half of the seventeenth century
suggested that there was little hope of them ever pursuing such a policy voluntarily.

Under the guidance of the conseil d'État and the intendants, the major portion of municipal revenue was usually devoted to public works and amenities— the repair and upkeep of roads, the water-supply, street-cleaning and lighting, and public buildings. The intendants are sometimes given all the credit for the improvements made in the layout and architecture of French towns in the eighteenth century; this does less than justice to the efforts of the municipal officials themselves. The initiative in altering, adding to and adorning a town was almost invariably taken by the municipal officials, and the intendant was often obliged to restrain their enthusiasm. But because all expenditure on public works, from the repair of a water conduit to the erection of a new town-hall, had first to be approved by the intendant, he was in a position to guide the municipal officials' activities, to see that their sense of priorities was sound, that they did not, for example, neglect sanitation in favour of a tree-lined promenade. But the necessity of referring to the intendant every undertaking, no matter how insignificant, certainly caused irritation and even regrettable delay.

Most public works were carried out under contract by whoever submitted the lowest tender. One important exception was the routine maintenance of the water-supply. This was often taken care of by appointing a fontainier, who superintended the water system, and executed any minor repairs in return for a fixed salary, which was classed among the dépenses ordinaires. The repair of large-scale damage, caused by frost for instance, was not the fontainier's responsibility, but necessitated a special tender and extraordinary expenditure. The town clock was serviced in exactly the same way: a salaried horloger undertook the routine cleaning and adjustments, while structural alterations were paid for by the town.

The development and reconstruction of towns was not tackled in earnest until the second half of the eighteenth century. Earlier the building and repair of roads and other amenities had often been badly neglected because the money which would normally have been spent on public works had been diverted, under one pretext or another, into the royal coffers. In the budget of Pontivy, 300 l. p.a. were allocated to the maintenance of its roads, but it is doubtful whether any of them were ever repaired between 1695 and 1719. No work was done on the roads in the suburbs of Brest from 1709 to 1747.

2. M. Bernard: La municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, p. 252.
As the strain of meeting the fiscal demands of the royal government eased, so the attention given to public works increased. In order to compensate for its previous neglect, Pontivy spent about 90,000 l. in all on public works between 1761 and 1788, although its revenue was never more than 9,000 l. p.a. At about the same time, Brest too was relaying its roads, restoring its quays and slipways, and building a new town-hall and a maison des postes. Quite a number of towns were able to afford not only such essentials as new roads, market-squares, town-halls and so forth, but also the luxury of street-lighting. In 1775-1776 Nantes installed a system of street-lighting which cost 12,565 l. 11s. 10d.; not to be outdone, Rennes followed suit in 1783 at a cost of 15,920 l.

The kind and magnitude of the public works embarked upon by a town depended of course on its size and resources, but, with the exception of a few unusually well-endowed communities, all were obliged to postpone their building projects until the second half of the eighteenth century.

After public works, municipal salaries constituted the next most important category of expenditure. The number and kind of officials paid by a town, and the amount they received,

varied enormously from place to place. There was only one hard and fast rule: all venal officials were paid salaries, calculated as a percentage of the cost of their posts. As to the non-venal members of corps de ville, they enjoyed generous salaries in some towns, in others mere token payments, or nothing at all. The maire of Bordeaux, for example, was paid in 1768 1,500 l. p.a., the lieutenant de maire and the six jurats 2,000 l. p.a. each, and the procureur du roi, 4,500 l. p.a.; the maire and the lieutenant de maire each received in addition a lodging allowance of 1,000 l. p.a. On the other hand, in Avallon at about the same time, the maire was paid 12 l. p.a., the four échevins and the secrétaire greffier 2 l. p.a. each, and the procureur syndic 10 l. p.a. The comparison is perhaps unjust: Bordeaux was infinitely wealthier and more important than Avallon, which probably accounts for the difference in their salary scales.

One tendency common to nearly all towns, great and small, was for the semi-professional members of the corps de ville — procureur-syndic, secrétaire-greffier and trésorier — to be paid higher salaries than the maire and échevins or consuls; indeed in some towns they were the only paid members of the corps de ville. The budget drawn up for Riom in 1766

1. Arch. nat., H.l. 92, 1.
included salaries of 200 l. p.a. for the syndic-receiveur and the secrétaire-greffier, nothing at all for the maire and échevins. Very often the trésorier was not paid a fixed salary, but instead received a percentage of the municipal revenue he collected. His income, therefore, fluctuated with the town's financial fortunes. The trésorier of Pontivy, who was entitled to 1s. per livre of revenue up to 1725, and 2s. per livre from 1725-1789, received 100 l. in 1716, 101 l. 10s. in 1720, 880 l. in 1730, and 1,687 l. 11s. 3d. in 1782. The secrétaire greffier's position too was somewhat peculiar. If his work was so heavy that he was obliged to engage extra clerical help, the wages of his clerks were sometimes paid directly by the town - Riom paid 100 l. p.a. to its four clerks; but they were more usually regarded as the secrétaire-greffier's personal assistants, and accordingly paid by him. His salary would then be adjusted by the town to compensate for this additional expense. Up to 1780 the greffier of Brest was paid 250 l. p.a. plus occasional gifts of between 150 l. and 600 l. in acknowledgment of extraordinary services; in 1780 his salary was raised to 1,200 l. p.a. in respect of the additional clerical staff he had recently had to employ. The intendant

found this increase excessive, but after some haggling he eventually reached the following compromise with the town: the greffier was to be paid 800 l. p.a. in time of peace, 1,200 l. p.a. in wartime, when organizing the billeting of troops in that busy sea-port added considerably to his work.¹

Every town employed various petty officials, whose duties were of a rather menial nature. A concierge for the town-hall, and a town crier, called either tambour or trompette according to the instrument used to attract attention to his announcements, were indispensable; also a number of valets de ville.² Their job was to act as messengers, and generally fetch and carry, or even help to police the town; they formed a guard of honour for the corps de ville in ceremonial processions. The wages paid to these officials — concierge, tambour and valets, — were usually modest, but they were provided with liveries and sometimes granted privileges such as exemption from the obligation to collect taille, or lodge soldiers.³

A remarkable amount of money was devoted to the salaries of persons in no way connected with the administration of the towns, i.e. school-teachers, doctors and midwives. In the eighteenth century, public educational and medical facilities

¹ M. Bernard: La municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, p.224-225.
² Alternatively known as sergents, archers, or gardes de ville.
³ C. Chevalier: Tableau de la province de Touraine, 1762-1766, p.76-77.
though haphazard and limited, did exist, financed in part from municipal revenue. Most towns contributed by subsidizing local teachers and doctors, so that their services could be available to the poor at reduced rates or free of charge. The importance attached to education can be inferred from the proportion of revenue devoted to it by some of the smaller, poorer towns. In Cravant, a town of under 300 feux, with a total revenue of 750 l. p.a., the largest item of ordinary expenditure was the salary of the recteur de l'école – 117 l. p.a. In the even smaller neighbouring bourg of Coulange-sur-Yonne, where the total revenue was only 453 l. p.a., the recteur de l'école was paid 190 l. p.a. Larger towns could afford more: Brest spent in all 1,016 l. p.a. on education, 800 l. of which supported four frères des écoles chrétiennes, who staffed the local schools. The doctors employed by a town were usually attached to the local hospital or workhouse, and their first duty was to the poor. Physicians were almost invariably paid considerably more than surgeons – in Pontivy, 300 l. p.a. against 100 l. p.a. – a reflection of their higher professional

standing. But perhaps midwifery was the most highly prized medical skill, for towns which employed no doctor usually had a midwife, often very well paid: the accoucheuse of Riom in 1768 received the princely salary of 560 l. p.a.\(^1\). In Pontivy, where a midwife was first engaged in 1775, she was paid as much as the physician - 300 l. p.a.\(^2\).

Finally, in nearly all municipal budgets, provision was made for the payment of the Lenten and Advent preachers. Religious fervour may have been rare in the eighteenth century, but, notwithstanding Voltaire, the habit of formal religious observance remained strong. It was customary, then as now, for a special course of sermons to be given in parish churches during Lent and Advent, to prepare the faithful for the two most important feasts of the Church. A member of one of the great preaching orders, Dominican or Capuchin, for example, was usually invited to deliver the sermons, for which he was paid by the town. The cost was not trifling: even a humble little town like Cravant paid the Lenten preacher 100 l. p.a.,\(^3\) while Brest spent 600 l. p.a. on sermons.\(^4\).

3. Arch. nat., H. l. 200 I, 166.
4. M. Bernard, La municipalité de Brest, 1750-1790, p.222.
C. The extraordinary financial demands of the royal government.

That the royal government itself received, directly and indirectly, considerable subsidies from the towns, is seldom appreciated. They were obliged to defray some of its administrative costs, in particular, the living expenses of royal officials in the province. Payments to the intendants, gouverneurs and commandants were a feature of many municipal budgets, and usually took the form of housing allowances. From 1743 Auxerre contributed 400 l. p.a. and Avallon 420 l. p.a. towards housing the commandant de la province de Bourgogne.2

The governor of Brittany and the lieutenant du roi received 2000 l. p.a. each from Nantes.3 In the same province, the rent of the commandant's residence, the upkeep of its gardens, and accommodation for his corps de garde cost Rennes 503 l. in 1782.4 A further 400 l. p.a. towards this commandant's establishment was paid by Brest.5 Governors of towns, too, expected to receive housing subsidies: Rennes and Auxerre had to pay their gouverneurs municipaux 1333 l. and 300 l. p.a.

1. The commandant, whose full title was lieutenant général commandant le gouvernement, was the deputy of the gouverneur général, who was usually at court, and consequently the highest-ranking active royal official in a provincial administration.
respectively. This was a notorious abuse because *gouverneurs municipaux* were rarely resident in their towns - the post was a purely honorary one, - and when they did pay them a visit, expected accommodation to be provided for them. Such items of expenditure were of no benefit whatsoever to towns, but the sums involved were insignificant when compared with the amount of money extorted by the royal government on other pretexts.

Throughout the reign of Louis XIV and at disturbingly frequent intervals during the eighteenth century, the French government verged on financial ruin. At such times it tried to increase its revenue by various unorthodox expedients, which included the selling of venal offices on a large scale. Not only were existing offices in the administration, the judiciary, and the world of commerce declared venal, but new ones were feverishly invented and multiplied, solely that they might be sold to the profit of the royal treasury. This policy had an immediate and drastic effect on the towns, for municipal offices were among those put up for sale. Between 1690 and the death of Louis XIV, hardly a year passed without some category of municipal office being declared venal, and later, all but the most insignificant posts connected with the administration of towns were on three occasions offered for sale: in 1722 to mitigate the financial crisis caused by the collapse

of Law's system, in 1733 to raise funds for the War of the Polish Succession, and in 1771 to tide over the near-bankrupt treasury until Terray's financial reforms could be put into operation. The political and administrative results of this policy have been exaggerated, while its financial consequences have been largely ignored. In fact few towns lost the right of managing their own affairs, because most of them acquired venal municipal offices, whether voluntarily or under pressure from the royal government.

Desire to preserve their independence, fear of the abuses venal officials might commit, and unwillingness to pay their salaries, induced some towns to buy up immediately all municipal offices declared venal; others were bullied into so doing by the royal government. The market for venal offices was quickly glutted by Louis XIV's ministers: they created far too many venal offices, far too often, and discredited them as an investment by alternately suppressing and re-creating them in rapid succession. Venal offices which private individuals refused to buy had to be disposed of somehow or other - the sale of venal offices was farmed out to a traitant, who, having advanced the price to the treasury, gave the government no peace until all the offices had been purchased, and he had recovered his outlay, - and the towns could offer very little resistance.
The traitant's men could take over the administration of any town which objected to buying venal offices, until it gave way. Under this threat towns acquired not only municipal offices that had been declared venal, but in addition many offices in which they had no interest at all, jurés mouleurs de bois, and inspecteurs aux boucheries, for instance.

What this rachat des offices, as it was called, cost the towns is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate conclusively. The few figures that are available for Louis XIV's reign, when the exploitation of rachats des offices reached its apogee, are confused; information about later transactions in venal offices, perhaps because they were better organized, perhaps because municipal offices alone were involved, is more manageable.

In 1722 all venal municipal offices, which had been suppressed in 1714 and 1717, were recreated. The occasion was the collapse of John Law's system, and the government required half the cost of these offices to be paid in titres de rente, billets de liquidation d'offices supprimés, and other government stock;¹ this transaction in venal offices was in fact a round about method of cancelling government debts, including those incurred by the abolition of venal municipal offices at the end of Louis XIV's reign. In 1724, this purpose having been

accomplished, the venal municipal offices were once more suppressed. It was an ingenious scheme and made a handsome profit: 12,000,000 l. were wrung out of Languedoc alone. 1. So the government repeated the manoeuvre on a smaller scale in 1725. The venal offices of receveurs and contrôleurs des octrois were simultaneously suppressed and recreated and the assignations issued to compensate the holders of the suppressed offices were demanded by the royal treasury as half the price of the new. Towns could always be relied upon to buy up any office connected with their financial administration, and almost without exception they rose to the bait. Nuits St. Georges handed over assignations worth 3,141 l. and 3455 l. in cash, (3,141 l. plus the usual tax of 2s per livre.) 2.

But the royal government had been too clever and had pushed the towns too far. In 1733 municipal offices were yet again declared venal, but this time the towns refused to purchase them. The usual coercive measures were of no avail, indeed were impracticable, for the traitant could hardly take over the administration of nearly all the towns in France, and so the bulk of these offices remained on his hands until 1746. That year the government made a last desperate attempt to salvage what it could from the wreckage of this transaction.

Peremptorily, it ordered all unsold venal offices to be transferred to the towns, willy-nilly, and authorized special octrois to enable them to pay for this unwished-for concession. The towns acquiesced. According to figures given in the Code municipal, their submission cost them well over 23,000,000 l.; as usual, the province of Languedoc, which had to pay 11,400,000 l., was the hardest hit. In fact the royal government made even more out of this deal than these figures suggest, for the special octrois, granted to help the towns raise the money demanded, were not abolished when the offices had been paid for, but continued to be collected to the profit of the government until the Revolution. The amounts involved were by no means insignificant: 1,500 l. p.a. from Saint-Malo, 2,400 l. p.a. from Brest, 3,000 l. p.a. from Morlaix, 24,000 l. p.a. from Nantes. It is not surprising that when municipal offices were put up for sale, for what proved to be the last time, in 1771, the government experienced considerable difficulty in selling them, and

2. Code municipal, p.309 et seq.
3. Plus 820,000 l., paid by the états of Burgundy in 1735.
by and large, the prices fetched were much lower than on previous occasions. The town of Laon, for instance, which had given 66,740 l. for the 1733 venal offices, paid only 12,000 l. for those created in 1771; Languedoc paid 3,565,487 l.²

Although the government's total profit from these rachat des offices transactions is a matter of pure conjecture, it is at least possible to ascertain with some degree of accuracy, how much they cost individual towns. Amiens, for instance, paid 96,800 l. for the offices of maire, assesseurs, and commissaire aux revues, created in 1692; 44,000 l. for milice bourgeoise offices, 1694; 20,000 l. for various police offices, 1699; 50,000 l. for the offices of lieutenant de maire, assesseurs and échevins, 1704; 15,000 l. for milice bourgeoise offices, declared venal for the second time in 1709; 15,000 l. for the confirmation of its possession of the offices of maire and échevins, 1718; 150,000 l. for all the municipal offices declared venal in 1733; 70,000 l. for the same offices, 1771.³ Rachats des offices must therefore have cost Amiens approximately 460,800 l. But of course, these figures express only the price of the offices, they take no account of the

interest on loans which a town might have had to raise to pay for the offices. Herein lay the attraction of the rachat des offices from the government's point of view. The rachat des offices was essentially an irredeemable forced loan, the interest on which took the form of the wages or fees attributed to the venal offices. Now the interest (or wages) paid to a town in respect of its loan (or rachat des offices) was considerably lower than the interest the government would have had to pay if it had borrowed the money it needed on the open market, and consequently, lower than the interest paid by the towns when they had raised loans to meet the rachat des offices. By this method of extorting money from the towns, the government effected an appreciable saving.

Very few towns could afford to pay for rachats des offices out of ordinary revenue; usually they had to be granted extra octrois to meet this burden. In 1708, an increase in the octrois of Pontivy was authorized to enable it to purchase venal offices worth 11,000 l. The right of levying this increase was

1. Towns had as much right to draw these wages or fees as had individuals.

2. This point has been made by G. Bertucat: Les finances municipales de Dijon, p. 129-131: "alors que le Trésor royal avait reçu 100,000 l. et deux sols pour livré en sus la finance de l'office de maire, pour lequel il ne payait que 4,000 l. de gages annuellement, la ville avait été obligé d'emprunter 110,000 l. au denier 18 et devait verser comme intérêts 6,111 l. 2s. 2d. à ses créanciers... Par ce procédé de la réunion des offices aux corps de ville et communautés, le Trésor royal réalisait certainement des opérations advantageuses; contraire d'emprunter, il aurait dû le faire au même taux que les villes, c'est à dire dans les conditions
défavorables, c'est sur leurs finances qu'il arrivait, très adroitement, à rejeter toute la charge et les funestes conséquences des emprunts; obligées de payer rapidement au Trésor des taxes énormes, les villes devaient en effet, emprunter coûte que coûte et par suite à des taux élevés."
handed over for sixteen years to the intendant-général of the
duc de Rohan as a repayment for the loan of 11,000 l. which he
had advanced to the town. It was by no means uncommon for the
right of collecting octrois to be transferred for a period of
years to a private individual who in return paid for the rachat
des offices. This kind of arrangement was adopted to satisfy
other royal demands: when the government asked Pontivy for a
don gratuit of 7,000 l. in 1712, the town abandoned certain
octrois for seventeen years to a bourgeois, who in exchange paid
the required sum. It was by surrendering their octrois for
fifteen and twenty-one years respectively that Rennes and Nantes
contrived to pay the 1689 don gratuit.

The so-called don gratuit was another favourite device
for extorting money from the towns. It was only occasionally
used by Louis XIV's ministers, who at first tried to maintain
the polite fiction that it was a voluntary donation to an
impoverished king by his loyal and enthusiastic subjects. On
14 April 1689 the Contrôleur général wrote to the intendant of
Auvergne:

"au sujet des présens que plusieurs villes du royaume ont
dejà faits au Roy. L'usage que S.M. désire que vous

1. F. Le Lay: Histoire de la ville de Pontivy au XVIIIe siècle,
p. 127.
3. A. Dupuy: Études sur l'administration municipale en Bretagne
au XVIIIe siècle, p. 237. Rennes paid 500,000 l., and Nantes
150,000 l. p. 273.
fassiez de ces exemples est d'examiner les villes de vostre département qui pourroient, à proportion de leurs forces, donner de semblables marques de leur bonne volonté. S.M. veut surtout que la chose vienne d'une entière liberté des Magistrats et des habitans des villes,...... je vous répète encore que le Roy désire que cela soit conduit avec tant de prudence, que le public ne s'aperçoive pas que S.M. ayt demandé ce secours, pour peur que vous prévoyiez de difficultés au succès de la chose."¹.

Prodded by the intendants, the towns "volunteered" considerable sums in 1689 - in the généralité of Champagne, Troyes and Reims, for instance, paid 50,000 l. each, and Chalons 30,000 l.².

Again in 1712, every town was invited to send a don gratuit to the royal treasury; it was an invitation which could not be refused, and cost Nantes, for example, 170,000 l., Rennes 120,000 l., and Brest 70,000 l.³.

But the don gratuit was a very minor, casual source of revenue until the second half of the eighteenth century, when it was transformed into what was virtually a regular urban tax.

An edict was issued in August 1758 ordering a don gratuit extraordinaire, to be paid annually by every town in France for a

period of six years. The amount required from each was stipulated in the edict, which also provided that this money was to be raised by means of extra octrois. The municipal officials of each town could decide on which goods dues should be levied, provided their recommendations reached the Contrôle général within a month of the edict's publication; otherwise the royal council would fix the octrois tarif.¹ The government originally intended these octrois to be paid by all townspeople alike, including nobles, ecclesiastics, and other privileged classes; goods destined for hôpitaux and hôtes-dieu only were to be exempt. But a few days after the edict was issued, the bourgeois of Paris obtained immunity for the produce of their country estates,² and in December 1758 the clergy forced the government to grant them exemption from these octrois.³ The introduction of the don gratuit had to be postponed a month because some towns had been carelessly omitted from the list published in August 1758, while others claimed that they had been over-assessed and insisted on an adjustment. Joigny got its don gratuit reduced from 10,000 l. p.a. to 8,000 l. p.a., Chablis from 3,000 l. p.a. to 2,000 l. p.a., and Vezelay from 2,000 l. p.a. to 700 l. p.a.⁴ A few towns thoroughly disliked

¹ Arch. nat., AD IX, 401, 136.
² Declaration 24 aout 1758, Arch. nat., AD IX, 401, 138.
³ Arch. nat., AD IX, 401, 139.
⁴ Declaration 3 janvier 1759, Arch. nat., AD IX, 401, 143.
the whole scheme and negotiated special agreements for themselves. Troyes, for example, offered 140,000 l. cash down in lieu of 40,000 l. p.a. for six years, and the government, always in need of ready money, accepted. ¹.

So began this don gratuit extraordinaire, which was levied, not for six years, but until the Revolution, because the government, finding it impossible to dispense with the additional revenue it yielded, repeatedly prolonged its existence. ². Several changes were introduced between the inception of the don gratuit in 1759 and its abolition thirty years later. At the end of the Seven Years' War the amount demanded was cut drastically, ³. and in 1770 many small towns were discharged absolutely from the obligation of paying it. ⁴. Even so, according to figures quoted by de Castries in 1777, dons gratuits from towns in the pays d'états alone were worth 1,537,400 l. p.a. ⁵.

The other important change was in the method of collecting the octrois destined for the don gratuit. From the beginning the royal government wished to have these octrois collected by the receveurs and commis of the ferme générale des

¹. Lettres patentes 29 mars 1759, Arch. nat., AD IX 401, 144.
⁴. Arrêt 19 mars 1770, Arch. nat., AD IX 401, 218.
aides, but the parlements, when registering the edict of August 1758, added the proviso that "le recouvrement du droit... ne pourra être fait que par ceux qui sont ou seront proposés par les Officiers Municipaux, ou ceux qui les représentent." 1

Many towns, anxious to keep the employees of the ferme générale des aides out of their affairs, took advantage of this clause to organize the collection of the octrois themselves. Unfortunately municipal officials were rarely efficient tax collectors, and such towns were usually late with the payment of their dons gratuits. 2 This was the government's excuse for arranging that from 1770 the octrois of the majority of towns should be collected by a professional tax farmer, François Noel, and paid direct to the royal treasury. The don gratuit, as such, was forgotten, and the octrois it had occasioned were thus unobtrusively converted into a kind of aide, paid by the urban population, and known as droits réservés.

THE POLICY OF THE ROYAL GOVERNMENT TOWARDS TOWNS.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the relations between the royal government and the towns centered on finance: the government's attitude towards the towns was largely determined by financial considerations, and the towns' chief contact with the royal government was the intendant's tutelle of municipal finance. Both the policy and the method of enforcing it were inherited from Colbert. While he was in power Colbert sought, not only to liquidate the debts accumulated by the extravagantly spendthrift municipal officials of the mid-seventeenth century, but also to curb municipal expenditure in general, and thereby minimize the burden of taxation levied by the towns - taille and octrois - lest it jeopardize the royal government's own taxation. To this end was instituted that strict supervision of municipal finance exercised by the Contrôle général and its local agents, the intendants, the fundamentals of which were laid down in the edict of April 1683.

This tutelle of municipal finance was no new device invented by Colbert. The principle that the proper employment of municipal revenue was of concern to the royal government was laid down as early as 1256, in an ordonnance of St. Louis. Among
other things, this ordonnance required those responsible for the financial administration of all towns on the royal domaine, to visit Paris annually, to give the king's officials an account of their receipt and expenditure; and it forbade towns to negotiate loans or to give any presents, except wine, without royal leave.¹ Nor were the powers and responsibilities assigned to the intendant unprecedented. The edict of Fontainebleau, June 1555, provided for the appointment of a conseiller général superintendent to each généralité, with the duty of supervising the administration of municipal finance. Each year he was to draw up a budget of receipt and expenditure for every town within his area; he was to eradicate corruption, peculation and abuses, in particular excessive expenditure on deputations and litigation; municipal officials were to be responsible to him for the financial administration of their towns. However, this innovation was very short-lived: so powerful was the opposition to the conseiller général superintendent that the office was suppressed in the ordonnance of Orleans.² This same measure laid down what proved to be the standard procedure for municipal accounts: they were to be checked either by the local bailliage or sénéchaussée, or by the chambre des comptes, according to the nature of the revenue involved, — accounts of deniers patrimoniaux being submitted to the bailliage, accounts

¹ Isambert etc., Recueil des anciennes lois françaises, vol.1, p. 174.
² Isambert etc. Recueil des anciennes lois françaises, vol.14, p. 63, art.94.
of deniers d'octroi to the chambre des comptes.\(^1\)

The drawbacks to this system were serious: the distinction between deniers d'octroi and deniers patrimoniaux was a purely artificial one and difficult to respect in practice. Worse, municipal accounts were audited only in the narrowest, most technical sense of the word, by the bailliage and chambre des comptes, which courts had no duty to ensure that municipal funds had been usefully employed for the public good. Often the impartiality and independence of the bailliages were highly suspect since their magistrates were so frequently members of corps de ville, and the fat fees\(^2\) demanded by the chambre des comptes induced towns to avoid submitting their accounts for as long as they could remain undetected.\(^3\) So that, by and large, municipal expenditure was virtually unchecked, which explains to some extent how the towns came to be in the shocking state of financial disorder attacked by

1. Isambert etc., Recueil des anciennes lois françaises, vol. 14, p. 63, art. 95.

2. The basic fee was 43 l. 14s. per 1,000 l. of revenue audited, plus the expenses of the court's lawyers and clerical staff. But only towns with 10,000 l. p.a. revenue were required to submit their accounts to the chambre des comptes annually; towns with under 3,000 l. p.a. revenue presented their accounts every six years; towns with 3,000 l. p.a. to 6,000 l. p.a. every four years, and towns with 6,000 l. p.a. to 10,000 l. p.a. every two years. Table des ordonnances relative à la chambre des comptes, vol 73, fol. 213, 282. Bib. nat., A.F.F. 11063.

3. The intendant of Poitiers reported in 1683 that the towns of Chastellerau and Fontenay in his généralité had not submitted accounts to the chambre des comptes for forty-two and twenty-five years respectively. A.M. de Boislisle: Correspondance des contrôleurs généraux p.t.o.
Colbert.

Suffering no restraint, municipal officials, if not guilty of outright embezzlement, had foolishly frittered away the revenue entrusted to them on unnecessary and fruitless expenditure—litigation, the fashionable pursuit, ridiculed by Molière;¹ numerous deputations to Paris, which were often, in truth, holidays for municipal officials and their wives at the expense of the townspeople;² banquets and gifts. This selfish extravagance was paid for by additional and usually unauthorised taxation, or by raising loans. This appalling misuse of public funds was not confined to a few towns or regions; the reports of the intendants reveal that throughout the length and breadth of France, municipal finances were in a chaotic state. In 1663, the intendant of Burgundy, shocked and indignant, described:

"l'inégalité et l'injustice des impositions, la liberté que les maires et échevins ont prise d'imposer à leur discretion ce qu'ils ont voulu; ce qui a été pratiqué dans toutes les communautés de Bourgogne à la foule du menu peuple et à l'avantage des magistrats et principaux

1. Auxerre, for instance, was engaged in forty-four legal cases simultaneously in 1637. Challe: Elections municipales d'Auxerre il y a cent ans. Annuaire de l'Yonne, 1866, p.16.

2. In two years, 1668-1670, the échevins of Pont-Audemer were thought to have spent over 3,000 l. on visits to Paris and Rouen. M.A. Canel: Notice sur les institutions municipales de la ville de Pont-Audemer. Recueil des travaux de la société libre de l'Eure, 11e série, vol.II,1841.p.385.
de chaque communauté; ensorte que quand ils ont été obligé de payer 10,000 l. les maires et échevins n'ont point fait de difficulté d'en imposer 20 et quelque fois davantage." 1.

His inquiries revealed that:

"en trois communautés qui nous ont représenté leur état, il y a plus de 1,500,000 l. de dettes, savoir: 500,000 l. à Dijon; 400,000 l. et d'avantage à Semur, et plus de 600,000 l. à Beaune." 2.

These alarmingly heavy debts had been amassed because the towns of Burgundy claimed the right of borrowing when and as much as they pleased. From the south of France came similar tales of woe. The intendant of Dauphiné wrote to the contrôleur général in 1679:

"Je n'ai point vu de province où la corruption soit si grande et si générale que dans celle-ci. Les communautés n'ont pas de plus grande ennemie que les consuls et leurs officiers; ils les pillent par toutes les voies qu'ils peuvent imaginer. Je travaille autant que je puis pour arrêter l'avidité de ces mangeurs de communautés." 3.

2. C. Normand: Saint-Quentin et la royauté, p. 103-104.
The intendant of Provence reported in 1687 that:

"en l'année 1642, la plupart des communautés de la province payèrent tous leurs créanciers; cependant, elles se trouvent chargées aujourd'hui de 23 millions de dettes, ce qui ne peut estre arrivé, et n'est arrivé effectivement que par une dissipation et déprédação sans exemple de la part des consuls, exacteurs, trésoriers et autres administrateurs."¹

It was this situation which prompted Colbert's campaign to restore the French towns to solvency, one of the most vital and difficult he undertook. He left no intendant in any doubt that the most important aspect of his mission in the provinces was to oblige the towns in his généralité to liquidate their debts.² This was one of Colbert's constant preoccupations during the twenty years before his death; towards the end of his life he was greatly concerned that steps should be taken to prevent a recurrence of the scandalous financial maladministration which had sullied the reputation of the towns during the first half of the seventeenth century. This could obviously be achieved only by restricting the towns' liberty to manage their own affairs: how seriously municipal officials misused this liberty is indicated by reports that

¹ A.M. de Boislisle: Correspondance des contrôleurs généraux des finances avec les intendants des provinces, vol I, 476.
of how one intendant tackled this problem, see C. Arbassier: L'absolutisme en Bourgogne: l'intendant Bouchu et son action Financière.
they misappropriated even taxation imposed to pay off the debts they had heedlessly accumulated.\textsuperscript{1} The first indication that Colbert was anxious to make provision for the future, as well as to rectify the mistakes of the past, was in a circular letter to the intendants dated 17 April 1679, in which he exhorted them to give thought to how the towns could be prevented "de contracter à l'avenir de nouvelles dettes avec la facilité qu'elles on\'eue jusqu'à présent."\textsuperscript{2} This informal appeal for suggestions became a definite request for advice in a circular letter of 29 February 1680.

"L'intention de Sa Majesté est de former une déclaration sur tous les avis de MM. les commissaires départs, pour establir des regles si certaines et si étroites que les villes et communautés ne puissent pas tomber dans l'embarras ou elles sont encore à présent, quoyqu'il y ayt près de vingt ans que le Roy travaille à les en tierer."\textsuperscript{3}

The intendants were asked to comment on proposals for restricting the towns' freedom to contract debts, proposals which later became the nucleus of the edict of April 1683. At the end of this letter, Colbert explained why the credit and prosperity

\textsuperscript{1} P. Clement: \textit{Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert}, vol. IV, pp. 91, 172.
\textsuperscript{2} P. Clement: \textit{op.cit.}, IV, p.131.
\textsuperscript{3} P. Clement: \textit{op.cit.}, IV, p.138.
of the towns so intensely exercised the royal government:

"Sa Majesté est persuadée qu'en apportant ces précautions les communautés ne tomberont jamais dans l'estat auquel elles sont, et que, par ce moyen, elle leur procurera un soulagement très-considerable et les mettra plus en estat de contribuer aux dépenses de l'Estat, lorsqu'elle le désirera."¹.

The intendants sent in their recommendations, and after some delay the decree based upon them was issued, not long before Colbert's death.

This law, the edict of April 1683, ² was the cornerstone on which the royal government's relations with the towns, during the eighteenth century, rested; its fundamental

1. P. Clement: Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert, vol. IV, p.139. My italics. In the previous month, Colbert had written to the intendant of Rouen:

"À l'egard des dettes des communautez, c'est un travail auquel le roy désire que tous l'rs. les commissaires départis s'appliquent pour deslivrer les communautez de son royaume de cette vermine qui les ronge continuellement, et les mettre une fois en estat de n'avoir point à se consommer en frais de justice par ces moyens-là, et pouvoir, par conséquent, porter plus facilement les charges de l'Estat." G.B. Depping: Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV, vol.III, p.279-280. My italics.

2. Isambert etc: Recueil des anciennes lois françaises, vol.19.
importance demands a fairly detailed analysis of its provisions.

Municipal officials of all towns were required to forward details of their financial administration to the intendants, within three months of the publication of the edict; in particular they were asked to submit an inventory of their revenues, all leases for the farm of their revenues for the previous ten years, and the receveurs' accounts for the same period. On the basis of this information each intendant would draw up a budget of ordinary expenditure for every town in his généralité, taking special pains to appropriate a certain, fixed sum for the repair and upkeep of roads, bridges, walls, etc. The budgets of larger towns would be examined and ratified by the royal council. Municipal officials were forbidden to divert this ordinary expenditure to other purposes than those stipulated in the budget, on pain of themselves restoring the money misappropriated.

Ordinary expenditure was to be met from revenus patrimoniaux. In those towns which completely lacked revenus patrimoniaux, or where they were inadequate, the municipal officials could summon the assemblée générale des habitants to discuss how additional revenue could be raised, whether by an annual imposition levied on tailliables, or by taxes on consumer

1. Or rather, of those towns within the généralités of Paris, Amiens, Soisson, Chalons, Orleans, Tours, Bourges, Poitiers, Moulins, Lyons, Rion, Grenoble, Rouen, Caen, Alençon, Limoges, Bordeaux, and Montauban; this omits the généralités of Aix, Dijon, Montpellier, Toulouse, Nantes-Rennes. Why?
goods. Their decision and the intendant's opinion would be pondered by the royal council when it considered what steps could be taken to alleviate the town's indigence.

Under no circumstances whatsoever could towns sell or in any way alienate their communal goods and property, or borrow money for any purpose whatsoever, except in the following three contingencies: to finance measures necessary to combat plague, to provide lodging and supplies for soldiers, and to rebuild church naves which had collapsed as a result of decay or fire, and for which the towns were responsible. In these circumstances, municipal officials could summon the assemblée générale des habitants, or its equivalent, to deliberate on the need for a loan, which had to be agreed by a majority vote. If the inhabitants were in favour of raising a loan, they had also to decide how it should be repaid, whether by direct or indirect taxation, and over how many years. The conclusions of the assemblée, after being signed by "la plus grande et plus saine partie desdits habitants," were to be forwarded to the intendant whose prior permission to raise the loan was essential. Only if a town was struck by plague could the municipal officials borrow money on the authorisation of the assemblée générale des habitants alone, without reference to the intendant. But three months after the cessation of the plague, he had to be informed what money had been raised, and how it had been spent.
Taxation to repay loans had to be levied by popularly elected collecteurs if it was direct, personal taxation, or farmed out to the highest bidder if on consumer goods; the auction of the lease of such farms had to be held by the intendant himself. The collecteur or farmer was to hand over the product of these impositions to the receveur, or to the town's creditor, taking every reasonable precaution to prevent the money falling into the clutches of the municipal officials and being by them employed for purposes other than the repayment of the loan. Similarly, the loan itself was to be entrusted to the receveur, whose responsibility it was to ensure that the money was used as intended, and not misappropriated by the municipal officials. Even the financier who lent the money was adjured to keep a careful watch on its utilization, which certainly indicates the depth of Colbert's mistrust of those who governed the towns.

Loans raised without the preceding formalities, it was decreed, were to be considered null and void; interest taken in respect of such loans was to be treated as usurious; none but the municipal officials were to arrange to borrow money on a town's behalf. Creditors were forbidden to sue towns for the repayment of debts owed to them, even legitimate debts, without the intendant's permission. His authorisation was also an indispensable prerequisite for both litigation and deputations.
undertaken by the towns. As for raising a loan, municipal officials wishing to initiate or defend a lawsuit, or go on a deputation, had to get the backing of the assemblée générale des habitants and the intendant, who would fix how much time and money could be spent on either. Moreover, municipal officials themselves and also the "officiers de justice de nosdites villes" were forbidden to take part in deputations, unless they undertook to do so free of charge: any expenses claimed by municipal and bailliage officials would have to be restored in quadruple. Colbert's dislike of deputations, which may have been intensified by having so many inflicted on him, is clearly manifest in his letter of 6 November 1682 to the intendant of Aix; deputations were an outmoded method of doing business – the needs of local interests, including the towns', would receive just as much attention from the king if detailed in memoirs forwarded through the intendants.¹

The result of this edict, when enforced,² was to

1. P. Clement: Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Colbert, vol IV, p.164-165. It has been suggested that these restrictions on deputations, and the channelling of complaints and petitions through the intendants severely hampered the bringing of grievances to the attention of the government: A. Thomas: Une province sous Louis XIV, p.58.

2. That the Crown experienced difficulty in bringing municipal officials to respect the provisions of the edict of April 1683 is suggested by the declarations of 2 August 1687 and 2 October 1703 – Isambert etc.: Receuil des anciennes lois françaises, vol. 20, p.50 & 435.
give the royal government the means of controlling, through its intendants, the expenditure of municipal revenue. The budgets drawn up by the royal council and the intendant fixed ordinary annual expenditure, which could not thereafter be altered without their sanction; towns which asked for and received royal permission to levy new taxation to augment their income, thereby became more dependent on the government; and of course none of them could raise loans without the government's goodwill. Since it was in their power to check the key financial operations of the towns, it was thought superfluous for the intendants to verify all municipal accounts. As Colbert wrote to the intendant of Riom in 1683:

"Il n'est pas à propos que vous chargiez d'examiner les comptes de toutes les villes, parce que ce serait un travail immense, qui ne produirait aucun avantage aux peuples." ¹

He apparently thought that the existing auditing procedure - the bailliage or sénéchaussée checking the accounts of deniers patrimoniaux, the chambre des comptes those of deniers d'octroi - was satisfactory. ² However, during the eighteenth century, the intendants acquired the power of reviewing municipal accounts themselves, or, if more convenient, delegating this

² P. Clement: op. cit., vol. IV, p. 159.
task to their subdélégués.¹

As a deterrent, Colbert's edict proved remarkably successful: wholesale financial maladministration on the scale practised in the seventeenth century never recurred. Of course, there were individual exceptions - the tutelle of municipal finance was no automatically operated mechanism, its efficacy depended on the personalities of those who exercised it, and the circumstances in which they worked. The French bureaucracy, even towards the end of the ancien régime, was such a rudimentary organization that differences of character and temperament in its officials affected the implementation of its policies: a town could count on getting away with more under a lazy, sickly or trustingly sanguine intendant, than under a tireless, scrupulous and mistrustful one. Often even the most hardworking intendant found it impossible to devote as much time and attention as desirable to municipal administration, because it was only one of his many responsibilities and because he lacked sufficient subordinate officials to relieve him of routine business. The system was by no means perfect, and yet, by and large, the intendants kept the financial administration of the towns well under control.

The royal government's watch-dog attitude towards municipal finance was prompted by fiscal considerations. A

¹. Colbert, who was notoriously suspicious of subdélégués, being local, and therefore in his eyes, partial men, would not have approved.
minister of Colbert's or Turgot's disposition would probably also have a sincere interest in the sound administration of public funds for its own sake, but even Colbert, on several occasions, admitted that his policy towards the towns was inspired by concern for the state's financial needs. One wonders whether, when he wrote that his aim was to restore the credit of the towns in order that in future they might contribute towards the expenses of the state, he foresaw what heavy subsidies the royal government was to extort from the towns during the eighteenth century, under the guise of rachats des offices and dons gratuits.

There can be no doubt that, but for the extraordinary insight into municipal finance gained by the royal government in the course of its campaign to liquidate municipal debts, and its subsequent close supervision of municipal expenditure, it would not have been able to milk the towns' resources so efficiently. The royal government itself appreciated the importance of its tutelle, and from time to time sought to invigorate the intendants' vigilance vis-à-vis the towns. Such an endeavour was made by Turgot, whose circular letter to the intendants, dated 28 September 1774, bears an uncanny resemblance to similar missives from Colbert:

"Quant à l'emploi des revenus des villes et communautés, il me paraît également nécessaire de le soumettre à des
...Pour prévenir la dissipation des deniers, je regarde, monsieur, comme indispensable de fixer par des états les charges et dépenses annuelles dont les villes et communautés sont chargées, et au-delà desquelles les administrateurs ne pourront, sous peine d'en demeurer personnellement garants, rien payer. Lorsqu'il s'agira d'une nouvelle dépense annuelle, elle sera ajoutée à l'état qui aura déjà été arrêté, et ainsi successivement. Quant aux autres dépenses de la nature de celles qui doivent être autorisées par le Conseil, on s'y pourvoira en la forme ordinaire; et il y sera statué sur votre avis, en justifiant toutefois par vous que la ville sera en état de faire cette dépense, soit de réparation, soit de construction nouvelle, et en joignant à votre avis le tableau de la situation des revenus de la ville......il n'est pas moins nécessaire de veiller à ce que l'emploi du produit se fasse avec la plus grande économie. La défaut d'attention sur cet objet important conduirait insensiblement toutes les villes du royaume à la destruction de leurs revenus...."1. No more compelling evidence than this could be adduced to prove how fundamental and persistent was the royal government's problem of controlling the financial

administration of the towns.

But distinct from this almost continuous pressure to make towns comply with the regulations laid down by Colbert, a sweeping attempt to overhaul municipal finance once again, was initiated in 1764: this would seem to be the most plausible explanation of the municipal reform edicts issued in that and the following year.

These edicts, of August 1764 and May 1765, have inevitably caught the attention of historians, because they embody the only endeavour, prior to the Revolution, to impose a uniform system of administration on all towns throughout France, and because they suppressed venality in municipal government and restored freedom of elections. A number of theories have been advanced to account for this apparently revolutionary innovation, among them some pretty wild hypotheses, but since the papers of Delaverdy, the contrôleur général, who was indisputably the moving spirit behind the edicts, were among those destroyed in the fire which broke out in the hôtel de ville of Paris in 1871, it is unlikely that his true motive will ever be established beyond all shadow of doubt.

Those provisions of the edicts which have received most consideration can be briefly summarized as follows.

1. Perhaps the most fantastic is that advanced by A. Richard in Recherches sur l'organisation communale de la ville de Saint-Maixent jusqu'en 1790, p.138: "On sentit le besoin de se faire bien venir de la population des villes et de se ménager leur appui au moment où l'on se créait par l'expulsion de l'ordre des Jésuites de puissants ennemis."
In place of their existing, highly individual "constitutions", based on medieval charters and modified from time to time to meet their own particular needs, French towns were all to be administered according to the same pattern. This stipulated an executive committee, the corps de ville, comprising a maire, four échevins, six conseillers, a syndic-receveur, and a secrétaire-greffier; and a policy-making body, the assemblée des notables, which consisted of the corps de ville plus fourteen notables. The lieutenant général du bailliage was ex-officio president of the assemblée des notables, and the procureur du roi au bailliage acted as ministère public. Election to these two bodies was by an indirect and somewhat complicated method. One deputy was nominated by the ecclesiastics, one by each jurisdiction (bailliage, grenier à sel, bureau des finances, etc.), one by each corps (nobles et officiers militaires, avocats, bourgeois vivant noblement, etc.), and one by each communauté (épiciers, savetiers, boulangers, etc.) in the town. These deputies elected the fourteen notables among whom various professions and social classes were represented in proportion to their importance: one notable had to be chosen from each of the following:

1. This was in towns of a population of 4,500 and over; smaller towns had smaller corps de ville - 2,000-4,500: a maire, 2 échevins, 4 conseillers, a syndic-receveur, and secrétaire-greffier; under 2,000: 2 échevins, 3 conseillers, a syndic-receveur and a secrétaire-greffier.

p.t.o.
2. If there was no bailliage or sénéchaussée in the town, these two were replaced by the equivalent officials from the local seigneurial jurisdiction.
the principal chapter of the town,
the ecclesiastical order,
the nobles and military officers,
the officials of the bailliage or sénéchaussée,
the bureau des finances,
the officials of any other royal jurisdiction,
i.e. grenier à sel, eaux et forêts,
the notaires and procureurs;
two notables from each of the following two groups:
the officials of the royal household, avocats, médecins, and bourgeois vivant noblement,
the artisans;
and three notables from:
the wholesale and retail merchants, surgeons, and liberal professions.
The notables in their turn elected the rest of the municipal officials—conseillers, échevins, syndic-receveur, secrétaire-greffier, and three candidates for the mayoralty, one of whom would be picked by the king as maire. There were important qualifications as to eligibility for municipal officials: those chosen as notables had to be aged thirty or over, and inhabitants of the town for at least ten years past; conseillers were required to have served in municipal administration as notables, échevins as conseillers, and maires as échevins. This tendency towards continuity was further accentuated by the staggered
replacement of officials — two of the four échevins, and one of the six conseillers were to be replaced annually — and by allowing notables and the semi-professional officials to be re-elected as often as thought fit.¹

The essence of this electoral system is its conservative bias; many towns justly complained that their former regimes were more "liberal" and "democratic" than this. Its author seems to have amalgamated all the conservative traits of existing municipal constitutions, for none of these provisions is new in itself - the appointment of the maire by the king from three candidates, the staggered replacement of officials, the requirement that those elected to the most important offices should first have had experience in the lower ranks of the municipal hierarchy, all these characteristics were manifest in the government of towns before 1764 - but this particular combination of them was original. Another feature which could be described as reactionary, was the reintroduction into local administration of the bailliage officials, who had been deprived of their right to preside at municipal assemblies in 1692. Altogether it is difficult to agree with Jean de Montenon's description of these edicts as "liberal." It is equally impossible to support his statement that

"ce qui caractérise incontestablement la situation

¹. Maires, échevins, and conseillers could only be re-elected to these offices after a period out of office equal to their term in office; there was, of course, nothing to prevent them being elected to other municipal posts in the meantime.
It was not freedom of elections that was exceptional, but venality in municipal administration.

Another common misconception is that these edicts were in fact enforced throughout France. Certainly uniformity in municipal administration was, for obvious reasons, greatly desired by the royal government. But the opposition with which the new proposals met was too strong to be ignored or overcome. The very edict of May 1765 excludes from its provisions Paris, Lyon, and towns within the appanage of the Duke of Orleans; the particularist susceptibilities of Languedoc and Artois had to be humoured by devising different measures for each of them, the edicts of May 1766 and July 1768 respectively; while the obstruction of the parlement of Rennes and the états de Bourgogne prevented the introduction of the law in Brittany and Burgundy. These exceptions involve a not inconsiderable area of France.

Rather than concentrate exclusively on the political and administrative aspects of these two reforming edicts, important though they are, as do most historians, it is more

1. J. de Montenon: Un corps de ville provincial à la veille de la Révolution. Délibérations du corps de ville de Poitiers, p. 54.
illuminating to investigate their financial provisions, for after all, no less than forty-one of the fifty-four clauses of the edict of August 1764 alone, are concerned with finance. Moreover, there were other, less well-known decrees issued at about that time, the purport of which strongly suggests that Delaverdy was probably motivated by considerations of the kind which had exercised Colbert.

A declaration of 11 February 1764 announced the government's intention of tackling the general financial confusion caused by the Seven Years' War, and of establishing good order in every branch of finance.

"Nous ont fait reconnaître la nécessité d'être instruits, de la manière la plus exacte, de tout ce qui concerne la situation dans laquelle se trouvent actuellement lesdites Villes, Corps, et Communautés, la nature des droits qu'ils perçoivent, le montant d'iceux, les charges et déductions qui y ont lieu, le montant des frais de perception, l'emploi ordinaire des deniers, et le total des dettes contractées sur le produit desdits droits......"¹

In order to enlighten the government about their circumstances, all towns were required to submit, within three months, detailed memoranda on their revenues and expenditure - the nature of their deniers patrimoniaux, and octrois, an estimate of the

annual product of this taxation, the cost of collection and the number of officials employed therein, particulars of expenditure, and the amount of debt owed. These memoranda on municipal finance were to be studied by four officials, Bigot de Sainte-Croix, Langlet, Lorry, and Angelesme de Saint-Sabin, each of whom was made responsible for the towns in a certain number of généralités.

"Veut et entend Sa Majesté qu'après l'examen et le travail particulier que fera chacun desdits Commissaires sur les Mémoires dont ils sont spécialement chargés par le présent arrêt, ils se communiquent reciprocement leurs résultats particuliers, à l'effet de former en commun leurs observations, qui seront par eux signées, et remises au Contrôleur général de ses finances; à l'effet de quoi lesdits Commissaires s'assembleront au moins deux fois par mois chez l'ancien d'entre eux."

The end of all this research, according to the edict of August 1764, was to be the planning of every town's budget, to be embodied in and authorised by special letters patent for each one. At least some towns - Auxerre for example, - complied

with the contrôleur général's request for mémoires, but the scheme never reached its logical conclusion, the wholesale issue of budgetary letters patent never took place.

However, a new, revised procedure for the tutelle of municipal finance was laid down in the edict of August 1764, and enforced until the repeal of this law in 1771. What it prescribed was basically a more elaborate and highly-centralised version of the Colbertian formula. Municipal officials were once more forbidden to deviate from the financial scheme drawn up for their town by the government, but henceforth the changes and increases in expenditure, like the levying of extra revenue, had to be sanctioned not only by the assemblée des notables and the intendant, but also by the Contrôleur général in letters patent. His permission was also required before the construction of public works and amenities could be embarked upon. Fresh regulations governed the acquisition and disposal of municipal property, and the negotiation of loans: all these transactions needed the authorisation of the assemblée des notables and the intendant as before, plus the endorsement of the local parlement, if the sum involved was under 3,000 l. or letters patent issued on the Contrôleur général's recommendation, if over 3,000 l. The conditions upon which deputations could be 1. Which was reiterated in the edict of May 1765.
undertaken remained the same. A change was made in the procedure governing the leasing of municipal property: leases were to be auctioned to the highest bidder, not informally by the municipal officials alone, but in the presence of the assemblée des notables. Officials of the local bureau des finances or élection were to take charge of auctions of the farm of octrois. The handling and auditing of municipal revenue was specified in detail. All revenue was to be deposited in a chest with three locks, the key to one being held by a member of the corps de ville, the key to another by a notable, while the third key belonged to the receveur. He would be allotted so much petty cash by the assemblée des notables for current expenses, the disbursement of which he had to note in a special register. The receveur was required to give the municipal officials a brief financial statement at the beginning of every month, and in March, an exhaustive account of the previous year's receipt and expenditure. By a specially devised and speedy legal process, the receveur could if necessary by constrained to submit his accounts on time. After being audited by the assemblée des notables, they were to be forwarded to the

1. This was amplified in the edict of May 1765, which obliged the receveur to keep as well, a register in which every item of expenditure was noted day by day. No payment was valid unless authorised by the maire, at least one échevin, and the secrétaire-greffier.
contrôleur général via the intendant. The author of this edict was presumably under the impression that separate accounts were still kept for deniers patrimoniaux and deniers d'octroi, because the former were to be checked by the local bailliage or sénéchaussée and the grand 'chambre of the parlement, while the latter were to be verified first by the appropriate bureau des finances, and then by the chambre des comptes; all this in addition to examination by the intendant and the contrôleur général. This purely legalistic distinction between the two kinds of revenue was impossible to observe in practice, and it was customary for towns to have a single composite set of accounts. Inevitably, a fierce fight broke out between the parlements and the chambre des comptes, as to which courts should audit the accounts; the royal government's decision favoured the chambre des comptes, which by the declaration of 27 July 1766, were given the undisputed right of dealing with municipal accounts.¹

One of the most striking features of the revised tutelle was the extension of the contrôleur général's interest in municipal finance to include, not only the formulation of policy, but its detailed application. This centralization of the tutelle, which deprived the intendants of their power to settle the financial problems of the towns in their généralités.

and limited them to giving advice to the contrôleur général, may perhaps explain why some of them opposed the edicts.\(^1\)

That the old judicial courts - parlement, chambre des comptes, bailliage, bureau des finances, - should have had their former role in municipal administration restored to them, is also remarkable. It would seem that Delaverdy expected to secure sounder administration of municipal finance by subjecting it to a profusion of checks and controls, including supervision by the assemblée des notables, the bailliage, the parlement, the intendant, the contrôleur général, and so on. This ill-considered multiplication of the tutelle of municipal finance was abolished in 1771, perhaps because Terray and Maupeou wished to extract financial aid from the towns without fear of let or hindrance from the judiciary, and therefore the intendant's undivided tutelle was preferable to the procedure introduced by Delaverdy, though admittedly this is pure conjecture.

To conclude: the chief elements in the royal government's policy towards the towns in the eighteenth century can be summarised thus. The royal government looked to the towns for extraordinary financial assistance, over and above normal taxation, in times of crisis: its timing of the creation of venal offices is an indication of this. The extortion of these

\(^1\) Especially Amelot at Dijon, and Caumartin of Flanders-Artois. See Arch. nat., H I. 144, 1-9; H I. 50, 66.
extraordinary financial contributions, in the guise of rachats des offices and dons gratuïts, in addition to normal taxation - for contrary to general belief, taille, capitation, and vingtièmes were levied in most French towns - effectively disposes of the claim, made not infrequently, that the countryside bore the brunt of royal fiscal demands, and that urban society was let off lightly. The intendants' tutelle of municipal finance was the inevitable corollary of this exploitation of the towns' resources by the royal government. Moreover, even if this strict control of municipal expenditure had not been required to enable the government to milk the towns efficiently, some supervision of municipal finance was virtually inescapable, since bitter experience proved that, if left to their own devices, municipal officials could not be relied upon to administer their town's revenues efficiently and wisely. For these reasons, the government's most close and constant contact with the towns in the eighteenth century was the intendant's tutelle, as formulated by Colbert.
PART TWO

AUXERRE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Few who visit Auxerre today would guess that in the eighteenth century it had been the centre of a flourishing wine industry. Indeed, few realise that before it was ravaged by phylloxera, lower Burgundy produced several well-known wines, besides the Chablis for which it is now famous. Courtépée, with the assurance and phraseology of a true connoisseur, described the wines of the area thus:


Most of the inhabitants of Auxerre were employed in the production of wine or in the allied trade of barrel-making; even the labourers who worked in the vineyards lived in the town:

"La ville d'Auxerre est peut-être la seule dans le Royaume qui fasse dans l'enclos de ses murs l'exploitation totale des fruits de son territoire. C'est dans la ville d'Auxerre qui résident tous les vignerons qui cultivent au dehors; il n'y a point de maisons repandus dans les campagnes; c'est dans la ville que sont les fumiers et les charrois pour les conduire; c'est dans la ville que se fabriquent et se rebattent les tonneaux, que se façonnent les vins, qu'ils s'y étomment, s'y soutirent s'y remplissent, s'y enmagasinent; en un mot tous les ouvrages, toutes les dépenses, toutes les consommations nécessaires à l'exploitation des vignes, seul bien de la ville d'Auxerre, se font dans la ville, tandis que partout ailleurs elles se font dans les closeries ou autres maisons de culture à la campagne." 1

The prosperity of the town of Auxerre and the surrounding district was completely dependent on its wine trade. Very little wheat was grown locally - it was imported from Avallon and other grain-producing regions of Burgundy, - and there were

few cattle. Manufactures were virtually non-existent, except for small, domestic, weaving concerns which produced a coarse type of cloth for local consumption only. Colbert, whose close ties with the comté of Auxerre lead him to take a keen interest in its affairs, tried in vain to establish textile industries there; the lace-making industry he started in Auxerre to alleviate poverty and unemployment, failed because young girls were unwilling to work in a factory, and the municipal officials refused to enforce the regulations prohibiting lace-making in private homes. And although Auxerre was situated on the Yonne, a navigable river which linked the rich hinterland of Burgundy with Paris, its inhabitants did not engage in commerce, a fact deplored by some commentators. The bulk of Burgundy's exports to the capital consisted of timber and wine; but the merchants of Paris controlled the trade in timber, which was floated down the Yonne from the forests of the Morvan, and the wine from the great vineyards of the Côte d'Or was not transported to

3. The family seat was at Seignelay, a short distance from Auxerre, and his sons Nicolas and André Cobert were in succession bishops of Auxerre.
C. Courtepée et E. Béguillet: Description générale et particulière du duché de Bourgogne, vol. 6, p. 700.
Paris by river, its natural route, because the ferme des aides operated in the comté of Auxerre and would have taxed it. For these reasons, Auxerre, in the eighteenth century, concentrated almost exclusively on viniculture. An analysis of the adult male population of Auxerre, prepared in 1727 by the municipal officials, apparently to guide the provincial administration in its assessment of taxation, reveals that out of 2054 male adults, there were 800 vignerons journaliers, and 163 tonneliers, and many of the 116 merchants listed dealt in wine.

After wine, the most important interests were the law, the Church, and the royal administration. Auxerre had two law courts - a bailliage présidial and a prévôté royale, and a surprisingly large number of lawyers: in 1727 there were sixteen avocats, sixteen procureurs, and ten notaires. This strong legal element was undoubtedly responsible for the bitter political strife which frequently divided Auxerre; the bailliage officials and the lawyers, intelligent but dissatisfied and disputatious men, took the lead in any conflict, and

1. G. Courtepée et E. Béguillet, Description générale et particulière du duché de Bourgogne, vol. 6, p. 702.
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 43 (Pg.97, pc.12).
3. Until 1749 when the prévôté royale was incorporated into the bailliage.
4. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 43 (Pg.97, pc.12).
of course their knowledge of the law often gave them the advantage. Scarcely less influential or contentious than the lawyers, and even more numerous, were the ecclesiastics. Auxerre, like any other cathedral town, swarmed with clergy. Besides the cathedral chapter, which comprised sixty canons, and the collegiate church of Notre Dame, with eighteen canons, there were communities of Benedictines, Premonstratensians, Cistercians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits, who until 1762 staffed the college of Auxerre, Capuchins, Augustinian friars dechaussés, Ursulines, Lazarists, who taught in the seminary, Visitandines, and Soeurs de la Providence, who ran the hôpital général. Dominating all was the bishop of Auxerre, whose powers of appointment and 30,000 l. p.a. revenue made him a person to be reckoned with.

Auxerre was an important administrative centre, with a maréchaussée, a grenier à sel, a maîtrise des eaux et forêts, a recette particulière des états de Bourgogne, two subdélégués, and a local branch of the ferme des aides. Yet, because of its late and incomplete union with the duchy of Burgundy, Auxerre was rather equivocally placed administratively. It was represented in the états de Bourgogne and considered part of

2. C. Courtepée and E. Bégulllet: Description générale et particulière du duché de Bourgogne, vol 6, p.685-695.
3. The bishop appointed for life all canons of the cathedral of St. Etienne, and was patron of forty-three cures in the diocese. P. Ordinni: La survivance des idées gallicanes et jansénistes en Auxerrois de 1760 à nos jours, p.51, 69.
the pays d'états for the purposes of direct taxation, it came under the gouvernement général de Bourgogne and the intendance of Dijon, and its maréchaussée was a subdivision of the prévôté général de Bourgogne; but its juridiction consulaire, its recette du tabac, its grenier à sel, and its maîtrise des eaux et forêts, were all subordinate, not to Dijon, but to Paris. Most important of all, its bailliage présidial came within the jurisdiction of the parlement de Paris. Belonging entirely neither to one administrative hierarchy nor to the other, Auxerre enjoyed, not the best, but the worst of both worlds. For example, it contributed towards the cost of Burgundy's exemption from the ferme des aides, and paid for the aides too.

The town itself was small and compact, but nonetheless impressive, built on a hill with the cathedral of St. Etienne at the top. Ferrand, intendant of Burgundy, found that "l'Air y est pur, et les vues en sont belles, et même agréable," but for Courtépée it had "un air antique et triste, étant presque toute bâtie en bois." Altogether, Auxerre must have been a rather ordinary provincial town.

2. C. Courtépée et E. Béguillet: Description générale et particulière de du duché de Bourgogne, VI, p. 703.
THE ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE DES HABITANTS, THE ASSEMBLÉE DES NOTABLES, AND THE CORPS DE VILLE OF AUXERRE.

The administration of the town was organized through two agencies, the assemblée générale des habitants, and the corps de ville, the former being a quasi-legislative, policy-making body, the latter an executive committee.

The assemblée générale des habitants, owing to the deficiencies of its records, is difficult to describe with precision. Its function was quite straightforward: it expressed local opinion and acted both as a check and as a director of the corps de ville. Colbert had saved it from extinction by making its consent a prerequisite for all important financial transactions undertaken by the corps de ville - raising loans, levying taxation, buying or selling communal property, engaging in litigation, etc. In Auxerre, as in so many other towns, it also elected the corps de ville. The nature of its responsibilities did not require the assemblée générale to meet often - rarely more than two or three times a year.\(^1\) The most baffling aspect of the assemblée générale des habitants is its membership: who had the right to attend was not formally laid down until the end of the eighteenth century.

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1. In Auxerre it met three times in 1778, twice in 1779, four times in 1780, twice in 1781 and 1782, and three times in 1783. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB.
But it is highly probable that this body lived up to its name and actually consisted of all responsible (i.e. tax-paying) male adults. However, the franchise, attendance at the assemblée générale des habitants was usually poor; this was sometimes, however, not merely a manifestation of apathy, but rather of opposition or discontent. For example, meetings held in 1699 and 1705 to discuss how to raise money to pay for compulsory rachats des offices were sabotaged through unanimous absenteeism.

The populace stayed away from the election of 1730, probably because it was aware that the vote taken was a mere formality, the municipal officials having been previously selected by the governor of Burgundy and the maire.

At the end of the century, the assemblée générale des habitants experienced what can only be described as a regeneration. An unambiguous ruling defining its membership was laid down in the arrêt of 12 August 1778: all notables habitants i.e. those who paid 3 l. p.a. or more taille were to attend the assemblée générale in person, the rest of the inhabitants were to be represented by députés, two députés being appointed by each gild. Satisfactory meetings were ensured by empowering

1. This is the firm assumption of Challe in his article Les élections municipales d'Auxerre il y a cent ans. Annuaire de l'Yonne, 1866, p.15.
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 82, (Pq.84, pc.46). See chapter which follows on elections. Other assemblées générales held to elect municipal officials may have been similarly ignored; but the minutes of the meetings are usually silent about the attendance.
the maire to fine absentees 10 l. This incentive was, in fact, unnecessary, for from 1786 to 1789 assemblées générales in Auxerre were lively and popular: they were held more frequently and were well-attended. In May 1786 sixty-one persons were mentioned by name in the procès-verbal as present "et en outre un nombre très considérable de Peuple surtout de vignerons." Exact figures were never given, but for the next three years, between 40 and 100 individuals were listed in the minutes of each assemblée générale, and there were also unspecified numbers of "autres habitants." This revived interest in public affairs must not be interpreted as a harbinger of the Revolution, though perhaps it prepared the Auxerrois for the events of 1789.

Three matters in particular account for the municipal officials' need to consult the assemblée générale more often than heretofore, - the opposition of the clergy and nobility to the increased taille négociale and its consequent replacement by an octroi on salt, the corps de ville's legal proceedings against the Prieur de St. Amatre, who was claiming to levy a tithe on the wine of Auxerre, and the rachat negotiated by the town of aides levied by the royal government within the comte of Auxerre. These were all highly controversial topics, connected with the unpopular and discredited taxation system.

1. This suggests that the system of representation by deputies had been tacitly dropped.
2. See chapter on municipal revenue in Auxerre, below.
of the ancien régime, and therefore aroused strong feelings.

It was impossible for this large, unwieldy body, the assemblée générale des habitants, to do more than register either approval or disapproval of proposals put to it by the corps de ville. Any problem requiring more weighty and informed discussion was usually referred by the assemblée générale to the assemblée des notables. Most French towns seem to have had either an assemblée générale or an assemblée des notables, that is to say, either a popular forum or a representative council, and the tendency was, in the eighteenth century, for the latter to replace the former. Auxerre enjoyed the services of both. Here the assemblée des notables appears to have been a genuinely spontaneous growth, not imposed on the town in a constitution drawn up by the royal government. It was functioning smoothly at the end of the seventeenth century: on 14 December 1698 the assemblée générale handed over to an assemblée des notables for its consideration, the demand of the venal town clerk for the payment of his wages,¹ on 14 February 1700 a similarly complicated request, from the farmer of the octroi on wine, was referred to the notables.²

Identifying the notables is almost as elusive as

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 38, (Pg. 79, pc. 14).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 38, (Pg. 79, pc. 17).
defining the membership of the assemblée générale. There is, however, one small but helpful clue: a letter on this subject from St. Florentin, secrétaire d'État de la Maison du roi, dated 10 April 1759. He was writing to the municipal officials about an assemblée des notables held on 17 March, to discuss how the don gratuit demanded by the king should be paid. The corps de ville had invited to the meeting, among others, MM. Riché and Bussière, avocats, and MM. Imbert and Blonde, marchands; instead the corps des avocats sent MM. Buisson and Camelin, and the communauté des marchands, M. Lallemente, and both associations protested that it was altogether wrong for the corps de ville to stipulate whom it wished to be nominated as deputies. St. Florentin agreed:

"J'ai reçu, Messieurs, la Lettre et le Proces-verbal que vous m'avez adressés concernant L'Assemblée que vous aviez convoquée pour délibérer sur les moyens qu'il convient de prendre afin de subvenir au payement du don gratuit que doit payer la ville d'Auxerre. La difficulté que le Corps des Avocats et celui des marchand ont élevée au sujet de la formation de cette assemblée n'est pas sans fondement. Toutes les fois qu'il ne sera question de votre part que d'appeler quelques notables habitants pour conferer avec eux sur des affaires de la

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 10, (Pq. 240, po. 6).
ville et vous mettre en état de proposer les partis les plus convenables dans l'assemblée où il faudra en délibérer; vous devez sans doute choisir librement ceux des habitants dans le zèle et lumières desquels vous avez le plus de confiance. Mais l'orsqu'il s'agit de tenir l'Assemblée même où la Deliberation doit être prise au nom de la Communauté, il est du droit naturel qu'elle soit représentée par des Députés de son choix, et que les Corps nomment eux mêmes les personnes qui doivent y assister de leur part. L'Edit qui a établi le Don gratuit vous a fait en particulier connoître que ce n'est ni à vous seuls ni à quelques particuliers de votre choix à délibérer sur la manière d'acquitter cette imposition, puisqu'il porte qu'il en sera délibéré par les maire et Echevins et anciens habitants.\(^1\)

It would appear from this that there were, at least in the eyes of the secrétaire d'état, two types of assemblée des notables: an informal advisory committee consulted by the corps de ville when it required independent opinion, whose members had no official standing, but were merely private individuals in whose judgment the municipal officials had confidence; and a representative council comprising deputies

1. Arch. D'Auxerre, BB 80, (Pq.82, pc.10).
nominated by the corps et communautés, whose decisions, its seems from the last part of St. Florentin's letter, were as valid as those of the assemblée générale des habitants. Thus the formation of municipal policy was a much more subtle and delicately negotiated matter than at first appears. Whatever its composition, meetings of the assemblée des notables (except during the 1765-1771 period, when this name was applied to quite a different body) were obviously infrequent and irregular: the views of the notables were sought only when some momentous and involved question had to be settled. Moreover the convocation of the assemblée générale des habitants and the notables depended on the will of the corps de ville, which was the real power in the town.

The corps de ville consisted of a maire, a gouverneur du fait commun, four échevins, a procureur syndic, a receveur des deniers communs, and a secrétaire. In theory, according to Auxerre's constitution, it was supposed to meet twice a week, in fact it was rarely necessary for the municipal officials to get together so frequently. They met whenever the management of the town's business required: rarely fewer than ten times, or as many as thirty-five times a year, depending on circumstances. There was no quorum regulation - the resolution of three officials was as valid as that of a dozen - but usually seven or more members of the corps de ville attended
its sessions. The only official whose presence was indispensable was the *procureur syndic*.

Auxerre was not one of those towns run on a "division of labour" system, each municipal official being specially responsible for certain branches of its administration; on the contrary, the *corps de ville* acted collectively, and all its members were answerable for the totality of the town's affairs. But inevitably, as on any committee, some members had much more influence than others, and it was they who determined the *corps de ville*’s policy. Such were the *maire* and the *procureur syndic*, whose prolonged tenure of office gave them the tremendous advantage of experience over their ever-changing colleagues. Naturally there were from time to time, complaints about their ascendancy. In March 1763 the *subdélégué*, Pontagny, wrote to the *intendant*:

"Je crois Monseigneur devoir vous informer d'un mauvais usage qui s'est introduit dans les deliberations des affaires de la ville qui concernent les dépenses un peu considérables, telles que reparations ordinaires ou extraordinaires de pavé, adjudications pour ouvrage, promenades etc. Le corps de ville a Auxerre est composé du maire, de 4 échevins, d'un gouverneur du fait commun, de 4 assesseurs et d'un procureur du roi syndic, ce qui

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1. Except, obviously, specialists such as the *secrétaire* and *receveur*. 
fait au total onze officiers; il n'y a cependant que
le maire et le procureur du roy qui decedent pour
l'ordinaire les objets de dépenses énoncés cydessus,
les autres officiers municipaux n'en ont connaissance
que lorsqu'il s'agit de signer les mandements; ....
les echevins se plaignent aussi de ce que la taxations
du prix du pain qui forme un objet important pour le
public n'est arrêtée que par le maire et le procureur
du roy seuls, sans que les membres du bureau soient
consultés."

He wrote again, in the same vein, in November 1787:
"tous ces torts (i.e. maladministration and unauthorized
expenditure) ne sont pas ceux de tous les officiers du
bureau en general; plusieurs d'entre eux qui s'aperoivent
ne qu'on/les écoute pas, s'abstiennent d'y paraître, et ce
n'en est pas mieux, parce que l'on profite de leur absence
pour tout décider arbitrairement; ce n'est pas non plus le
fait seul de maire, quoiqu'on lui reproche avec fondement
de se croire absolue, independant, et décoré d'une place
infiniment superieure..... mais comme il est peu instruit
et faute, il se laisse gouverner par le premier Echevin
actuel qui est tranchant et presomptueux quoique d'ailleur
il ait du merite."^2

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
The mai re's position was, of course, practically hereditary, and the Baudessons thus accumulated unrivalled experience of municipal affairs. The office of procureur syndic, although venal during the first half of the eighteenth century, and so more correctly termed procureur du roi, was not handed down from father to son. This remarkable phenomenon makes one wonder whether, in view of the importance of this post, the corps de ville had some influence in determining who should hold it. The arrangement whereby the municipal officials "appointed" the venal secrétaire-greffier suggests that such a situation was by no means impossible. There is one other, admittedly slender, clue, which might indicate that even though the post of procureur du roi was technically venal, this none-the-less did not prevent the corps de ville from nominating that official: in 1709 Toussaint Robinet de Pontagny bought the offices of procureur du roi, substitut, and procureur du roi de police, not from their previous holder, Etienne Liger, as one would expect, but from the mai re, Jean Baudesson. Is it too much to assume from this that the mai re, either acting on his own initiative, or on instructions from the corps de ville, had

1. See following chapter on municipal elections in Auxerre.
2. Only on two occasions was this post treated as though it was a private family possession: in 1706 Etienne Liger transferred the post of substitut to his son (Liger had until then held both posts of procureur du roi and substitut), and in 1747 Toussaint Robinet de Pontagny resigned in favour of his nephew, Toussaint-Jean Martineau de Mormont.
4. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 48, (Pg. 74, po. 6).
acquired the offices in question from Liger, in order to determine whom his successor should be? Certainly the transfer of these offices in 1747 to Pontagny's nephew must have been subject to the corps de ville's sanction, since the town had acquired a major share in them eight years earlier by paying Pontagny 6,150 l.\footnote{Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 47, (Pg.73, pc. 12).} Whatever the system of nomination, it was accepted in the eighteenth century that the procureur du roi should be a semi-permanent appointment; the practice of renewing this official every two years, as was customary in Auxerre in the seventeenth century, ceased, even when the post was elective. Toussaint Robinet de Pontagny was procureur du roi from 1709-1747, Toussaint-Jean Martineau de Mormont from 1747-1765. Delaverdy's reform edict combined this office with that of receveur: it was held in Auxerre by Charles Bezanger from 1765 to 1772. The former post of procureur syndic was revived in that year, and awarded to Leblanc, who exercised it until the Revolution. Such lengthy tenures were not merely condoned by the government, but positively enjoined, in a letter from St. Florentin, dated 25 April 1741:

"L'intention de Sa Majesté cependant est que le Procureur Syndic, le secrétaire et le receveur de l'hôtel de ville ne soient point changes et qu'ils soient conserves dans ces places jusqu'à nouvel ordre de sa part, si cependant
quelqu'un d'eux venait à décéder, se demettre ou
prévariquer, dans les deux premiers cas la communauté
s'assemblera et proposera trois sujets afin que Sa
Majesté puisse faire choix de celui qu'elle estimera le
plus propre de remplir la place qui sera vacante et dans
le troisième cas qui est celui de prévarication la
Communauté m'en portera ses plaintes afin que si elles
se trouvent fondées j'en puisse rendre compte à Sa
Majesté et recevoir ses ordres sur sa situation.\textsuperscript{1}

Though no reason was ever explicitly given for the government's
attitude, it was almost certainly motivated by the belief that
in such a complicated and responsible job, the need of
experience outweighed the dangers of perpetuity.

The duties of the procureur du roi of Auxerre were
those normally performed by this official in any French town.
But in addition he acted as ministère public in the police
jurisdiction, which in all the towns of Burgundy belonged to
the municipality. This in itself was an exacting responsibility.
When town administration was reorganized in 1765, the procureur
du roi au bailliage was required to perform the police functions
previously discharged by the procureur du roi à l'hôtel de
ville. In Auxerre the bailliage official concerned refused to
assume this charge until instructed by his superior, the

\textsuperscript{1} Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 80, (Pg.82, pc.2).
procureur général du parlement de Paris. The corps de ville's letter to the procureur général begging him to take action as quickly as possible, reveals just how important were the police duties of the procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville:

"Tout est pressant à cet Égard pour le maintien du Bon ordre dans cette ville, a chaque instant le Ministere public est nécessaire pour empescher le libertinage et les Exces soit pour arreter les abus qui se font journellement au mepris des ordonnances, soit enfin pour faire les visites nécessaires dans les foires, dans les Marchez, et dans les Boutiques pour empecher que le public ne soit trompé par des ventes à faux poids et a fausses mesures, Nous recevons tous les jours des plaintes sur lesquelles nous ne pouvons faire droit sans le secours du ministere public."¹.

The first holder of the venal office of procureur du roi was not well received in Auxerre: almost immediately he became embroiled in a dispute with the maire over their respective attributions. The quarrel was referred to the Prince de Condé for arbitration.². The town resented losing the right to elect its procureur du fait commun³ and so by way of compensation, a new post was created, procureur de la ville ad lites. This official, who was elected every two years, played no part in the town's administration, he was merely retained, so to speak, to act on

2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 47, (Pg. 73, pc. 5).
3. This was the title of the procureur syndic in Auxerre in the seventeenth century and earlier.
behalf of Auxerre, should it become involved in any litigation during his term of office.\textsuperscript{1} The eighteenth century tendency towards permanency infected this post too. The subdélégué Pontagny wrote to the intendant on 6 March 1763:

"une observation au sujet du Procureur ad lites, depuis un temps considérable le Sr. Merat en exerce les fonctions. Bien des personnes pensent qu'il serait a propos que le procureur ad lites fut electif tous les trois ans comme les échevins, parce qu'il est a craindre qu'un procureur qui se regarde comme perpetual n'engageat par ses conseils la ville a entrer trop légèrement dans des procs pour se procurer des emolumens. Il serait bon monseigneur que vous demandaries aux maire et échevins le titre de L'establissement de ce procureur ad lites."\textsuperscript{2}

It took the rational intelligence of the intendant Feydeau to go a stage further and point out that this office was altogether superfluous. He abolished it in his economy campaign in 1780, because not only was the procureur ad lites paid a salary of 30 l p.a., but also fees for any legal work done on the town's behalf.

Though in fact the procureur du roi was, after the maire, the most powerful member of the corps de ville, it was in theory the gouverneur du fait commun up to 1748, and the

\textsuperscript{1} Arch. d' Auxerre, BB 47, (Pq. 73, pc. 5).
\textsuperscript{2} Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
premier échevin after that date, who ranked next to the maire in importance. Neither the premier échevin, nor the gouverneur du fait commun — the title was a medieval survival and disappeared in 1765 — performed any functions in municipal administration distinct from those of the other échevins. The premier échevin's one special privilege was to accompany the maire to the états of the province. This privilege was merely based on custom up to 1745, but in that year St. Florentin stipulated that the second deputy to the provincial assembly had to be the premier échevin. Any eminence attached to these two posts — gouverneur du fait commun and premier échevin — was brought to them by the holders. A succession of highly respected merchants added lustre to the office of gouverneur du fait commun during the first half of the eighteenth century, while in 1786, the remarkable abilities of Villetard in negotiating the rachat des aides du comté d'Auxerre in Paris, similarly enhanced the office of premier échevin.

Of more permanent importance was the secrétaire, who in Auxerre also acted as concierge à l'hôtel de ville. His multifarious duties were detailed in 1772 by Faultier de Brinville. He had to take down the minutes of the meetings

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, AA 18, BB 80, (Pq. 82, pc. 6).
of the corps de ville, which, he claimed, were normally held every Sunday and Wednesday, and lasted from two o'clock in the afternoon until seven or eight at night. He had to record the lengthy discussions of the assemblée générale and the assemblée des notables. He said that he kept a copy of every letter received and dispatched, of every petition and memoir composed by the corps de ville, of every ordonnance issued by the intendant and every law published by the royal council pertaining to municipal administration. It was he who wrote the billets de logements for soldiers billeted on the town, and the instructions for carters pressed into transporting baggage for the army, or beggars or galley-slaves; it was he who looked after the municipal archives, and deputized for the greffier de police when he was indisposed. He declared that he was even required to supervise the labourers employed to mend the roads, repair the water-supply, walls and ramparts. This is a fair account of the wide range of activities undertaken by the secrétaire, but Faultrier de Brinville exaggerates his assiduity: he was trying to persuade the intendant that he deserved a rise in salary.

Obviously it was desirable for such an official, so intimately concerned with the executive details of municipal administration, not to be venal and beyond the corps de ville's
control. It was one of the many offices which the royal government, failing to sell to private individuals, obliged the towns to buy. But balancing Auxerre's budget was always rather tricky, and in 1694 the town just could not raise 6,000 l. with which to acquire outright the office of secrétaire-greffier. Therefore the municipal officials rather cleverly auctioned it in May 1694 for 5,010 l to Pierre Creté, bourgeois, on the following conditions: he undertook to sell the office back to the town whenever required by the corps de ville, to which it still belonged technically; he was to perform all the functions discharged by the previous secrétaires; he was to renounce all claim to the usual wages paid to the secrétaire, since 375 l. p.a., due from the deniers patron-iaux, were attached to the venal office. This arrangement, which cost the town only 990 l. - the difference between the cost of the office and Creté's contribution, - worked very well. When Pierre Creté died in 1722, the corps de ville arranged for the office of secrétaire to be sold by his heirs to Germain Boucher, who was to succeed him; again the corps de ville stipulated that it should enjoy the right to buy out Boucher whenever it thought fit. Boucher, however, must have proved satisfactory as secrétaire for he too remained in office.

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 53 (Pq. 77, pc. 2,3,4,7).
2. His father was gouverneur du fait commun, and paid for the post on his son's behalf. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 53, (Pq. 77, pc. 8,9,11).
until his death in 1739. Then the town's finances were presumably in a more healthy state, for Boucher's widow sold her late husband's post, not to his successor, but to the corps de ville.\(^1\) This transaction did afford the town a much more immediate control over the secrétair: previously only fairly wealthy men willing to buy the office could be appointed, now there were no such limitations on the corps de ville's choice. The next secrétair, Claude Duru, was nominated by the governor of Burgundy, on the advice of the maire.\(^2\) Whether at his own request, or because of some shortcoming, Duru's tenure of office was terminated in 1758. Following the procedure laid down by St. Florentin in his letter of 25 April 1741,\(^3\) three candidates for the post were elected by the assemblée générale des habitants on 10 December 1758; of these St. Florentin chose Jacques-Étienne Faultrier de Brinville to be secrétair.\(^4\)

Faultrier de Brinville enjoyed and deserved the reputation of being Auxerre's most distinguished secrétair-greffier. He was the only member of the old municipal oligarchy to retain his post on the corps de ville after the 1765-6 elections, perhaps because he had established himself as an indispensable, professional civil servant, perhaps because he

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1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 53 (Pq. 77, pc. 12 & 14).
3. See above, p. 196-197.
genuinely supported the Grec party. His association with the 1765-1772 municipal administration certainly won him the reputation, justified or not, of being an adherent of bishop de Cicé. Consequently his position was placed in jeopardy when the political tide turned in Auxerre, and the Grecs were displaced. That he was continued in office in 1772 when the rest of his colleagues were removed, was a tribute to his abilities, but did not assure him security of tenure. The états de Bourgogne's purchase of venal municipal offices created in 1771 apparently caused Faultrier de Brinville to fear that he would be dismissed by the élus généraux. His friends persuaded Mesnard de Cornichard to write on Faultrier's behalf to Rousselot, secrétaire en chef des états de Bourgogne. Rousselot in reply averred that he could do nothing: the post of secrétaire-greffier was decidedly not at the disposal of the élus généraux despite the recent rachat; it depended more on the recommendation of the maire. Baudesson, who was unlikely to favour Faultrier if the latter persisted in his attachment to bishop de Cicé. For the same reason it was doubtful whether the intendant would use his good offices with the secrétaire d'état de la Maison du roi on behalf of Faultrier, since the bishop's party had been responsible for the recent disturbances of the public peace in Auxerre. Accordingly, Mesnard de

1. Mesnard de Cornichard was chef de bureau in the contrôle général, and specially responsible for the financial administration of towns in the pays d'états.
Cornichard had the following memorandum drawn up for the benefit of Faultrier de Brinville's patron: this document is worth quoting in full for the light it throws on place-hunting and the use of influence at this time.

"Les places des secretaires greffiers des hotels de villes en Bourgogne ne dependent point sur M. les Elus generaux. Ce sont les officiers municipaux qui choisissent les sujets et les proposent au secretaire d'etat qui consulte l'intendant, Comme les Maires influent beaucoup dans les Elections il a été ecrit a M. Baudesson Maire d'Auxerre, en faveur de M. Faultrier de Brinville auquel M. Barbey s'interesse. Mais cette demarche pourroit devenir infructueuse par le fait de M. Faultrier qu'on dit etre du parti oppose a M. Baudesson et attache a celui de l'Eveque d'Auxerre; s'il persisted dans ces dispositions le bien de la paix demanderait qu'il fut change. C'est a M. Barbey a fait usage s'il la juge apropos de cet eclaircissement que M. Mesnard croit devoir lui donner pour le bien de son protege; au surplus c'est le secretaire d'Etat qui nomme sur la presentation des officiers municipaux cette circonstance demanderoit quelques demarches auprès de M. Nogaret 1. qui M. Barbey

1. Nogaret was a chief du bureau in the Maison du roi department, and in charge of elections in towns attached to that ministry.
Whether Faultrier de Brinvillle's advocate and intermediary, Barbey, won over Nogaret, or whether the secrétaire, putting place before principle, transferred his allegiance from de Cicé to Baudesson, one does not know; but he certainly remained at his post until 1786 when his son Pierre-Augustin Faultrier de Brinvillle replaced him. He too, like his father, was either an irreplaceable professional official, or a consummate opportunist, for he continued as secrétaire-greffier until 1804.

The receveur des deniers communs was, like the secrétaire, an important if rather subordinate member of the corps de ville. Because the receveur was responsible for disbursing municipal revenue, the town never allowed the office to be venal: it was vital for its holder to be of trustworthy character and removable by the corps de ville if he proved to be inadequate. The receveur's duties were relatively simple: he paid out such sums as were authorised by the maire and échevins, checking that the payments they ordered were either confirmed in the municipal budget or specially sanctioned by the intendant. The only drawback to the post was that very often expenditure had to be met months or even years before

1. Arch. nat., II, 144, 17, 18, 19.
municipal revenue was paid into the receveur's treasury. The collection of the taille négociée was as difficult and tardy a procedure as levying royal taille: always there were poverty-stricken households years behind in their payments. The other source of revenue, the octrois, did not fall due until the December of each year, and even then it was not unusual for the farmers of octrois to beg for a respite. So unless there was a residue from the previous year in the treasury, which was rare, the receveur was tacitly expected to provide out of his own pocket money for the settlement of those debts which the municipal officials could not persuade their creditors to defer until the year's end. This state of affairs explains why the receveurs were without exception, rich merchants, and why their accounts took so long to draw up. Until the second half of the eighteenth century, when the intendants of Dijon were more strict in enforcing government regulations relating to municipal accounting, Auxerre's receveurs often seem to have budgeted over a period of years, instead of annually. Cristofle Collinet accounted for the financial administration of the years 1698-1702 inclusive altogether in 1710; Étienne Dubiez similarly gave only one account for the five years he was receveur, 1703-1707, also in 1710; François Millot accounted for his management of municipal revenue, 1707-1711, in 1717; Édme Parent likewise lumped together the accounts for 1744-1750 and presented
them for verification in 1752. In view of the incessant delays and the irregular payment of revenue, this long-term budgeting was certainly very sensible, although it did make it more difficult for the intendant to detect unauthorised expenditure. From 1751 the receveur was required to submit annual accounts, though these were often a number of years overdue when forwarded to the subdélégué and the intendant for ratification. The receveurs of Auxerre remain shadowy figures in the background of the municipal administration, doing their job as well as they could in the existing circumstances. None of them was involved in any financial scandal in the eighteenth century, which says much for their integrity, and for the tutelle of municipal accounts. These were first examined by eight auditeurs nominated by the assemblée générale des habitants -- two conseillers au bailliage, two avocats, two notaires, two procureurs, and two marchands, — then by the subdélégué, who forwarded the accounts, together with his comments on them, to the intendant for final verification. The prospect of running this gauntlet must have strengthened the receveurs' honesty.

During Louis XIV's reign, Auxerre had a few venal

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 63-73.
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 40, (Pg. 81, pc. 1,2,3,5).
3. It was also usual to demand of the receveur two sureties against his good behaviour; this was not done in Auxerre until 1788. The intendant noticed this negligence the previous year, remarking with astonishment: "Votre ville est sans doute la seule de ma Généralité qui ait été jusqu'à présent dans l'usage de ne point exiger de cautionnement du Receveur." Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
officials inflicted on it: they made no practical contribution to the town's administration, but were merely an expensive nuisance. The highest-ranking of these was the lieutenant de maire, an office acquired at a cost of 7,500 l. by a local avocat Jean Robinet. He thereby gained entry to the corps de ville and a salary of 360 l. p.a. payable from the municipal revenue. His installation is worth describing as a model of the procedure to which venal officials were subjected. On 26 December 1702 Jean Robinet presented his letters of provision to the maire together with a formal request to be received into the office of lieutenant de maire. The procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville was notified of this petition, and ordered an investigation into Robinet's life and habits. Two days later, the priest of his local parish church, and two fellow avocats testified before the maire that Robinet was a man of good life and habits, of catholic apostolic religion, and that he frequented his parish church. On receiving this statement, the procureur du roi announced that Robinet could be installed after he had taken the oath of office before the maire. Baudesson administered the oath to him the following day, and on the 31 December 1702 the lieutenant de maire's installation was held. Whether all this was anything but a hollow formality, whether any venal

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 46, (Pq. 72, pc. 3 & 7).
official was ever refused installation because no one would swear to his good character, is very doubtful.

Almost immediately after Robinet took his place on the corps de ville, a dispute sprang up between him and the gouverneur du fait commun, as to which of the two should follow after the maire in procession and deputize for him. No sooner was this settled than Robinet quarrelled with the maire himself: Baudesson objected when at the Te Deum to celebrate the taking of Fort Kell, on 10 April 1703, the lieutenant de maire appeared in a robe of violet satin identical to that worn by the maire, thus symbolically claiming equality. Among the succeeding protests and counter-protests, claims and counter-claims, is the following memoir of Robinet, which indicates the strength of the hostility towards this venal official:

"M. le Maire ne lui devait pas disputer comme il faisoit d'avoir seance apres lui à la Police reunie au Corps de ville, ny empecher qu'il ne signat conjointement avec lui les logements des gens de guerre, n'y pretendre qu'il ne peut pas le representer en son absence à la Police, ny l'empêcher de porter un robe semblable à la Sienne."¹

This kind of grievance was typical. Baudesson himself had earlier, when venal maire, encountered similar opposition from the elected and therefore more respectable municipal officials:

¹ Arch. d'Auxerre, BB.46, (Pg. 72, pc. 8,9,10).
the échevins had tried to prevent him from administering alone, without their participation, the oath of office to municipal officials. They had also attempted to exclude the assesseurs from meetings of the corps de ville and assemblées générales. The post of assesseur, which was a venal one created by the royal government in 1692, merely gave its holder priority in elections to the échevinage: half the échevins were to be chosen from among the assesseurs, until each of the latter had held office once, and once only. Their only other advantage, apart from marching behind the échevins in public processions, was that the senior assesseur could claim to replace the procureur du roi if ever he was ill or otherwise prevented from discharging his duties. The four posts of assesseurs in Auxerre continued to be bought and sold or handed down from father to son until abolished by the 1765 reform edict, but those who held them played a very insignificant role in municipal administration. As late as 1733 the assesseurs were still protesting in vain against their exclusion from office. Their only consolation was the salary of 80 l. p.a. which they drew.

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB.49, (Pg. 75, pc.2).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB.49, (Pg. 75, pc.5).
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 49, (Pg. 75, pc. 10, 11, 12).
4. This not to be despised sum probably explains why the assesseurs did not disappear, why there was always a market for their offices.
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN AUXERRE.

Any study of municipal elections in Auxerre in the eighteenth century falls naturally into two distinct parts, the dividing date being 1765. Up to this time political life was stagnant in Auxerre, because although elections were held annually, there was no genuine competition for municipal offices, which were the monopoly of a small, powerful, well-to-do clique. In such a situation, two things call for examination: the strength and size of the oligarchy, and the source of its power. For convenience, the second problem will be dealt with first.

Whenever municipal offices were declared venal and put up for sale by the royal government, the états of Burgundy, ostensibly in order to preserve the independence and local traditions of the province, bought them up wholesale. This policy was initiated in the 1694 session of the états, when it was decided that all offices of maire, which had been made venal two years earlier, should be acquired by the province. The royal government agreed to this and also to a special and very important condition attached to the purchase. This was the stipulation that the offices of maire in Burgundy should become an adjunct of the états. In consequence the towns lost the right to elect their maires as surely as if these offices had been venal, for the élus généraux, on behalf of the états
of Burgundy, thereafter appointed and dismissed as they pleased all maires in Burgundy. Although the élus généraux of the ecclesiastical order and the nobility were associated in the nomination of maires, it seems reasonable to suppose that in such a matter, the tiers état, whose particular province was municipal administration, would have the stronger influence. Now in the états of Burgundy, the tiers état was composed exclusively of maires, which meant that in Burgundy, new maires were chosen by the existing maires. This explains why in Auxerre the mayoralty was the exclusive preserve of the Baudesson family, handed down from father to son. On 26 April 1693 Jean Baudesson, avocat, was installed as venal maire of Auxerre, having paid 20,000 l. for the office. He continued at his post after the états had acquired the offices of maire.

1. Arch. nat., H l. 144, l. The maire of Dijon was the only exception; the town itself purchased the office immediately it was declared venal and so preserved the right to elect its maire.

2. It was the venal maires themselves who suggested that they should sell their offices to the états. Their motive, revealed in a decree of the états of 1694 was pecuniary: "Les gages des maires perpétuels et hereditaires des villes étant esté assignés sur les revenus patrimoniaux des dites villes par préférence à toutes autres dettes et charges, veu que cette préférence ameneroit des procès continuels, et esloignerot des maires les esprits de plusieurs habitants qui sont assignés sur les dicts deniers patrimoniaux, les maires offrent d'eux-mêmes à estre payés par les etats, et consentent, pour estre ainsi payés, que leurs charges demeurent dès à présent incorporées aux dicts états pour ne faire qu'un mesme corps." Cited by A. Thomas, in Une province sous Louis XIV, p. 305.

Not one of the maires lost his post as a result of this transaction: all continued in office under commission from the états.
and was replaced on his resignation in 1729 by his son Édouard-Jean Baudesson, avocat. He in his turn resigned in 1756 in favour of his son, Jean-Claude Baudesson, avocat, who held the office until 1781, when he was likewise succeeded by his son, Pierre-Henri Baudesson de Poinchy. The primacy of the Baudessons was never seriously challenged, and thus the highest post in the municipal administration of Auxerre was beyond the reach of ambition.

But there were other posts on the corps de ville: what of the échevins? These offices too were bought up by the états whenever the royal government made them venal, and theoretically the right of appointing échevins also belonged to the élus généraux. However, this right was generously waived, and the selection of échevins and lesser municipal officials was left to the inhabitants of the towns. Thus apparently municipal elections survived; certainly in Auxerre an assemblée générale des habitants was summoned every 24 June, the traditional date, to elect the gouverneur du fait commun and the échevins. But appearances are sometimes deceptive, and in fact the choice of the people of Auxerre, as indeed of every other town in Burgundy, was dictated to them by the governor of the province. At the assemblée générale des habitants held to elect municipal officials, a letter of recommendation from the governor was read, and whosoever he nominated was voted for. Cf. the Champion family which monopolized the mayoralty in Avallon.
The right of appointing municipal officials was not a special privilege attributed to the governorship of Burgundy, but a traditional prerogative enjoyed by the princes de Condé, and tacitly allowed by the royal government. The Condés, who regarded the governorship of Burgundy almost as a private possession, commanded great respect and loyalty in the province, and that they should dispose of municipal offices was accepted by the inhabitants unquestioningly.

Obviously the princes de Condé were not personally acquainted with even the leading inhabitants of every town in Burgundy, nor able to select suitable municipal officials from them on their own initiative. It appears that in the eighteenth century they were usually briefed in these matters by the maires, who recommended to the governor candidates fit for office. Their choice was not arbitrary, they had to abide by the rules laid down in the town's constitution.

Baudesson, maire of Auxerre, for example, when drawing up his list of recommendations, had to bear in mind that the gouverneur du fait commun had always to be a merchant, and that

1. Earlier there was no stereotyped system of recommendation. On at least one occasion, in 1672, the duc de Bourbon asked Colbert if there was anyone whom he would like to have promoted to the corps de ville of Auxerre; the minister referred the matter to his son, the bishop of Auxerre, who needed JUST SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE that he had support on the corps de ville for his scheme to establish an hôpital général in Auxerre. G.B. Depping: Correspondance administrative sous le règne de Louis XIV, vol.1, p.851-855.
his term of office was initially a year, though two successive re-elections, making altogether three years in office, were permitted. As to the échevins, one had to be a conseiller au bailliage, the second an avocat, the third a procureur and the fourth a merchant; they each held office for two years—occasionally an exceptional man was continued a year longer—and their elections were staggered: two of the four échevins were renewed annually. In addition there seems to have been a tacit understanding in Auxerre that an échevin should also undertake, whether before or after his period on the corps de ville, the less agreeable duties of asséreur, or administrateur de l’hôtel-dieu, or both.

The following letter of 5 January 1736 from Chartraise de Montigny, receveur des états de Bougogne, to Champion, maire of Avallon, throws some light on the working of the system of appointment:

"Les plaintes que S.A.S. Monseigneur le Duc a recu en temps différents des magistratures de Son Gouvernement, l'ont mis en garde contre les Etats que vous m'envoyez tous les ans, ou vous ne proposez que tres peu de sujets, en sorte qu'il ne peut point se determiner sur d'autres que sur ceux que vous proposez.

Pour prevenir cet inconvenient, il m'a chargé descrire a tous les maires des villes de son gouvernement,

1. Henri de Bourbon, prince de Condé, 1692-1740, was always known as "duc de Bourbon," or popularly "Monsieur le Duc." Usually the title "duc de Bourbon" was borne by the prince de Condé's eldest son.
pour avoir un État exact et fidel de tous les habitans de leur ville capables d'occuper les places d'Echevins, sindics et secretaires afin de luy en rendre compte.

Vous aurez donc attention Monsieur, de faire cet état le plus tot et le plus detaille que vous pouviez et de me l'envoyer: il faut qu'il soit par colonne, ou vous metrez les noms de chaque particulier, leurs qualités et professions, vous metrez en marge leurs nottes, c'est à dire vous marquerez si c'est un honnest homme, s'il a du bien, s'il a de l'esprit, vous y depeindrez son caracter, ses moeurs et sa conduite, et vous m'instruirez si c'est un estranger ou non, et s'il a deja rempli quelques fonctions dans la Magistrature, et s'il est capable d'y rentrer....... 

Vous aurez surtout attention particulier d'en proposer plusieurs (sujets pour la magistrature) afin que Monseigneur le Duc puisse se determiner, et pour eviter les erreurs vous aurez soin tous les ans en m'envoyant votre Etat, de me marquer les noms de ceux qui seront morts ou retirés, ou par leurs conduites se seront rendus indignes de remplir les fonctions de magistrats.

Vous voyez donc Monsieur de quel importance il est que votre Etat soit fidel et exact, afin que S.A.S. Monseigneur le Duc soit contente et qu'elle soit persuadée
que Messieurs les maires ne proposent que de Bons sujets pour entrer dans les magistratures.... Elle veut protéger les Maires, mais auparavant savoir si leur conduite est bonne....

Voici les Intentions de S.A.S. Monseigneur le Duc telles que je les ay recu: S.A.S. ne decidera rien pour l'avenir sur les Etats des magistratures qu'ils ne soient dans le regle qu'elle desire.

1. La demande des Maires ne suffit pas pour la determiner a conserver un Echevin, procureur syndic, et secrétaire, et la satisfaction que les magistrats disent avoir en luy, est un louage d'autant plus suspect a S.A.S. qu'elle pense que les Maires ou les Echevins peuvent avoir des raisons particuliers pour vouloir conserver le meme procureur syndic et le meme secretaire qui souvent leurs sont devoues et se pretent a tout ce qu'ils desirent; ainsy quand un procureur syndic, ou un secretaire, dans quelque ville que ce soit, aura fait son temps, et qu'il sera convenable de le continuer, Monseigneur le Duc entend, qu'on explique precisement les raisons pour lesquelles il est necessaire de le conserver plutot que d'en nommer un autre, et veut qu'on propose en meme temps des sujets propres a le remplacer, afin que S.A.S. en choississe un, en cas qu'elle ne veuille pas continuer l'ancien, et a
déclare qu'elle n'accordera plus de continuation d'un magistrat, lorsqu'on ne proposera point en même temps des sujets pour le remplacer.

2. S.A.S. desire qu'il reste en place chaque année dans toutes les villes d'anciens Echevins qui puissent instruire les nouveaux, c'est pourquoi dans les villes où il y a quatre echevins, elle veut qu'il en sorte deux chaque année, et qu'il en soit nommé deux nouveaux à la place.

3. L'intention de S.A.S. est que les Etats pour le renouvellement des magistratures luy soient presentez un temps considerable avant l'election, pour avoir celuy de se determiner afin que ses ordres arrivent dans le temps marquée...

One deduces from this letter that, far from merely advising the governor and suggesting worthy candidates for municipal office, the maires of some towns had been obliging him to nominate exactly whom they wished, by submitting the narrowest possible list of suitable persons. The other grievance against the maires was that they were maintaining officials in their posts for too many years, and occasionally not from the best motives. All this smacks of oligarchy.

There is, however, no evidence that the Baudessons

misused their powers. Admittedly municipal officials were chosen from a small inter-related group, and it was not at all unusual for one man to be appointed and re-appointed to a succession of municipal offices. But the restoration of elections after Monsieur le Duc's death in 1740 did not result in the overthrow of the ruling clique, which continued as before. To understand this phenomenon one has to examine Auxerre's constitution, which itself was conducive to oligarchy. First, municipal officials had to be chosen, as in so many other towns, from four professional groups: conseillers au bailliage, avocats, procureurs, and marchands. Even if the choice had been unrestricted, it is doubtful whether persons of lower social status would have been elected to the corps de ville, since the demands made upon a municipal official in the eighteenth century excluded from office all but those who had sufficient education and leisure to undertake the necessary duties. The supply of suitable candidates in a population of about 2,000 adults was understandably small. Secondly, municipal officials were elected by the assemblée générale des

1. The king refused to renew for his successor all the privileges which he had enjoyed; this was perhaps Fleury taking revenge on the dead man. But although elections were restored, they had to be held under the fairly strict supervision of the secrétaire d'État du Maison du roi. His formal permission was necessary before an election could be held, and no municipal official could be installed until he had approved their nomination.

habitants, which any male adult who paid taille had the right to attend. The great majority of the voters were day-labourers in the vineyards of Auxerre, owned by the same fairly wealthy group which monopolized the town's administration. Naturally there was no likelihood of the municipal officials being ousted while their employees were the voters, and there was no secret ballot.

In order to convey how narrow and exclusive was the circle from which the municipal officials were chosen, it will be necessary to examine in some detail the careers and connections of members of the corps de ville. There always were, of course, talented individuals, who owed their position to merit, and whose administrative ability caused them to be recalled to office again and again. Such a one was Pierre Durand, marchand, who was échevin from 1711-1714, gouverneur du fait commun from 1717-1720, and administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1720-1724. There was Roch Liger lejeune, also marchand: he began as receveur des deniers communs from 1719-1722, he was échevin from 1727-1730, administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1730-1733 and finally gouverneur du fait commun for just one year before his death in 1738. Francois Grasset, avocat, had an exceptionally long career in municipal administration, extending from 1683-1722: his first office was that of procureur syndic from 1683-1685, he had two years as échevin
from 1688-1690, then returned to be procureur syndic again from 1693-1695; he was échevin from 1697-1699, and again from 1706-1709, he spent three years as administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1711-1714, and finally his last post was that of échevin from 1720-1722.

But these were unusual cases. Kinship, rather than merit, most often explained an individual's accession to the corps de ville. One suspects that more sons inherited their fathers' offices than inherited their fathers' abilities. No better example of son succeeding father can be given than the Baudessons. But they were far from unique. There was, for instance, Louis Blonde, marchand, and Antoine his son, also marchand: the father was échevin from 1709-1711, administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1711-1714, the son was échevin from 1737-1739, administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1744-1747, and gouverneur du fait commun from 1748-1751. Similarly Pierre Boyard marchand was first échevin, then gouverneur du fait commun; his son Edmé also held these posts. Another successful merchant family was that of Robinet. Pierre Robinet senior started in 1682 as gouverneur du fait commun, he was assesseur in 1696, échevin from 1702-1704, and finally, returning to his original status, gouverneur du fait commun from 1708-1711. His son, Pierre Robinet junior, was first échevin in 1723, then gouverneur du fait commun from 1730-1733 when he was elected administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu.
But it was the conseillers au bailliage who really built up what one might, without serious exaggeration, call municipal dynasties. One of the most powerful was the Marie family. Claude Marie, conseiller au bailliage, was échevin from 1672-1674. His son, Thomas Marie, avocat du roi au bailliage, was échevin from 1689-1691, and maire from 1692-1693. He married twice: by his first wife he had a son, Claude Marie, who inherited his grandfather's office of conseiller au bailliage. Claude Marie was échevin from 1718-1721 and assesseur in 1733; his wife was sister-in-law of Roch Camelin, conseiller au bailliage, who was échevin from 1742-1745, and administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1746-1749. Claude Marie's daughter married Melchior Choppin, also conseiller au bailliage, who was échevin from 1751-1753; his father, Claude Choppin, avocat, had been a prominent member of the corps de ville: assesseur in 1726, échevin from 1729-1731, administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1734-1738, and again échevin for five years from 1741-1746. To return to Thomas Marie, avocat du roi au bailliage; by his second wife, who was widow of the seigneur of St. Georges, he had a second son, Etienne-Thomas Marie de St. Georges, conseiller au bailliage. His municipal career began with the post of assesseur in 1725, he was échevin from 1739-1742, administrateur de l'hôtel-dieu from 1743-1746, when he was again elected assesseur. The Marie de St. Georges who played such a leading role in the 1765 election was almost certainly his son.

The other judicial family which enjoyed remarkable
influence in the government of Auxerre, was that of Martineau. Claude Martineau Deschenez, conseiller au bailliage, was first administrateur de l’hôtel-dieu for ten years from 1698-1708, then échevin from 1710-1713, asséeur in 1720, administrateur de l’hôtel-dieu again from 1726-1729, and finally asséeur in 1731. His brother-in-law was Toussaint Robinet de Pontagny, procureur du roi à l’hôtel de ville, and subdélégué de l’intendant de Dijon. In 1747 he resigned the office of procureur du roi à l’hôtel de ville in favour of Toussaint Jean Martineau de Mormont, his nephew and younger son of Claude Martinez Deschenez, who exercised it until 1765. Claude Martineau Deschenez had three cousins, all of them conseillers au bailliage and members of the corps de ville at one time or another. There was Claude Martineau, échevin from 1695-1697, and the two brothers, Nicolas Martineau de Méré and René Martineau de Montenay. Nicolas began as asséeur in 1723, he was échevin from 1724-1727, asséeur again in 1732, and administrateur de l’hôtel-dieu from 1732-1735; his brother René’s sole municipal post was that of échevin from 1745-1748. Their sister Edmée Martineau married an avocat, Gaspard Coullault de Berry, who was a very successful member of the corps de ville: administrateur de l’hôtel-dieu from 1722-1725, échevin from 1726-1729, asséeur in 1732, échevin once more from 1733-1736, and finally again administrateur de l’hôtel-dieu.
from 1738-1742. Gaspard Coullault de Berry and Dâmée Martineau had a son, Gaspard Coullault de Berry de l'Epinette, who inherited the office of conseiller au bailliage from his uncle Nicolas Martineau de Méré. He also followed in the family's footsteps on to the corps de ville: he was asséreur in 1751 and 1753, and échevin from 1756-1759.1

The control of municipal government by this fantastically inter-related oligarchy might perhaps have continued uninterrupted but for two events: the advent of Champion de Cicé to the bishopric of Auxerre, and the introduction of municipal reforms in 1764-1765.

When Champion de Cicé was appointed bishop of Auxerre in 1760, the most pressing task before him was to stamp

1. The sequence of officials elected to the corps de ville of Auxerre can be pieced together from the following documents in the arch. d'Auxerre: BB 81, BB 82, BB 83, BB 84, BB 85, BB 86, BB 87, BB 89. This covers the first half of the eighteenth century only; details of elections from 1760-1789 can be found in the registers of the assemblée générale des habitants, or more easily, in Chardon's Histoire de la ville d'Auxerre. Establishing family connections between municipal officials is difficult. Information about those who were also bailliage officials can be obtained from a detailed list of magistratates in the Annuaire de l'Yonne, 1891. For the rest, one must search through the minutes of the following notaires, now housed in the arch. dep. de l'Yonne - Guimard, Sampic et Jouvin, and Coste. Fortunately, there are excellent inventaires analytiques of these notarial records.
out Jansenism, which was rife in the diocese. This heresy had been protected and fostered there during the fifty-year episcopate of Caylus, who had disseminated his beliefs with unexpected energy. He had quite undermined the authority of the Jesuits in the diocese by withdrawing from them the right to preach and hear confessions. He had established in the bishop's palace, a seminary where priests could be trained to his liking. He had composed a new, reformed liturgy, a breviary, a martyrology, a missal and a catechism, and made their use compulsory within the bishopric. Fleury ordered both catechism and missal to be suppressed. By welcoming to the diocese all appellants priests and religious, Caylus earned for it the title "le refuge des pêcheurs." This refugee

1. Of this "Jansenism" Pierre Ordioni remarks, in his doctoral thesis on La Résistance Gallicane et Janséniste dans le diocèse d'Auxerre, 1704-1760:

"Le Jansénisme de Saint Cyran, de Singlin, de Le Maître de Sacy, et de Lancelot, de Pascal et de Racine, de Philippe de Champaigne n'a pas fait de ravages dans la province qui ne l'a pas réellement connu. Le Jansénisme de Port Royal est resté une religion de l'élite, un moment pathétique de l'âme religieuse française.....

La province a connu les ravages d'un autre Jansénisme: celui du XVIIIe siècle qui n'avait conservé sa pureté que chez quelques attardés. Charles de Caylus était déjà plus gallican que janséniste.... Tombé dans le domaine populaire, le jansénisme n'a connu que des excès. La province n'a pu que perdre par la connaissance de ce beau mouvement diminué, desséché, défiguré.

Le gallicanisme lui-même, qui avait trouvé en Bossuet un champion, avait perdu son propre sens. Ici tout est polémique et tout est politique." p.175-176.
problem became so embarrassing to the French church that in 1747 the heads of all religious orders in France were forbidden to allow any of their members to enter the diocese of Auxerre. Although Caylus was condemned in Paris by the conseil-privé, and in Rome by the Pope, he could not be forced out of his office, since the parlement of Paris refused to register sentences giving judgment against him. The government was powerless; all it could do was to forbid him to leave the diocese, and wait for his death, and unfortunately he lived to the ripe old age of eighty-five. His immediate successor, Caritat de Condorcet, made no progress against the heresy during the six years he was bishop of Auxerre. His too obvious contempt for their beliefs, and his militant enthusiasm for the bull Unigenitus merely antagonised the Auxerrois, and strengthened their faith in Jansenism. He soon asked to be moved to a more tranquil diocese and gladly made way for Champion de Cice.

Champion de Cice has acquired a not unmerited reputation for Machiavellian conduct. To all outward appearances he was quiet, friendly and charming; he concealed behind this smooth, ingratiating demeanour, an unshakable strength of purpose and zeal which would stop at nothing. He pursued a long-term policy, and was not, like Condorcet, reduced to
Correcting and disciplining the clergy was a relatively easy matter. The bishop was patron of forty-three *cures* in the diocese and appointed for life all the canons of the cathedral; he had only to wait patiently until the holders of these benefices died or resigned, and replace them with his own followers. Dealing with the laity was much more difficult; it was primarily a question of re-education, and the most influential agency for this, the pulpit and confessional apart, was the college of Auxerre. It was de Cicé's efforts to gain control of this school which brought him into a head-on collision with the *corps de ville*, and caused the bitterly fought election of 1765.

The college of Auxerre had been established in 1622 by the Jesuits. It had never prospered in their hands: the standard of education provided was scandalously low, and Caylus had done his utmost to discourage parents from sending their sons there. When the Jesuits were turned out in 1762,

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1. On the bishops of Auxerre in the eighteenth century, see Lebeuf, Challe et Quantin: *Mémoires sur l'histoire civile et ecclésiastique d'Auxerre*, vol. II. On the issue of Jansenism and de Cicé's campaign against it, see two studies by Pierre Ordioni: *La Resistance Gallicane et Janséniste dans le diocèse d'Auxerre, 1704-1760*. Thèse pour le doctorat (faculté de droit), Université de Dijon. *La survivance des Idées Gallicanes et Jansénistes en Auxerrois de 1760 à nos jours*. Thèse pour le doctorat (faculté de lettres), Dijon, 1933.

there were only fifty-five pupils. The arrêt of the parlement of Paris, which deprived the Society of the right to run schools, authorized municipal officials to appoint new teachers to replace them. The corps de ville of Auxerre decided that a commission of enquiry should be set up to investigate the state of the college. In its report this commission recommended that all goods and property belonging to the Jesuits should be confiscated to the profit of the college, arguing that since members of the Society took a vow of poverty, all their wealth must have been accumulated on the school's behalf. The narrow, old-fashioned syllabus taught by the Jesuits was severely criticised; so too was their aim of inculcating absolute obedience to the Pope. The commission advised the corps de ville to put seculars, not regulars, in charge of the college. But the municipal officials first very judiciously tried to discover what was the bishop's opinion on this matter. Baudesson visited de Cicé, who was in Paris at this time, but the prelate refused to commit himself. The maire returned to Auxerre on 5 March 1762 and had an interview with the bishop's brother, abbé de Cicé, who was vicar-general of the diocese. He too would say nothing. Time was running out: the arrêt du parlement ordered that the new teachers were to be installed by 1 April. So the corps de ville, trusting in its own judgment, reached an agreement with the
abbé Magne, a former Oratorian, that he should be principal of the college, and himself nominate a vice-principal and six teachers, subject to the approval of the municipal officials. Bishop de Cicé was informed of this contract; he returned to Auxerre at once and told the corps de ville that he disapproved entirely of what it had done. He tried to persuade the municipal officials to break their agreement with Magne, and proposed that he himself should arrange for the college to be taken over by either Oratorians or Doctrinaires. He even offered to induce the cathedral chapter to allot six prebends for the remuneration of the college staff if he were allowed to appoint it. De Cicé's proposal came too late; the corps de ville was adamant, and defiantly it sent the contract with Magne to the bailliage for ratification. Here too the bishop tried to get the contract annulled, and again failed. However, the bailliage did insert into the agreement a qualification stipulating that, in future, the principal and all teachers of the college were to be maîtres-ès-arts of any university in France.

The reform of French schools was completed by the edict of February 1763 which imposed on them a new, uniform administrative system. In conformity with this law, a bureau

1. Mémoire sur les Troubles qui ont Régné dans la ville d'Auxerre depuis 1762 jusqu'en 1773, written by Pontagny, the subdélegué, for the intendant, and dated 28 September 1773. Arch. dép. de l'Yonne, C 7.
d'administration was elected in Auxerre; it consisted of the bishop as president, the chief justice of the local royal court (i.e. the lieutenant général du bailliage), and its procureur du roi, two municipal officials, two notables, and the principal of the college. To de Cicé's chagrin, this body was unmoved by his arguments against the contract, and it was sent to the parlement of Paris for final confirmation. De Cicé was still unbeaten. He had influence at court and used it to get a vital amendment introduced into the letters patent issued by the royal government to sanction the recent establishment: teachers of the college of Auxerre were required to have the degree of maitre-es-arts, not of any French university, but of the university of Paris in particular. This fresh qualification very cunningly, and with seeming innocence, completely undermined the new school, for only the principal, abbé Magne, had graduated from Paris. However the parlement came to the rescue, and informed by the corps de ville of Auxerre of de Cicé's trick, refused to register the letters-patent. To break the deadlock, the royal council ordered that the qualification of maitre-es-arts of the university of Paris should be demanded of future teachers only, who replaced the existing ones on their death, dismissal or resignation.

De Cicé's first campaign to capture the college of
Auxerre had thus resulted in failure. It was obvious that in order to get rid of the abbé Magne and his colleagues, he would first have to gain control of the bureau d'administration, and that this would never be achieved while Jansenists continued to dominate the bailliage and the corps de ville.

Luck favoured the bishop: the opportunity to change the character of these two bodies soon presented itself. In February 1765 Thomas-André Marie Davigneau, lieutenant-général du bailliage, died. Since his son and heir was still a very small child, his family was obliged to nominate someone to exercise the office until the boy came of age. According to Robinet de Pontagny, the subdélégué, he himself was chosen by the Davigneaus for this post, but the royal government refused to sanction his appointment because the bishop had denounced him as a Jansenist and a leader of that religious sect in Auxerre. Instead de Cicé pulled strings and got Jean-Baptiste-Thomas Boucher de la Rupelle, hitherto lieutenant particulier, promoted to the post of lieutenant général. Pontagny, writing later in 1773 commented:

"Je crois devoir vous observer que ce n'est ny par un attachement bien sincère à la constitution, ny par une opinion bien décidé sur les affaire de l'église que M.de Cicé a agi, un esprit de domination a dirigé ses démarches; s'il a employé contre plusieurs de ses
Pontagny's disavowal must be taken with a pinch of salt. Obviously, in order to protect himself he had to protest that he was no Jansenist, especially in view of his status as subdélégué. But he goes too far when he denies that Jansenism was a vital issue in Auxerre.

Soon after he had secured for his adherent Boucher de la Rupelle the key office in the bailliage, the edict of May 1765 furnished the bishop with the means of attacking the corps de ville. When municipal officials were elected by the assemblée générale des habitants, there was little Charmion de Cicé could do to dislodge the corps de ville: persuading eight hundred odd unorganized farm workers to vote against their employers was an impossible task, even for one as resourceful as de Cicé. But Delaverdy's reforming edict radically altered the franchise in Auxerre, making the corps et communautés des arts et métiers into electoral colleges. Each of these professional associations and trade gilds - there were thirty-five in Auxerre - was to elect one deputy; in their turn the deputies

1. Mémoire sur les Troubles qui ont Régné dans la ville d'Auxerre depuis 1762 jusqu'en 1773, written by Pontagny, the subdélégué Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
would elect fourteen notables, who, besides replacing the assemblée générale des habitants as the mouthpiece of local opinion, also nominated the corps de ville, - a maire, four échevins, six conseillers, a syndic-receveur, and a secrétaire. This complicated, three-tier electoral system, with ultimate power vested in only thirty-five corps et communautés, made pressure and intrigue easy. In ousting the Jansenist clique from the corps de ville, the bishop was immeasurably helped by two circumstances: in the first two stages of the election, the shopkeeper and skilled artisan class would preponderate, and would probably be the most considerable source of opposition to the municipal oligarchy. De Cicé's other advantage lay in having a fervent supporter at the head of the bailliage, since that court was to decide all electoral disputes.

From the beginning the contest assumed the proportions of an epic battle. The population divided into two parties, the Latins and the Grecs. The Latins, so called because they enjoyed the backing of most of the clergy and cathedral chapter, comprised the Jansenists and Gallicans, who denounced the bull Unigenitus and the formulary as unjustifiable interference by the papacy in the affairs of the French church. Their opponents, who obviously had to take the name Grecs, were those who supported the bishop, whether
because they genuinely shared his religious convictions, or because they disliked the municipal oligarchy and would further any attempt to overthrow it. In the electoral conflict, neither the bishop, de Cicé, nor the maire, Baudesson, played an outwardly active part, though what went on behind the scenes is of course not recorded. It was the bailliage officials who made the running, Boucher de la Rupelle, the ambitious lieutenant général, leading the Grecs, while Pierre-Edmé-François Grasset, procureur du roi au bailliage, and Edme Martineau Deschenez, avocat du roi, both persistent

1. Edme Martineau Deschenez died before the electoral campaign finished. He was one of the few participants about whose character and beliefs something is known. He came of an old and highly respected family of magistrates, accustomed to public service. As well as being avocat du roi au bailliage for over thirty years, he was also subdélegué of the intendant of Paris. Pierre Ordioni says this of him:

"Tous ces magistrats, très lettrés, très versés dans les sciences religieuses: droit canon, casuistique, exégèse, appartenaient à la petite noblesse de province, ou à la grande bourgeoisie cultivée et autère et avaient un sens très élevé et moins étroit que les parlementaires de leur rôle devant le Roi. Les requisitoires de Martineau des Chenez, que nous avons pu lire manuscrits, sont à ce titre typiques. Son souci de la mission que le Roi a confiée à la Magistrature et aux gens de Roi en particulier, son sens de la justice appartenant au Roi et déléguée par lui pour le bien du peuple et le maintien de l'ordre dans l'État, sa conception de l'ordre public dans le domaine religieux, ses interventions directes dans les affaires de pure théologie, ..... ses exposés très documentés des idées jansénistes et des théories gallicanes, son loyalisme envers la Monarchie, son respect de la personne du Roi, expliquent ce temps." La Résistance Gallicane et Janséniste dans le diocèse d'Auxerre 1704-1760, p. 130.
and resourceful men, headed the *Latins*. Happily it is possible to follow the course of the struggle in detail because most of the *procès-verbaux* have survived.  

The nomination of deputies by the *corps et communautés* passed off with only one hitch: the *officiers commensaux*, the so-called royal household officials, who had bought such posts as mole-catcher to the royal stables in Normandy, valet to the king's bloodhound, pantry-boy to Madame la Dauphine, in order to acquire tax exemption, refused to vote for a deputy in conjunction with the *bourgeois vivant noblement*, whom they regarded as beneath their caste. Consequently, both the *officiers commensaux* and the *bourgeois* each elected their own deputy. On 26 June 1765, the deputies met to elect the *notables*. The proceedings were stormy. Boucher de la Rupelle disputed the right of the *premier échevin*, Claude Billeto, *conseiller au baillage*, to preside at the meeting in the *maire*’s absence; Baudesson, who ought to have taken the chair being out of town. The deputies of the *corps et communautés* protested against the participation of the municipal officials, who had been inexplicably invited to the assembly, in the election of the *notables*. There was also a demand for the exclusion of the *maréchaussée*’s deputy, on the grounds that this jurisdiction was not among those required by the edict.

to send a representative. The meeting had to be adjourned until the following day, so that the bailliage could settle these disputes. It was decided that Boucher de la Rupelle, lieutenant général du bailliage, should preside at the election, and not Claude Billetou, premier échevin, and that both the maréchaussée's representative and the municipal officials should be excluded. On 27 June twelve notables were chosen. They in their turn were asked to assemble on 1 July to nominate the corps de ville. Again the premier échevin, Claude Billetou, found fault with the arrangements, arguing that this date had been fixed by the municipal officials illegally, since they had met without being officially summoned by him in his capacity of deputy-maire. The bailliage rejected his complaint and the assemblée des notables was held as planned on 1 July. Three of the four échevins chosen that day were former municipal officials, and their election was a victory for the Latins. On 2 July the conseillers, syndic-receveur and secrétaire-greffier were elected: again, five of the eight men selected for these posts had either served on the corps de ville personally, or were closely connected with the ruling oligarchy.  

1. Housset, chanoine; Lallement, curé; Leblanc, procureur du roi des eaux et forêts; Ducrot, avocat; Millot, médecin; Faultrier, bourgeois; Dufaure, noble; Garnier, notaire; Sautereau, marchand; Chardon-Évrat, marchand; Robinet de Pontagny, conseiller au bailliage; LESSERÉ, chirurgien; Sanglé, pâtissier; Robot, menuisier.
2. Échevins: Despatys de Chazeuil, conseiller au bailliage; Bussière, avocat; Leclerc, procureur; Moreau, commissaire des p.t.o.
vins; conseillers: Seurrat, conseiller au bailliage; Coulard, avocat; Chardon, notaire; Nizon, bourgeois; Merat, apothicaire; Desoeuvres, procureur. Syndic-receveur: Prix Deschamps, bourgeois; secrétaire-greffier: Faultrier de Brinville.
short-lived: on 21 August 1765 the parlement of Paris annulled all the elections on the grounds that the exclusion of the maréchaussée's deputy was illegal. This judgment was very proper and entirely in keeping with the terms of the edict of May 1765, but it is rather suggestive that Raffin, deputy of the maréchaussée, was also a relative and ardent supporter of Boucher de la Rupelle, lieutenant général du bailliage and leader of the Grecs.

On 10 September, after the parlement's decision had been registered by the bailliage, Boucher de la Rupelle ordered it to be implemented at once: fresh elections were to be held as soon as possible, and in the meantime, the old corps de ville was to replace the recently installed officials and form an interim administration. He commanded Baudesson to summon the deputies of the corps et communautés within twenty-four hours to nominate new notables. The battle was now joined in earnest. The Latins tried delaying tactics. Boucher de la Rupelle had gone too far: orders such as he had given the maire were outside his competence as judge. It was the duty of the ministère public to supervise the execution of the parlement's sentence, and affronted by Boucher de la Rupelle's encroachment on their rights, Pierre-Edme-François Grasset, procureur du roi au bailliage, and his colleague, Edme Martineau Deschenez, avocat du roi, lodged an objection against Boucher de la Rupelle's order. This had split the ranks of the
corps de ville as well as of the bailliage: the ubiquitous premier échevin, Billetou, being a Grec, was very eager to carry out Boucher de la Rupelle's command, but Baudesson forbade him to do so: it was for the procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville, like his opposite on the bailliage, to decide whether Boucher de la Rupelle's order should be put into effect, and he was awaiting the outcome of the objection entered by Grasset and Martineau Deschenez. Then this whole legal wrangle was repeated. On 12 September Boucher de la Rupelle announced that notwithstanding Grasset's objection, which had to be heard by the parlement of Paris, his order of 10 September should be carried out provisionally, so that Auxerre could have without delay, new municipal officials, chosen according to the edict of May 1765. On 13 September, Martineau Deschenez, on behalf of Grasset, who was ill, entered a fresh objection to the lieutenant-général's order of the previous day. Boucher de la Rupelle replied by referring this second objection to the parlement, and again directing that his order of 12 September be executed provisionally.

This stupid and vicious circle was broken by Martineau Deschenez's efforts to stir up the bailliage against Boucher de la Rupelle. He demanded that a meeting of the magistrates be summoned, and sent Lefebvre, secrétaire du bailliage, to visit the officials, in order of seniority, asking each in turn
to call an assembly for the next day. Naturally Boucher de la Rupelle himself refused, as did Briand de Fortbois, lieutenant criminel, Potherat de Billy, doyen des conseillers, and Seurrat, conseiller. However, at eight o’clock that night, Coullault de Berry, the next conseiller in rank, told Lefebvre that he would take the responsibility for calling the meeting. It was held on 14 September and opened with a speech by Martineau Deschenez attacking Boucher de la Rupelle, whom he upbraided for usurping from the procureur du roi the right to decide on the implementation of the arrêt du parlement authorizing fresh elections. Martineau Deschenez argued that Boucher de la Rupelle’s haste was unwise since it was known that parlement was on the point of issuing a further three arrêts, all concerning the happenings in Auxerre, and before proceeding to new elections, his colleague Grasset ought to seek information about these sentences and advice on the interpretation of the May edict from the procureur général du parlement. Finally, appealing to the amour-propre of the magistrates, Martineau Deschenez declared that in acting on his own initiative, Boucher de la Rupelle was detracting from the authority of the court, since the right to decide election disputes belonged not to him alone, but to the whole corps du bailliage. His arguments won over a majority of the magistrates. They proclaimed their support for the two objections lodged by the
gens du roi, and ordered that until parlement settled their dispute with Boucher de la Rupelle, no elections should be held, but the old corps de ville should continue temporarily to administer the town. At a further meeting held on 20 September the bailliage announced that it viewed with alarm the attempts of Boucher de la Rupelle to monopolize the right of judging disputes arising from the municipal reform edict.

Eventually on 12 October 1765 the deputies met once more, this time under the presidency of Baudesson, to elect the notables. It was of course, too much to hope that they actually would perform this task. Instead, eight of them protested against the presence of Gueron, subdélégué du prévôt des marchands de Paris, claiming that he did not represent a gild of Auxerre. Boucher de la Rupelle decided that Gueron was not eligible to be a deputy. Immediately the issue of the election was again lost beneath a welter of legalistic debates, which were in reality the manoeuvres of the Latins and the Grecs for favourable positions. Two days after the abortive assemblée des députés, the corps des orphèvres complained to Baudesson that its deputy, Latour, by voting against Gueron, had exceeded his powers. The other goldsmiths, numbering three in all, disapproved of Latour's action, repudiated him, and chose a new deputy. On the same day, 14 October, at a meeting of the bailliage, Grasset again launched an attack on Boucher
de la Rupelle. He claimed that the exclusion of Gueron from the assemblée des députés was invalid, even though it had been authorized by the contrôleur général, first because neither he, the ministère public, nor any of the other bailliage officials had been consulted, and secondly, because the arrêt du parlement sanctioning fresh elections had stipulated that the deputies who had participated in the first election of notables, and they included Gueron, should participate in the second. Grassé informed his colleagues that he would lodge (yet another) objection against Boucher de la Rupelle's disqualification of Gueron, and ask that the whole affair be once more referred to parlement. He proposed that a new assemblée des députés, including Gueron, should be summoned by the maire, to elect the notables for the third time, since at the previous meeting on 12 October, there had been some mistakes in the voting: the procès-verbal showed 515 votes cast instead of 518. A majority of the bailliage officials backed Grassé's proposals, thus nullifying the election of notables held two days earlier. This provoked a group of the deputies into appealing to parlement against the bailliage's annulment of the election.

Meanwhile, Baudesson, anxious lest the representation of the goldsmiths' guild in the assemblée des députés should cause another round of controversy, asked the bailliage, on
15 October, whether Latour or his replacement ought to be invited to the meeting to be held the following day to elect the notables. Once again Lefebvre was sent scurrying round the magistrates to find one who would convocate the court. Boucher de la Rupelle, Briand de Fortbois, and Patherat de Billy all refused or imposed intolerable conditions: Briand de Fortbois would summon the bailliage for two o'clock in the afternoon only, knowing full well that this was too late, since Baudesson had fixed the time for the assemblée des députés at seven o'clock that morning. When the bailliage did meet, Grasset made much of the senior magistrates' obstructive conduct, and suggested that steps should be taken to prevent their ill-will from paralysing the court. It was therefore agreed that if Boucher de la Rupelle was unobtainable or unwilling, the ministère public himself could, for the time being, summon the bailliage. For a definitive solution the problem was referred to the parlement. As to which of the two deputies of the goldsmiths' gild should be asked to take part in the election of the notables, the bailliage proposed that, in order to avoid all difficulty, neither should be invited. The goldsmiths agreed to their disfranchisement.

The notables chosen on the 16 October were not the same as those first elected on the 27 June - half of them had
been superseded — but the Latin were still in the majority, for the next day the new assemblée des notables re-elected as échevins the four men nominated to these offices on 1 July by the original notables. This election was not without incident. Boucher de la Rupelle ought to have presided, but naturally as he did not recognize the validity of the notables' election the previous day, he refused to participate. His lead was followed by Briand de Forthois, Potherat de Billy, Seurra, Billetou and Godot, and since Coullault de Berry and Thierry de la Maison Blanche were away, it was Disson, a far from senior member of the bailliage, who summoned and took the chair at the assembly. He again presided on 18 October, when the notables nominated the conseillers, syndic-receveur, and secrétaire-greffier. Again, those chosen at the beginning of July were re-appointed.

Once more these municipal officials were doomed to a short and insecure tenure of office, for the Grec party had not yet acknowledged defeat. On 23 October 1765, Grasset learnt that Latour, one-time deputy of the goldsmiths' gild, had lodged an objection against the bailliage's decision to exclude

1. Ducrot, Faultrier, Dufaur, Garnier, Sautereau, Sangle, and Robot, elected on 27 June (see above p. 237) were replaced by Pasqueau, avocat; Daubenton, officier commensal; Merat, procureur; Martin, tailleur; Demeaux, cordonnier; Chauchet, prieur de Saint-Amatre; and Rode, chevalier d'honneur au bailliage; the last two were notorious Jansenists.
2. See p. 237 above.
him from the assemblée des députés, on the grounds that judgment had been passed without hearing his testimony, and that the sentence was contrary to the arrêts du parlement of 21 August and 27 September. He also appealed to the parlement against the revocation of his mandate by the corps des orphèvres, which he claimed was illegal; against the election of the notables on 16 October, which was invalid because it had taken place without him; and against the nomination of municipal officials on 17 and 18 October following. Opposition to the Latins increased. Grasset was notified on 26 October that nine of the notables chosen on 12 October had appealed to parlement against the bailliage's annulment of their election, and against the nomination of new notables and municipal officials on 16-18 October. But before Grasset and the Latins could reply to this onslaught, the deterioration in the health of the Dauphin and his death in January 1766, caused a truce to be arranged, while novenas and requiem masses were said in the churches of Auxerre.

During this interval the parlement of Paris tried to find a way out of the mess into which Auxerre had got itself. It decided that the assemblée des députés held on 12 October 1765 was valid, confirmed the election of eleven of the notables chosen by it, and ordered another meeting to be summoned to

1. D'Aymard, grand-vicaire de l'évêque; Colombet, chanoine; Dufour, noble; Codot, conseiller au bailliage; Raiffin, secrétaire en la maréchaussée; Ducrot, avocat; Housseau, médecin; Carlier, notaire; Sautereau, marchand; Viot, marchand; Nombret, artisan.
fill the remaining three posts, for which there had been ties on 12 October. This was done on 26 February 1766. The next day the notables elected the échevins, conseillers de ville, syndic-receveur and secrétaire-greffier, and the lists showed that, in the end, the Grecs had triumphed.

Nearly all the new officials were strangers to municipal administration, but most of them came from the same class as the displaced oligarchy. The social range of the corps de ville was merely extended at one end by the addition of a priest and a noble, and at the other by a surgeon and a notary. Moreover, although the new system was in operation for scarcely six years, there were already indications, before its abolition, that the new group was beginning to get as close a hold on the town's administration as bad earlier municipal officials. This development was to a certain extent encouraged by the provisions of the 1765 edict, which stipulated that the maire was to be chosen from among the

1. Those elected were Lesséré, chirurgien; Robot, menuisier; and Faultrier, bourgeois.
2. Louis Raffin, conseiller au bailliage; Marie de St. Georges, avocat; Antoine Paradis, marchand des bois; and Gaboré, procureur, were elected échevins. The six conseillers de ville were Imbert, marchand; Fotherat de Pressurot, conseiller au bailliage; Leclerc de Champmartin, officier commensal; Duplessis, notaire; Billetou de Guilbaudon, lieutenant de la maîtrise des eaux et forêts; and Henry, chirurgien. Charles Bezanger became syndic-receveur, and Faultrier de Brinville, secrétaire-greffier.
3. Paradis, Imbert, and Faultrier de Brinville alone had previously served on the corps de ville.


échevins, and the échevins from the conseillers de ville, who in their turn were recruited from the notables. Combined with long terms in office, and the gradual renewal of officials, this invariably gave the corps de ville a conservative, oligarchical bias.

Only one thing marred the triumph of the Grecs; they could not get rid of Baudesson. According to the 1765 edict, the notables were to elect three candidates for the office of maire, one of whom would be appointed and installed by the états de Bourgogne. The Grecs tried in vain to get this put into effect. At an assemblée des notables held on 1 August 1766, Raffin, premier échevin, proposed that three candidates be nominated. Grasset, the leader of the Latins, who by virtue of being procureur du roi au baillage acted as ministère public in the assemblée des notables, tried to resist this move. He reported that the governor of Burgundy, at the request of the états, was about to petition the king to restore "L'ancienne municipalité de la province," and suggested that before electing candidates for the mayoralty, they should await the outcome of this move. Grasset was overruled, however, on the grounds that his information was not official but a mere rumour, and the meeting proceeded to choose three candidates, of whom Baudesson was not one, for the office of maire. Their names were presented to the états de Bourgogne, but the élus
géneraux, whose opposition to the edict of 1765 remained unabated, refused to play the part required of them. In their eyes Baudesson continued to be maire, though of course he could not participate in the municipal administration.

Even so, by the summer of 1766, de Ciec had secured an amenable corps de ville. There was little danger of its political complexion changing during the next three years, because under the provisions of the 1765 edict, new échevins and conseillers de ville continued to be elected by the notables who came into power in February 1766, and who were predominantly Grecs. However their term of office ended in 1770, and the Latins entertained high hopes of winning a majority in the elections to be held that year for the assemblée des notables, and of course they confidently expected that a Latin assemblée des notables would then proceed to elect a Latin corps de ville. But by a most cunning, and yet very simple ruse, the Grecs upset these calculations: at the eleventh hour they advanced the time fixed for the assemblée des notables. The retiring Grecs notables met at the town hall at eight o'clock in the morning, and as their last official act, quietly nominated the

1. The obstruction of the états de Bourgogne toward the edict of May 1765, which would have deprived them of their right to appoint maires in the province, prevented its enforcement in Burgundy. However, since the parlement of Paris had registered it, the edict did take effect in Auxerre (which came within the jurisdiction of the parlement of Paris), but all those associated with the new municipal administration, the bishop of Auxerre and the Grecs, incurred the implacable hostility of the élus généraux, while its victims, and
Baudesson in particular, received their sympathy and support.

échevins and conseillers de ville for the following year. At ten o'clock, the députés of the corps et communautés elected the new notables, who, to their chagrin, soon found that the corps de ville had already been renewed, and that they had therefore been cheated of the right to choose municipal officials for another twelvemonth. The Latins clamoured, complained and protested; they appealed to the parlement of Paris, but the Grecs had discovered a genuine loophole in the edict of 1765 and legally there were no grounds for annulling the election of the échevins and the conseillers de ville.

This triumph was vital for de Cicé, because those members of the bureau d'administration of the college who had been appointed in 1765 by the old Latin oligarchy, and had persistently thwarted his wishes, were due to be replaced in 1770, and if the Grecs controlled the corps de ville, they would promote docile sympathisers to the bureau d'administration. With the bureau d'administration in his pocket, only one thing prevented the bishop from breaking the contract negotiated in 1762 and dismissing all the staff of the school: although he could rely on the support of the senior bailliage officials, the gens du roi and a majority of the conseillers au bailliage were ardent Jansenists, and would give judgment in favour of

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the schoolmasters if they appealed to the court against their dismissal. So the bishop switched his attack to the bailliage.

De Cicé had tried earlier to thin the Jansenists' ranks by campaigning for the suppression of the conseillers honoraires sur le fait des aides et tailles. Let the sub-delégué Robinet de Pontagny tell the story:

"des le mois de janvier 1766 on avait tenté sur des mémoires présentés à M. le vice chancelier et appuyés par une lettre de M. l'Eveque qui furent renvoyés à un bureau de commission du Conseil, de faire supprimer la juridiction sur le fait des aides et tailles dont les 4 officiers avaient rang et seance dans le bailliage, le coup manqua dans le temps;"

The bishop had to bide his time until 1771, when Maupoux's reorganization of the judicial system gave de Cicé a wonderful opportunity to remake the bailliage in his own image. Pontagny continues:

"on attendait une occasion plus favorable, les edits rendus en 1771 au sujet de la cour des aides et du parlement de Paris la fournirent; lorsque ces edits furent presentes au Bailliage, tous les opinants à l'exception des Sr. de la Rupelle, Farsbois, Eilletou et les 2 freres Raffin furent d'avis de differer l'enregistrement de 15 à 18 jours, ce retard n'étoit
point un crime par lui même, puisqu'on avait le mois
pour y procéder, mais on trouve le moyen de la caracté-
iser d'un acte de rebellion."
For when the audience was over, Rupelle and his four
accomplices drew up a procès-verbal, according to Pontagny,
full of "impostures grossières," claiming that the other
baillage officials were planning to vote against the registra-
tion of these edicts. This document was first submitted to
the bishop for approval, and then sent secretly to the Chancellor.
He replied a fortnight later by suppressing the
jurisdiction sur le fait des aides et tailles. When the day
finally came for the baillage to decide whether or not to
register Maupeou's edicts, the lieutenant general, says Pontagny
could not risk the possibility that the court might accept
the laws, thus exposing his procès-verbal as a tissue of lies.
He therefore provoked the magistrates to ill-judged action by
ordering the registration of the edicts forthwith, deliberately
omitting to take a vote on the issue. His colleagues rose to
the bait, protesting loudly against this high-handed,
unprecedented procedure. Their objection was easily represen-
ted as a refusal to comply with the royal government's policy
and resulted in dismissal for nearly all the baillage officials.
"Pour les remplacer, on a fait donner une charge de
conseiller à un frère du S. Billetou, une à un frère
du Lieutenant criminel Forsbois, et une 3e. a un neveu
du même Sr. de Fortbois, l'office de procureur du roy a été rempli par le Sr. de St. Georges cousin germain du Lieutenant général, et de l'avocat du roy qui a été conservé".

Thus by 1772 the bishop was in a position to take steps to reorganize the college of Auxerre as he thought fit. The bureau d'administration announced that the time had come to enforce article 10 of the letters patent of 1764, and that consequently all those teachers who were not maîtres-ès-arts of the university of Paris were dismissed. This measure disposed of five members of the staff, and by suppressing the mathematics and physics department as being superfluous, another master was eliminated. The pupils rioted and held demonstrations demanding the reinstatement of their teachers, and a hundred and four of the inhabitants of Auxerre testified before a notary that they had a high opinion of the masters dismissed, and were more than satisfied with the tuition given at the college. For indeed the school had really flourished since the departure of the Jesuits: by 1766 there were more than 200 pupils, eighty of them boarders. Only lack of buildings prevented further expansion. But de Cicé was hardly the man to be deflected from his goal by public opinion. To

1. Mémoire sur les Troubles qui ont Regné dans la ville d'Auxerre depuis 1762 jusqu'en 1773, written by Fontagny, the subdélégué, and dated 28 September 1773. Arch. dép. de l'Yonne.

2. He was Pasumot, the ingénieur géographe du roi, who had revised Cassini's maps.
get rid of the principal and the other masters who could not be expelled for lack of qualifications, criminal proceedings were taken against them. They were accused of disseminating Jansenist ideas among their pupils, by causing them to read immoral books, such as the history of Port-Royal, the life of the deacon Paris, les Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques, and so on. For good measure they were also charged with smuggling prostitutes into the school dormitories at night. The newly constituted bailliage found the teachers guilty on all counts. The principal was sentenced to life exile and the confiscation of all his property; two of the masters were condemned to be flogged, branded, and sent to the galleys for life;¹ the other three received less harsh penalties.² Fortunately these vicious sentences were not carried out. Maupeou's parlement reversed two of the milder punishments, and all the masters were exonerated by the old bailliage when it was restored after Louis XV's death. Indeed they were authorized to sue the procureur du roi and the seven judges who had demanded and given such deplorable verdicts.³

1. One of these, Le Franc, was seventy years old! The career of the other, Hautefage, suggests that there may have been some truth in the accusation that the school was a hot-bed of Jansenism, for earlier he had been expelled from the diocese of Toulouse for holding Jansenist beliefs, and he was to spend the rest of his life in Holland, editing the works of Arnauld, and contributing to the Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques.

2. Dominique Ricard, the well-known Greek scholar and authority on Plutarch, was censured and fined 6 l.

3. The proceedings against the schoolmasters were deemed to be full of irregularities, there were contradictions and inadequacies in the testimonies of the witnesses, the judges were related to one another, and to the witnesses, etc.
Unabashed, the bishop made one final effort to stop the college of Auxerre being re-established. By pulling strings in Paris he obtained in 1776 a déclaration du roi converting it into an école royale militaire, under the direction of the Benedictine community of Saint-Maur. De Cicé thus prevented the corps de ville, whatever its complexion, from having any further concern in the administration of the local school.

To return to political events. In 1771 the reform edicts of 1764-1765 were suppressed, towns ordered to revert to their old constitutions, and municipal offices again offered for sale. The états de Bourgogne, as usual, bought these posts, and so regained its right to nominate maires. The élus généraux immediately appointed Baudesson to the mayorality of Auxerre, and got their choice approved by the king. However, the Grecs, who at that time still dominated the corps de ville, were loathe to accept the return of their chief enemy. Accordingly de Cicé sent the royal government a memoir asserting that not only was Baudesson a Jansenist, but that when previously in office he had seriously mismanaged the affairs of the town, school and hospitals. The royal government ordered Baudesson's installation to be deferred, and sent him and the élus généraux

1. P. Ordioni: La survivance des Idées Gallicanes et Jansénistes en Auxerrois de 1780 à nos jours, p. 116. The college of Auxerre was not one of the ten schools included in the original plan for écoles royales militaire, as set out in the ordonnance of 28 March, 1776; it was incorporated in the scheme some months later, which lends support to the claim that de Cicé was responsible for its conversion. L. Mention: Le comte de St. Germain et ses reformes 1775-1777, p. 64.
a copy of de Cicé's memoir, asking them for an explanation. Baudesson convinced the élus généraux of his innocence, and so they asked Tavannes, commandant en chef en la province de Bourgogne, to use his influence to further Baudesson's appointment. Tavannes first tackled de Cicé. The meeting was not a success. In the course of it, Tavannes is supposed to have remarked with some asperity, in reply to de Cicé's allegations that Baudesson subscribed to Jansenism, that it would be time enough to demand proof of his catholicity when he applied for the tonsure or a benefice. Tavannes next went to Paris, where the whole affair was discussed by the conseil des dépêches in the king's presence. It declared Baudesson's conduct to have been irreprouachable, and confirmed his nomination as maire. He took the oath of office before the états de Bourgogne, and was installed with great pomp and rejoicing.

A few days later, the bailliage, which since the judicial revolution of 1771 had been monopolized by the Grecs, passed a sentence opposing the installation of their adversary as maire, and forbidding Baudesson to perform any of the functions attached to the office on pain of a fine of 1,000 écus. At the time Baudesson was actually in Dijon, attending the états de Bourgogne, and when the news of the bailliage's sentence arrived, there was a tremendous fuss. Each of the orders debated the bailliage's audacity: the nobility and the
third estate both agreed unanimously that the king should be asked to annul the sentence and oblige the bailliage to recognize Baudesson as maire; the clergy too were of this opinion, and rejected by twenty-six votes to eight de Cicé's motion that the affair should be investigated by a special commission. Affronted, de Cicé left the états without permission, but when he reached Auxerre, he was met by the maréchaussée with a royal order to return to Dijon until the session closed. With equal promptitude, the royal council quashed the bailliage's sentence and confirmed Baudesson's appointment. 1.

The élus généraux, no doubt influenced by Baudesson, were by now weary of the corps de ville's antagonism and lack of co-operation, and they persuaded Latour du Pin, lieutenant-général en la province de Bourgogne, Tavannes, commandant en chef, and Amelot, intendant de Dijon, to present to the king their views on how the situation in Auxerre could be improved. Their chief grievance was that a single clique, the Greco, monopolized power in Auxerre, since it controlled both the bailliage and the corps de ville. They recommended that the municipal administration be reorganized and put into the hands

of the Greco's opponents. The royal government complied, and Auxerre was presented with a new constitution on 17 October 1772. This vested municipal authority in a maire, four échevins, four conseillers de ville, a procureur-syndic, a substitut, and a secrétaire. The échevins could be avocats, médecins, procureurs, notaires, chirurgiens, marchands or bourgeois, but they could not be either ecclesiastics or baillage officials: henceforth these two professions were to be excluded from municipal administration. A limit was put on the tenure of the échevins only: they were to hold office for two years, though all other members of the corps de ville could remain until they resigned or were dismissed. The first officials appointed under this constitution were nominated by the king\(^1\) but thereafter the assemblée générale des habitants was to elect two échevins every year.

Perhaps the people of Auxerre's appetite for elections had been satisfied in 1765-1766, or perhaps the restored oligarchy's control was a little too blatant. Whatever the reason, the apathy of the electors now became a problem. On 24 June 1778 an assemblée générale was summoned to choose new échevins, but so few people turned up that the election had to be postponed. Four days later the meeting again had to be abandoned, since only eight inhabitants were present.

\(^1\) All except the secrétaire-greffier, Faultrier de Brinville, who remained in his post, were chosen from the Latin party.
The municipal officials appealed to the government for help, which came in the form of an arrêt du conseil of 12 August 1778. This ordered all notables inhabitants who paid 3 l. taille p.a. to attend the assemblée générale des habitants in person; the lower classes — vigneron, artisans, tonneliers, and so on — were to be represented by deputies, two being chosen by each trade. The maire was empowered to impose a fine of 10 l. on every absentee. This threat to their pockets probably explains why 249 persons appeared at the next assemblée générale, held, again to elect échevins, on 23 August 1778. Some dissatisfaction with the existing electoral arrangements was expressed:

"L'un de Messieurs a dit qu'il serait infiniment plus important pour le Bien de la Ville de Ne Nommer Annuellement qu'un échevin que de proceder à la nomination de deux, Qu'au Moien de cette election les sujets nommés ne restent que deux ans en place et n'ont pas le temps d'acquérir la connoissance des Affaires de la Ville, Que si au Contraire on en nommoit un annuellement il arriveraient que les échevins resteroient quatre ans en place et qu'il s'en trouveroit toujours trois au fait des affaires."

The meeting concurred with this suggestion and voted that Amelot the intendant be asked to obtain permission for the

échevins to stay in office for a four year period. The royal government was altogether opposed to this, indeed it thought that too few people had been participating in municipal administration. An ordinance was issued requiring the assemblée générale of Auxerre to nominate in future three candidates for each post of échevin, one of whom would be selected by the king for the office, the assumption being that the royal choice would be more liberal than that of the inhabitants. 1. Whether or not the oligarchical trend was reasserting itself is difficult to decide: the Revolution brought the new constitution to a premature end, it did not last long enough for one to make a conclusive evaluation of the membership of the corps de ville. And there is a technical difficulty — that of discovering the background and family connections of the municipal officials of the late eighteenth century. 2.

2. When bailiage officials are excluded from the corps de ville, it immediately becomes difficult to trace family connections: they constituted the class about whose background most is known, partly because more than any other group, their marriage settlements, wills and other legal documents are to be found in the notarial archives.
MUNICIPAL FINANCE IN AUXERRE.

Part I: Revenue.

As a perusal of the appended documents will amply show, the chief feature of Auxerre's financial administration in the eighteenth century was the struggle to make both ends meet: the value of the town's resources declined, especially in the last two decades before the Revolution, while costs and expenditure giddily mounted. The bare bones of the story are revealed in the various arrêts du conseil regulating the town's budget, and in the municipal officials' accounts and statements of receipt and expenditure. What follows will be, in the main, a commentary on and explanation of those documents.

Auxerre had three main sources of revenue: octrois patrimoniaux, taille négociale, and various rentes. The octrois were levied on the manufacture of barrels, on the wine trade, and on meat. The droit de jauge à la fabrique des tonneaux, the oldest, was acquired on 26 December 1618 at a cost of 8,811 l. and consisted of:

"un sol par chacun muid neuf, six deniers par feuilles et autres tonneaux à proportion, et sept sols six deniers par année sur chacun atelier de tonellier et tous autres faisans ou faisans faire des tonneaux dans lad. ville."

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8. I quote the actual terms, as both currency and measures are untranslatable.
Originally it was perhaps an extremely remunerative tax, because the wine trade, to which barrel-making was an essential auxiliary, was Auxerre's only industry, but during the eighteenth century, its product was almost insignificant.¹

The octroi on wine dated from 12 April 1692, when Auxerre was authorized, by arrêt du conseil, to levy:

"30s. par muid de vin entrant en la ville et faubourgs pour y être vendu et consommé, autre que du cru des habitants de la ville, et 30s. par muid de vin passant dessous et dessus le pont d'Auxerre."²

The most significant feature of these terms is the exception: the bourgeois of Auxerre, whose wine came from their country properties, escaped the tax completely; it was paid by the poor of the town who bought wine retail, and the Parisian wine merchants transporting the Côte d'Or vintages to the capital. At first, the wine merchants had resisted attempts to collect the dues, and to get the octroi established and accepted, the town had to fight several expensive lawsuits.³ Needless to say, the inhabitants' right to enjoy wine of their own growing free of tax was the occasion of evasion and smuggling. But the

¹ See Appendix C, X.
² Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, G 12. The capacity of the muid was fixed in 1715 at 37.5 setiers or 300 pintes de Paris, which today would be 272 litres. Lebeuf, Challe et Quantin: Mémoires sur l'histoire civile et ecclésiastique d'Auxerre, p. 501.
³ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 13.
problem of levying the octroi on wine seems to have caused less trouble in Auxerre than in many other French towns; at least there is no surviving evidence that the municipal officials were vexed with a never-ending stream of legal cases against smugglers, though it may well have been that they were just lethargic, and that unsuppressed smuggling accounts for the astonishing decline in the product of the tax from 1760.\(^1\)

Auxerre acquired the right to levy dues on meat in 1704, as a result of its purchase of the venal offices of inspecteurs aux boucheries: towns which bought them were allowed to indemnify themselves by collecting the taxes on meat attributed to the offices. In return for 24,750 l. (i.e. 22,500 l. \& the usual treasury tax of 2s. per livre),\(^2\) Auxerre was entitled to levy:

"3 l. par chacun boeuf et vache, 12s. par chacun veau et génisse, et 4s. par chaque mouton, brebis et chèvre, qui entreneront et se consommeront dans les principales villes."\(^3\)

This proved to be the town's most remunerative source of income in the eighteenth century.\(^4\)

1. This is mere surmise: I have no actual evidence to explain the fluctuations in the profit of any of the octroïs (See Appendix C X, XI, XII). It is doubtful whether the octroi par muid de vin was affected appreciably by wine production, as this is thought to have increased considerably in the years immediately preceding the Revolution: the comté d'Auxerre produced an average of 17,712 muids p.a. from 1756-1765, 10,051 muids p.a. 1766-1775, and 18,648 muids p.a. from 1776-1785. Lebeuf, Challe et Quantin, Mémoires sur l'histoire civile et ecclésiastique d'Auxerre, p. 550.

2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pg. 129, pc.16).

3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pg. 129, pc.1).

4. See Appendix C XII.
These octrois were exploited by farming them out.
The right to collect the dues during a specified period of years, usually six, was auctioned to the highest bidder, up to 1742 by the maire and échevins of Auxerre, after 1742 by the subdélégué. In the main, there was nothing remarkable about either the farm of the octrois or the farmers. There was however a brief spell in the middle of the eighteenth century when competition for the farm of the droit de 30s. par muid de vin was fierce. In July 1748 the farm of the octroi on wine was knocked down to Guy Michel de Pincemaille at 1,050 l. p.a. Now once the public auction had been closed, bidding could only be re-opened if there was an offer of at least an additional third of the price - a tiercement this was called. Such an offer was made in July 1748 by François Bourdillié and accepted by the municipal officials. Bourdillié thereby acquired the farm of the octroi for 1,400 l. p.a. Six years later, when his lease was finished, Jean Baptiste Chaceres bid 980 l. for the farm of the dues on wine and barrels combined, and this was the price at which the public auction closed on 16 June 1754. The following day Jacques Faultrier Brinville reopened the bidding with a tiercement, and two days later François Bourdillié doubled Brinville's offer. He thus became farmer of the octroi once again, for the record sum of 1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 44 & CC 51.
These two auctions were the only noteworthy incidents in the history of the octroi on wine.

The farm of the droits d'inspecteurs aux boucheries, on the other hand, was far more eventful, especially in the beginning, and demands a more detailed account. When the problem of raising the 24,750 l. required from the town for the offices of inspecteurs aux boucheries was put to the assemblée générale des habitants in May 1704, it suggested two solutions. A special tax could be levied on all the inhabitants, or the farm of the dues on meat could be conceded for a period of years to whoever was prepared to pay for the office. Although the first expedient was preferred by the assemblée générale des habitants, because the clergy refused to contribute to the proposed tax, it had to be abandoned, and the second alternative adopted. An auction was held on 9 September 1704 by the subdélégué Claude de Varennes, but not one offer was made for the farm, and so, having no other choice, the municipal officials themselves, under the name of Jacques Frappé, undertook to pay off the 24,750 l. in return for twelve years' farm of the meat taxes. However, the municipal officials quickly discovered that levying octrois was far from easy, and on 13 December 1704 they wrote to the intendant

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 44.
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pq. 129, pc. 2 & 3).
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 49.
explaining their difficulties and asking whether they might relinquish the farm if they received a good offer for it. The intendant advised them to consult the assemblée générale again. It met on 21 December 1704, and was informed that the master butchers' gild was willing to pay 2,800 l. p.a. for the farm of the dues. The assemblée générale voted to accept this offer, and since the traitant in charge of selling the offices of inspecteurs aux boucheries was threatening to take legal action if Auxerre did not discharge its debt of 24,750 l. immediately, it also authorized the municipal officials to raise a loan for that amount, which was to be repaid with the 2,800 l. p.a. from the butchers' gild. The intendant approved these arrangements, and thus Auxerre acquired the offices of inspecteurs aux boucheries and its octroi on meat.

Trouble arose again however on 1721, when on 1 April the suppression of the offices of inspecteurs aux boucheries was ordered. The corps de ville of Auxerre claimed that this abolition applied only to offices bought by individuals, and not to those purchased by towns, which were therefore entitled to continue levying the octrois on meat as before. The

1. During the three months that the municipal officials collected the dues, their receipts totalled 947 l. 11s., and their expenses 825 l. 7s. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pg.129, pc.14).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pg.129, pc.4).
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pg.129, pc.7).
butchers of Auxerre were of the contrary opinion, and on 7 June served a writ on the municipal officials notifying them that they intended to oppose the next auction of the octrois. To prove that they were in earnest they went on strike: one and all they resigned from the maîtrise and informed the municipal officials that they would slaughter no more beasts. Once before in 1715 the butchers had taken similar action, in an attempt to persuade the corps de ville that since the offices of inspecteurs aux boucheries had finally been paid for, it should stop levying the taxes on meat. This strike had been broken by the intendant fining every butcher 150 l. for each week of inactivity. In 1721 the dispute was settled by a decree of the royal council announcing that the abolition of inspecteurs aux boucheries did not apply to the towns of Burgundy, where the meat taxes had been converted into revenus patrimoniaux.

The butchers, not only of Auxerre, but of all towns, agitated against this taxation on meat, because it was collected from them. The taxes were droits d'entrée which the butchers had to pay on their beasts as they were brought into the town to be slaughtered. Of course some butchers tried to avoid payment by smuggling animals into the town at night through holes in the walls, or by establishing secret slaughter-houses in neighbouring villages, where the dues were not levied.

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pg.129, pc.22-26).
leaving their customers to smuggle the joint home. Such ruses, if discovered, were punishable by heavy fines and confiscation of the meat. In order that they should not be subjected to the prying investigations of the farmers of the octrois, who were always on the alert for fraud and evasions, the butchers of Auxerre themselves frequently took over the farm of the dues. They adopted this policy in 1723. In March of that year, Francois Collet, bourgeois, became farmer of the droits d'inspecteurs aux boucheries, at a price of 3,020 l.p.a.; a few days later the master butchers' gild negotiated a transfer of the farm, agreeing to pay the 3,020 l.p.a. into the municipal treasury, plus 480 l. p.a. to Collet as an indemnity. To raise this 3,500 l.p.a. the master butchers' gild, with the municipal officials' permission, taxed each butcher in the town in proportion to the beasts he killed, ignoring the tariff of meat dues laid down by the Crown. A roll was drawn up showing how much each butcher had to pay weekly, the total subscriptions per week being 67 l. This system was operated from February 1724, when it was initiated, certainly until May 1741, and perhaps even later. After 1741 the farm was taken over by individual master butchers (except for the period 1756-1760), ostensibly for their own personal profit: there is no mention in the leases of the farm that they were acting on behalf of their gild. But

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 75 (Pq.129, pc.27).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 49.
this omission cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence that
the butchers had no corporate interest in the farm, for the
municipal officials' statement of revenue and expenditure for
1769 includes the following passage:

"Droit patrimonial de la ville sur la Boucherie, adjugé
aux Bouchers pour le temps de six ans par acte du 19 juin
1766, 6400 l.p.a......les Baux antérieures étoient de
beaucoup inférieures et qu'on s'attend à une diminution
à la prochaine adjudication, les Bouchers ne l'ayant
porté à ce taux que pour éviter une regie genante pour
eux et très couteuse à la ville."

Theoretically, according to the lease, the farmer of the meat
taxes at this time was Joseph Mutellé, though it seems from
the corps de ville's statement that in fact he was acting on
behalf of his fellow butchers. The levy of this octroi in
Auxerre was, throughout the eighteenth century, characterised
by such uneventful tranquillity that it is highly probable
that the butchers themselves usually had an interest in the
farm.

Auxerre's second main source of revenue, the taille
négociale, was introduced because the octrois alone were not
sufficient to meet expenditure. In the eighteenth century, the
municipal officials invariably quoted the arrêt du conseil of

1. See Appendix C V.
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, GG.
15 March 1686 as the origin and justification of this local taxation, though in fact it dated from 1678 at least.\textsuperscript{1}

However it was the 1686 arrêt which fixed the taille négociale at 2675 l. p.a., the amount which was levied until 1777. This sum was divided among the inhabitants by the four assesseurs (one officier du bailliage, one avocat or procureur alternately, one merchant, and one artisan, chosen by the assemblée générale des habitants), who were also responsible for portioning out the royal taille. Legally all inhabitants were supposed to pay taille négociale, but in fact the clergy, the nobility, military officers, officiers commencaux, conseillers du bailliage sur le fait des aides et tailles, and officials of the maréchaussée, the grenier à sel, and the maîtrise des eaux et forêts all refused to contribute. In spite of its injustices and disadvantages, the municipal officials much preferred this direct taxation to duties on consumer goods, and when, in 1763, du Four de Villeneuve proposed abolishing the taille négociale, and replacing it with another octroi,\textsuperscript{2} they sprang to its defence with a reply which was so well reasoned that it ought to be preserved:

"De toutes les manières de faire contribuer l'habitants, la taille par imposition seroit la moins onéreuse si elle étoit bien distribuée. Il n'en coute rien pour la collecte,\textsuperscript{3}\textsuperscript{4}

et quand chaque menage porteroit sa part virile, il
n'en aurait pas vingt cinq sols. En taxant meme plus
haut les citoyens aisés, et plus bas les moins riches,
ceux là n'en payeroient que depuis 50s. jusqua 50s. et
ceux oy depuis 25s. jusqua 5s. Mais nous ne pouvons vous
taire, Monseigneur, qu'il s'y commet de grands abus. C'est
le plus foible qui paye le plus et le plus opulent qui
paye le moins: et par un autre renversement parmi les
plus opulents, plusieurs, sous pretexte d'exemption, ne
veulent pas acquitter leur petite imposition; en sorte
que le Collecteur timide en supporte toute la perte.

L'octroy sur les denrées n'est pas susceptible des
memes abus puisque c'est le marchand qui paye, et qui
tache de se dédommager sur celuy qui achette et qui
consomme; mais aussi il est a craindre que le marchand,
éfarouche de l'Impot ne porte ailleurs sa denree; et que
devenant plus rare, le Citoyen ne soit dans le cas de la
suracheter. De plus il faut mettre l'octroy en adjudica-
tion, le fermier veut gagner, l'usage des commis est
dispendieux, et comme le prix de la denrée augmente en
proportion du droit, par l'enlevement le Citoyen payera
infiment plus par un octroy que par une Imposition.
Enfin l'envie de s'affranchir de l'Impot fait les
fraudeurs, et la fraud devient une occasion de procès et
The municipal officials were not blind to the abuses connected with the taille négociable, but on the contrary were only too eager to correct them:

"Les injustices qui regnent dans la répartition du Roll de la Taille de la ville d'Auxerre ont excité de tous tems les plaintes des Maire et Echevins, et le cri general des habitants," wrote the subdélégué Robinet de Pontagny to the intendant on 5 January 1764. But unfortunately the municipal officials were helpless: forbidden to interfere in the distribution of taxation, they could only offer advice to the asséeurs, who would never undertake the complete reassessment of taxation required, but merely raised or lowered the taxes of a few individuals. As a result, continued Pontagny:

"on voit communément les personnes les plus aisées de la ville imposées a des sommes modiques, tandisque les Vignérons et les artisans (sic) supportent des cottes considérables; je sens, Monseigneur, que la reforme de tous ces abus devient un ouvrage penible, mais les officiers municipaux et les asséeurs en la presente amée me paroissent disposes a l'entreprendre; ils demandent seulement a y etre en quelque façon contraints par des ordres superieurs afin d'etre moins exposes aux reproches et aux

1. Letter 19 February 1763, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
clameurs des bourgeois qui se trouvent augmentées; si vous
suggérez à propos Monseigneur d'écrire aux Magistrats que
vous êtes informé des abus enormes qui se sont multiplié
à l'infini dans les différents roles des impositions de
la ville, et leur ordonner en conséquence de travailler à
les reformer de concert avec les asséeurs, je crois que
votre lettre suffirait seule pour animer leur zèle et leur
activité...."

The intendant did write the forceful letter as the subdélégué
suggested, but whether the taille négociée roll was overhauled
as a consequence is not recorded. Certainly the municipal
officials' hostility towards privilege and exemption was not
just a pose, because ten years later, when the town's finances
were in such a deplorable state that permission to triple the
taille was asked, they stipulated that all inhabitants, without
exception, should contribute, and so brought upon the corps de
ville its toughest battle of the century.

The cause of the trouble was the rather topical one
of inflation: by 1774, while the town's revenue was approximately
what it had been at the beginning of the century, not only had
costs increased, but as an examination of the appended state-
ments of receipt and expenditure will show, demands on the
municipal exchequer had multiplied. The town's annual credits

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 12.
totalled 8,749 l. 3s., its ordinary expenditure as fixed in
1760, 7,404 l. 1s. 10d. p.a., additional essential expenditure
cost a further 7,125 l. p.a. and its debts amounted to 16,970 l.
17s. These were the grim facts with which the municipal
officials confronted the assemblée générale des habitants on
9 January 1774. The problem was referred to the assemblée des
notables, which made the following recommendations, approved
unanimously by the assemblée générale on 13 February 1774:
royal permission was to be obtained for a taille négociale of
9,000 l. p.a. to be levied on all inhabitants of Auxerre, and
for a loan of 30,000 l. to be raised by means of rentes viagères,
which was to be used to pay off outstanding debts and reconstruct
the roads and water-supply. The tax proposal immediately
aroused the opposition of the clergy and the nobility, as the
subdélegué Pontagny had, two years' earlier prophesied it would:
"quant à l'augmentation du revenu, la forme proposé par
les habitants éprouvera sûrement bien des difficultés de
la part des gentilshommes et des ecclésiastiques." When asked by the intendant for their opinion of the suggested
changes, the clergy denied that the revenue of the town needed
to be supplemented and reminded him that no matter what
happened, their privileges exempted them from paying taille
négociale. The nobility were slightly more realistic: admitting

2. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7. Letter of Pontagny to the
   intendant, 22 February, 1772.
that Auxerre's revenue ought to be increased, they suggested a new *octroi* on wine to bring in 5,000 l. p.a. They too observed that they could pay no personal imposition. But the *intendant*, recalling the Parisian merchants' opposition to the existing duty on wine, plumped for the municipal officials' plan, especially as it in fact involved no new taxes, but merely an increase in the existing *taille négociée*. On 24 November 1774 Amelot gave the plan his official blessing and forwarded it to the *contrôle général*, where it was pigeon-holed for some time. A dispute between the town and clergy of Riom about a local tax similar to the *taille négociée* was then in full swing, and the *contrôle général* wanted to know in whose favour this controversy was decided before it would authorize an increase in Auxerre's taxation. However in 1776 the *contrôleur général* recognized that the town's financial situation would brook no delay, and the question was re-opened by sending the plan back to the *intendant* for further consideration.

It was the loan of 30,000 l. which now proved the greatest obstacle: the municipal officials insisted that it should be raised by means of *rentes viagères*, because since these were cancelled on the death of the *rentier*, the problem of repayment never arose. On the other hand, the interest on *rentes viagères* was tremendously high, and as the royal government pointed out, might cripple the town's finances and provoke
further loans in the future. The contrôle général was also disturbed by the amount of money the corps de ville wished to borrow: since the original plan was submitted, the town's debts had grown to the sum of 24,908 l. 17s., it was estimated that to improve the water-supply would cost 5,000-7,000 l. This meant that there would be no money to pay for the pavé:

"if faut ajouter que la ville manque de fonds pour payer journellement les ouvrages qui se font actuellement au pavé, dont les réparations avaient été absolument négligées pendant six à sept années qu'a duré l'administration établie par les Edits d'août 1764 et may 1765. Singulièrement la reconstruction à neuf du pavé en entier de la grande route depuis la porte du temple jusqu'à celle de Paris qui se fait sous l'autorisation de M. l'intendant, et dont la dépense pour ce seul objet, montera suivant le devis à 31 mille quelque cent livres." ¹

The contrôle général was persuaded to put aside its objections and on 18 January 1777 an arrêt du conseil was issued authorising the municipal officials of Auxerre to levy a tax of 9,000 l. p.a. and to raise a loan of 30,000 l. by rentes viagères. Four months later, on 12 May 1777, letters patent were added. ² This extra formality was intended by the municipal officials to overawe the privileged classes and

dissuade them from seeking exemption from the taille négociale. It proved to be a gross miscalculation and increased the corps de ville's difficulties enormously, for the letters patent had to be registered by the cour des aides of Paris, which in the process modified the terms almost beyond recognition. The original arrêt stipulated that the taille négociale was to be paid by all manner of citizens; the only exceptions it admitted were the town's hospitals and écoles de charité, and employees of the ferme générale and the maréchaussée who neither owned property in the town nor engaged in commerce. The cour des aides qualified this clause by adding that it could not derogate from existing privileges and exemptions. According to the arrêt du conseil the taille roll was to be verified and authorized by the intendant. But the cour des aides stipulated in the letters patent that the conseillers sur le fait des aides et tailles au bailliage d'Auxerre, not the intendant, were to check and pass the tax roll, and that the tax collectors were to take the oath of office before these same bailliage officials. The cour des aides also deprived the intendant of the right to hear complaints from those who thought themselves overtaxed: their grievances were first to

1. When the comté d'Auxerre, hitherto a pays d'élection, was united to the province of Burgundy in 1688, the élus de Bourgogne stipulated as a condition of the union, the suppression of the élection d'Auxerre. They allowed however, four special conseillers au bailliage d'Auxerre to take over the purely judicial duties of the former élection.
be investigated by the conseillers au bailliage, from whose decisions appeals were to go before the cour des aides itself. These drastic amendments gave the privileged classes more than adequate loopholes through which to escape, and inevitably led to a bitter quarrel between the intendant of Dijon and the cour des aides.

As soon as the terms of the letters patent were made known, two individuals whose contributions to the original taille négociale were so overdue that the municipal officials had taken legal action against them, sued the corps de ville before the bailliage, alleging wrongful prosecution. They claimed that their status as nobles exempted them from paying taxes, and that the old taille négociale was illegal because none of the arrêts du conseil authorizing it had been properly registered, i.e. by the cour des aides. When the municipal officials refused to recognize the bailliage's jurisdiction, on the grounds that the competent judge of tax disputes was the intendant, the procureur du roi au bailliage in retaliation declared the intendant incompetent, and questioned the validity of all taille rolls and of all forms of octrois authorized in the past by the intendant, and appealed to the cour des aides to pronounce on this issue. As the intendant

pointed out, this placed all Auxerre's sources of revenue in jeopardy. Indignantly, he reminded Necker that since the seventeenth century, the intendants of Dijon had been responsible for the execution of arrêts empowering not only Auxerre, but also Noyers, Semur-en-Auxois and Chatillon-sur-Seine to levy taille négociable, and that their right to authorize tax rolls had never before been doubted. The cour des aides, according to Dupleix, intendant of Dijon, aimed: "de connaître seule de toutes les contestations relatives aux impositions de quelque nature qu'elles soient." It had been incited to adopt this attitude by the conseillers sur le fait des aides et tailles au baillage d'Auxerre, who:

"ont la pretension d'etre exemptes de cette Taille négociable dont les Lettres Patentes ordonnent que l'imposition se fera sur tous les habitants sans distinction des privilégié ou non privilégié: comme par leurs charges ces officiers sont au nombre des privilégié, ils voudraient s'établir juges en première instance des contestations relatives à cette imposition, et il est sensible qu'ils commenceraient par s'en faire décharger en prononçant que tous les privilégié en seront exempt, malgré la disposition contraire des Lettres Patentes. C'est pour parvenir à ce but qu'ils ont instruit M. le Procureur General de l'arrêt du 18 février 1777 des qu'il a été obtenu et que

1. i.e. of the cour des aides.
ce magistrat a fait des démarches auprès de M. de Boulogne qui m'en a prévenu dans le temps, pour empêcher qu'il fut exécuté sans Lettres Patentes. Ce sont évidemment ces mêmes officiers qui ont provoqué la Cour des Aides à insérer dans son Arrêt d'enregistrement que les Lettres Patentes ne pourraient nuire aux droits et privilèges d'aucune Corps ou Particuliers. L'intérêt qu'ils avaient à empêcher l'effet de la disposition des Lettres Patentes à cet égard, suffit pour convaincre qu'ils auront suggéré la modification qui y a été mise en y ajoutant celle qui pouvait les rendre maitres de décider sur qui l'imposition devait tomber. Ce sont eux enfin et il n'y a même qu'eux qui aient pu donner avis à M. le Procureur Général de la demande portée au Conseil par les Officiers Municipaux contre les modifications afin de traverser cette demande.  

As a result of the intendant's urgent representations, this dispute was speedily settled by the conseil d'état, which on 14 December 1779 issued a new arrêt nullifying the modifications inserted in the letters patent by the cour des aides.  

For Auxerre it had proved a costly business. The first arrêt du conseil, 1777, cost 687 l. 8s. 6d., and the letters patent 610 l. The cour des aides charged 640 l. for

1. Intendant de finance.
3. Arch. nat., H l. 197, 76.
registering them. The second arrêt du conseil annulling the effects of this registration cost 1,583 l. 3s. making a grand total of 3,520 l. 1ls. 6d. Moreover the municipal officials got previous little satisfaction out of their somewhat expensive efforts, for the opposition to the taille négociable did not abate. In a letter to the intendant dated 14 February 1780, Pontagny, the subdélégué, warned that: "la noblesse et le clergé déjà mecontens de l'impôt formeront de concert avec d'autres privilèges de nouvelles oppositions, le petit peuple murmura." On 20 May 1780, he reported that the municipal officials, in a desperate attempt to win popular support for the taille négociable, had invited the gilds to send deputies to assist in the assessment and levy of the tax. Unfortunately the privileged classes would not co-operate, on the contrary, there were rumours that they were about to enter a formal opposition against the arrêt:

"ils ont aussi appelé à leur operations des députés des differens ordres de la ville, et même des artisans et des vignerons; le clergé, la noblesse, le corps du presidial et les avocats n'ont point voulu envoyer des députés, et on pense que le clergé et la noblesse vont se pouvoir par opposition contre les lettres patentes, comme devant être exempts de toutes charges publiques, les officiers

Later, when the bailliage did vote to oppose the taille négociable, Pontagny confirmed that, as he had suspected, it was the conseillers dur le fait des aides et tailles who were responsible for this decision:

"Le corps du Bailliage est composé de plus de 28 officiers, si tous les membres eussent été réunis, la requête en opposition n'eut pas été présentée de 17 officiers présents à la délibération, huit voix furent pour ne pas donner de requête en opposition, l'autre partie l'emporta d'une voix, on eut pris la voie des représentations; on peut regarder cette démarche comme l'ouvrage des conseillers de l'élection honoraires au Bailliage, jaloux de ce que l'arrêt de 1777 ne leur a point donné la compétence."

However, the bailliage officials won over the intendant, because, instead of merely reiterating, as had the clergy and nobility, that their status exempted them from all personal taxation, they reasoned that the town's expenditure was grossly inflated, and that, if reduced, the taille négociable could

easily be dispensed with. This argument appealed strongly to Feydeau, who immediately initiated an inquiry into Auxerre's budget. As a result of this he was able to send off to Necker on 8 August 1780 a memorandum showing how the ordinary annual expenditure of Auxerre could be reduced from 13,285 l. 1s. 10d. to 6,564 l. 1s. 10d. Necker was delighted by this solution, since it obviated the need for a taille négociable, which was causing considerable agitation in the Assembly of the Clergy of France:

"J'ai vu avec beaucoup de plaisir l'attention que vous avez donnée à l'examen des reductions dont chaque article des charges de la communauté, fixée par l'arrêt du Conseil du 18 fevrier 1777 pouvoir être susceptible; c'etait effectivement, ainsi que vous l'observez, le point principal de l'affaire....le parti de suprimer entierement cette taille, en retirant l'arrêt et les lettres patentes qui l'ont établie, me paroit infiniment preferable à celui de la laisser subsister pour 3,000 l.: quelque modique que soit cette somme, sa perception laisserait toujours subsister des contestations dont il est interessant de suprimer la cause, surtout pour ce qui concerne le clergé d'Auxerre, dont l'assemblée générale du clergé de france a pris les interets extremement à coeur.... Les difficultés qu'éprouve la perception de la taille

1. See Appendix C VIII.
negociable justifié par l'extrême lenteur avec laquelle les recouvrements s'en font, celles élevées sur le même objet de la part de la Cour des aides sont encore de nouveau motifs pour en faire désirer l'entière suppression....ne serait-il pas possible d'améliorer sa situation par d'autres moyens tel qu'un droit additionnel de 8 ou 10 sols pour livre suivant le besoin, sur les droits de denrées destinées à la consommation des habitants."

Difficulties in levying the *taille négociable*, mentioned by Necker, had arisen because the lower classes had not been slow to follow the brilliant example of opposition unwittingly set by their superiors:

"La ville a un pressant besoin de deniers, le receveur est en avance, les troubles actuels arretent le recouvrement d'une somme due sur les 4 derniers rolles de la taille négociable, cela fait un objet de 6,000 l., tous les cottisables même les artisans et les vignerons refusent de payer."

The disastrous failure of the *taille négociable* forced the municipal officials to adopt the course suggested by Necker and Feydeau - to reduce expenditure and replace the *taille* by a new *octroi*.

2. Letter of 1 July 1780 from Pontagny to the intendant. Arch. dep. C 15.
The taille négociale was replaced in 1783 by an octroi of 24 sous on each minot of salt sold by the grenier à sel of Auxerre, which, until the gabelle was abolished during the Revolution, produced between 6,000 - 7,000 l. p.a. But this solution of the town's financial problems was not reached without considerable difficulty, for while the corps de ville of Auxerre refused to consider additional duties on any other type of foodstuff, the intendant of Paris, Berthier de Sauvigny, protested warmly against the octroi on salt. As a result of the administrative disorder characteristic of the ancien-régime, Auxerre's grenier à sel happened to serve several parishes in the adjoining généralité of Paris. Berthier de Sauvigny complained that to levy duties on the salt sold by Auxerre's grenier à sel was to oblige people outside the town to contribute towards the payment of its debts, which was manifestly unjust. Besides a salt-tax fell most heavily on the poor. Feydeau, intendant of Dijon, countered with the following arguments: investigation had proved that two-thirds of the salt sold by the grenier went to the inhabitants of Auxerre; even when taxed, salt from this particular grenier would still be cheaper than that from any other depot in the district, with the exception of Seignelay; and the farmers general approved

1. See Appendix C XIII.
2. Salt in Auxerre cost 58 l. 3s. 9d. per minot; in Dijon, Saulieu and other greniers in the province it was 65 l. 13s. 9d. per minot; so that even when taxed, Auxerre's salt would be 5 l. 6s. cheaper. (Feydeau's arithmetic is surely faulty: would it not have been 6 l. 6s. cheaper?).
of the octroi because it would level out the difference in the price of salt in lower Burgundy, and would therefore discourage smuggling. As to the objection that people outside the town would be contributing to its revenues:

"les habitants qui sont du ressort du grenier d'Auxerre sont aussi du ressort du baillage d'où résulte l'obligation de contribuer à l'entretien de l'auditoire et des prisons qui sont autant pour eux que pour les habitants de la ville; qu'ils profitent également du collège où ils envoient leurs enfans, de l'hôtel-dieu ou leurs pauvres malades sont recu."¹

The contrôle général found Feydeau's reasoning the more persuasive, and thus Auxerre was granted its octroi on salt.

Various rentes were Auxerre's only other considerable source of revenue. Capital lent to the provincial government bore interest at the rate of 60¼ l. 17s. p.a., and a further 1,000 l. p.a. accrued from a rente paid from the farm of the octroi on wine entering Paris. This rente, granted to the town in 1641 as compensation for the suppression of its own octrois, was originally worth 8,000 l. p.a., but was reduced by half in 1666, and 3,000 l. of it transferred to the Jesuit college. When the town's budget was being reviewed by the conseil d'état circa 1757, an attempt was made to recover this 3,000 l. for

¹ Arch. nat. H 1. 197, 20.
² For details see Déclaration des biens et revenus de la ville et de ses charges, 7 September, 1764. Appendix C IV
the town, for the agreement with the Jesuits provided that it should cease to be paid when the college's other revenues totalled 4,000 l. p.a. and it was rumoured that the Jesuits by that time enjoyed at least 7,000 l. from other sources. But although the arrêt of 1 January 1760 required the college to give an account of its revenues, it prevaricated, and the corps de ville never managed to recover the 3,000 l. p.a. and in 1776 legally surrendered it to the école militaire.¹

One disadvantage common to both the Paris and Dijon rentes was tardy payment. The municipal officials, in a letter to the intendant dated 28 May 1780, explained that for more than twenty years the rente on the entrées de Paris had always been three years overdue, because the system of accounting used by the farm organization made delays unavoidable; while the élus généraux of Burgundy were usually two years in arrears with their finances.²

Another small item of revenue mentioned occasionally in Auxerre's budget needs explaining: the droit de minage. This corn duty, which consisted of one-fortieth of all grain bought at the market of Auxerre, was acquired by the Hôpital des Cent-Filles de Notre-Dame de la Miséricorde in Paris, at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The corps de ville was frequently embroiled in squabbles and litigation with the

¹ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 13.
² Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 13.
Hôpital des Cent-Filles, because the merchants of Auxerre, to avoid paying the droit de minage, sold their corn direct from their granaries, instead of taking it to the market. To put an end to this unsatisfactory state of affairs, the corps de ville in 1691 decided to lease the droit de minage in perpetuity for an annual rent of 2,000 l. p.a. The municipal officials continued themselves to farm out the droit de minage, but on terms specially favourable to the people of Auxerre: the farmer had to allow them to sell their corn from their granaries tax-free; he could only levy the due on corn bought and sold in the market. This arrangement provided a small, but not to be despised profit for the municipal exchequer, and a valuable concession for the townspeople. But there was always the anxiety that the Hôpital des Cent-Filles might lease the droit de minage to someone else, or collect it on its own behalf. From time to time the administrators of the Hôpital des Cent-Filles cleverly exploited this threat to persuade the corps de ville of Auxerre to increase the rent it paid for the droit de minage - to 3,000 l. in 1730, to 4,500 l. in 1774. In spite of all the town's pleading, the Hôpital would never sell the due outright. Ironically enough, the arrêt du conseil issued in 1774, which allowed limited free-trade in grain and was therefore welcomed in Auxerre, cost the town further expense. Salle and Durand, the farmers to
whom the corps de ville had leased the droit de minage, demanded an indemnity for the loss this reform had caused them. The sum agreed upon was 120 l. p.a. for the duration of the lease.

Such were Auxerre's most important ordinary sources of revenue. In addition, extra octrois were occasionally levied to meet extraordinary demands, usually from the royal government, in the form of dons gratuits and rachat des offices. These octrois did not, properly speaking, provide revenue for the town's enjoyment and benefit - the proceeds went into the royal coffers, - and will be dealt with in the third section of this chapter. There was, however, one rather interesting exception.

In 1739 the corps de ville was authorized by an arrêt du conseil to levy an extraordinary octroi of 3d. on each livre de pain mollet baked and sold by the bakers of the town and faubourg of Auxerre, in order to raise money for the construction of windmills, which, it was estimated, would cost 12,000 l. The municipal officials persuaded the government that this quixotic enterprise was essential, by arguing that the local watermills were frequently put out of action by frost and drought, and that famine ensued. On 24 February 1740, the farm of this octroi was auctioned to Francois Bourdilliat at 1210 l. p.a. for ten years, the length of time for which the

due was to be levied. On 4 July 1750, the intendant prolonged the octroi for a further period of ten years, on what grounds there is no evidence. Certainly the money was not being used for the purpose originally intended, because in 1754 the municipal officials asked the conseil d'état for permission to spend the money raised by the octroi on pain mollet to build a corps de garde, to buy some fire-engines, and to restore the walls and pavé. On 4 July Robinet de Pontagny, the subdélégué, wrote to the intendant in support of this request:

"comme il ne paroit pas d'une grande utilité pour la ville d'avoir des moulins à vent.....je crois que la requête des maires et échevins merite d'etre repondu favorablement, et que les objets de depense qu'ils y proposent sont beaucoup plus utiles pour la ville que l'établissement des moulins à vent qui étoit ordonné par l'arrest du Conseil."

The conseil d'état approved the change of plan, and on 12 November 1754 authorized the money to be spent on the corps de garde, fire-engines, walls and pavé. The revenue from the octroi for the years 1740-1750 amounted to 12,100 l. p.a., and according to the accounts submitted to the chambre des comptes, it was spent thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corps de garde</td>
<td>5,665 l. 6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavé</td>
<td>3,030 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenades</td>
<td>2,192 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire-engines</td>
<td>1,896 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indemnity</td>
<td>150 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>30 l. 2s. 4d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>12,963 l. 8s. 4d.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The indemnity mentioned above was paid to the farmer of the octroi, Bourdilliat, because the municipal officials, acting in their police capacity, had from time to time forbidden the bakers to make pain mollet, owing to the scarcity and price of grain, and Bourdilliat had claimed compensation for the losses he had sustained as a result of their prohibition.

Part II: Expenditure.

A. Public works.

During the eighteenth century municipal expenditure steadily mounted: in 1692 Auxerre spent 4,314 l. 14s., after 1760 rarely less than 10,000 l. p.a., and from 1784 annual expenditure never fell below 14,700 l. p.a.¹ The growing cost of public works and amenities largely accounts for this overall increase. Ordinary expenditure on the following six items - pavé; promenades; ponts, murs, portes et tours; fontaines; horloge; and enlèvement des boues - was budgeted at 2,350 l. p.a. in 1686;² at 4,850 l. p.a. in 1760;³ and at 8,400 l.p.a. in 1777.⁴ And these government-fixed estimates were not infrequently exceeded. Yet it is difficult to establish conclusively what exactly was spent on public works, since the form in which municipal accounts were drawn up is distinctly unhelpful, and comparatively few contracts for farms of public works have survived. The following discussion must perforce be rather haphazard and sketchy.

The repair and maintenance of Auxerre’s pavé was one of the corps de ville’s biggest headaches. Between 1678 and 1760, 800 l. p.a. was allowed for this work in the town’s

¹. See municipal accounts: Arch. d’Auxerre, CC 63-73, & GG.
². Appendix C I.
³. Appendix C III
⁴. Appendix C VII.
budget; In 1760 this sum was increased to 2,000 l. p.a., and in 1777 to 4,000 l. p.a. Yet the evidence suggests that from about 1726, the cash available for pavé rarely met the cost, and that the municipal officials were continually obliged to resort to extraordinary expenditure in order to bridge the gap.

It was customary for the construction and repair of all public works to be arranged by auctioning the job to the lowest bidder. With Auxerre's pavé this was impossible, as the municipal officials explained to the intendant:

"Comme il n'y a ici qu'un pavier il y aurait du danger à procéder aux entreprises du pavé par voyage d'adjudication, d'autant plus qu'il y a certains ouvrages difficiles dont il n'est point capable. Nous faisons donc pris à la toise......si même le travail est tel que nous ne devions pas le lui confier, nous sommes plus maîtres d'y employer un pavier étranger plus habile." 4.

The cost of pavé per toise rose considerably in the 1720s. In 1693 the price of new pavé was 3 l. per toise, of repaired pavé, 30s.; these figures remained constant until 1719, when new pavé was quoted at 3 l. 5s. per toise. Four years later it had again increased to 4 l. 10s., while repaired pavé cost

1. Arch. nat. E 1794
2. Appendix C III.
3. Appendix C VII.
4. Letter 19 February 1763, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
2 l. 5s., and by 1731 the price was 5 l. per toise of new pavé, 2 l. per toise of repaired.1 These figures explain why the 800 l. p.a. fixed by the government in 1686, which was, until 1726,2 sufficient to maintain the town’s pavé, thereafter had to be supplemented. The intendant granted permission for an extra 2,000 l. to be spent on pavé in 1739,3 and approximately a quarter of the profit of the octroi sur le pain mollet went on the same object. According to those contracts of the paveur which had survived, the cost of repairing the pavé in 1755 was 2,950 l., in 1759, 1,190 l., and in 1777, 8,355 l.4 The following year, 1778, expenditure on pavé was 5,452 l. 16s. 6d., in 1779, 4,900 l. 16s. 9d., and in 1787, 5,796 l. 0s. 6d.5

It seems not unlikely that the very heavy expenditure on pavé toward the end of the eighteenth century was the result of its almost total neglect in the years 1765-1772. After examining the accounts of this period, the subdélégué, Pontagny, wrote on 6 April 1773 to the intendant:

"ces réparations ont été totalement négligées par les officiers municipaux, on voit avec étonnement qu’il n’a pas été dépensé pendant 7 ans pour un objet aussiy

2. Receipts for payments made to the paveur show that repairing the pavé cost 800 l.p.a. in 1693, 1695, 1699, 1700, 1702, 1704, 1705, 1706, 1707, 1708, 1709, 1710, 1711; 1,600 l. in 1713; 2001 l.p.a. in 1714, 1717, 1719, 1722, 1723; 2,400 l. in 1726. Arch. d'Auxerre, DD 30.
5. Arch. d'Auxerre, GG.
necessaire plus de 3,750 l.; il y a apparence qu'ils ont menagé sur cette partie ainsy que sur celle de l'entretien des murs, port et portes fixé par l'art. 14 dudit arrêt du conseil à 1800 l. par an pour pouvoir fournir aux dépenses extraordinaires, la pluspart inutiles qui ont monté suivant les comptes pendant ces 7 années à plus de 36 mille livres.

Feydeau's memorandum to Necker of 1780 suggests another reason why the bills for pavé were so high. The municipal officials were importing the material for road-building from Fontainebleau, which was sheer extravagance, and they did not follow the usual practice of requiring the householders to repair the side roads. Feydeau estimated that if the ordinary pavé du pays was employed, and if the squares and the main roads only were maintained at the town's expense, a saving of 2,000 l. p.a. was possible.

There is little to be said about the money spent on repairing the walls, towers and gateways of Auxerre, except that it was almost totally wasted. As the clear-sighted Feydeau pointed out in 1780, these fortifications were quite useless and ought to have been demolished. However, considerable sums were spent on them during the eighteenth century: 1,200 l.p.a. was allowed for their upkeep between 1678 and 1776, and

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 14.
2. Arch. nat. H l. 197, 60.
3. Arch. nat. H l. 197, 60.
5. Instead of 14,000 l.: the 1760 arrêt had allowed 2,000 l.p.a. for pavé.
double that amount from 1776 until 1780 when Feydeau slashed it to 300 l. p.a. Up to 1730 the arrangements were very simple: each year 1,300 l. was spent on either general maintenance, or on some special repair. In 1695 the whole sum was devoted to the corps de garde de la porte du Pont: in 1697 the porte d'Esleny had a major overhaul, costing 1,200 l. and in 1702 it was the turn of the porte du Temple. From 1730 expenditure was more erratic, with very large sums being spent at two or three-yearly intervals: 1,386 l. was spent on the fortifications in 1730, 2,000 l. in 1731, 5,614 l. in 1733, 2,400 l. in 1735, 1,200 l. in 1736, 1737, and 1738, 1,600 l. in 1739, 2,590 l. in 1742, 2,500 l. in 1744, 3,988 l. in 1749, 4,450 l. in 1752, and 5,029 l. in 1755. I doubt whether any special significance is to be attached to this change.

Though the historian ought not to pass judgment, it is difficult to refrain from concluding that the money devoted to Auxerre's walls, gates and towers, would have been put to much better use developing the town's water-supply. This was deplorably inadequate throughout the century, and the few recorded attempts to improve it came to nothing. In 1707, 530 l. were spent on looking, in vain, for a spring to supply the fontaine de Ste Genevieve. The assemblée générale des habitants demanded in 1731 that an hydraulic engineer from Paris 1. Arch. d'Auxerre, DD 21-22.
should be hired to search for water, as the town’s fontainier was an unlearned man, unable to cope with such matters. The result of this demand was presumably the estimate submitted on 31 October 1731, by Renequin, ingénieur du roi, that it would cost 22,225 l. to put the fontaine de Ste Genevieve in good working order. This advice was not acted on, for two years later the assemblée générale des habitants again asked that an hydraulic engineer be brought from Paris to examine the water-supply. A certain Couplet, professor of mathematics at the Observatoire de Paris, visited Auxerre, on the intendant’s suggestion, and drew up plans which, it was estimated, would have cost 64,485 l. to carry out. These the intendant thought excessive; he said bluntly that the town could not afford such an enormous sum, and pointed out that Dijon had no fountains, only wells, broadly hinting that what was good enough for Dijon would be good enough for Auxerre. He also thought that Couplet’s fee of 2,047 l. 18s. was exorbitant, and refused to allow the municipal officials to pay him more than 1,200 l. In consequence, the angry professor for some months bombarded the intendance with demanding letters.

So Auxerre’s water-supply remained basically unaltered throughout the century. 200 l. p.a. was allowed in the town’s budget for the upkeep of the fountains, until 1760, when it was

increased to 300 l. p.a. This sum was only sufficient to pay the wages of a *fontainier*, who was responsible for the cleaning and general maintenance of the fountains and minor repairs. Major repairs, such as the replacement of broken pipes necessitated extraordinary expenditure. In 1702 it cost 2,090 l. to mend the *fontaine de Ste. Genevieve*. Repairs to the fountains amounted to 3,551 l. 17s. 6d. in 1718, and 1,200 l in 1753. When the *fontainier's* wages were raised to 300 l. p.a. in the *arrêt du conseil* of 1 January 1760, it was on condition that he himself paid for fixing all faults and spare parts. He soon asked to be released from this agreement:

"On n'a payé au *fontainier* que 200 l. jusqu'en 1759 inclusivement, parcequ'alors la Ville payait séparément les reparations extraordinaires: on luy a payé au contraire 300 l. en 1760, conformément au nouvel arrêt, parceque cette année le *fontainier* avoit pris ces dépenses extraordinaires sur son compte. Enfin en 1761 on ne luy a donné que l'ancien taux de 200 l. parcequ'il n'a plus voulu se charger de l'extraordinaire des dépenses qui étoient devenues trop considérables.

C'est donc la ville en 1761 qui en a fait tous les frais: elles ont été authorisées par une délibération

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, DD 25.
générale des habitants du 20 septembre; Nous vous avons présenté, Monseigneur, notre requête en conséquence, mais elle n'est pas revenue; et il n'a pas été possible de l'attendre parce que d'un côté les réparations étaient urgentes, la ville manquant absolument d'eau, et que de l'autre la saison propre à ces sortes de travaux s'échappait, tellement même qu'on ne put pas les faire.\(^1\)

The upkeep of the **grand horloge de la ville** was organized in the same way as that of the fountains: the money was used to pay the wages of an horloger, who took care of everything except structural alterations, which came out of extraordinary expenditure.

Judging by the difficulties experienced by the municipal officials from time to time in arranging for the streets to be cleaned, Auxerre must have been a more than usually filthy place in which to live in the eighteenth century. Although it was in 1763 that subdélégué Pontagny wrote: "Il est très difficile de trouver en cette ville des personnes qui veuillent entreprendre l'enlèvement des boues, et qu'il est encore plus difficile d'en trouver qui s'acquittent bien leurs devoir."\(^2\) His remark could well apply to the whole of the ancien régime.

Street-cleaning was auctioned to whoever would do the job for the lowest price. The town was divided into four quarters, and the adjudicataire had to provide a cart for each quarter. These carts had to be tightly constructed so that liquid filth did not escape, fitted with a scoop and a brush, and pulled by two horses, one of which carried a bell to warn the inhabitants of the muck-carts' arrival. Each quarter was cleaned every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, the carts making their circuits at 9 a.m. during the winter from All Saints to Easter, and an hour earlier in the summer. In addition the streets in which the markets were held had to be cleaned up after the market had closed. The adjudicataire collected not only mud, manure and filth, but also snow and ice in winter, and for a payment of 5s., building rubble and debris dumped in the streets. Broken glass and crockery was not to be thrown into the roadway, but handed to the carters as they made their rounds. The adjudicataire could sell the filth to whomever he pleased, provided it was taken beyond the town's boundary. Such were the chief terms of the farm of street-cleaning in 1760;¹ they remained basically the same throughout the eighteenth century.

The cost varied considerably: 450 l. p.a. in 1728, 250 l. p.a. in 1731, 550 l. p.a. in 1733, 490 l. p.a. in 1737, 507 l. 10s. p.a. in 1741, 500 l. p.a. in 1745, 400 l. p.a. in 1

¹ Arch. dep. de l’Yonne, C 11.
1751, 700 l. p.a. in 1757, 1,000 l. p.a. in 1760. The municipal officials accounted for this last staggering figure thus:

"à la dernière adjudication, soit qu'il y eut du concert entre les Chartiers; soit qu'ils y eussent éprouvé des pertes par le passé, personne ne semblait en vouloir. Nous ecrivimes à Mr. de Fleury pour luy proposer de faire l'enlevement des boues par corvées: mais il nous repondit par sa lettre du 2 Novembre 1759 qu'il ne pouvait adopter ce party, dont il n'y avoit pas d'exemple. Nous fismes donc obligés de remettre l'enlevement des boues de nouveau en adjudication; et malgré trois remises on ne put trouver aucun rabais au dessous des mille livres."

This crisis must have been temporary, for according to Faydeau the farm was usually auctioned between 1760 and 1780 at 600 l. p.a., and in 1783 it dropped to 450 l. p.a.

However, at the auction of the lease in 1786, the price again soared: the lowest offer was 1,200 l. p.a.! The situation was saved by a proposition from Sieurs Merat and Maure, an avocat and an aubergiste, who wanted the street-filth as manure for their vineyards: they offered to clean the streets free of charge, if certain conditions attached to the former leases were removed. They refused, for example, to shift rubble and

2. Letter 19 February 1763, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
3. Arch. nat., H I. 197, 60.
snow, they expected the town to provide the carts, and to pay them 200 l. p.a. for sweeping the public squares. The municipal officials agreed to these terms, and the intendant reluctantly authorized their contract for three years from 1 January 1787. All did not go well. On 24 November 1788 the assemblée des notables demanded that the municipal officials should arrange promptly for the streets to be properly swept, as the cleaning had been neglected for a long time. The corps de ville wrote to the intendant on 6 December 1788, informing him that one of the parties to the street-cleaning agreement had died, that his area of the town was absolutely untouched, and that his surviving colleague removed only as much filth as he needed to manure his vines. They suggested that the work should be farmed out once more. The intendant accordingly authorized a new auction.

This was held on 5 April 1789 when the lowest bid of 600 l. p.a. came from Auxerre's secrétaire-greffier, Faultrier de Brinville: he too was interested in the garbage as manure for his country property. The municipal officials warmly recommended his offer, asserting in a letter to the intendant dated 11 April 1789, that since the greffier was always under their eye, it would be easy for them to ensure that he carried out his obligations. The intendant was less enthusiastic when he discovered that Faultrier de Brinville refused to sweep the public squares, to remove snow and ice in winter, and to give
the town its customary forty-eight loads of filth as manure. He calculated that if the value of all these incidental services which the town was losing was taken into consideration, they were in fact paying not 600 l. but 976 l. p.a. for the street-cleaning. However, as Faultrier de Brinville's was the best offer, the farm was passed by the intendant.¹

B. The municipal wage bill.

Those items of Auxerre's budget which fall under this heading are, by and large, fairly straightforward and require little explanation. Some salaries remained static throughout the century. The maire and échevins were paid honoraires of 62 l. p.a. from 1686 to 1789; this payment was never queried, except by that ruthless intendant, Feydeau, during his economy drive. He claimed that since the municipal officials of Auxerre were not venal, titular officials, for them to have any salary was irregular. Nevertheless he allowed it to continue, because the amount involved was so small,² and because it was of such long-standing.³ Feydeau did not let similar sentiments sway him when considering the 12 l. p.a. which had been paid to the crieur de nuit for over a century. As its functions were, in his opinion, useless, he suppressed the office and with it

¹. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 11.
². Exactly how this 62 l. p.a. was divided among the maire and échevins, I do not know.
³. Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
the salary. Until 1781 too, a payment of 30 l. was made annually to the procureur de fait commun, and 100 l. to the predicateurs de l'Avent et du Carême. Feydeau abolished the first because, as the procureur claimed fees for any legal work he did for the town, a salary was superfluous. As to the predicateurs de l'Avent et du Carême, they received a stipend from the bishop and chapter of the cathedral, and in addition, if they belonged to a mendicant order, a collection was made on their behalf round the parishes of the diocese, consequently, argued Feydeau, it was unnecessary for the municipal treasury too to support them. Another wage which varied little during the century was that of the tambour: between 1678 and 1760 he received 20 l. p.a., increased by the arrêt du conseil of 1 January 1760 to 30 l. p.a., at which it remained until the Revolution. But the salaries of most of the officials and employees of the town fluctuated considerably.

One very important official whose remuneration has a somewhat chequered history, was the secrétaire-greffier. In 1678 he was paid 100 l. p.a. on condition that he provided

1. Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
2. The Lenten sermons were worth 60 l. and the Advent 40 l. See Appendix C II.
3. Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
5. See Appendix C III.
6. This increase may be due to the employment of an additional trompette, because the 1760 arrêt and subsequent documents mention "tambour(s) et Trompette(s)."
free of charge all required copies of documents. This sum was increased by 25 l. some time before 1757, in return for which he agreed to furnish heating and lighting for the council room in the town-hall. This apparently rather odd arrangement arose because the secrétaire was at the same time concierge of the town-hall. Again in 1760 his salary was increased by a further 25 l., bringing it to 150 l. p.a. Ten years later the secrétaire’s pay became an article in the dispute between the two opposing political factions in Auxerre. On 6 October 1770 the majority group on the corps de ville – the Grecs – voted that a further 240 l.p.a. should be paid to the secrétaire, Faultrier de Brinville, a supporter of the Grecs, in addition to the salary laid down in the arrêt du conseil 1 January 1760. The intendant of Burgundy pounced on this unauthorised increase when he was going through the municipal accounts, and forbade it, ordering that, as from 1 July 1772 the secrétaire should be paid the usual salary of 150 l. p.a. only. Quite unabashed the assemblée des notables decided, on 13 January 1772, that, on the contrary, he should receive 300 l. p.a. from that date. Then the various parties concerned started string-pulling to influence the intendant. Boyard de Forterre, a friend of Faultrier de Brinville, wrote to a M. Jolivet asking him to use 1. See Appendix C II. 2. See Appendix C III.
his influence with the subdélégué-général so that the notables' decision was favourably received by the intendant. Exploiting his position as subdélégué, Robinet de Fontagny, who was hostile to the Grec party, informed the intendant in a letter of 22 February 1772, that there was no cash in the town's treasury, and that the municipal magistrates were pressing for an increase in the secrétaire's wages, not because that official deserved it, but purely in order to reward him for his loyalty to the party. He advised that no change should be made in the salaries paid by the town until the conseil d'état had finished the investigation it was conducting into Auxerre's expenditure. 1

Five months later, on 21 July 1772, Baudesson, maire of Auxerre and Faultrier de Brinville's enemy, wrote to the intendant that he had been asked to sign a mandat authorizing the payment of the first six months of the secrétaire's wages, which naturally he was loathe to do. He suggested that the sum decided by the notables was excessive, "surtout pour une ville qui est très pauvre, la place de secrétaire a toujours été fort recherchée sans ces appointments on la regarde comme une place qui peut valoir mil à douze cent livres." 2 A compromise must have been arranged, for in 1776, the secrétaire was paid 250 l. p.a., with the usual proviso that he must furnish documents free of charge, and wood and candles for the council chamber.

Feydeau, characteristically, found even this too much.

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne C. 7.
He argued that the apartment in the town-hall enjoyed by the secrétaire was worth 250 l. p.a. at least, that the emoluments of the greffe de police, which he also collected, added a further 150 l., and that, in reality, the secrétaire was pocketing 680 l. p.a. He accordingly reduced his salary to 200 l. p.a.¹. But in this instance, Feydeau may have been too severe, because not only was this cut restored by his successor in 1784, but the secrétaire was also awarded a gratuity of 150 l. to recompense him for the reduction in his wages in 1781-1783.².

The events of 1789 added enormously to the secrétaire's burden. The extra work involved in drawing up the cahiers de doléances forced him to hire, at his own expense, additional clerical staff, and it was he who organized the distribution of bread and flour during the famine. In view of these heroic efforts, the assemblée générale des habitants voted that his salary should be increased to 500 l. p.a., and that he should be granted an extraordinary gratuity of 600 l. The intendant, when asked for his approval, remarked that Auxerre was in serious financial difficulties, and that since there was not sufficient revenue in the municipal treasury to meet this increase, the money might have to be raised by the inhabitants themselves. However, as the assemblée générale was presumably aware of these

¹. Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
circumstances, and was representative of opinion in the town, he agreed to pass the secrétaire's rise, provided that the mandats for the payment of this salary were submitted to the intendance annually. Faültrier de Brinville must also have received his 600 l. gratuity, because on 7 November 1789, the intendant sanctioned the mandat for it.¹

It seems that the receveur de la ville was paid no salary, but was merely reimbursed the cost of drawing up the annual accounts, until, in 1769, the assemblée des notables decided that he was worth 200 l. p.a. plus 36 l. p.a. for expenses. This too was the work of the Grec party, handsomely rewarding one of its adherents: the edict of May 1765, which gave the bishop's faction the chance to take over the town's administration, also authorized a revision of municipal salaries. But this unprecedented payment to the receveur was not contested until Feydeau suggested to Necker in 1780 that it could well be reduced to 150 l. p.a. He admitted that the receveur made no profit out of the municipal exchequer, but that, on the contrary, was continually obliged to advance money to the town; nevertheless, considering the simple, unexacting nature of the job, 236 l. was too much.² In fact, on 22 February 1781 he slashed the receveur's salary to 100 l. p.a., plus 36 l. p.a. to cover the expense of drawing up the annual account. But this

¹ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
² See Appendix C V.
³ Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
reduction was only temporary. As soon as Auxerre's revenue was augmented by the octroi on salt, the receveur, along with several other officials, demanded that the cut in his pay be restored. To this the intendant, on the advice of the subdélégué and the maire and échevins, agreed, in 1785, even allowing the 200 l. p.a. wage plus 36 l. expenses to be back-dated to 1783. But he refused to sanction the payment of a 200 l. gratuity asked by the receveur to indemnify him for the loss in salary he had sustained in 1781-1782.¹

Auxerre enjoyed the services of two gardes de la ville, sometimes called valets de ville. Until 1760 they were each paid 100 l. p.a., and an allowance of 50 l. p.a. was made for their liveries. These were renewed every three years, and in order to prolong their life, turned after eighteen months, when new hats and stockings were also supplied.² The arrêt du conseil of 1 January 1760 decreed that 300 l. p.a. was to be allotted to the wages and clothing of the valets de ville. When Dufour de Villeneuve, who took over the intendance of Dijon from Joly de Fleury in 1761, came to examine the first batch of municipal accounts sent to him from Auxerre, there were many items of expenditure of which he disapproved, among them this 300 l. p.a. for the valets de ville. He asked the municipal officials to explain why, if 250 l. p.a. was sufficient to pay and clothe the

¹. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, G 7.
valets de ville between 1755 and 1759, 300 l. p.a. was necessary
in 1760. There is a hint of exasperation in the reply, as the
maire and échevins patiently explain how prices had risen since
1686, when 50 l. p.a. covered the cost of liveries:
"du reste il ne faute pas croire que les 50 l. par an,
qu'accordait l'arrest de 1686 fussent suffisantes pour
fournir aux habillement des deux valets de ville. Ils
ne coutoient pas tant à la verité qu'ils coutent aujourd'hui,
mais ils excedoient bien certainement les 50 l. alloués
par l'arrest. Que faisoit-on donc? Les deux valets
étoient habillés tous les trois ans avec bas et Chapeau,
leur habits étoient retournés au cour de dix-huit mois
avec repetition des Chapeau et des bas; on retenoit chaque
année sur la somme totale de 262 l. de quoy fournir à
ces dépenses, et ils touchoient le surplus pour leurs
gages: de la il en resulte qu'à mesure que les etoffes
augmentoient, ils restoit moins aux Valets pour leurs
appointements....Ainsy il falloit au moins l'augmentation
qu'a fait l'arrest de 1760, pour remettre les gages portés
par l'ancien arrest de 1686. Il paroit meme qu'il auroit
fallu augmenter par juste proportion ces gages comme les
habits; on ne l'a pas fait, et les valets n'en sont pas
plus contents."2

1. I.e. 200 l. wages of the valets, plus 12 l. wages of the
crieur de nuit, plus 50 l. for the liveries.
This silenced the intendant. Until 1780, 100 l. p.a. was paid to each valet as wages, and 300 l. was spent every three years on the liveries. Feydeau suggested that by making these clothes last longer, the 300 l. p.a. allowed in the 1760 arrêt could easily be reduced to the old amount of 250 l. p.a.1. But inflation made this economy impossible. In 1784, new liveries cost 234 l. 9s., three years later the price had almost doubled, to 418 l. 4s., and had to be met from extraordinary expenditure.2. The valet's wages, however, remained constant at 100 l. p.a. each, until the Revolution.

The corps de ville contributed towards the costs of the hôtel-dieu by paying the salary of its surgeon. He received 100 l. p.a. at the end of the seventeenth century,3 but by 1757 this had been increased to 150 l. p.a.4. His salary continued at this figure until 1778 when the maire and échevins, after giving Lesséré fils his late father's post as chirurgien de l'hôtel-dieu, decided to appoint another surgeon, Roux, as his colleague, because the duties at the hospital were so heavy; each surgeon was to be paid 100 l. p.a. Pontagny strongly supported the extra appointment and the increase in expenditure and so, on 1 October 1778, the intendant agreed.5. Needless to say, Feydeau found fault with the arrangement. He

1. Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
3. Arch. nat., E 1784.
4. See Appendix C II.
5. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
ordered the subsidizing of these surgeons by the town to be suppressed, claiming that in all other towns local doctors treated the poor in the hospitals and workhouses free of charge; if the surgeons of Auxerre insisted on being paid, the hôtel-dieu itself would have to find the necessary cash out of its own revenue.

One other contribution which the town made towards the health of its inhabitants was the payment of an annuity of 100 l. p.a. to a midwife. Presumably, if the arrangements in Auxerre were similar to those elsewhere, the midwife undertook, in return for this salary, to deliver free of charge, the babies of poor women who otherwise would not have been able to afford professional services. However, unlike the chirurgien de l'hôtel-dieu, the maîtresse sage-femme was not regarded as indispensable: there seems to have been only one, as payment of the annuity began between 1760 and 1764 and ended in 1780, when Feydeau crossed it off Auxerre's budget, because the sage-femme herself was dead. There is no evidence that this woman had either predecessors or successors.

Also instituted sometime between 1760 and 1764 were the two commissaires de police, at a salary of 200 l. p.a. each. Those who held these posts seem, on the whole, to have performed their duties rather unsatisfactorily. Feydeau commented in 1780:

1. Arch. nat., H.l. 197, 60.
2. See Appendix C IV.
3. Arch. nat., H I. 197, 60.
"on ne paraît pas très content de l'exactitude du service de ceux qui remplissent aujourd'hui ces deux places.... il faut charger les officiers municipaux de veiller à ce que leur service se fasse exactement à l'avenir."

He ordered their salary to be reduced to 100 l. p.a. each, because they enjoyed all police fines and confiscations.¹

The municipal 'officials' reaction to this economy was to suggest that, since one of the commissaires had just died, the two posts should be amalgamated, and the combined salary given to the remaining commissaire, Salle. Pontagny, the subdélégué, supported this request, and on 20 June 1782 the intendant agreed. It quickly became obvious that more than one commissaire was needed to cope with police duties, and on 13 March 1785 the corps de ville voted that two such officials should be appointed, and that they should be paid 200 l. p.a. each. Pontagny again backed their request, explaining that:

"la réduction faite en 1781 avaient été plutôt occasionnée par les clameurs mal fondées de quelques habitants qui redoutaient une imposition par tête, que par la vraie nécessité."²

He had himself written at the time, in a letter to the intendant, 29 November 1781:

1. Arch. nat., H l. 197, 60.
"il seroit à désirer que les revenus patrimoniaux permirent de retablir ces deux places à des gages même plus forts que ceux de 100 l. a fin de procurer plus de zèle et d'exactitude dans le service."

Once more the intendant followed the subdélégué's advice, and on 30 June 1785 authorized the establishment of a second post of commissaire de police. This same question cropped up again in 1788, when Sieur Parent was nominated by the municipal officials to succeed Sieur Gaubie as commissaire de police; the intendant inquired whether two officers were absolutely essential. Pontagny replied in the affirmative, adding that even two were not really adequate, and that in certain respects, police duties in Auxerre were badly neglected. One can imagine the intendant's surprise when, a few months later, he was once again presented with a request for the union of the two posts!

Thienot, premier échevin, had alleged in a meeting of the corps de ville on 11 January 1789, that S. Milon had, for a long time, neglected his duties as commissaire de police, leaving all the work to Parent. His colleagues concurred, and decided to dismiss Milon, and leave Parent in sole charge. When the intendant's approval was demanded for this arrangement, he straightway wrote to Pontagny, pointing out what an inconsistent policy was being followed regarding the commissaires, and asking whether the union of these two offices was really warranted "et si les officiers municipaux ne s'y seraient pas déterminés par quelques

considerations particuliers plutôt que par le motif du bien public." In their replies, Pontagny and the municipal officials admitted that they had suggested amalgamating the posts of commissaires de police in order to procure a better salary for Parent. They wanted to recompense him for all the work he had done during the winter of 1788-1789, while Milon shirked his duties. Surprisingly enough, instead of castigating the corps de ville for having allowed Milon to swing the lead, the intendant announced on 6 June 1789, that he approved of its decision to give Parent both posts of commissaire, and of its motives in doing so! ¹

The sonneurs de la cloche pour le balayement des rues date from about the same time as the commissaire de police. Their job, for which they were paid in all 60 l. p.a. was to run round the streets of Auxerre, three times a week, ringing a bell, to warn the inhabitants that the juges de police were coming, and if they wanted to avoid being fined, they ought to sweep up their filth.² Feydeau thought that the sonneurs' functions were superfluous, and that it should be sufficient merely to insist that all householders sweep the streets at a fixed time on pain of a fine. He accordingly suppressed the office. ³ On 12 December 1785 the municipal officials decided

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
2. In 1777 "trois sonneurs" are mentioned, in 1780 "un homme qui sonne une cloche trois fois par semaine" - perhaps in this case too, the posts were united to provide a better salary? Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8 & 12.
3. Letter from Pontagny to the intendant, 10 January 1786, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 11.
4. Arch. nat., H 1. 197, 60.
that it must be restored. When the intendant referred the matter back to Pontagny, commenting that the sonneur really did seem unnecessary, he was informed by the subdélégué that:

"il est certain que depuis la suppression de la cloche qui sert d'avertissement à tous les habitants les rues ne sont plus exactement balayées et qu'il y regne surtout en hiver une grande malpropreté."

In the face of this argument the intendant waived his objections and the sonneur was reinstated.¹

Another innovation introduced about 1764 was the payment of certain gratuities to the sergent d'armes and the soldats de la ville.² Exactly what this urban brigade was is difficult to discover: it is rarely mentioned except as an item of expenditure, and there is no apparent connection between it and the milice bourgeoise. It seems to have acted as a ceremonial guard of honour in the processions held to celebrate the great feasts of the Church, and in 1764 the soldiers are described as "presque journallement obligés de faire des patrouilles dans le cas où l'on prévoit qu'il peut y arriver du bruit, et arrêter les personnes suspectes."³ This suggests that the inhabitants of Auxerre were incorrigibly rowdy and disorderly, contrary to the usual picture painted of them as sober, earnest-minded Jansenists! Moreover, in other towns,

¹ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 11.
² See Appendix C IV.
³ See Appendix C IV.
patrolling the streets to apprehend suspicious-looking or noisy persons and wrong-doers was normally the task of the commissaire de police. Auxerre's army is rather mysterious! Nevertheless its upkeep and wages usually cost 200 l. p.a., until this payment was suppressed by Feydeau in 1781. He also refused to allow the 60 l. p.a. paid to the sergent d'armes to continue.  

1. Arch. nat., H l. 197, 60.
Part III: Extraordinary financial demands of
the royal government.

In addition to normal taxation, such as taille, capitation and vingtièmes, the royal government, in times of financial crisis, extorted money from towns by various devices, the most important and successful being rachat des offices and don gratuit. Auxerre was situated within the pays d'états of Burgundy, and usually the états played the role of broker, negotiating on behalf of the whole province, rachats des offices,¹ and the payment of dons gratuits. In either case, the états would offer, or would be asked to pay² a lump sum, which was then divided among the towns under its jurisdiction, according to their size and resources.³

Regrettably it is not possible to trace the history of every rachat des offices imposed upon Auxerre, owing to the gaps in the documentation. Most orders to raise money for venal offices can be matched with receipts from the royal or provincial treasury, proving that at least the cash was obtained, even if

1. Technically speaking, already existing offices which had been declared venal - e.g. maire, échevin - were "purchased" and the états paid for the "suppression" of new, hitherto unheard of, offices, which would have been a nuisance to commerce, - e.g. jurés moulleurs de bois, inspecteurs aux boucheries.

2. I do not know whether the états invariably took the initiative, or whether on occasion, the province was ordered by the government to buy certain offices; the latter seems not unlikely.

3. Again I do not know whether the états was responsible for deciding the individual towns' contributions, or whether this was fixed by the government. Surviving receipts indicate that sometimes Auxerre paid its share direct to the trésor.

p.t.o.
royal or the revenue casuels, sometimes to the provincial treasury. This suggests that practice varied: that the states occasionally paid from its treasury a lump sum to the royal government on behalf of the whole province, recouping its outlay by taxing the towns; or more often, that the states merely came to terms with the royal government as to the total imposition to be levied on the province, leaving the revenue casuels to divide the agreed amount among the towns and collect it.
there is no indication as to how it was done. But occasionally there survives only the information that such and such a sum of money was required from Auxerre as that town's share of the total cost of such and such an office: how the money was raised, indeed whether it was raised at all, cannot be discovered. But even with this limitation, it is possible to give a pretty impressive account of the government's exactions from Auxerre.

The long sequence began in 1694 when the town arranged to buy the office of greffier alternatif des roles des tailles, created in November of that year, for 6,930 l. This was probably a voluntary offer, since he would have been entitled to fees of 4d. per livre of taille collected, and in Auxerre there was the municipal taille négociale as well as the normal royal taille. By 1 March 1698, almost four years later, only 3,465 l. of the amount due had been paid. In October 1703 new offices of greffier des roles des tailles were announced and automatically forced upon towns. That of Auxerre was valued at 4,085 l. plus the usual treasury tax of 2s. per livre, making 4,493 l. in all. It was not until 2 August 1706 that the municipal officials bought it, at the slightly reduced figure of 4,440 l., in view of their single cash payment. At the end of 1694 Auxerre was informed by the

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 55, (Fq.101, pc. 1 & 3).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 55, (Fq.101, pc. 5,6 & 8).
intendant that it was to purchase all offices in the town's
milice bourgeoise, which had been made venal by an edict of
March 1694. An assemblée générale des habitants was held on
12 December, which decided to raise the 14,300 l. (13,000 l.
2s. per l.) demanded, by reselling these offices to the highest
bidder. All except the office of colonel de la milice
bourgeoise, which the town decided should be incorporated with
that of the maire, were auctioned, and fetched 8,775 l.
Where the remaining 5,525 l. came from, one does not know.

Again, in the following August, 1695, the intendant
had bad news for Auxerre: the province had acquired the offices
of auditeurs examinateurs des comptes des corps et communautés
des arts et métiers for 200,000 l., to which sum Auxerre was
asked to contribute 12,100 l. (11,000 l. & 2s. per l.). Ferrand,
the intendant, ordered the municipal officials to divide this
amount among the inhabitants and to levy it as a tax.

Burgundy offered an equivalent sum for the somewhat similar
offices of conseillers de ville auditeurs examinateurs et
rapporteurs des comptes des communautés, created in November
1704. As the chief attribute of this office was the collection
of a percentage on the municipal revenue, it was obviously
desirable to buy its suppression. Auxerre's share of the cost
was assessed at 16,500 l. (15,000 l. & 2s. per l.).

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 38, (Pq. 79, pc. 4).
2. Le chat: Le présidial et le corps de ville vers la fin du 17e
siècle: procès sur le pas croisé. Annuaire de l'Yonne,1843,
p. III.
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 77, (Pq. 99, pc. 2).
4. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 77, (Pq. 99, pc. 2).
How the money was raised one cannot tell, but on 17 July 1706, 5,000 l. of the total owed was handed over to the traitant selling these particular offices, and by a receipt of 27 April 1708 the trésorier des revenus casuels acknowledged the eventual payment of all 15,000 l.

Even more menacing to a healthy financial administration was a venal treasurer. This office was consequently almost invariably bought by towns, and no doubt aware of this, the royal government frequently created it. An arrêt du conseil was issued on 20 March 1696 authorising the purchase by Burgundy of the offices of receveur and contrôleur des deniers patrimoniaux et d'octrois, created in March - July 1694, for 146,446 l. (133,133 l. & 2s. per l.). The royal government generously gave the towns permission to levy new octrois for six years, in order to raise the money; the intendant would arrange with each town on what goods the octrois should be imposed and at what rate. Or if more convenient the municipal officials could collect the money by means of personal taxation over a similar period of six years. The assemblée générale des habitants of Auxerre was informed on 20 May 1696 that its share of the cost of the offices was 26,609 l. This sum was to be met by the following octrois: 5s. on every muid

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 78, (Pg. 103, pc. 7).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 78, (Pg. 103, pc. 10).
3. Arch. nat., H*140 bis, 1.
4. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 38, (Pg. 79, pc. 7).
de vin "passant dessus et dessous le pont d'Auxerre pertuis de la Chaisne et Montenan" in addition to the existing tax of 3s. on wine; 3d on every "pain blanc et molles vendus et débités dans ladit, ville et faubourgs;" 10s. on every ox or cow, 3s on every heifer or sheep, and 5s. on every pig entering the town. The right to collect these dues during six years was auctioned on 20 June 1696 to Jean Germain Collinet, bourgeois of Dijon, on condition he paid the 26,609 l. owed by the town for the venal offices, and in addition "1000 l. pour une fois, pour les épices et frais de comptes, et 200 l. pour les frais de voyages et autres du Sr. Baudesson Maire." It was about eighteen months later when Collinet paid the 19,152 l. for the office of receveur des deniers communs. Since the octrois were non-patrimoniaux, Collinet had to submit his accounts to the chambre des comptes of Dijon: his receipts for the six years totalled 27,609 l. and his expenditure 27,447 l. 19s. 6d.

1. Arch. nat., H*140 bis, 6. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 42. Like arrangements were made for Avallon. An octroi of 7s. on every "bichet de bled qui sera mis en oeuvre par les boulangiers et patissiers" was authorized and auctioned on 14 June 1696 to Georges Boisseau, Edme Loret and others, on condition they paid the 2,799 l. 10s. which Avallon was charged for the offices of receveur et contrôleur des deniers communs, "et 200 l. pour les épices et frais de Comptes, et 100 l. pour une fois pour les frais du voyage du Sr. Champion, Maire." Arch. nat., H*140 bis, 5.
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 62. These figures are rather puzzling. Can it possibly be that Collinet in fact made only 361 l. 0s. 6d. profit out of the farm of these octrois?
Barely had two years passed when Auxerre was again required to purchase the suppression of new offices of receveurs des deniers patrimoniaux, this time at a cost of 10,000 l. The élus généraux of Burgundy had paid 922,000 l. to buy exemption for the province from twenty-four assorted edicts: 180,000 l. of this sum was for the suppression of these venal municipal trésuriers. A favourite expedient of the royal government was to divide jobs thus: the office of receveur des deniers communs, for example, became two - receveur ancien and receveur alternatif, the holders of which exercised their office alternate years. Not infrequently a stage further was added with a receveur triennal! Naturally towns as well as individuals were asked to buy the products of this fantastic multiplication system. Auxerre was required to pay 19,800 l. (18,000 l. & 2s. per l.), when Burgundy’s offer of 220,000 l. (200,000 l. & 2s. per l.) was accepted for the offices of receveurs alternatifs et trienniaux des revenus communs created in March 1704. 3. Somehow or other the money was raised, though

1. The money was borrowed from M. et Mme. Michodiere, trésorier de France, and from the Ursulines of Dijon. Arch. d’Auxerre, BB 78, (Pq. 103, pc. 6).
it was not until 20 April 1711 that the trésorier des revenus casuels was able to issue a receipt signifying that this debt was paid. Before this, fresh offices of receveurs anciens alternatif et trienniaux had yet again been created in January 1709 and forced on to the towns: 17,708 l. (16,280 l. plus 2s. per l.) were demanded from Auxerre, plus 700 l. augmentation de gages. This last was in truth nothing less than a forced loan to the Crown, the interest on which went under the guise of an official's salary. Earlier, in 1706, Auxerre had had to pay 1793 l. (1630 l. plus 2s. per l.), and again in 1708, 1360 l., on the pretext of augmentation de gages for the office of receveur et contrôleur des deniers patrimoniaux which the town owned.

But undoubtedly the most important rachat des offices negotiated by the province of Burgundy was that of the offices of maire and échevin. Since the maires of the towns of Burgundy were députés-nés of the états, it was thought vital that they should not be venal; the same too applied to the échevins, one of whom was usually chosen in each town to accompany its maire. Consequently throughout the eighteenth century whenever these posts were declared venal, the états of Burgundy could be relied upon to negotiate their purchase, and so prevent venality from corrupting municipal and provincial life. In January 1696,

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 79, (Pq. 104, pc.4).
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 77, (Pq. 99, pc.20), & BB 38, (Pq. 79, pc. 30).
468,062 l. 13s. 6d. was paid for the offices of maire, created in 1692; in August 1703, 590,000 l. was the price of the lieutenants de maire, created in May 1702; 950,000 l. was paid in December 1706 for the maires alternatifs. In January 1704 an edict was issued declaring half the échevins on all corps de ville venal: Burgundy paid 275,000 l. to avoid this metamorphosis. The independence of the échevins was again attacked in March 1709; to buy off this attack, and the police officials "alternatifs" created in January of that year, the province offered 1,000,000 l., which was accepted. The first police offices - the lieutenant général de police, procureur du roi, and greffier de police, commissaires and huissiers de police, had been acquired by the états in August 1700 at a cost of 922,000 l. The actual offices were consequently suppressed, but their attributes transferred to the corps de ville in Burgundy, which greatly enhanced municipal authority and prestige. Unfortunately, what proportion of these sums Auxerre was called upon to furnish is rarely recorded. But judging by the 16,500 l. it contributed towards the purchase of the offices of échevins in 1704 and the 12,000 l. at which it was assessed in 1706 as its share of the 152,000 l. paid by Burgundy.

1. Arch. nat., H 1. 144, l.
3. Arch. nat., H 1. 144, l.
4. Arch. nat., H 1. 144, l.
5. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 77, (Pq. 99, pc. 19).
for the offices of conseillers de police,\textsuperscript{1} the burden of these rachats on its inhabitants must have been considerable.

Other offices were acquired by the towns, not in order to avoid venal municipal administrators, but to prevent various branches of commerce being damaged. Hence Burgundy's purchase in August 1696 of the jurés moulleurs de bois et mesureurs de charbon, at a cost of 227,700 l. (207,000 l. plus 2s. per l.) towards which Auxerre was required to pay 15,400 l. The government authorised municipal officials to raise this money by levying it as a personal tax payable by all classes of inhabitants without exception. Otherwise, where it was more convenient, the right to collect the dues attributed to the post of juré mouleur de bois might be auctioned to whoever would pay in advance the money for the offices. Auxerre opted for the second method of payment. Since the town's debts then amounted to 40,000 l. in all, and included not only the 15,400 l. for the suppression of the offices of jurés moulleurs de bois, but also 6,339 l. for corn supplied to the army, and 12,000 l. for the local clergy's share of the taxe faite pour les Cens et Rentes (for which the town was held responsible when the

\textsuperscript{1} Arch. nat., G7, 1551.
\textsuperscript{2} Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 77, (Pq. 99, pc.19). In fact, I must confess that there is no way of telling whether the purchase of the jurés moulleurs de bois was compulsory - whether since private individuals were uninterested in buying these offices they were forced on to the towns - or whether the \textit{états} of Burgundy voluntarily negotiated their purchase in order to protect the commerce in wood, which was an important asset of the province.
ecclesiastics secured exemption), the municipal officials petitioned the king:

"de leur accorder non seulement les droits réglés par le
tarif sur l'entrée des bois à bruler et charbons mais
encore sur tous autres bois propres aux ouvrages de
menuiserie, charpenterie et autres sans exception, sinon
celuy qui serviront à empaisseler les vignes, ensemble
les merrains propres à faire muids, feuillettes et autres
vaissieaux de vendage, comme aussi leur accorder dix sols
par muid de vin qui seront vendu tant en gros qu'en détail
dans lad. ville et faubourgs d'Auxerre, meme par les
hôteliers et cabaretiers." 1.

Their plea was successful, and they were allowed to levy the
following octrois during eight years: 10s. for every muid de vin
sold wholesale and retail; 2. 5s. for every "moule de bois à
bruler qui entrera dans lad. ville et faubourgs;" on other
woods not firewood: 5s. for a load drawn by one horse, 7s. 6d.
for a load drawn by two horses, and 10s. for a load drawn by
three horses or four oxen; 8s. a hundred bundles of sticks;
"5s. pour chaque assnée de charbon chargée de deux billous et
defaux sacs;" "20s. pour chaque charêtée de charbon;" "10s. par

2. When the octrois were prolonged in 1705 for a further nine
years, this tax on wine was lowered by the intendant as a
result of protests from cabaretiers and hôteliers. Arch.
d'Auxerre, BB 38, (Po. 79, pc. 28).
chacune charretée de bois à faire charbon." Only wood, faggots, and charcoal for the hospitals, Jesuits and Capuchins were to be exempt.¹ The farm of these octrois, lasting eight years and six months, was auctioned on 26 April 1697 to S. xioch Liger, on condition he paid the town's debts amounting to 40,000 l.²

There is no doubt that these octrois must have caused great hardship in Auxerre. They were extraordinary taxes, in addition to the normal octroi patrimonial on wine, and their imposition coincided with the octrois authorised a year earlier to pay for the offices of receveurs and contrôleurs des deniers communs.³ The people grumbled and protested against them — on 14 September 1698 the assemblée générale des habitants passed the following motion:

"Sur la proposition de l'Estinction des Octrois qui se perçoivent sur toute la viande de boucherie et cochons, vin, pain, bois, et charbon, adjugez aux S. Collinet et Liger, comme étant très onéreux aux peuples par le profit immense qui font les adjudicataires, et par les proces

¹. The administrative anarchy of the ancien régime at least allowed every consideration to be given to local conditions. Rather different octrois were granted to Avallon to pay for these same offices, because timber being the chief resource of the Avallonnais, it was vital for it not to be taxed. Instead: "33s. par muid de vin qui sera vendu en ladite ville et faubourgs par les hosteliers, cabaretiers et autres à table assise cru et non cru, "et par les habitants vendant en détail pour ce qui ne sera de les cru." Such heavy taxes, on vin du cru too, would not have been tolerable in a pays vignoble such as the Auxerrois. Arch. nat., H*140 bis, 36.
². Arch. nat., H*140 bis, 52. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 42.
³. See above p. 6.
continuels qu'ils font aux habitants... a été conclu que ladite suppression et extinction des octroys sera demandée à Sa Majesté, à la charge de rembourser les adjudicataires des sommes qu'ils auront payées ensemble des intérêts, à condition par eux de compter du produit des droits par eux perçues, et que pour parvenir au remboursement des Adjudicataires, lesd. sommes seront imposées en deux et trois années sur ceux qui sont sujets aux droits d'octroys... 1.

This decision was not, indeed could not, be implemented. In view of the misery of the time and the considerable number of privileged and exempt, it was unrealistic to suggest raising 40,000 l. by personal taxation over a period of two or three years. If the rachats des offices were to be paid for, octrois had to be levied. The charge that the farmers of the octrois were making immense profits was without foundation. When Roch Liger eventually submitted his accounts in 1718 to the Chambre des comptes of Dijon, it was discovered that his receipts totalled 43,358 l. 12s. 8d. and his expenses 44,362 l. 6s. 2. So notoriously unprofitable was the farm of these octrois that when they were renewed in March 1705 in order to raise the 63,013 l. 10s. which Auxerre owed for the offices of greffier des rolle de taille, contrôleur et commissaire aux revues,

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 38, (Pq. 79, pc.12).
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 37.
Not one made any bid at their auction. Not until a year later could anyone be persuaded to accept the farm.

However, the temper of the inhabitants remained high. On October 11, 1699 an assemblée générale des habitants was summoned to discuss how to raise money to buy the offices of voyers experts, priseurs et arpenteurs, and greffier de l'Ecritoire, for which Auxerre was required to pay 14,300 l. (13,000 l. plus 2s. per l.). The people went on strike: no one attended the meeting, so that consequently no decisions could be taken. An assemblée générale held on 25 April 1700 protested against the price of the office of conseiller garde seel, for which Auxerre was ordered to pay 5,500 l. (5,000 l. & 2s. per l.). Again, when an assemblée générale was convoked on 18 January 1705 to discuss the purchase of 65,488 l. 10s. worth of venal offices, the attendance was so poor that nothing
could be decided, except that all absentees should be fined 3 l.

There was usually quite an appreciable time-lag between the order to purchase venal offices and their payment. The delay was inevitable: few of the provincial merchants who farmed actrois and lent money to towns could obtain large sums at short notice. The offices of contrôleur du greffe de l'hôtel de ville, greffier de l'Écritoire and commissaires aux revues, thrust upon Auxerre in June 1704 at a cost of 5,720 l. were not paid for until 15 November 1707.

The exploitation of the creation of venal offices as a means of raising money was on such a scandalous scale throughout Louis XIV's reign that this expedient fell into comparative disrepute, and was thereafter not so profitable. It was made use of to a noticeable extent only three times during the remainder of the eighteenth century, in 1722, 1733, and 1771. On each of these occasions all venal municipal offices and police posts devised by Louis XIV were re-created, and those proper to the province of Burgundy were bought up by the états. The first lot, acquired in May 1723, cost 600,000 l. The towns, called upon to raise this sum between them, were authorized to prolong the imposition of already existing actrois or to levy new ones. In order to pay its share, 16,000 l.

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, BA 38, (Pq. 79, pc.22).
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, BA 77, (Pq. 99, pc.18).
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, BA 79, (Pq. 104, pc.2).
4. Arch. nat., H 1. 144, l.
Auxerre was obliged to impose fresh dues on wood, charcoal and hay. The right to collect this new octroi for four years and nine months was auctioned to Claude Lelong de la Tour, bourgeois of Dijon, on condition he paid the town's debts, which amounted to $21,117 l. 1. Lelong de la Tour most unfortunately went bankrupt after paying $14,000 l. of the $16,000 l. due to the province. The procureur syndic des états sued him, his surety, and the municipal officials for the remaining $2,000 l.; whether he recovered the debt one cannot tell. 2. Auxerre was asked in 1735 to pay a similar sum of $16,000 l. for the rachat des offices created in 1733, which the province had purchased for $320,000 l. 3. The town raised the money by obtaining an extension of the dues levied on wood, charcoal and hay. 4.

One of the most cynical deals in venal offices was announced in the edict of June 1725. All hitherto created posts of receveurs and contrôleurs des deniers patrimoniaux et d'octroi were suppressed and new ones simultaneously created. Auxerre bought these offices for $14,160 l., of which sum half was payable in assignations issued by the royal treasury to compensate holders of liquidated venal offices, the other half, plus 2s. per l., i.e. $7,788 l. was payable in cash, in four equal instalments spaced over twelve months. The money was obtained from yet another new octroi of 3d. on each pain mollet weighing a pound.

1. In addition to the $16,000 l. for the venal offices, Auxerre owed $3,117 l. for repairs to the hôtel de ville, and $2,000 l. to the adjudicataire de la garde des vignes et finages of the town.

2. Arch. dep. de la Côte d'Or, C.696. 3. Arch.nat., H 1.144, l.

4. Arch. d'Auxerre, BE 38, (Pg.79, pc.40).
sold by the bakers of Auxerre. The right to collect the octroi during a period of twelve years was acquired by François Parly l'aîné, bourgeois of Auxerre, at a cost of 1200 l. p.a.

The expenses to be met out of the profit of the octroi were as follows: not only 7,788 l. for the offices of receveur and contrôleur, but an additional droit de taxation des offices of 1,057 l. ls. 4d., and a droit de confirmation paid to the King on his succession to the throne, of 2,025 l. plus 2s. per l., amounting to 11,075 l. ls. 4d.

The town's debt for the venal offices was paid off, not within a year as ordered, but in January 1733.

The last important transaction in venal offices, those created in 1771, did not affect the towns of Burgundy directly. Negotiations for the purchase of these offices were conducted during 1773 by the États, which offered to pay 600,000 l. The contrôlé générale demanded exactly twice that amount. A compromise was reached at the end of the year, when both sides agreed on 1,000,000 l. as the price. The États were to raise a loan to pay for the offices, and were authorized to prolong the octrois imposed on goods travelling up and down the Saône for six years in order to wipe out the debt.

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1. Arch. dep. de la Côte d'Or, C 696.
2. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 47.
3. Arch. dep. de la Côte d'Or, C 696.
4. Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 78, (Pq. 103, pc. 20).
5. Arch. nat., H l. 144, 10.
6. Arch. nat., H l. 144, 11.
memorandum was drawn up about this time showing that the octrois, so generously granted, would by no means cover the cost of the rachat des offices: the loan to be raised by the états plus interest and fees, etc. would cost 1,650,000 l., while the Saône octrois could not be expected to produce more than 1,260,000 l., leaving the états 390,000 l. out of pocket. ¹

During the second half of the eighteenth century, with venal offices discredited, the government found the don gratuit more profitable, and concentrated on it instead. This was no new device, for Louis XIV had used it to help finance his wars. In 1700 Auxerre was asked to contribute 35,000 l. to the so-called "free gift" presented to the king by the province. ² Ten years later the government ordered all octrois levied by the towns to be doubled and the Crown to enjoy this doublement for six years, as a don gratuit. ³ Burgundy paid 200,000 l. to be exempt from this measure, and Auxerre's portion of this payment was fixed at 15,750 l. ⁴ There were no doubt other occasions during Louis XIV's reign when towns were required to prove their loyalty and enthusiasm by giving the royal government a "free gift," but as a source of revenue its exploitation was at that time spasmodic.

The regular levy of the don gratuit dates from 1758.

¹ Arch. nat., F 1 l. 144, 12.
² Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 58, (Pg. 79, pc.17).
⁴ Arch. d'Auxerre, BB 58, (Pg. 79, pc. 32).
An edict of August 1758 required all towns to send in an annual donation to the royal treasury for a period of six years. Before this time was up, an extension of the don gratuit to 1769 was ordered; again, later, it was prolonged to 1774, to 1779, and so on, up to the Revolution. Auxerre's contribution, originally assessed in August 1758 at 9,600 l. p.a., was moderated in January 1759 to 8,000 l. p.a. With the end of the Seven Years' War, a déclaration was issued on 21 November 1763 authorising further reductions in the dons grâuites paid by all towns: they were to be cut by one-sixth in 1767, by one-third in 1768 and by one-half in 1769. The edict of December 1764 ordered these amounts to be lowered by a further 50%. Consequently Auxerre paid in 1768, 2,666 l., and in 1769, 2,000 l., at which figure its annual don gratuit remained until the Revolution.

The don gratuit was at first raised in Auxerre by means of personal taxation. The edict of August 1758 had suggested new octrois as the most feasible way of financing it and instructed municipal officials to summon an assemblée générale des habitants, immediately after the edict was published, to discuss on which goods the new dues should be levied. But at the assemblée des notables held in Auxerre on 21 April 1759, the maire suggested:

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, GC 10, (Pg.10).
"une imposition personnelle par un rôle particulier pris sous dix classes de cottes différentes depuis vingt sols jusqu'à seize livres au plus haut fait en présence des députés qui seroient pris dans chaque corps dans lequel rolle ne seroient compris environ sept cent pauvres habitants....joint que Messieurs du Clergé ont eux mêmes, de l'avis de Messieurs les agents généraux du Clergé, consenti d'y entrer pour leur cotte part; que cette forme d'imposition se faisant sans frais sererait très avantageuse au public, qui par la regie d'un octroy, et le benefice que pourroit faire un adjudicataire se trouveroit payer moitié en sus de l'imposition principale."

In spite of opposition from the bailliage, on behalf of which Housset, Billetou and Martineau de la Villotte proposed:

"un octroy sur la viande et sur le vin entrant en cette ville pour y être consommé et non par une imposion particulière dont la répartition étant arbitraire pourront être sujette à de grande inconvénients," the maire carried the day. His personal taxation scheme was approved by the intendant and the contrôleur général, and operated until 1769.

Trouble arose with the edict of April 1768 which decreed that the don gratuit should be levied until 1774. This

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 10, (Pq. 240, pc.7).
measure was supplemented by an arrêt du conseil and letters patent of 15 May following, which authorised François Noel to organise and collect the droits réservés of all towns listed in the déclaration of 3 January 1759 and the letters patent of 22 April 1759. The right of towns to collect the octrois themselves was withdrawn probably because municipal officials, owing to their inexperience and lack of personnel, frequently failed to send the don gratuit to the royal treasury on time. Unfortunately, as a result of a most complicated misunderstanding Auxerre was one of the towns listed in the relevant statutes.

The roots of this affair go back to the terms of the union between the comté d'Auxerre and the province of Burgundy. A more equitable allocation of royal taxation was the motive of this union, whereby the comté surrendered its independence and became part of the financial system of the états of Burgundy.

The logic of the change demanded that all laws concerning finance should be applied to Auxerre in the form in which they were registered by the parlement of Dijon, but otherwise the comté's position in the judicial hierarchy remained unchanged. For financial matters Auxerre came within the jurisdiction of the parlement of Dijon, for purely judicial cases it was still subject to the parlement of Paris. The distinction between these two spheres of justice was far from clear-cut. The edict

1. Term by which octrois dues devoted to paying the don gratuit were known.
2. Arch.dep. de la Côte d'Or, G 696.
3. Arch. nat., AD IX. 401, 189, 196, 203.
of August 1758 which launched the don gratuit gave town officials one month in which to decide on which consumer goods to levy octrois: if the contrôleur général had not received their views four weeks after the registration and publication of the law, it would go ahead and draw up the necessary tariffs itself.

The parlement, cour des aides and chambre des comptes of Paris registered the edict on the 6 & 7 September 1758. But the corps de ville of Auxerre took no action, since Joly de Fleury, intendant of Burgundy, informed it that since the edict was concerned with finance, the town would have to wait for its registration by the parlement of Dijon, before debating how the don gratuit was to be paid. This explains why the assemblée des notables was not held in Auxerre until 21 April 1759.

Meanwhile, some bureau in the contrôlé générale, assuming that Auxerre was within the jurisdiction of the parlement of Paris (even locating it in the généralité of Paris!) included it in the Déclaration du Roi du 3 Janvier 1759, and in the Lettres patentes du Roi du 22 avril 1759, among those reprehensible towns which were too uninterested to submit their own plans for octrois. Consequently the contrôlé générale had decided that the don gratuit should be financed in Auxerre by the following dues: 30s. on every muid de vin, 15s. on every muid de bière ou cidre, 15s. 6d. 8s. on every muid de poire, 40s. for an ox or cow, 15s. 6d. for a heifer.

1. Arch. nat., AD IX. 401, 136.
2. Arch. dép. de la Côte d'Or, C 696.
3. Arch. nat., AD IX. 401, 143.
5. These dues, being on vins du cru, as well as on the retail trade, were very hard on a pays vignoble.
or pig, 5s. for a sheep, 10s. for a load of hay or wood drawn by three horses, 7s. for a load drawn by two horses, 5s. for a load drawn by one horse.

The order to levy these octrois was not revoked when later the contrôle générale approved Auxerre's preference for personal taxation. Consequently François Noel, to whom the collection of the droits réservés had been confided by the arrêt of 15 May 1768, set up his bureau in Auxerre and levied these taxes.

Angry protests and pleas were sent to the contrôle générale by the municipal officials. They claimed that it was illegal for Noel's organisation to collect the octrois in Auxerre, since the arrêt and letters patent of 15 May 1768 had never been registered by the parlement of Dijon. Indeed when that court had registered the edict of April 1768 which ordered the payment of the don gratuit to be extended, it had stipulated that "la perception ne pourra être faite dans chaque Ville et Bourg servant à l'acquittement du Don gratuit, que par ceux qui seront choisis et préposés par les Officiers Municipaux." However Terray dismissed this idea that before a fiscal measure could be applied in Auxerre, it had to be passed by the parlement and chambre des comptes of Dijon:

"ce Comté ressortissant du Parlement et Cour des Aydes de Paris aucuns Edits et déclarations ne peuvent y être exécutés qu'ils n'ayant été enregistrés dans ces deux

1. Arch. nat., AD IX. 401, 155.
2. Arch. nat., H 1. 144, 30."
Cours. Il est vrai que la réunion qui en a été faite au Duché de Bourgogne paroïtroit exiger pareillement l'enregistrement au Parlement de Dijon; mais le refus de cette Cour ne peut avoir l'effet d'arrêter dans le ressort du Parlement et Cour des Aydes de Paris l'exécution des loix qui y ont été enregistrées...la régie doit être continuée dans le Comté d'Auxerre et y être faite ainsi qu'elle l'est dans toutes les autres villes du ressort du Parlement et Cour des Aydes de Paris."\(^1\)

Arguments that the octrois were ruining Auxerre's wine-trade were received equally coldly by the contrôleur général:

"Votre assertion à cet égard pourrait être exacte si la production de cette denrée excédait la consommation; mais nous n'avons que trop malheureusement éprouvé depuis plusieurs années qu'elle n'y suffit pas, et que le commerce a été obligé de rechercher jusqu'au fonds des celliers des vignerons les vins qui y existoient; qu'il en a enlevé, malgré l'augmentation qui pouvoient y occasionnement les droits dans certains lieux. La perception du droit ne détruit donc pas le commerce."\(^2\)

However Terray did eventually agree to a slight reduction in the dues levied on wine.\(^3\). But from 1770, when the government

2. Letter to Amelot, 31 July, 1770. Arch. dep. de la Côte d'Or, C. 696. Terray's argument that the octrois were not harming the wine trade, since the consumption of wine far exceeded its production, conveniently ignores the fact that 1765-1770 were sterile years in the vine-yards of the comté d'Auxerre. Arch. nat., H 1. 144,30.
3. Arch. dép. de la Côte d'Or, C 696.
took over the collection of the *droits réservés*, the *don gratuit* lost its former individual character, and became, so to speak, merely additional aids.

Perhaps the most striking feature of both the *rachat des offices* and the *don gratuit* was that they were usually financed by *octrois*, taxes on the prime necessities of life. What effect the government's fiscal demands had on the cost and standard of living of poorer town-dwellers can be imagined, if not exactly calculated.
Part IV: The intendant's tutelle of municipal finance.

The royal government tried to exercise a strict supervision over municipal finance. This watchdog policy was initiated by Colbert, and codified in the edict of April 1683, in an endeavour to prevent a recurrence of the large-scale embezzlement and misappropriation of funds practised by municipal officials in the seventeenth century. The corner-stone of the government's control was the town budget; every item of expenditure, even for the most trifling sum, was fixed, either by the intendant, in the case of insignificant communes, or more usually, by the conseil d'État. The municipal officials were obliged to adhere unswervingly to these financial dispositions ordained by the government. Whenever circumstances demanded extraordinary expenditure, the raising of a loan, or a permanent adjustment in the municipal budget, prior authorization by the intendant was essential.

Auxerre was situated in the généralité of the intendant of Dijon, whose supervisory powers were even greater, owing to the existence of the commission pour la vérification des dettes des villes et communautés de la province de Bourgogne. This commission, dating from 1662, gave its holders almost all-embracing authority over the financial affairs of the towns of Burgundy, empowering them to:
"procéder à la reconnaissance et vérification des dettes des Villes et Communautés de ladite Province, régler leurs dépenses ordinaires, corriger les abus... recevoir toutes les plaintes qui vous seront faites concernant lesdites dettes; reconnaître tous les Octrois desquels jouissent lesdites Villes, à quoi montent et reviennent leur destination et emploi, ceux qui peuvent être augmentés ou établis de nouveau; quels sont les biens patrimoniaux des Villes et Communautés...... et généralement tout ce qui peut servir au soulagement et acquittement desdites Villes et Communautés.

Vous donnant pouvoir de vous faire représenter les Rôles des Impositions, les Livres de collecte de chaque Communauté; les Registres des Délibérations, Comptes des Particuliers qui ont eu l'administration des deniers publics; les Minutes des Notaires, les Grosses des Particuliers pour éviter collusion, les Baux à ferme ou Amodiation desdites Octrois; les Comptes et Pièces justificatives d'iceux et généralement tous autres Actes que vous jugerez nécessaires pour la vérification et acquittement desdites dettes et pour vérifier les abus et malversations, afin d'y apporter ensuite le remède convenable.....".

It was originally intended that this commission should be exercised by the governor of Burgundy, the intendant of Dijon

1. C. Arbassier: L'intendant Bouchu et son action financière, p.121-122.
and the élus and greffier of the états of the province; but since the representatives of the états refused to co-operate in the scheme, the work was, from 1668, entrusted to the intendant and the governor alone. The commission was continued even after the immediate problem of clearing up the financial chaos in Burgundy's towns had been solved, and it became in the eighteenth century, one of the intendant's ordinary instruments of administration. While every decision and all action was taken in the name of the governor and intendant jointly, the latter enjoyed the real power, and his colleague was a mere figure head. In 1742 St. Florentin wrote to Orry that as all previous governors of Burgundy had been members of the commission des dettes, that distinction could hardly be denied to the recently appointed duc de St. Aignan, provided he was made to understand that the post was a purely honorary one, and that he should by no means attempt to participate in the work of the commission. However, as the governors, and especially the Condés, commanded enormous respect and loyalty in the province, the intendants did not hesitate to gain support for their measures by using the governor's name. The governor and the intendant usually backed each other up, and in general, worked together extremely efficiently, the états invariably following their lead.

1. C. Arbassier: L'intendant Bouchu et son action financière, p. 120.
2. C. Arbassier: op. cit., p. 124.
3. Arch. nat., H l. 140, 64.
The parlement of Dijon was consistently hostile to the commission and exerted itself, with increasing vigour from 1740, to gain its suppression. It argued that the purpose for which the commission had been established - liquidating municipal debts in the seventeenth century - had long since been achieved; that the intendant used the commission to settle all disputes concerning municipal finance, thus depriving the ordinary courts, i.e. the bailliages, of an important part of their jurisdiction. This was true: the march of events was gradually robbing those ancient courts, the bailliages and chambre des comptes, of all authority in town administration. But the parlement failed to persuade the government to abolish the commission des dettes, which was renewed, as usual, for Saint-Contest when he was transferred to the généralité of Dijon in 1740. However, the letters patent instituting Saint-Contest did contain a complicated and detailed règlement defining the boundary between, the jurisdiction of the intendant and that of the ordinary courts. Its tactful phraseology scarcely concealed the fact that all vital matters were within the intendant's cognizance. Nonetheless, the commission lapsed in 1749 with the advent of Joly de Fleury to the généralité of Dijon. He simply did not ask for the renewal of the commission des dettes to be specified in his letters of appointment, because, according to a memoir of the prince de Condé, written

in 1766:

"il crut que sa qualité d'intendant lui suffisait pour connoître des dettes et affaires des villes et communautés, comme dans les pays d'Élection: son exemple a été suivi de sorte que dès cet instant la Commission établie pour la vérification et liquidation des dettes des villes.... se trouva eteinte pour ainsi dire d'elle même."\(^1\)

Joly de Fleury's own opinion of the commission was expressed somewhat enigmatically to Clostrier, a premier commis in the contrôle général: "vous savez combien cette commission étoit dangereuse par l'abus qu'en avoit fait, et cependant je n'ay pas ose dire tout ce que j'en soaiso". Dangerous to whom? Remembering that Joly de Fleury was a scion of an eminent parlementaire family, one guesses that he was probably sympathetic toward the claim of the parlement of Burgundy and its subordinate courts, that the intendants had abused the powers of the commission des dettes in order to prevent the ordinary courts from interfering in municipal affairs. After 1749 the commission was never revived, in spite of strenuous efforts by Condé and Amelot in 1766, when the latter possibly hoped that if the commission were resurrected, it would compensate for the powers he lost under the 1764-1765 municipal reform edicts. Inevitably Condé and Amelot were opposed by the contrôleur-général, Delaverdy:

1. Arch. nat., H I. 140, 92.
2. Arch. nat., H I. 140, 70.
"Mais la proposition\(^1\) de M. le Prince de Condé ne fut point adoptée. M. De l'Averdy, insistant pour l'exécution des édits municipaux de 1764 et 1765, répondit à ce prince qu'il ne peut donner savoir dans le Conseil du Roi, pour l'établissement de la nouvelle commission qui lui paraît inpraticable."\(^2\).

Whether the loss in 1749 of the powers conferred by the commission des dettes made an appreciable difference to the intendant's control over the towns of Burgundy, or whether by this time, as Joly de Fleury claimed, the intendant's normal attributes gave him ample authority, cannot be deduced from the history of Auxerre. Regrettably, all surviving correspondence concerning the intendant's tutelle of this town's finances dates from about 1780, when Dufour de Villeneuve was appointed to Dijon, and consequently no comparative study of the effectiveness of the intendant's tutelle before and after the disappearance of the commission des dettes is possible.

However the practice of submitting the accounts and pièces justificatives of the receveur of Auxerre to the intendant for ratification was followed throughout the century. This procedure during the first half of the century was somewhat casual and haphazard: it must not be thought that annual accounts were submitted each year. For example, an account of the

\(^1\) Arch. nat., H1, 140, 92.
\(^2\) Arch. nat., H1, 140, 95.
the financial administration from 1703-1707 inclusive was presented to the intendant in 1710, for the years 1707-1713 in 1717, for 1715-1719 in 1722, for 1744-1750 in 1752, for 1751-1755 in 1757. These delays in drawing up and forwarding accounts to Dijon, the custom of accounting for a varying number of years at a time, and the absence of any analysis of receipt and expenditure, must have made it extremely difficult for the intendant to detect peculation, misappropriation and unauthorised expenditure. Improvements were introduced, perhaps at the intendant's instigation, though this is mere guesswork, in 1756. After this date not only was a separate account given of each year's financial administration, but details of receipts and expenses were listed systematically under various heads, which must have simplified considerably the intendant's task. The intendant (or a member of his staff—the subdélégué-général perhaps) would go through the accounts comparing them with the pièces justificatives, to check that all expenditure was authorised either by the town's budget or by special orders from the intendant. Surviving dossiers from

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 63-73.
2. The form of these early accounts, or rather their lack of it, makes it unbelievably difficult for the historian to discover how the town's revenue was employed.
3. Arch. d'Auxerre, GG.
4. For example, recette was generally subdivided thus: 1. Reliquat du dernier compte; 2. Rentes des magasins, maisons, etc.; 3. Rentes de Paris et de Dijon, taille négociale; 4. Octrois; 5. Baux à loyers.
5. These consisted of a) mandats issued by the maire and echevins authorizing payments by the receveur, and b) chits signed by the intendant sanctioning extraordinary expenditure.
the généralité of Dijon reveal that this examination of accounts was, in the second half of the eighteenth century at least, meticulous, but that nonetheless the maire and échevins of Auxerre not infrequently exceeded their powers by spending money entirely on their own initiative, and that the supposedly almighty intendant was occasionally unable to stop them. The greater part of the intendant's correspondence with the sub-délégué and municipal officials of Auxerre was concerned with unauthorised expenditure. Three points emerge from a study of this correspondence. The lack of speedy communications, the amateurish organisation of the royal bureaucracy and its deficiency in numbers, and the absence of effective means of disciplining erring officials, prevented the intendant from exercising that strict tutelle of municipal affairs prescribed by the government. And no doubt the character and inclinations of the man occupying the intendance played a part too. It would be instructive, therefore, to investigate the tutelle of Auxerre's financial administration as operated by successive intendants, and compare their effectiveness.
This intendant apparently had no inkling of what state Auxerre's finances were in until January 1763, when the accounts for 1756-1761 were submitted for verification. Then his reaction was immediate and forthright. On 8 January 1763 he informed the municipal officials that much of their expenditure would have to be disallowed:

"pour empêcher la continuation d'une dissipation excessive et pour introduire dans votre ville la règle qui est établie dans presque toutes les autres de la province."

He added: "il me semble que vous ayez affecté une dissipation extraordinaire." ¹ The same day, Dufour wrote also to the subdélégué requiring him to enforce a very strict control of the municipal officials' financial activities:

"J'ai besoin de votre vigilance et de vos soins pour m'aider à effectuer l'envie que j'ai de remettre la règle dans l'administration des deniers municipaux de la ville d'Auxerre. Le moment présent exige un détail fatiguant pour vous, mais je compte autant sur votre zèle que sur vos lumières.

La première opération que vous avez à faire est de faire transcrire sur les registres du receveur des revenus patrimoniaux l'ordonnance par laquelle je lui défend

d'acquitter aucun mandement qui ne soit revêtu de mon visa. 1.

Vous vous ferez remettre en même temps un État de situation de sa caisse avec un bordereau de tous les mandats qu'il a acquitté postérieurement à son dernier compte.

Je vous prie de prévenir ce Receveur qu'il doit prendre plutôt que plus tard les précautions nécessaires pour faire rentrer les fonds qu'il a demandé qui lui fussent passer en reprise dans son dernier compte parce qu'il a du se les faire payer.

....Vous vous ferez remettre des copies de tous baux, adjudications, livraisons, marchés, permissions et autres pièces qui peuvent servir à vérifier les articles des comptes soit en recette soit en dépense.

....Cet arrêt de 1760 ne comprendra toutes les dispositions que M. de Fleury avait coutume de faire insérer dans ces sortes d'arrêts, 2 lorsque vous aures

1. The ordinance read as follows: "Il est défendu au Receveur de la ville d'Auxerre de payer aucune somme à l'avenir des Deniers de sa recette sinon en vertu d'ordonnance particulière de notre part et sur les mandats des Magistrats après qu'ils auront été par nous visés à peine de radiation dans les comptes qui seront par lui rendus de toutes les sommes qu'il aurait payé sur les mandats non visés ou sans ordonnance de notre part, et sera la présente insérée sur son registre, en présence du Sr.de Pontagny notre subdélegué à Auxerre." This was a radical innovation. Hitherto only extraordinary expenditure not laid down in the municipal budget required the intendant's authorization.

2. What does this mean? Dufour's investigation of accounts suggests that he disapproved of his predecessor's administration, and especially of the 1760 arrêt, so this may be just a veiled insult......
pris la peine d'examiner les comptes, je vous prie de me faire passer un mémoire d'observations sur les changements que vous penses qu'il y aurait lieu de faire apporter à cet arrêt.

...L'entretien du pavé, celui des promenades, celui des fontaines et tous autres.....1. peu considérables qu'ils soient doivent être adjuger perdevant vous, après avoir fait prendre de mon autorité un devis de cet entretien qui en fixe les charges, j'ai cru m'apercevoir qu'il n'en avait pas ainsi usé par le passé, j'ignore si les magistrats prétendent être en droit de faire eux mêmes ces adjudications, je ne le presume pas, en tous cas vous voudrez bien vous en informer et me faire part de leurs raisons et de votre avis.

Vous aurez soin lorsque vous me renverrez les comptes d'y joindre non seulement les pièces justificatives de la dépense extraordinaire; mais encore ceux de la dépense ordinaire et même de la recette, quand même je n'aurais pas eu besoin d'autres éclaircissements le deffaut de ces pièces m'aurait toujours empêché de pouvoir rendre mes ordonnances sur les comptes que je vous renvoie avec la partie des acquits qui les accompagnoit......"2.

Why did the accounts for 1756-1761 so enrage Dufour and provoke such heavy-handed action? He was upset not a

1. Word illegible - possibly "ouvrages"?
2. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C Ill.
little by the increases in Auxerre's ordinary budget authorised in the arrêt du conseil of 1 January 1760, increased in the sums spent annually on candles, on salaries and liveries for the valets de ville, on street-cleaning and repairing, on the water-supply. But his objections to these items were convincingly met with persuasive arguments from both the municipal officials and the subdélégué. The intendant was equally disturbed by the number of legal cases in which the town was involved - eleven in all - as the cost of litigation was so notoriously heavy in the eighteenth century. Five of the cases were prosecutions for the payment of taille, one of the payment of the octroi sur le vin, three were concerned with commerce. The municipal officials countered Dufour's charges of excessive litigation by pointing out that nine of the eleven cases had been authorised by his predecessor, Joly de Fleury; for the other two they could find no official sanction - one of these, against the local maîtrise des eaux et forêts, had been proceeding in the parlement of Dijon since 1731!

Explaining away the restoration of the St. Pelerin quay, on the river Yonne, was more difficult. Dufour had asked

1. Letter 19 February 1763, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, G 8.
2. Letter 3 March 1763, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, G 8.
3. Including a case against the grocers of Auxerre, which was extremely important for the town, since the municipal officials were defending the principle of liberty of commerce. Auxerre was one of the few free towns, wherein the gilds did not control trade.
why the repair work had been done, since his predecessor's ordinance of 31 July 1760 had authorised only estimates for it. The municipal officials' story was as follows:

"M. de Fleury avoit de grandes vues comme chacun sàit sur notre Ville. Il pensait à l'embellir, à la purifier de tout ce qui la défigure en tout d'endroits et à y animer le commerce.... À son passage par Auxerre sur le fin de 1759, il voulut en visiter les dehors, faisant les observations sur tout ce qui se présentait.... il arriva sur le port St. Fellerin, et remarqua que ce port est assez spacieux, et qu'il pourrait être très commode: mais il est choqué de la malpropreté et du désordre ou il étoit.
C'étoit dans des endroits des elevations de terrain, des enfoncements dans d'autres, des ordures et des décombres partout. M. de fleury en fit des reproches et recommanda qu'on aiustat ce port, en nivellant le terrain autent pour le propreté de la Ville que pour faciliter le dépôt, le débarquement et l'embarquement des marchandises. Pour être autorisé légalement à faire ces ouvrages, on lui donne requete: mais comme on étoit en tems d'hivers ou le travail des manouvriers est toujours à bon compte, parcequ'alors il y a plus de bras désoccupés, on crut devoir faire le marché pour en avoir meilleur party, comptant que l'autorisation viendroit pure et simple, ainsy que Mr. de Fleury l'avoit fait entendre. Cependant
notre requete reste à l'intendance jusqu'au mois de Juillet; et il y avait déjà longtemps que tout était finy quand elle arrive. Nous voyons avec surprise que l'ordonnance, en authorisant l'ouvrage, exige prealablement le rapport des marchés: mais il n'étoit plus temps, puisque tous étoit consommé....nous esperons luy (i.e. de Fleury) en rappeller la memoire à la premiere occasion, et dans l'intervalle ce Magistrat nous est oté."

Pontagmy, in a letter to the intendant dated 3 March 1763, backed up the municipal officials' explanations (with the exception of that concerning the St. Pelerin dock, to which he was probably referring when he admitted that "on ne peut se dissimuler que plusieurs articles des chapitres de la depense extraordinaire ne sont point en regle....") tactfully adding a few of his own suggestions for enforcing a stricter control on finance. He thought that when public celebrations were ordered, estimates for the expenditure involved should be submitted to the intendant and that the receveur should be forbidden to make any payments for fireworks and so on, until the estimates had been sanctioned; that the receveur should equally be forbidden to pay for extraordinary expenditure except on mandats authorised by either the intendant or the subdélégué; and that the receveur should send in his accounts

1. Letter 19 February 1763, Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
2. Hitherto permission to embark on extraordinary expenditure was required from the intendant; but once that had been obtained, payment of it was valid if authorized by the municipal officials only.
to the intendant within six months of the year's end. Finally Pontagny tried to extenuate the municipal officials' guilt:

"comme le bureau de l'hôtel de ville se trouve composé de différents officiers qui jouissent à juste titre de la plus grande réputation pour la probité et le désintéressement, on ne peut attribuer les irrégularités de leurs administration pour les mandements qu'ils ont donnés ou pour les dépenses qu'ils ont fait faire qu'a un défaut de connaissance des règles sur cet objet, ou au mauvais usage qu'ils ont trouvé établi."

Eventually Dufour de Villeneuve succumbed to Pontagny's pleading and passed all the accounts for 1756-1761, but not without the following earnest exhortation:

"je ne peux cesser de vous répéter que le défaut d'économie a été poussé à l'excès principalement pour les reparations constructions et dépenses d'entretien dont la Majeure partie n'a pas été autorisée; vous vous êtes exposés au danger d'être condamnés personnellement à rétablir dans la caisse de la ville les sommes exorbitantes qui ont été ainsi dissipées; l'arrêt même de 1760 qui en fixant les charges, porte les objets d'entretien à des sommes plus fortes, ne vous aurait pas mis à couvert, parce que cet Arrêt ne déroge pas aux reglements généraux qui ne permettent pas aux officiers des villes de faire aucune dépense sans

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
ma permission, je ne vous dissimulerai même pas que la dissipation des deniers patrimoniaux a excité les plaintes de plusieurs personnes, mais j’ay bien voulu céder aux representations de M. de Pontagny qui a fait valoir tous les Moyens qui pouvoient m’engager à ne pas revenir sur les dépenses passées.... Vous avez en la personne de M. de Pontagny une grande ressource; il est bien capable de vous aider de bons conseils; et les propositions que vous me ferez d’accord avec lui, suffiront rarement difficultés....

Je crains que vous ne vous soyez embarqués bien légèrement dans plusieurs procès; il paraît que le nombre en a été considerable depuis 1756.... je vous invite independament des formalités de la deliberation, et de la permission de plaider, d’user encore de la plus grande circonspection avant de vous determiner à entreprendre un procès ou à defendre à ceux qui vous seront intentés......

Vous aurez soin de faire rendre incessament le compte de l’année 1762....et de prevenir votre receveur, qu’à l’avenir, il ait à rendre son compte de chaque année, dans les deux premiers mois de la suivante....."¹.

He also forbade them to spend money on gunpowder for public celebrations and on candles for the funerals of municipal officials. He ordered the procureur syndic to start proceedings against the town’s debtors to obtain the payment of money due,

¹. Letter of 10 May 1763, Arch. dep. de l’Yonne, C 14.
on pain of being himself held responsible for it. He decreed that in future, farms of street-cleaning, road repairs and so on were to be auctioned on his authority, not that of the municipal officials. He stipulated that the money appropriated for clothing the valets de ville was not to be given to them in cash, but was to be used to buy liveries at three-yearly intervals, and suggested that the liveries should be turned at the end of eighteen months to prolong their wear. He insisted that the receveur was to make payments only when authorized by a mandat signed by at least seven municipal officials.¹

There was, however, very little time to put these reforms into practice, for shortly after, Dufour de Villeneuve left the généralité of Dijon, and Delaverdy introduced his municipal reforms which radically altered the tutelle of municipal finance.

¹. Arch. d'Auxerre, GG.
The tutelle of municipal finance: 1764-1771.

One of the most striking features of the municipal reforms introduced by Delaverdy was that an exhaustive investigation of the financial situation of all towns was ordered. On the basis of information to be supplied by the municipal officials and the intendants, the contrôle général was to overhaul and revise all town budgets, sending out to each municipality letters patent embodying its new tailor-made financial régime. There is little to suggest, however, that this indeed most necessary scheme ever came to fruition.

Meanwhile, a new procedure was to be followed in checking town accounts. The receveur was to give a brief statement of receipt and expenditure to the corps de ville at the beginning of every month, and to present six-monthly and annual accounts to the assemblée des notables. The annual account had to be submitted by March to the assemblée des notables, which, when it had verified and passed it, sent a copy to the intendant. He was no longer responsible for re-checking the account, but merely forwarded it to the contrôle général, so that that government department had a panoramic view of municipal finance throughout France. The tutelle of finance, formerly exercised by the intendant was divided among the old royal courts. The annual account had to be submitted to the local bailliage for verification and closure, and thence

1. Laid down in the edicts of August 1764 and May 1765.
forwarded to the appropriate parlement. In addition, a separate account of revenue obtained from octrois had to be sent to the cour des aides. This was impracticable: town officials could not keep quite distinct patrimonial and octroi revenue. Although in the seventeenth century each type of revenue had been appropriated to special purposes, this was no longer possible. Money from patrimonial sources and from octrois was treated indiscriminately, and to require separate accounts for each was unrealistic. Consequently, as the government admitted in the preamble to the déclaration of 27 July 1766, conflicts broke out between the parlements and the chambre des comptes, as to which should have the privilege of examining municipal accounts. To settle this rivalry, it was decreed that all accounting should be before the chambre des comptes.

To see how all this affected Auxerre, we must turn to the history of the next intendance, that of Amelot.

Amelot — Antoine-Jean. 1764-1774.

Amelot remained almost totally ignorant of Auxerre's financial circumstances until 1773, as its annual accounts were sent only to the bailliage for examination. No copy was ever presented to the intendant, as was required by the new law, for him to forward to the contrôle général. However, in 1773, with the suppression of Delverdy's reforms, the intendant's tutelle
was restored, and the accounts for 1771 and 1772 were presented to him as usual. Amelot, eagerly assisted by his subdélégué, Pontagny, exploited this opportunity to review the entire financial administration of Charles Bezanger, who had been syndic-receveur since 1765.

On 6 April 1773 Pontagny submitted to the intendant his observations on Bezanger's accounts: all of them, from 1765 to 1772, came under fire. The subdélégué particularly criticised the unauthorized increase in the salary of the secrétaire de l'hôtel de ville, and the misappropriation of funds supposed to be spent on public works. Since 2,000 l. p.a. were allowed for repairing the town's pavé, during Bezanger's seven years in office, 14,000 l. ought to have been devoted to road maintenance. Yet in these seven years, only 3,750 l. had thus been spent; economies had been made in the upkeep not only of the pavé, but also of the walls, bridges and gates, in order to finance litigation which had cost in all over 36,000 l. More specifically, he suggested that 1,410 l. ills. claimed in the 1771 accounts as the expenses of a deputation concerning the don gratuit included the cost of unauthorized litigation, and should consequently be slashed to 274 l. ills. He was scathing about the municipality's purchase of pitch, at a cost of 475 l. 17s. 3d., to kill insects which were plaguing the vineyards: since it failed to kill the grubs, the tar had been

1. Litigation arising chiefly out of the election disputes of 1765-1766.
resold to some sailors for 80 l. In the 1772 accounts Pontagny found fault with the sum of 548 l. spent on repairing the hôtel de ville; he claimed that the money had been wasted in doing up the secrétaire’s apartment in the hôtel de ville, and that since these renovations had taken place in May 1772, the work ought first to have been submitted to the intendant for his authorization. Finally Pontagny drew attention to Bezanger’s failure to send copies of his accounts to Dijon:

"ne peut on pas en conclure que ce comptable, ou plutôt le corps municipal ne voulait point donner à M. l’intendant aucune connaissance de leurs administration." ¹

In spite of all, however, he advised the intendant to allow the five accounts passed by the bailliage to stand, to which Amelot agreed. But as to the expenses claimed for the deputation, which Pontagny suggested be reduced from 1,410 l. 11s. to 274 l. 11s., the intendant was persuaded by Bezanger not to follow his subdélégué’s advice. ² Amelot finally approved all seven accounts.

This quarrel over the accounts was only one of a long series of episodes reflecting the tension, during Bezanger’s term of office, between the corps de ville, eager to use the reform edicts to throw off the irksome tutelle of the intendant, and Amelot, loath to acquiesce in this curtailment of his authority.

¹. Letter of 6 April 1773, Arch. dep. de l’Yonne, C 14.
². Perhaps the only occasion when the intendant did not follow Pontagny’s advice.
Trouble had flared up in 1767, when the municipal officials, wanting to demolish a stretch of Auxerre's old walls, asked the controleur general for permission to do this work. Their request was referred back to the intendant for his advice, and, inevitably, handed over to Pontagny for his comments. The subdelegue reported that the proposed demolition work was essential, and that the corps de ville planned to use the building materials recovered from the walls for new constructions. Amelot repeated this opinion to de Courtelle and explained why Amelot made this request:

"D'edit des villes a lieux a Auxerre: et les officiers municipaux triomphant tant qu'ils peuvent d'être soustraits à l'autorité de M. l'intendant, M. de Pontagny le fait bien remarquer à la fin de sa lettre au 25 juin, en observant qu'ils affectent de se soustraire à l'obligation d'obtenir l'autorité de M. l'intendant. M. de Pontagny le fait à l'autorité de M. l'intendant. Il, de Pontagny, le fait d'autorité réservée par l'édit des villes."

1. Article 15 of the edict of August 1764 laid down that all plans and estimates for public works undertaken by the municipal authorities had to be authorized by the controleur general in letters patent.

2. It ought to be remarked that Pontagny was by no means an impartial critic of the 1765-1771 administration; his authority suffered with that of the intendant, and his personal enemies led the corps de ville.*
doit donc être question du projet d'arrêt qu'après les ordres donnés, et pour en assurer l'entière exécution; sans quoi les Magistrats tenteraient et parviendraient peut être à les rendre illusoirs, malgré la clause qui chargeroit M. l'intendant de tenir la main à l'exécution de l'arrêt, si tout n'étoit pas bien combiné auparavant."

The contrôle général agreed to Amelot's demand, and the following tortuous procedure took place. On 30 October 1767, the intendant ordered the municipal officials to send him details of how they proposed to employ the building materials resulting from the demolition work. It was decided by the corps de ville at a meeting on 9 November 1767 that the rubble should be used to improve the drainage system. Sixteen days later Pontagny forwarded this decision to the intendant, assuring him that he approved the plan. On 25 January 1768 Amelot issued an ordinance authorizing the subdélégué to appoint an expert to draw up estimates of the cost of the demolition and drainage improvements. This report was finished by the 18 February 1768, when the story peters out. But if all went to plan, and there were no hitches, the affair would have continued thus. The expert's report is sent by the subdélégué, together with his comments on it, to Dijon; the intendant accepts the estimates and authorizes Pontagny to hold a public auction of the work of demolition and and drainage repairing; the subdélégué does so, submitting the

eventually agreed contract to the intendant for his signature. In addition to this, before the work could begin, an arrêt du conseil and letters patent had to be obtained. It was this devious, tardy procedure which the municipal officials rather understandably tried to evade from time to time.

In 1774, for example, the municipal treasury ran short of funds, and to meet the deficit 2,500 l. were raised from the hôpital général. But the loan was raised without the prior authorization of the intendant - Baudesson, the maire, negotiated the business entirely on his own initiative - and was therefore technically invalid. To legalize the transaction, the corps de ville applied for retrospective sanction. The situation was summarized thus on the intendant's behalf:

"Les officiers municipaux de cette ville se trouvant dans l'impossibilité d'acquitter les charges de la ville ont fait un emprunt de 2,500 l. de l'hôpital général de ladite ville, mais sans observer aucunes des formalités nécessaires, et qu'ils ont coutume d'observer en pareil cas. Au lieu d'emprunter cette somme en leur nom, ils l'ont fait sous le nom de M. Baudesson Maire, a qui ils ont seulement donné une reconnaissance que cette somme a été versée dans leur caisse, et comme cet arrangement n'est cependant legal, et pouvoir par consequent les exposer à quelques recherches a cet égard."
Ils demandent qu'il plaise à M. l'intendant approuver et homologuer cet emprunt, comme s'il l'avait été fait par la ville."

Despite this illegality, Amelot authorized the loan, without rebuke, on 9 April 1774.¹

¹ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
The municipal officials were guilty of a similar though less weighty offence not long after Dupleix had replaced Amelot as intendant of Dijon. Several petty but essential repairs, costing 380 l. 13s. 9d. in all, were done to the town clock, without the intendant's permission, which was required as this came under the heading of extraordinary expenditure. When the bills for the work came in, the municipal officials had to get the intendant's authorization to pay them. Dupleix agreed on 18 May 1775, commenting: "Ces dépenses ne sont pas absolument bien considérables et on peut les approuver sans tirer à conséquence."¹

Not infrequently it was Pontagny who rescued the corps de ville from an awkward situation. On 10 June 1778 Dupleix informed the municipal magistrates that he could not sign a mandat ordering the receveur of Auxerre to pay out 113 l. 11s. spent on food: depense de bouche had for a long time been absolutely forbidden. Pontagny came to the rescue, explaining in a letter dated 21 June 1778 that the food was for breakfasts which the municipal officials were wont to have together before public processions; the corps de ville was willing to end this custom if the intendant wished; if only the present small sum was passed "sans tirer à conséquence."

¹ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 10.
Dupleix weakened as a result of his subdélégué's pleading, and on 10 July 1778 agreed to the dépense de bouche.\textsuperscript{1}.

Feydeau de Brou - Charles-Henri. 1780-1783.

The next intendant was Feydeau, and even he, who ruthlessly pruned unnecessary expenditure out of Auxerre's budget, could be persuaded to give his consent after the deed was done. At the beginning of 1783 when the municipal officials asked his permission to plant elms along one section of the town's ditches, and to establish a nursery of these trees, Feydeau replied that if the town's finances had not been in such a desperate condition he would willingly have authorized this project. But in the existing circumstances he could not sanction expenditure on mere embellishment and decoration. Unperturbed, the corps de ville again wrote to Dijon a few days later, on 4 March 1783. The letter argued that far from being merely decorative, the elm plantation would be of great utility. Moreover, said the municipal officials, a few days after sending in their first request they had been offered the chance to buy a quantity of elms cheaply, which they had done, and the trees were now planted. The cost of the whole operation was 200 l. This money had been advanced by one of the municipal officials, and the intendant's sanction was again demanded, so that they could

\textsuperscript{1} Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 14.
reimburse their colleague. Scribbled at the top of this letter (by Feydeau himself?) is the terse comment: "Puisque la dépense est faite, il faut bien l'autoriser." Formal permission was granted in a letter of 8 March 1783, which included a warning: "Je vous prie de n'entreprendre à l'avenir aucune dépense sans mon autorisation préalable. Il est toujours dangereux de s'écarter des règles."^1.


For a few months the municipal officials conducted themselves with great circumspection, but at the end of 1783, owing to the changeover of intendants, they landed into serious trouble. Plans were submitted to the intendant for the celebrations to be held in Auxerre on 21 December 1783 to mark the signing of the peace between England and France. Amelot, who had been appointed intendant of Dijon on 30 November, was still in Paris, and it was from the capital that he wrote on 27 December, approving the proposal to substitute a distribution of bread to the poor, instead of having the usual firework display, but forbidding the corps de ville to hold a banquet in the town hall. Not only was this letter written six days after the celebrations took place, but it was sent to Auxerre via the bureau de l'intendance in Dijon.

It is not at all surprising therefore, that by the time it reached its destination, the municipal officials of Auxerre had already despatched to Dijon for the intendant's signature, *mandats* for the payment of the festivities, including the forbidden banquet. Pontagny was, as usual, called upon to explain and justify:

"les officiers municipaux de cette ville ont eu l'honneur de vous adresser dimanche dernier l'état de la dépense que la publication de la paix, et les rejoissances publiques qui ont été faites les 21 décembre jour du te deum, ont occasionné, ils ont reçu le même jour de ce mois par la poste de dijon la lettre que vous leur avés écrite, Monseigneur, par laquelle il paroit que vous desaprouvés le repas et les violons. M. Baudesson Maire de la ville en me communiquant votre lettre m'a engagé de me joindre au corps municipal pour vous prier de vouloir bien viser le mandement qu'ils ont tiré sur le receveur des deniers patrimoniaux, il monte au total a 1200 l., la dépense relative au repas, au bal et aux illuminations y entre pour environ 400 l. Je sçais que la ville n'est pas riche et on a besoin d'économiser, mais permettez moy de vous représenter, Monseigneur, que ces petites fêtes passagères ont opéré un grand bien, en réunissant des citoyens divisés depuis longtemps par des troubles, des
animosités, et des esprits de party, dont MM. vos
predecessors et surtout M. Votre père ont souvent été
importunés. Ces evenements a contribué aussi a retablir
la bonne intelligence entre le corps du presidial, et
celuy de l'hôtel de ville.....ces divisions étoient
préjudiciables au bien du service du roy, et a celuy du
public; plusieurs d'entre ces magistrats ont fait
distribuer à leurs frais du pain, de la viande et du vin
au peuple sur les places publiques, le tout s'est passé
dans le meilleur ordre et la plus grande tranquillité.....
ces considerations me font esperer, Monseigneur, que
vous voudrez bien permettre sans tirer a consequence
qu'on paye ces dépenses extraordinaires sur les deniers
de la caisse de la ville, Vous pouvez etre assuré qu'il
ne sera fait à l'avenir aucune dépense que pour les choses
utiles et necessaires et avec grande circonspection."

Truly Dufour de Villeneuve had been prophetic when he wrote:
"Vous avez en la personne de M. de Pontagny une grande
resource; il est bien capable de vous aider de bon conseil;
et les propositions que vous me ferez d'accord avec lui,
suffiront rarement difficultés....."2.

On 17 January 1784 Amelot passed the frais de bouche. 3.

In all the instances of unauthorized expenditure
described above, the intendant would have been perfectly justi-

2. See above, p.356.
3. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
fied had he required the erring municipal officials to restitute
the money paid out: the edict of April 1683 made the corps de
ville collectively responsible for revenue paid out without
the proper formalities. Such action had one big disadvantage:
legal proceedings would probably be necessary and were likely
to cost more than the sum at stake. Also it may have been that
the intendants were aware that the tutelle they were supposed
to exercise could not be as strict in practice as it was in
theory. Some freedom to act swiftly in an emergency or to take
advantage of seasonal unemployment to get the roads repaired
cheaply, and so on, was essential. This may explain why the
intendants were at times so apparently lax and easy-going.
However, although they added "sans tirer à consequence"
whenever they gave posterior sanction to some dubious municipal
project, the precedent was inevitably created: the corps de
ville of Auxerre became increasingly less respectful of the
proper formalities. Its lack of deference reached its highest
point with Amelot de Chaillou as intendant at Dijon: during his
term in office one incident followed another, culminating in
the affair of the grande salle of the hôtel de ville.

Amelot de Chaillou, son of an earlier intendant of
Dijon, began by being co-operative. He had without protest
passed the frais de bouche incurred during the peace celebrations
and most sympathetically restored many of the cuts in annual
expenditure ordered by Feydeau in 1781. In December 1785 when
the municipal officials submitted for his signature a mandat of 89 l. 4s. for repairs done during that year to the hôtel de ville prisons and palais de justice, all without authorisation, he commented: "Ce serait gêner l'administration des officiers Municipaux de les obliger à demander l'autorisation pour des objets aussi minutieux et aussi utiles à l'entretien des édifices publics." But two years later the tone of the relationship changed between the intendant and the town, when Baudesson, the maire, tried him too far.

On 8 July 1787 a meeting of the corps de ville decided that the town's walls were in such a deplorable condition that they had to be repaired immediately to prevent a water shortage. It voted to auction the repair work the next Sunday. Amelot de Chaillou was agreeable to this and on 17 July 1787, appointed Baudesson to organise the auction, asking him to send in a procès-verbal of the proceedings. But far from acting promptly, the municipal officials first had estimates drawn up for the repairs needed, and then did not open the auction until 2 September. The contract for the work was not concluded until 9 December 1787 and Baudesson did not send in the procès-verbal until 20 May following. Somewhat annoyed, the intendant wrote to the maire on 29 May pointing out that he had been informed that the repairs to the wells would brook no delay, and for this reason only had he agreed that an auction

should be held without first asking for estimates of the cost of the work. Since the work had apparently not been desperately urgent, his prior authorization ought to have been obtained for the estimates. "Je ne puis m'empêcher de vous témoigner toute ma peine de l'espèce de surprise que vous m'avez faite et par laquelle vous m'avez oté la connaissance de l'importance de l'objet sur lequel vous me demandâtes une autorisation."

Amelot ordered Baudesson to send him the estimates for examination. On 1 June 1788 the other municipal officials, in the maire's absence, forwarded the required document to the intendant, who duly passed it, at the same time forbidding the corps de ville ever to arrange estimates in future without his prior authorization.

For three months all went well. The repairs, costing 512 l. were completed. On 2 November 1788, the municipal officials sent to Amelot for his signature a mandat for the payment of this 512 l., informing him that the repairs had been inspected and had been found to have been satisfactorily carried out. Amelot immediately asked that the report of this inspection be forwarded to him, thus discovering that it had been drawn up by an architect of Auxerre appointed by Baudesson. This too was contrary to the regulations: the maire ought not to have arranged for the inspection without the intendant's prior agreement, and it was usually the latter official, or his
subdélégué, who chose the inspector. The dossier on this affair contains the following observation at this point, possibly Amelot’s own thoughts: "on avait raison de soupçonner que la fin de cette affaire répondait à son commencement. M. Baudesson a cru devoir presque tout ordonner, sans recourir à l’autorité de M. l’intendant." The intendant, by this time very angry, nullified the offending report and ordered another investigation into the repairs to be made by a different architect, under the supervision of the subdélégué, Pontagny. He ordered that Baudesson himself should pay the first architect’s expenses, and that 300 l. should be paid to the mason responsible for repairing the wells, so that he should not suffer unduly from these delays. The same day, 13 December 1788, Amelot wrote to Villedeuil, secrétaire d’état de la Maison du roi, complaining of the way in which his authority was flouted by Auxerre’s officials:

"J’ai déjà été plusieurs fois dans le cas de me plaindre aux officiers Municipaux d’Auxerre, des infractions qu’ils s’étoit permises contre les différents Edits, arrêts et déclarations du Roi relatifs à la vérification des dettes des villes et communauté de cette Province qui assujettissent les Officiers Municipaux à ne faire faire aucuns reparations ou constructions pour le compte des Communautés sans autorisation des Commissaires délégués à cet effet."
dont tous les pouvoirs se trouvent aujourd'hui réunis à
la place de l'Intendant et Commissaire départi. 1. Malgré
les lettres que j'ai pu leur écrire, les clauses que j'ai
insérées dans mes ordonnances pour les ramener à la règle,
et une conférence que j'ai même eue à ce sujet au mois de
Novembre de l'année dernière lors de la tenue des États
de cette province avec le S. Baudesson, Maire, à qui je
temoignai la ferme résolution ou j'étais de lui faire
supporter à l'avenir qu'aux Officiers Municipaux, ses
collègues, toutes les dépenses qu'ils feroient sans
autorisation. Ce Maire vient néanmoins de me donner une
nouvelle preuve de son insubordination, j'ose de même dire,
de son mépris pour les règlements....."

Then follows the story of repairing the wells.

"Vous trouverez sans doute Monsieur, aussi bien que moi,
dans toute cette conduite du Maire d'Auxerre, une affecta-
tion de passer par dessus les règles et de ne vouloir
reconnaître l'autorité d'un supérieur qu'autant qu'il
peut le juger à propos. J'ai cru qu'il convenait de faire
un exemple, puisque toutes les défenses, toutes les
représentations n'ont pu encore produire aucun effet."

For this reason he had ordered Baudesson to pay the cost of
the first architect's inspection and procès-verbal - 6 l.

1. Is Amelot under the impression that the commission des
dettes still survives ?
"Je crois devoir Monsieur, vous informer de tous ceci afin de vous mettre à même de faire aux Officiers Municipaux d'Auxerre et particulièrement au S. Baudesson les reproches qu'il mérite. Je pense que ce moyen pour le ramener à la règle, ne sera pas infructueux."

Villedieu replied soothingly on 31 December 1788 that in his opinion, making Baudesson pay for the first procès-verbal would suffice to bring the municipal officials to their senses. He did not think it desirable that he should lecture them on their conduct:

"soit parce qu'il pourrait faire croire que vous avés craint vous même que vos pouvoirs fussent méconnus en cherchant à les appuyer d'une autre autorité, soit parce-que la lettre que j'écrirais aux Officiers Municipaux seroit en quelque sorte un préjudice contre l'Appel qu'ils pourroient, quoique sans fondement, interjeter de Votre Ordonnance."

Unfortunately Villedieu misjudged the temper of the times: the municipal officials did not repent and return to the fold. They loyally supported Baudesson, who continued a heated correspondence with the intendant until November 1789. On the 21 of that month, "à raison des troubles actuels," Amelot climbed down, revoked his ordinance of 13 December 1788 requiring the maire to pay the 6 l. costs of the first procès-verbal,
which he sanctioned, and ordered the mason to be paid in full.¹

While all this was proceeding, the municipal officials had offended Amelot in various other ways, thus exacerbating the situation not a little. They tactlessly arranged with the prince de Condé, governor of Burgundy, for a detachment of Invalides to be posted to Auxerre to guard the vineyards, without consulting the intendant. The need for soldiers was explained in a memoir addressed to Condé on 1 August 1787.

"Le territoire d'Auxerre est pour la majeure partie planté en vignes, elles sont la seule ressource de l'habitants.....
La culture est livrée à des journaliers, pauvres pour le plus grand nombre; et on sait qu'il ne se trouve pas beaucoup de loyauté dans le pauvreté. De la, dans tous les temps, un Brigandage d'Echalats, ruineux pour le Bourgeois.....Pour remedier à ce mal au moins en partie, on a depuis tres longtemps établi à Auxerre des Gardes Vigniers....cet établissement a meme été confirmé en 1764 par un Arret du Parlement contre la revolte des Vignerons. Mais les abus sont arrivés au point qu'ils ont rendu cet établissement une surcharge pour l'habitant dont les Vignes n'en sont pas moins volées et endommagées; la garde actuelle confiée à des hommes de la plus vile populace, loin de garantir la depredation, la protege sourdement. Cependant il faut une Garde, sans quoi le Brigandage seroit sans mesure."

¹ Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 10.
The municipal officials asked Condé to send half a company of Invalides, commanded by two officers, to Auxerre to act as guards. They promised to find barracks for the soldiers and to pay them wages of 6s. per day each. Condé forwarded this memoir to the Maréchal de Ségur, who, having just resigned from the government, recommended it to his successor at the War Ministry. By 8 September Louis XVI had signed an order for the transfer of the required troops from Dijon to Auxerre, where they were due to arrive on the 29 September. As soon as they learnt of these unusually swift developments, the municipal officials sent a copy of their memoir and an account of what had been arranged to Amelot. He angrily wrote to Breteuil, secrétaire d'état de la Maison du roi, complaining that the despatch of the Invalides had been settled behind his back. Amelot received a reply to his complaint from Condé, who curtly informed him that although the municipal officials ought no doubt to have asked his (Amelot's) approval of the financial aspect of employing the Invalides as garde des vignes, yet, notwithstanding, he (Condé) as governor of the province was solely responsible for deploying the army, and so the whole matter was within his competence.\footnote{Arch. dép. de l'Yonne, C 9.}

Amelot raised no further objections, but naturally he was not feeling at all well-disposed towards the corps de ville of Auxerre, when, the following month he received a mandat.
asking him to sanction the unauthorised expenditure of 418. l. 4s. on liveries for the valets de ville. He referred the question to Pontagny, pointing out that three years earlier, when these uniforms were last renewed, the cost had been only 234. l. 9s., the increase being due to additional and unnecessary buttons and trimmings. He added that in 1781 Feydeau, and again in 1784 he himself had condoned similar unauthorised spending on valets' liveries, both warning the municipal officials not to repeat this offence in future. Pontagny replied on 8 November 1787 with harsh criticisms of the corps de ville's policy:

"Quant à la perseverance des officiers municipaux a ne vouloir point se conformer aux formes que vous leur prescrivez, j'en trouve le motif dans l'esprit d'indépendance et de pouvoir arbitraire qui regne dans Ce Corps depuis quatre a cinq ans, et dont tous les ordres de la ville se plaignent hautement. Vous paraisssez désirer, Monseigneur, que je vous dire naturellement ce que je pense de la manière d'agir des officiers municipaux, et je crois de mon devoir de vous instruire de l'état des choses; il se fait à la ville bien des dépense que la saine partie des habitants juge déplacées, mais sur lesquelles on ne les consulte pas, tandis que l'entretien du pavé est singulièrement néglige, malgré les 6 à 7,000 l.
d'augmentation de revenu que produit l'octroy sur le sel; on ne veille point à l'enlèvement des boues et les rues sont d'une malpropreté affreuse. Enfin on semble affecter de mepriser les représentations des habitants pour ne vouloir faire que de dépense ridicule et inutile;.....Il serait tres interessant, Monseigneur, que l'esprit qui anime ce corps fut reprimé, et que les habitants fut seul encouragés à faire parvenir leur representation pour introduire un meilleur regime dans cette administration."

As to the expenditure on the valets' liveries, Pontagny suggested that it should be allowed if reduced to the 1784 amount, and that the municipal officials should be severely warned against acting on their own authority in future. Amelot however decided to pass the total amount of 418 l. 4s. He explained to his subdélégué that he had had an interview with Baudesson, on this and several other topics 1. "d'apres laquelle j'ai lieu de croire qu'ils ne se mettront plus dans le cas d'essayer des reproches sur cet esprit d'independence que j'avais deja remarqué depuis quelque temps dans la plupart des affaires de leur ville."2.

A vain hope! The corps de ville's most audacious exploit was yet to come. It arose out of the municipal officials' desire to commemorate the "belle operation" of Villeteard, premier échevin, who in 1786 had successfully negotiated the

1. See p.375.
purchase of the royal right to collect *aides* in the *comté d' Auxerre*, thus freeing the populace of the burden of paying these dues. The municipal officials proposed to erect busts of the King, the Prince de Condé, governor of Burgundy, and the *élus généraux*, in the *grande salle* of the *hôtel de ville*, and to put up a plaque inscribed with the names of other persons instrumental in arranging the *rachat des aides*. Unhappily, protocol would not allow the busts of the King and Prince de Condé to be installed; however as a consolation, Condé and his son, the duc de Bourbon, offered to present the town with their portraits. Accordingly Condé's secretary visited the *hôtel de ville* to fix a suitable place for hanging. The *grande salle*, he declared, would first have to be decorated in a fitting style before any portraits could be hung. On 28 July 1787 the *corps de ville* decided to ask the intendant's permission to rebuild the chimney of the *grande salle*, plaster and panel the walls, and buy a tapestry. Amelot refused to authorise any expenditure without having estimates for the sum involved, and in his letter of 16 August 1787 he reminded the municipal officials that they had not yet even told him how much the busts of the *élus généraux* and the plaque would cost. Nine days later he was sent the required information: the renovation of the *grande salle* should not exceed 1200 l., while the plaque and the inscriptions were estimated at 500 l. But Amelot did nothing. On 20 May 1788 Baudesson wrote to him telling him that no reply had been received to the request for authorisation
of the proposed interior decorating, and that haste was needed since the portraits were on their way to Auxerre. Pontagny too wrote to the intendant shortly after, suggesting that permission to mend the chimney and replaster the walls should be given if this work was really essential, and that later the price of the tapestry, which the corps de ville hoped to buy in Paris, should be fixed, so that not too much was paid for it. "Ces précautions paroissent indispensables avec des Officiers Municipaux, qui savent toujours abuser des autorisations qu'on leur accorde". Still nothing was decided. 1. On 10 June 1788 Pontagny broke the news to Amelot that although no permission had been granted, the decoration of the grande salle was almost complete. Instead of the proposed tapestry the walls were hung with blue cloth patterned with fleur de lys.

"vous pourrez croire qu'il y a negligence ou defaut d'attention de ma part, mais j'espère vous assurer, qu'excepté les officiers municipaux, aucun habitant n'en était instruit, et tous ceux a qui j'en ai parlé ont temoigné la plus grande surprise."

Pontagny reported that there were rumours that the work had cost 1795.1.: he therefore suggested that since the intendant had heard the news indirectly and unofficially, he could act as though he knew nothing at all about it, and authorise

1. One wonders why Amelot was so irresolute. Was it because although he would have liked to prohibit the scheme, nevertheless he feared to do so lest he should offend Condé and those other influential persons in whose honour it was planned?
expenditure up to 1200 l. as requested, thus placing the corps de ville in a difficult position. This advice Amelot followed.

But how the affair ended, whether there was a tremendous row between the intendant and the municipal officials, or whether, like their quarrel over the repairs to the wells, this affair was overshadowed by events during the Revolution and forgotten, one cannot say: the records do not exist.

One can only conclude that, so far as Auxerre was concerned, the intendant's tutelle was not a brilliant success. The edict of April 1683 itself provides one reason for its failure: this measure was designed to prevent municipal officials from embezzling their town's revenue, and the penalty it imposed - the restoration of all money disposed of without authorisation - was in this light perfectly just and logical. However the edict made no differentiation between outright peculation and spending without sanction municipal revenue on the town's business. It was this last offence of which the corps de ville of Auxerre was so frequently guilty, and which the intendants never punished, possibly because the only legal penalty was too heavy to be invoked. The intendant had no effective means of disciplining the corps de ville, and so, as precedent after precedent of condonation accumulated, the municipal officials' respect for the intendant's tutelle was inevitably undermined.

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 7.
No suspicion of defrauding the town in order to line their own pockets ever fell upon the municipal officials of Auxerre. The crux of the conflict between them and the intendant was that the town's revenues were quite inadequate to meet all the demands made upon them. The intendant's concern was to ensure that the municipal resources were devoted to worthwhile projects and not squandered by the corps de ville on frivolous expenditure. Unhappily the procedure for achieving this end was as tortuous and tardy as any red-tape, and consequently ignored by the municipal officials whenever they dared.
AVALLON IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Courtépée had this to say of the district surrounding Avallon:

"La partie meridionale de l'Avallonois est aride, monteuse, couverte de bois. D'Avalon à Nevers, on peut presque toujours voyager à l'ombre des forêts. Mais le pays de Morvan, malgré son aridité, est riche en bétail de toute espèce, qui se nourrit dans les pâturages fournis par les bois. On y reçoit seulement du seigle, de l'avoine, du sarrasin et des pommes de terre. Le climat est très-froid pendant l'hiver, et souvent couvert de neige. Les fruits y sont après, sauvages et dénaturés. Les chasseurs y trouvent sangliers, chevreuils, et quelquefois des cerfs: les bécasses y sont communes. Les nombreux étangs et les ruisseaux procurent de bons poissons; mais on n'y voit ni vignes, ni froment......La partie de l'est et du nord paroit être l'image de la Terre promise, par la richesse des moissons, par la fertilité des rians côtoeaux qui donnent des vins délicieux, et par l'excellence des fruits en tout genre. On dirait que le Cousain fait la séparation des enfants d'Israël et de ceux d'Edom. Les uns jouissent vraiment de la graisse de la terre; les autres semblent n'en avoir que
la rosée; la nature a traité les premiers en mere, et
paroit ne regarder les seconds qu'en manière. 1.

The town of Avallon itself, built on a hill above
the river Cousin, enjoyed the best of both these worlds. It
was primarily a market town, and its merchants handled the
produce from the area—cattle from the Morvan in the south,
wine, cheese and grain from the north-east. But there was
also a variety of manufactures and secondary industries based
on these natural resources: barrel-making, tanneries, flour
mills, a paper-mill, a mill for drying planks of wood,
fulling mills, all driven by the fast-flowing Cousin. 2.

Avallon was smaller than Auxerre,—only 600 "feux" in 1713 3.
— but far more prosperous.

Unlike Auxerre too, Avallon was a fully integrated
part of the province of Burgundy; all its administrative and
judicial corps—bailliage particulier, grenier à sel,
maîtrise des eaux et forêts, and recette particulière des
états de Bourgognes—were subordinate to Dijon. Other
distinguishing features of the town included a college staffed
by Doctrinaires, an hôpital, and the magnificent Romanesque
collégiate church of St. Lazare, with its chapter of twelve
canons.

Life in Avallon in the eighteenth century must have

1. C. Courtépée et E. Béguillet: Description générale et
particulière du duché de Bourgogne, V, p. 624.
been comparatively comfortable, if very uneventful.
MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN AVALLON.

Owing to the paucity of its records, an investigation of the corps de ville in Avallon is well-nigh impossible.¹ However, as if to compensate for this lack, the meetings of the assemblée générale des habitants are remarkably well documented; its minutes throw very welcome light in an often obscure and amorphous institution. But it must not be assumed that since its meetings were reported in greater detail and more conscientiously, the assemblée générale des habitants was therefore of greater importance in the government of the town than the corps de ville. Rarely consulted about administrative problems, the chief concern of the assemblée générale in Avallon was to elect municipal officials.

The corps de ville of Avallon consisted of a maire, four échevins, a procureur syndic, and a receveur. During the eighteenth century, the maire, like that of Auxerre, was

1. The Registres des délibérations du corps de ville, Arch. d'Avallon, BB 4, and BB 5, deal with meetings of the corps de ville held during the first half of the eighteenth century; BB 6 covers the years 1740–1790, but between 1758 and 1778 the only sessions of the corps de ville reported were extraordinary meetings at which fathers of ten or more children asked to be allowed to enjoy the privileges attached to large families by the edict of November 1666, i.e. exemption from taille and billeting troops. Very little is written in the registers after 1778 until 1789, when the greffier starts to copy out procès-verbaux and decrees of the assemblée nationale. In all these registers, the procès-verbaux and decrees of the local police court, held under the presidency of the maire, are much more important and numerous than the minutes of the corps de ville, among which they are interspersed.
appointed by the élus généraux of Burgundy, whose choice consistently fell upon a member of the Champion family. The offices of procureur syndic and secrétaire, being venal, were also for a short time at the beginning of the century outside the electoral conflict. But from 1718, all municipal officials except the maire, were ostensibly chosen by the assemblée générale des habitants. The constitution of Avallon imposed no special limitations upon the choice of municipal officials; in contrast to Auxerre where each post of échevin was specifically allotted to a certain professional class, the assemblée générale of Avallon could elect anyone in whom it had confidence. But while a greater variety of professions thus participated in the municipal administration of Avallon

1. Shortly before the third Champion to be maire retired in 1785, he wrote to Amelot, secrétaire d'état de la Maison du Roi, proudly recalling that he had held this office for 24 years, his father for 42, and his grandfather for 26 years; he asked Amelot to use his influence with the états of Burgundy to get his son appointed to the mayoralty. Amelot commented, "Rien de plus juste que cette demande, la mairie est en quelque sorte hereditaire dans cette famille depuis un siècle." Arch. d'Avallon, BB 29.

2. The venal posts of procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville and substitut were acquired in 1693 by Bernard Normand, at a cost of 3,148 l. 8s., and transferred in 1701 to Lazare Chausson. The office of secrétaire-greffier, worth 2,503 l. was bought by Jacques Pichenot in 1692. When he died three years later, the functions of secrétaire were performed by Philibert Collin par commission, until Pichenot's son François was old enough to assume his father's position (1715). Both Lazare Chausson and François Pichenot seem to have discharged their responsibilities satisfactorily, for they were both continued in office after 1718, when the corps de ville, acting on orders from the commissaires députés, bought up these venal posts. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 95, and BB 10, p. 549.
than in that of Auxerre, nevertheless the range of society represented on the *corps de ville* was just as narrow. To be more explicit: though there were among the *échevins* of Avallon, officials of the *eaux et forêts*, the *grenier à sel*, and the *prévôté*, as well as *médecins*, *chirurgiens* and *notaires*, all of whom were excluded from the *corps de ville* in Auxerre, these men were all members of the fairly prosperous upper and middle layers of the *tiers état*. A considerable proportion of the *échevins* were recruited from the local *avocats*: out of 149 men elected to the *échevinage* from 1692 to 1789 inclusive, 36 were *avocats*. Their nearest rivals for municipal office were *procureurs*, 22 of whom became *échevins*.

One of the features of the *corps de ville* of Avallon was this strong legal contingent, which at times obtained exclusive control of the *échevinage*: in 1730 it was divided equally between *avocats* and *bailliage* officials; in 1724, 1725, 1771, and 1780, two of the *échevins* were *avocats*, the other two *procureurs*. This marked preponderance of lawyers and magistrates is one of the factors which lead one to suspect that in Avallon too, the *corps de ville* was probably monopolized by a closely-knit oligarchy. Circumstances certainly favoured oligarchy

1. Of the rest, 17 were members of the *corps du bailliage*, 16 were *notaires*, 12 were officials of the *grenier à sel*, and 16 were merchants. *Bailliage* officials in fact predominated until 1756, when they were debarrè from sitting on *corps de ville* in Burgundy; why they were excluded, I do not know. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 14, p.205.
during the first half of the eighteenth century, when, in Avallon as in Auxerre, the governor of Burgundy nominated municipal officials on the advice of the maire. It is also significant that certain surnames - Borot, Chausson, Comynet (Cominet), Gaudot, Letors, Mynard (Minard), Morisot (Morizot), Pichenot, Rousseau, and Vallon, - appear again and again on the corps de ville. But whether the municipal officials of Avallon were in fact connected by family ties, I have been unable to discover, because the records of Avallon's notaires, which would be the most convenient and manageable source of information on family relationships, have not been deposited in the public archives. For this reason, the issue of oligarchy in Avallon must be left in abeyance.

The corps de ville was normally elected by the assemblée générale des habitants, which all adult male inhabitants were entitled to attend.¹ In fact, few exercised their right, rarely more than sixty.² Those who were present, speaking each in turn, according to his rank, nominated the échevins³ and other local officials "a haute voix," thus:

2. E.g. December 1696 - 45; January 1698 - 61; December 1703 - 56; December 1704 - 23; April 1751 - 51; December 1758 - 36; December 1769 - 11; February 1770 - 52; chosen at random.
3. Two of the four échevins were replaced annually, their term of office being two years.
"Jacob Vallon conseiller avocat du roy au baillage a nommé pour eschevins Etienne Champion, et Francois Vallon, greffier en chef du baillage; pour collecteur de la taille royalle Etienne Lardery marchand, et pour collecteur de la taille negociale et impositions extra­ ordinaire Pierre Bajot;

Nicolas Berthery grenetier a nommé pour eschevins Simon Prevost aussi grenetier et Francois Gaudot, et au surplus est de mesmes sentiments que led. S. Vallon.

Simon Prevost grenetier nomme pour eschevins Etienne Champion et Francois Gaudot; et pour collecteur de la taille royale Jean Chin et pour la taille negociale et impositions extraordinaires Pierre Bajot.

M. Jean Morisot controller au grenier a sel nommé pour eschevins Simon Prevost et Francois Gaudot, pour collecteur de la taille royale Etienne Lardery et Pierre Bajot pour l'autre Collecteur.

M. Nicollas Gaudot aussi controller est de mesmes sentiments que led. S. Prevost."¹

And so on.

Elections were conducted in this fashion until the end of the eighteenth century,² when the composition of the

1. Assemblée générale 30 December 1696, Arch. d’Avalon, BS 7, p.32.

2. The municipal reform edicts of 1764-1765 were not applied in Avallon (nor for that matter in any other Burgundian town except Auxerre, Macon, and Bar-sur-Seine) because of the états' opposition. Arch. nat., E 1. 144, 3 & 5.
assemblée générale des habitants changed: instead of attending in person, the members of some corps et communautés quite spontaneously started to send deputies. This development is first recorded on the procès-verbal of the assemblée générale held on 29 December 1771, which reads as follows:

"M. Prevost lieutenant de la maitrise des Eaux et forêts de cette ville, au nom et comme député de son corps, a nommé.......

M. Francois Moillat notaire en cette ville, député de sa communauté.......

Other corps and communautés which sent representatives to this assemblée générale were the chapitre de l'église collégiale, the avocats, the grenier à sel, the procureurs, the chirurgiens, the drapiers et droguetiers, the tisserands, the savetiers et perruquiers; the rest of those present attended solely as private individuals. This change was possibly an attempt to combat the recently manifested indifference to municipal affairs. Only eleven inhabitants had turned up at the assemblée générale des habitants summoned on 31 December 1769 to elect the échevins for the next year, and even after an exhortatory letter from St. Florentin, the secrétaire d'état de la Maison du roi, who had annulled the election and ordered a fresh one to be held, the total number of public spirited persons rose only to fifty-two.²

It seems not unlikely that this apathetic response provoked the introduction of representation by deputies in the next and succeeding assemblées générales.

Whatever its origin, this spontaneous growth was regularised in June 1787 by the royal government, which formally suppressed the assemblée générale des habitants and ordered it to be replaced by a conseil municipal composed of thirty-three deputies. 1. Of these, thirty were to be chosen annually, by the non-privileged classes, divided into seventeen categories; 2. the other three were to represent the ecclesiastics, nobles and privileges. 3. There was this difference between the two: while the deputies of the non-privileged classes were obliged,

1. Ordonnance 16 June 1787, Arch. d'Avallon, BB 18, p.130.
2. I.e. three deputies to be elected by the avocats and médecins; three deputies to be elected by the principaux bourgeois; two to be elected by the notaires, procureurs and greffiers; two to be elected by the ohtrurgiens, apothicaires, arpenteurs, commissaires à terrier, and architectes; two to be elected by the marchands de grain, vin et bois, and gens vivant bourgeoisement; two to be elected by the marchands drapiers et épiciers; two to be elected by the marchands merciers, orphvres, horlogers, tanneurs, chamoisiers, and chapellières; two to be elected by the aubergistes, boulangers, pâtissiers, cafetiers, cabaretiers, bouchers, and charcutiers; two to be elected by the huissiers, perruquiers, chauliers, and maîtres d'école; two to be elected by the charpentiers, maçons, tailleurs de pierre, couvreurs, charfourmiers et tuilières; one deputy to be elected by the menuisiers, tourneurs, plâtriers, and vitriers; one to be elected by the tourneleurs and brandeviniers; two deputies to be elected by the selliers, bourelliers, charrons, serruriers, taillandiers, courtelliers, maréchaux ferblantier, potiers d'étain, and poelliers; one deputy to be elected by the laboureurs pour autry, menuisiers, voituriers, and jardiniers; one to be elected by the cordonniers and savetiers; and one to be elected by the vigneron pour autry et manœuvreurs.
3. I.e. officials of the bailliage, grenier à sel, eaux et forêts, etc.
on pain of a fine of five livres, to attend all meetings of the conseil municipal held during their year in office, the deputies of the privileged classes suffered no such constraint -- they enjoyed the liberty of attending or not as they thought fit: the ecclesiastics were the most conscientious and enthusiastic participants. Strangely enough, the vignerons and laboureurs quite ignored the conseil municipal: they never elected any deputies, nor were they ever encouraged to do so. However, the conseil municipal collapsed during the political fever of 1789: at a meeting held on 16 August, the procureur syndic counted no less than 212 persons present. They voted the overthrow of the deputy-system and the revival of the assemblée générale des habitants, attempting to strengthen the latter by stipulating a quorum of 100.

But valuable though this evidence of the vicissitudes of the assemblée générale is, the archives of Avallon also throw light on an even more important and equally unexplained aspect of municipal elections: electoral management and interference by the royal government.

Until the death of Louis-Henri de Bourbon in 1740, the assemblée générale's choice of municipal officials, in Avallon as in Auxerre, was dictated by the governor of the province. It must not be imagined that his influence was underhand or

1. Letter of 6 February 1789 from Villedieuil explains this distinction, Arch. d'Avallon, BB 18 l, p.175.
insidious; both the Condé family and later the secrétaire d'état de la Maison du roi, used the most blatantly overt methods. The governor of Burgundy informed the corps de ville whom he had picked as échevins in letters couched in these terms:

"Estimant qu'il est du bien et de l'avantage de la ville d'Avallon, de continuer eschevins les sieurs Minard et Denevre, et demettre en la place de ceux qui doivent sortir de la Magistrature à l'élection qui se renouvelle le Ier janvier prochain, le sieur Nicolas Préjan, advocrat, et le sieur Rougeot, procureur, prie ceux qui ont droit d'assister à la dite election de leur donner leur suffrage de Bourbon."¹

Those thus chosen by the governor were nominated in the assemblée générale by the maire (who was actually responsible for suggesting their names to the governor), and the great majority of the voters meekly followed his lead.

The duc de Bourbon was succeeded in 1740 by a minor, and this circumstance, combined with Fleury's hostility toward the Condé family, ended the system whereby the governor of Burgundy appointed municipal officials. From 1740 freedom of elections was re-established, but it was a freedom circumscribed by the watchful supervision of the secrétaire d'état de la Maison du Roi, whose department seems to have had a genius for inventing ad hoc regulations qualifying electoral law in the

¹. E. Petit, Avallon et l'Avallonaïs, p. 354.
government's interest. Its arbitrary amendment of electoral procedure was at first opposed by the electors of Avallon. On 1 January 1741 they chose not only two new échevins, but also a procureur syndic to replace Claude Borot who had held that post since 1736. This was quite contrary to St. Florentin's instructions, which forbade the replacement of procureur syndics (and secrétaires and receveurs) unless they died, resigned, or were guilty of maladministration. In these events, three candidates were to be elected by the assemblée générale des habitants, one of whom would be nominated to the vacant post by the king. Avallon's disregard of this rule provoked a sharp reaction from the government. In a letter of 17 January 1741 the king annulled the election of the new procureur syndic, and reinstated Claude Borot. This same election, held on 1 January, annoyed the government on another count: Letors, lieutenant criminel au bailliage, and Monfoy, an avocat, had proposed that those elected to municipal office should be required to swear on oath that they had not canvassed for their places. Tavannes, commandant en chef en la province de Bourgogne, denounced this move in no uncertain terms:

"Comme il n'appartient point à ces particuliers d'établir de leur propre autorité des Regles de cette especes dans une assemblée de cette nature, S.M. m'ordonne

2. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 12, p. 800.
Letors wisely dropped his proposed oath against canvassing for municipal office, but in spite of the maire's advice to acquiesce in the new restrictions imposed by the government on the election of a procureur syndic, the assemblée générale of Avallon on 22 January 1741 voted humbly to protest against this infringement of its liberties. Claude Borot, it was claimed, was too old and infirm to perform satisfactorily the functions of procureur syndic, and Avallon had never before submitted several candidates for the post to the king, for him to choose a replacement. The meeting seems to have been dominated by Edme Bernard Letors, conseiller au baillage, whose speech is recorded in the procès-verbal as follows:

"anciennement avant l'édit de création des offices de maire du mois d'aout 1692, il n'y avoit à Avallon que huit charges municipales, savoir quatre échevins, un

2. Brother of Henri Hubert Letors, lieutenant criminel ?
sindic, un secrétaire, un collecteur des deniers royaux, un receveur des deniers patrimoniaux de la ville et que les habitants de cette communauté avaient le droit et la liberté de choisir tout les ans entre eux des sujets qu'ils elisoient à la pluralité des voix pour remplir ses charges municipales, le Roy ayant uni en 1696 les offices de maire au Corps des États de la province de Bourgogne les États firent exercer les offices de Maire par des particuliers auxquels ils accordoient des Commissions, mais à l'égard des Échevins, sindic et autres charges municipales les habitants y ont toujours nommé conformément à leurs anciens usages, et jamais la communauté n'a proposé plusieurs sujets pour chacun desdits offices... que la Communauté doit supplier Monseigneur le Comte de St. Florentin de nous conserver nos droits et usages...."  

In reply, Tavannes reproached the assemblée générale of Avallon for wishing to deprive the king of the electoral influence which it had so cheerfully accorded to Louis-Henri de Bourbon:

"Le Roy a trouvé que les habitants ont d'autant plus de tort de vouloir pretendre disputer a Sa Majesté le droit de faire continuer le procureur sindic tant qu'elle le jugera a propos qu'ils ne l'ont jamais contesté au feu M.

1. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 12, p.798.
le Duc sur une simple lettre de recommandation que S.A.S.
ceriroit et comme le Roy n'approuve point ses remonstrances
Sa Majesté m'ordonne de vous mander MM. que au cas de
mort démission ou de destitution elle trouve bon que les
habitants assemblent et nomment trois sujets......

"Quand aux remonstrances que les habitants ont cru
devoir faire sur l'âge du procureur syndic actuel Sa
Majesté estant informée que ce syndic quoyqu'âgé remplit
très bien ses fonctions et qu'ayant demandé pour recompense
des services qu'il a rendu à la ville de rester encore en
place pendant une année après laquelle il est déterminé à
se demettre elle m'ordonne de vous mander qu'elle a jugé
apropos de luy accorder cette grace."

Cowed, the assemblée générale of Avallon thenceforth submitted
to the secrétaire d'état's arbitrary decisions; there was no
murmur of opposition when, in 1778, the procedure of electing
three candidates for the king's choice was extended to the
offices of échevins.

In deciding which of the candidates submitted should
be nominated to the vacant municipal post, the secrétaire d'état
was guided by the advice of the intendant and the maire of the
town concerned; he was certainly not much swayed by the
relative popularity of the candidates, manifested in the number

1. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 17, p.196.
of votes recorded on the procès-verbal. It was not at all unusual for those who had received most votes to be ignored, and candidates placed lower down the poll to be appointed échevins.1 Exactly what principles governed the selection of municipal officials, or what qualities were required of them, it is difficult to decide: perhaps a candidate had only to be acceptable to the maire to become a member of the corps de ville? The evidence, slender though it is, suggests that throughout the second half of the eighteenth century, when municipal officials were appointed by the secrétaire d'état, the maire enjoyed almost as much power and influence as he had earlier, under the rule of the governors of Burgundy. In 1747 for instance, St. Florentin refused to accept Philibert Boudin as an échevin, alleging that he had "suscité une caballe en sa faveur pour se faire nommer échevin;"2 the real reason for his rejection was probably that he had been strongly supported during the election by Arthault, ancien juge prévôt, an enemy of the maire, whose protégé Claude Garnier de Bessy was chosen by the secrétaire d'état to replace Boudin.

Inevitably, knowing how powerful was the influence of both the maire and the secrétaire d'état, those who aspired to be members of the corps de ville often tried to win the support

1. From the introduction in 1778 of the practice of submitting annually six candidates for the two posts of échevin, until the Revolution, only once, in 1786, did the secrétaire d'état select as échevins the two candidates with most votes; on six occasions one of the échevins chosen was low down in the poll, on two occasions both were.

2. Letter 13 January, 1747, Arch. nat., BB 13, p.32.
of one or the other, or both of them. In the archives of Avallon are some very interesting letters, written on behalf of candidates for municipal office, which indicate what were the conventions which hedged eighteenth century string-pulling. The candidate himself did not seek to promote his chances directly; it was his friends or relations, or those who were indebted to him for some favour received, who canvassed on his behalf. Thus Darme, a canon of the collegiate church of St. Lazare in Avallon, is discovered writing to St. Florentin

"au sujet d'un frère qui est procureur et notaire royal au bailliage d'Avallone auquel on fait des passédroits pour l'échevinage: voila deux ans consecutifs que M. le maire le nomme conjointement avec quelques habitants, et tout cela n'a point lieu, parce que souvent ce sont des parents qui se donnent la voie les uns aux autres sans faire mention dans le proces-verbal qu'ils sont parents. Comme le succès depend absolument de votre autorité, permettez, M. que je l'implore......"\(^1\)

The secrétaire d'état referred this letter to Tavannes, commandant en chef de la province, who turned to Champion, the maire of Avallon, for elucidation. He explained\(^2\) that although all the municipal officials had voted for the said Darme at the last election, the rival candidates had defeated him. Champion reiterated the canon's explanation:

"dans les petites villes il y a beaucoup de parents qui cherchent à se soutenir... Michel Darme est un tres honnete homme de procureur et de notaire, son frere le chanoine souhaiterait le voire echevin; c'est un place qui attribue pendant 2 ans la reduction de la taille à 5 l., et donne l'exemption des logements de gens de guerre, ce qui est d'une grande valeur dans un pays ou il passe beaucoup de trouppes et ou il y a grand nombre de privilegies."

Apparently St. Florentin approved of Darme's motives for wishing to become an échevin, for the following year he was nominated to the corps de ville.

Champion attributed similar frankly base motives to Jean Baptiste Ruffier, when recommending him in 1750 as a suitable receveur. Ruffier was anxious to avoid undergoing an election if possible; Champion accounted for his concern thus, in a letter to Chartraire de Montigny, trésorier général de Bourgogne:

"Le Sr. Ruffier, pour lequel Madame de Morey veut bien s'intresser se trouve embarassé dans la circonstance présente: le Sr. Ruffier est natif de Savoye, naturalisé par lettres de Sa Majesté; la sagesse et la conduite de M. Ruffier luy ont fait naître des jaloux, ainsi Mgr. s'il est obligé de se soumettre à une deliberation de ville, les suffrages ne seront peut etre pas nombreux; je connais
Mgr. à peu près le terrain.

Le Sr. Ruffier m’a communiqué Mgr. une lettre de Mr. Fourat receveur des deniers patrimoniaux d’Autun, en datte du 17 juin 1749, par laquelle il paroist que vous avez Mgr. fait obtenir audit Sr. Fourat la place de receveur des deniers patrimoniaux d’Autun sans autre formalité.

Votre pouvoir est toujours le même, et Mgr. Ruffier se flatte qu’aidé des bontes de Madame de Morey, il reussira dans cette affaire qu’il ne recherche que par rapport aux privileges attachés à cet employ.”

Champion backed up this move with like representations to St. Florentin himself. His efforts were not in vain: Ruffier was nominated receveur de la ville in succession to Berthenon, without the formality of an election. His subsequent conduct as receveur suggests that the opposition to his appointment, to which Champion referred, might not have been entirely prompted by jealousy. Happily, most candidates desired not to evade an election altogether, but merely to have a little extra support thrown into the balance.

On at least two occasions the maire was asked to do just this by a certain Roullin, an official in the Prince de

3. The story of how he diverted municipal revenue into his own commercial enterprises will be related in the chapter on municipal finance.
Conde’s household, whose letters of recommendation were disarmingly honest. He wrote on 24 December 1775:

"Je suis fortement sollicité par quelqu’un que j’ai un extreme désir d’oblier, de m’interesser auprès de vous pour procurer une de ces nouvelles places à M. Baudot, md. orphève de votre ville, qui a déjà été dans la magistrature. Je vous serai très oblige, Monsieur, de comprendre led. S. Baudot dans le nombre des sujets que vous allez presenter. Je ne le connois pas moi meme, mais on m’assure que c’est un galant homme, qui seroit agréable à ses concitoyens. Quelqu’envie que j’aye de faire plaisir aux personnes qui s’interessent à ce M. Baudot, je ne vous fais cependant cette demande qu’autant que vous le jugerez à propos, et qu’il soit digne de rentrer dans votre Magistrature. De quelque manière qu’il soit, je vous prie toujours de me faire une réponse que je puisse montrer aux personnes que m’engagent à m’interesser pour lui, et même de ne pas lui laisser ignorer que j’ai eu l’honneur de vous écrire en sa faveur."

Whether as a result of this appeal or not, Baudot was included among the candidates for the échevinage and held office 1776-1778.

On 6 December 1779, Roullin again wrote to Champion in the same frank and scrupulous vein, this time on behalf of 1. Arch. d’Avallon, BB 24.
Jean Leonard Cousin, who had designs upon the post of procureur syndic.

"J'ay l'honneur de vous envoyer, Monsieur, un petit mémoire que m'a remis M. Michel, qui est à la tête de l'administration des affaires, Maison et finance de Mgr. le Prince de Condé. Vous y verrez que M. Cousin désire être nommé syndic de votre ville, et qu'on espère que M. Minard se désisterait volontiers de cette place en sa faveur. Je n'ai point parlé de ce mémoire à Mgr. le Prince de Condé parce que S.A.S. ne prend pas connaissance de la nomination des officiers municipaux, mais je n'ai pu refuser à M. Michel de m'intéresser auprès de vous, Monsieur, pour tacher de faire comprendre M. Cousin dans le nombre des trois sujets qui seront présentés pour la place de syndic. J'ai assurément le plus grand désir

1. The memoir reads as follows:

"M. Cousin, premier échevin de la ville d'Avalon, désire être syndic de lad. Ville. M. Minard qui occupe actuellement, offre de s'en démettre en faveur dudit S. Cousin. En conséquence de cette bonne volonté, le S. Cousin s'est rendu dans les Bureaux de M. Amelot (secrétaire d'état de la Maison du roi), et les premiers commis lui ont dit qu'il n'était pas possible de le nommer d'office, sans blesser la liberté qu'ont les habitants, de designer et presenter trois sujets au Roi, pour qu'il décide celui d'entre eux qui lui sera le plus agréable. Le S. Cousin est bien certain d'avoir le voeu d'une partie des habitants, mais ce voeu peut être tellement partagé, qu'il peut arriver qu'il ne fut pas de nombre des trois qui doivent être présentés à Sa Majesté. N'y aurait-il point d'indiscretion de prier M. Roulin d'écrire à M. le Maire de la ville d'Avalon, que S.A.S. Mgr. le Prince de Condé désireroit, que dans le nombre des trois sujets qui doivent être présentés au Roi, le S. Cousin fut un d'entre eux. Cette lettre produirait sûrement le plus grand effet; et concilierait en même temps tous les suffrages en faveur dudit S. Cousin.

p.t.o.
On pense même qu'une Lettre de M. Boullin à M. le maire d'Avallon, dans laquelle il ne serait pas question de S.A.S. Mgr. le Prince de Condé opereroit le même effet.
d'obliger M. Michel, qui paraît s'interesser beaucoup au succès de cette affaire; cependant je ne vous demande sur cela que ce que vous jugerez à propos de faire, ne connoissant point M. Cousin, et ignorant les raisons qui peuvent s'y opposer. La seule chose, dont je vous prie instamment, c'est de me faire une reponse que je puisse montrer à M. Michel, et qui prouve que j'ai fait auprès de vous, ce qui pouvait dependre de moi.....

Cousin was included among the three candidates elected by the assemblée générale, to replace Mynard as procureur syndic on his retirement; and although the substitut, Charles Louis Borot, polled most votes (65 against Cousin's 38), Amelot, secrétaire d'état, chose Cousin as procureur syndic.

Rarely did an outrageously unfit man acquire office as a result of the intercession of powerful friends; moreover the town's leading inhabitants did not hesitate to protest against the appointment of an unacceptable person. For example, in January 1751 a public outcry greeted the nomination by St. Florentin of Gardet, greffier en chef au grenier à sel, to the post of secrétaire de l'hôtel de ville, and the secrétaire d'état was obliged to rescind this appointment, and to order the reinstatement of the former secrétaire Marc Antoine Malot, who had been unjustly accused of incompetence. An explanation

1. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 33.
2. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 18 1, p. 10.
of what was happening behind the scenes in this astonishingly swift nomination and dismissal is contained in a letter written on 2 January 1759 to the intendant of Burgundy by his subdélegé in Avallon, Préjan. The latter is seeking to prevent the same Gardet being confirmed in the office of échevin, to which he has recently been elected by the assemblée générale, for the following reasons:

"Cet homme est fils d'un Valet de Ville mort depuis peu, et que tout le monde a vu porté la albarde, d'ailleurs il n'a aucun merite personnel, et est généralement méprisé. ...dans quel avilissement d'ailleurs cela ne metteroit-il pas les places d'Eschevins, peu d'honneste gens voudroit y passer, et M. Garnier avocat qui vient d'être nommé avec Gardet s'explique déjà tout clair qu'il refusera si ce dernier est confirmé....outre l'indécence qu'il y auroit de faire placer a costé du maire et d'honnestes gens qui passent par l'Échevinage un homme tel que celui la, c'est qu'il y a des raisons qui l'en excluent....(he argues that the lawsuit pending between the corps de ville and the corps du grenier à sel is sufficient reason for excluding all members of the grenier à sel from municipal office until it is settled)....Je crois cela plus que suffisant pour empêcher que cette nomination ait lieu. Je ne sais point seulement comme on a pue l'imaginer, mais voici ce qui s'est passé.
M. Duchesne, intendant de M. le comte de St. Florentin écrit au sindic... il luy marque qu’il luy fera plaisir de luy (i.e. au Gardet) donner son suffrage, et que le ministre s’y interesse. Cette lettre montrée en Chambre de ville a revolté ces Mrs. qui tous ont délibéré de ne le point nommer et d’en dire les raisons à M. le Comte de St. Florentin; le maire seul que vous connaissez Monseigneur, a eut la faiblesse de luy donner sa voix qui en a fait avoir à Gardet plusieurs autres, de gens absolument de la lie du peuple et de la canaille qu’il a seule gagner par les promesses que Gardet leurs a faites de les faire travailler comme architecte. Cette homme en cette qualité est fort occupé par Monseigneur de Sauvigny 1. qui luy fait faire les chemins de traverses de sa generalité, et le Chateau de Sauvigny est le seul endroit de la Bourgogne ou cet architecte ait donné les preuves de son savoir.... et comme M. et Madame de Sauvigny semblent le protéger, je leurs en écrit aujourd’hui, et je fais voir le ridicule de la pretention de Gardet, aussy suis-je moralement sur qu’ils ne prenent aucune part à cette affaire, surtout après le tour qu’il a joué à Madame de Sauvigny qui ayant obtenu pour luy il y a quelques années la place de secrétaire de l’hôtel de ville sur le faux

1. Intendant of Paris.
exposé qu'il luy avoit fait de la conduite et du peu de capacité du secrétaire en exercice. Ces calomnies revolterent si fort contre luy tout le monde que Madame de Sauvigny que je lui en ecrivit combien Gardet luy en avoit impose, demande elle mesme sa revocation, et fit remettre l'ancien secrétaire en place; il y a donc toute apparence Monseigneur que Gardet qui fait travaillle sur le chemin de St. Florentin aura sou gagner quelqu'un des gens de ce Ministre, a qui il aura demandé de la faire mettre echevin, et que sur cela M. Duhesne qui ne le connoist point en aura ecris au sindic...."

Either Prejan seriously underestimated the influence or those supporting Gardet's candidature, or Gardet himself was a much more worthy character than appears from the subdélégué's letter, for he was in fact confirmed in the post of échevin.

But there seems to be no doubt that earlier, when trying to supplant Malot as secrétaire de la ville, his conduct had outraged eighteenth century conventions.

Municipal elections in Avallon were by no means as lively as they were in Auxerre. In this respect, however, it is not unlikely that Avallon was more typical of French towns in the eighteenth century than was Auxerre. But the monotony of elections without controversy and competition almost certainly

1. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 23.
2. Letter of 12 July 1763, Arch. d'Avallon, BB 38.
induced the apathy which paralysed the assemblée générale des habitants of Avallon in the 1770s, and led to its replacement by a conseil municipal. Perhaps in this too, Avallon was not unrepresentative? For the historian, the clandestine manoeuvres to secure office are probably the most interesting aspect of the municipal elections in Avallon; the correspondence on this topic is very instructive, both as to the method of exerting influence, and the accepted attitude towards public office.

MUNICIPAL FINANCE IN AVALLON.

The main theme of this chapter is conveniently epitomized in a remark made by the intendant of Dijon, Dufour de Villeneuve, in 1763, "Votre ville quant aux revenus est la plus aisée de ma Generalité."¹ The financial resources of Avallon were always more than sufficient to cover expenditure; the municipal officials were never vexed by the problem of making both ends meet, and the intendant was not obliged continually to preach economy. In short, the financial situation of Avallon was exactly the reverse of Auxerre's. This happy dissimilarity can be explained by the fact that Avallon's principal source of revenue was timber, a very solid asset, which increased in value during the eighteenth century. The town owned large tracts of forest, of which it was entitled to cut down and sell fifty and a half arpents a year. The revenue from these coupes de bois, though inadequate by itself, nevertheless provided a very sound foundation for the municipal budget; it was a much more reliable source of income than taxation either on individuals or on consumer goods.

Such taxation was levied in Avallon, but as a supplement to the revenue from coupes de bois. At the beginning of the century a taille négociale was imposed on all inhabitants.

¹. Letter 30 April 1763, Arch. d'Avallon, CC 55.
². See Appendix D VIII.
to bridge the gap between the profits from the timber and municipal expenditure.\(^1\) The amount of \textit{taille} levied fluctuated from year to year, depending of course on the price fetched by the \textit{coupe de bois} and the current rate of spending: it could be as much as 2,171 l. 3s. in 1701, or as little as 269 l. 11s. 4d. in 1708; the average \textit{rôle de taille négociale} seems to have totalled about 750 l.\(^2\). By 1716 the municipal officials were able quietly to dispense with the \textit{taille négociale}, preferring in its place two fairly new taxes on consumer goods, the \textit{octrois} on wine and meat.

The \textit{octroi} patrimonial of 33s. on each muid de vin brought into Avallon was introduced in April 1692, to enable the town to raise 6000 l., its share of the 250,000 l. subsidy granted to the king by the \textit{états} of Burgundy.\(^3\) Once the 6000 l. due by the town had been paid, it was authorised to continue collecting the \textit{octroi} for its own benefit, and it proved to be a valuable source of income during the eighteenth century. The flaw in this tax was that a distinction was drawn between \textit{vin du cru} and \textit{vin non cru}: the former, wine produced in the inhabitants own vineyards, was exempt from the \textit{octroi}.\(^4\) This differentiation, which was not unique to Avallon, but a characteristic of towns in pays de vignobles, was conducive to

1. \textit{Arret} 15 March 1686, Arch. d'Avallon, CC 55.
2. See Appendix D IX.
3. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 44 & 46.
4. Except that sold by innkeepers and publicans; all wine, \textit{du cru et non cru}, retailed by them "à table assise," was liable to the \textit{octroi}.
fraud, since naturally people tried to evade paying the octroi by smuggling vin non cru into the town as vin du cru. Not infrequently the farmers of the octroi complained to the intendant of Dijon that this smuggling caused them considerable losses, and asked that action be taken to prevent it. In 1713, for example, the intendant was informed that the inhabitants of Avallon

"pour entretenir le Commerce Considerable qu'ils font sur les vins en achètent de grosse quantité dans les villages voisins qu'ils font passer pour vins de leur cru et par ce moyen se soustrayent injustement du droit d'octroy.....

Plusieurs habitants de laditte ville n'ayant point ou peu de vignes en debitent neanmoins et ne laissent pas de vendre du vin pendant toute l'année sans en payer aucun droit." 

The remedy usually suggested by the octroi farmers was that all inhabitants should be obliged to declare not only vin non cru but also vin du cru, at the customs barriers on the outskirts of the town, justifying their claim that it was vin du cru by disclosing the place of its provenance. They also demanded authority to enter and search cellars in private

1. The widow of Leonard Lebrun, conseiller au bailliage, was cited as an example.
2. Placet 26 July 1713, Arch. d'Avallon, CC 46.
3. Ordonnance 24 August 1742, Arch. d'Avallon, CC 45.
houses, in order to check their contents against the declaration slips, and so expose smugglers. But even if the intendant was sympathetic towards the octroi farmers' requests for increased powers, the municipal officials always protested strongly and usually effectively, on behalf of the inhabitants, against any invasion of private property by the farmers. As a result smuggling continued unchecked.

Smuggling also undermined the octroi on meat. Since dues had to be paid on all meat slaughtered and sold in Avallon, there was an obvious incentive for the townspeople to buy their meat in the neighbouring villages, where it was not subject to the octroi, and smuggle it into the town. The risk of incurring a heavy fine of up to 200 l. did not deter all of them. The origin of this octroi on meat was similar to that on wine: when Avallon was required to purchase the venal office of inspecteur aux boucheries, created in 1704, it was given permission to levy the dues attached to this office in order to raise the necessary 8000 l. After 1712 when the price of this office had been recovered, these dues on meat became part of the town's revenue.

1. Ordonnance 24 August 1742, Arch. d'Avallon, CC 45.
2. As follows: 40s. boeuf or vache, 12s. veau or génisse, 4s. mouton, brebis or chevrier.
There was almost invariably quite a considerable surplus of revenue over expenditure in Avallon's budget. Indeed, during the first half of the eighteenth century, the balance accumulated reached astronomical figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1718</td>
<td>15,920 l. 11s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>10,413 l. 4s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728</td>
<td>14,841 l. 1s. 3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1734</td>
<td>16,177 l. 14s. 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1737</td>
<td>22,731 l. 10s. 1d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1739</td>
<td>28,771 l. 7s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740</td>
<td>34,821 l. 13s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>42,945 l. 10s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1744</td>
<td>24,017 l. 17s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>18,779 l. 13s. 10d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1753</td>
<td>17,020 l. 5s. 3d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>24,801 l. 10s. 3d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the 1760s and 1770s, owing to abnormally heavy expenditure on roads and street-lighting, the surplus dropped, and balances in the region of about 2000 l. were more usual. Then later in the 1780s the former superfluity reappeared:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1782</td>
<td>12,361 l. 1s. 11d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794</td>
<td>14,052 l. 3s. 2d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>10,721 l. 9s. 7d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With reserves on such a scale, arrears in the payment of revenue rarely caused serious embarrassment. It was not at all unusual for timber merchants to owe up to 3,000 l. on the coupe de bois: there was inevitably a considerable hiatus between the auction of the annual quota of timber, and its actual sale in Paris. Delays in the collection of the taille négociable however could not be treated so lightly, and ruthless efficiency had to be used to prevent tailliables.
accumulating arrears, which were extremely difficult to recover. The terrible famine of 1709 - 1710 unavoidably caused many to be behind with their payments and these debts snowballed alarmingly: arrears of 515 l. 19s. 6d. in 1710 increased to 1362 l. 0s. 10d. in 1711 and to 4482 l. 18s. in 1713. That the municipal officials were ready to drop the taille négociée as soon as financial conditions were favourable is understandable: octrois were not so equitable as taille, but much easier to levy. The farmers of the octrois were seldom allowed to be lax in their payments. During the eighteenth century only two got into serious difficulties — Bouillotte, farmer of the octroi on wine, was always about 1500 l. p.a. in arrears during the term of his farm, 1759-1765, but seems to have had little trouble in finally paying off, in 1768, all his debts; a more serious liability was the sum of 3074 l. 10s. owed by Legris, farmer of the octroi on meat, when he died unexpectedly in 1770 — it took his heirs ten years to wipe out this debt. The only other notable cause of arrears was the royal government's tardy payment of the salaries attributed to venal offices bought up by the town; but this will be discussed later.

Avallon's abundant revenue enabled its municipal officials to indulge lightheartedly in the kind of expenditure so often denied to other towns, including the neighbouring Auxerre. The Intendant of Dijon seems never to have been obliged to forbid any expenditure proposed by the municipal
officials. They were never constrained to economize on the repair and construction of public works and amenities. What follows is perforce a rather repetitive account of the scope of this expenditure.  

Appreciable sums, which varied in amount from year to year, were devoted regularly to the upkeep of not only roads within the boundaries of Avallon, but also those on its outskirts, which linked the town with the villages nearby. In addition, big programmes of road construction and re-laying were undertaken from time to time: they accounted for over 14,011 l. in the budgets of 1743-1744 inclusive, over 42,104 l. in 1758-1763 inclusive, and 7,579 l. in 1771. As well as being well-maintained, the streets of Avallon were probably better swept and cleaned than those of most French towns. In order to get rid of their refuse, the inhabitants did not rely on the local landowners' need for manure, but could afford to pay garbage collectors up to 590 l. p.a. to have the streets swept three times a week. Another uncommon amenity enjoyed

1. Unless otherwise stated, details of Avallon's expenditure are taken from the municipal accounts: Arch. d'Avallon, CC 295 - CC 398.

2. Intendant Dupleix suggested in 1775 that Avallon ought to make a profit out of street filth, like other towns, i.e. auction its garbage as manure to the highest bidder, who thus paid for the privilege of cleaning the streets. The only drawback was that all the refuse was not necessarily removed, but only as much as was needed for manure. However, experience had proved that this system was unsuitable for Avallon: there was little demand for manure, since most of the surrounding countryside was not cultivated, but forest. Arch. d'Avallon, DD 153.
by the townspeople was street-lighting. In 1765 the municipal officials overcame Amelot's reluctance and were given permission to install sixty-five street lamps at a cost of 1500 l. The expense of lighting the streets was rather high - between 800 l. and 1,000 l. p.a.

Money for the preservation and upkeep of Avallon's walls, gateways, turrets, squares and clock-tower, was not stinted in the eighteenth century, and their present excellent condition is a testimony to the care lavished upon them in the past. Contributions even towards the repair of churches - by no means a municipal responsibility - were not infrequently granted from Avallon's revenue: on this alone was spent 1660 l. in 1718, 2050 l. in 1722, 3263 l. 12s. in 1724, 1216 l. 13s. 4d. in 1727. The money was usually spent on windows, masonry and roofing; but in 1737 the municipal officials generously bought a new organ costing 996 l. 8s. for the church of St. Julien, because its own parish funds were low. Another similar voluntary gift was the 300 l. spent in 1707 on renovating and decorating the courtroom of the bailliage of Avallon. Besides the present hôtel de ville, built just before the Revolution at a cost of over 40,000 l., the most pleasant souvenirs of the taste and zeal of the corps de ville in the eighteenth century are the promenades it laid out and

1. Arch. d'Avallon, DD 142.
2. Arch. d'Avallon, DD 123.
the trees it planted, not only within the town, but also along the roads leading to it. 192 l. were spent in 1749 on tree-planting, 128 l. in 1763, 408 l. 5s. in 1767, 119 l. 2s. in 1768, and 128 l. 10s. in 1769; and a small sum was devoted each year to pruning the trees. Other public works worthy of mention were the enlargement of the market square in 1714, which was made possible by buying adjacent private gardens at a cost of over 1700 l., and the purchase in 1756 of a building to serve as a slaughterhouse for the locality: 3613 l. 15s. was paid for this. A warm tribute to the municipal officials' achievement was paid by Courtepée and Béguillet in their famous Description de Bourgogne: "On ne peut qu'applaudir au zèle des Magistrats qui ont bâti un bel Hôpital, élevé l'Hôtel de Ville, établi les lanternes, percé dans le voisinage des routes aisées, impraticables auparavant, formé des promenades publiques."¹

This ambitious public works programme was peculiar to Avallon; but one aspect of the town's budget was typical of all municipal expenditure - the ever-mounting sums spent on municipal salaries. Avallon's wage-bill rose from approximately 350 l. p.a. in 1686, to just over 2,000 l. p.a. in 1786. The municipal officials themselves did rather well out of this increase: the arrêt of March 1686 allowed the procureur syndic

¹ L. C. Courtepée et E. Béguillet: Description générale et particulière du duché de Bourgogne, V, p.629.
10 l. p.a., and the secrétaire and échevins 2 l. p.a. each, at which nominal level their salaries remained until 1763, when the intendant suggested that in view of the town's affluence, the maire and syndic could be paid 50 l. p.a. each, the échevins 20 l. p.a. each, and the secrétaire 100 l. p.a.\(^2\).

The members of the corps de ville not unnaturally accepted these new rates, which were paid until the Revolution. The most considerable single wage increase was enjoyed by the two gardes des bois, employed by the town to protect its woodlands: their wages, fixed at 48 l. each in the 1686 arrêt, rose to 200 l. p.a. each, sometime between 1712 and 1762. The four sergents de la ville were equally well treated: they were paid in all 24 l. p.a. in 1712, 200 l. p.a. in 1764, and 316 l. p.a. in 1781. Their uniforms were cut from good quality cloth, which cost 293 l. 9s. in 1716, 365 l. in 1749, and 1146 l. 10s. in 1769. They were even allowed to have their hair dressed at the town's expense in 1770 and 1773.\(^3\)

But undoubtedly the employment of no less than four

1. Discounting 100 l. p.a. paid to the secrétaire greffier and 130 l. p.a. paid to the procureur-syndic, from 1693-1718, when these offices were venal.
2. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 55; Appendix D V.
3. The accounts of 1770 and 1773 include the payment of 40 l. to P. Houdaille, perruquier, for a year's "accomodage des quatre sergents de ville, d'un portier, du tambour et des deux gardes de la ville, dans les jours de ceremonie."
Arch. d'Avallon, CC 379 & 382.
maitres à écrire to teach the town's children was Avallon's chief extravagance, in the eyes of the intendant at least. Joly de Fleury expressed his astonishment thus in 1754:

"Je vois dans la dépense qu'il y a quatre maitres à écrire gages par la ville, indépendamment d'un grammairien; je ne connais point de ville dans la Bourgogne où il y ait un aussi grand nombre de maitres d'écritures...."

He adjured the town to cut down the number of writing masters by not replacing the first two to die or retire. Avallon had not always rejoiced in the services of so many pedagogues: the arrêt of 1686 allowed for only one maitre d'écriture at a salary of 160 l. p.a. He was joined, prior to 1712, by a grammairien, who was at first paid the modest sum of 20 l. p.a.; this had increased by the middle of the eighteenth century to 450 l. p.a., while "celuy qui enseigne les premiers principes de la grand mere (sic !)" had acquired the status of professor at the local college. By then, the maitres à écrire numbered four: one was paid 250 l. p.a., another 160 l. p.a., and the remaining two were paid 150 l. p.a. each. Joly de Fleury's advice was presumably followed, since the salaries of only two writing-masters - 200 l. p.a. and 150 l. p.a. - were included in the municipal budget of 1764. But Avallon's enthusiasm for education seems 1. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 363.
to have been irrepresible, for by 1771 the town was again employing four maîtres à écrire, at rather lower salaries: one received 110 l. p.a., and the other three 80 l. p.a. each. In addition to all this, generous financial help was also given to the pères de la doctrine chrétienne, who ran the local college. For many years, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, while the school's normal premises in the old Maladerie were unavailable, the municipal officials paid 360 l. p.a. rent for temporary accommodation for them. From 1764 on, school prizes, 300 l. worth of books, were presented each year by the corps de ville. In August 1778 it voted the college a special subsidy of 2200 l., payable in four equal annual instalments; the physics laboratory, installed in 1788 at a cost of 1374 l., was another gift from the municipal treasury.

Expenditure of this kind strikes the modern mind as being most meritorious; less easy to accept are the huge sums spent on vin d'honneur. Not bottles, but barrels of wine were given to influential officials whom it was important to keep well-disposed towards the town: the intendant, the secrétaire en chef de l'intendance, the gouverneur of Avallon, the commandant en chef de la province de Bourgogne, and the secrétaire des commandements du Prince de Condé. Rarely was less than 1200 l. p.a. devoted to these presents of wine. Whether Avallon ever got any appreciable return for this outlay 1 l. i.e. feuillettes = 135 litres each.
seems very doubtful: there is no evidence to suggest that it was ever more favourably treated than other towns which could not afford vin d'honneur. Indeed the regular presentation of such gifts probably weakened their value as douceurs: the recipients began to expect them as a right. In 1764, Roullin, the Prince de Conde's private secretary, to whom Avallon gave lavish quantities of wine each year, wrote to the municipal officials, suggesting that since that year's vintage was notoriously poor, they should not offer him any of it, but rather send double his usual quota in 1765. Which they did! Their only recorded recompense was to be asked to elect to the corps de ville proteges of Roullin or his friends. Amelot, intendant of Burgundy, tried in 1770 to break this wasteful tradition of presenting vin d'honneur regardless of desert or suitability: Roullin and du Bouzet, gouverneur of Avallon, were given not wine but cash - 300 l. each. However, they would appear to have been more powerful than the intendant, for the following year the municipal officials reverted to their former practice and sent them wine.

This indiscriminate offering of vin d'honneur was one of the abuses which Colbert tried to end; of the others - needless expenditure on litigation, deputations, and public celebrations - Avallon was not seriously guilty. Of course its

1. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 373 & 374.
right to send representatives to the états de Bourgogne, held at three-yearly intervals, involved appreciable sums to cover their expenses: between 300 l. and 600 l., depending on the duration of the session. This apart, no remarkable amounts were ever spent on either deputations or litigation. As for public celebrations, opportunities for which occurred infrequently, they could not be held except on royal orders, and expenditure on fireworks and other necessary ingredients was carefully scrutinized by the intendants. If cost is any guide to quality, the most colourful and exciting celebrations held in Avallon were those in honour of the birth of the Dauphin in 1729 (274 l.) and for the birth of the Prince de Condé's long-awaited heir in 1736 (1110 l. 14s.). After royal events - births, marriages, accessions and the like, - the most important occasions of celebrations were military victories and peace treaties; French successes in the War of Austrian Succession cost Avallon 1939 l. 18s. in the years 1744-1746 inclusive, and a further 165 l. 18s. for the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

Admittedly the greater part of Avallon's revenue was devoted to rather grandiose if pleasurable ends; but the town could fortunately well afford it, without sacrificing the welfare of the inhabitants. The financial demands of the royal government even, did not undermine its fundamental prosperity.
Avallon, like all other French towns in the eighteenth century, was milked by the royal government, whenever it got into financial difficulties, by being obliged to purchase venal offices or subscribe to so-called *dons gratuïts*. According to an *Etat des offices municipaux qui ont été créés dans les hotels de ville de la province de Bourgogne depuis 1689*, drawn up by the corps de ville in 1723, Avallon spent no less than 47,036 l. ls. 10d. buying up venal offices created during Louis XIV's reign. In order to estimate how much altogether the roi soleil's foreign policy cost the town in specie, one must add to the price of these *rachats des offices*, a payment of 6000 l. in 1693, part of the extraordinary subsidy voted by the *états de Bourgogne* the previous year, 5000 l. paid in 1700, its contribution towards 180,000 l. offered by the province in return for exemption from twenty-four fiscal edicts, and 9000 l. demanded in 1710 as the price of exemption from the *doublement des octrois*. Thus the total amount extorted from Avallon between 1689 and 1714 was at least over 67,000 l.

During the rest of the eighteenth century the town was apparently let off rather lightly: the venal municipal offices created in 1722 cost it 16,000 l. and the venal office

1. See Appendix D X.
2. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 44.
3. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 5, p. 106.
5. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 5, 9 June 1728, & 12 November 1733.
of receveur et controleur des deniers patrimoniaux, created two years later, involved a further 6675 l. 7s., but this is the last recorded rachat des offices - astonishingly enough, Avallon seems to have escaped buying up the venal municipal offices created in 1733 and 1771. On the other hand, it was assessed rather highly for the don gratuit instituted in 1758, paying initially 3,600 l. p.a., and from 1774-1789 over 4,000 l. p.a. These sums were, in the main, raised by means of extraordinary octrois. At the very beginning of the century the royal government demanded too much too often for it to be found out of ordinary municipal revenue, and later, in 1727, when the town was considering how to pay for the offices of receveur et controleur des deniers patrimoniaux, the trésorier général de la province advised the corps de ville, which wanted to spare the townspeople additional taxes on consumer goods, to ask for extra octrois nonetheless. He wisely argued that if they dispensed with the octrois and managed to finance the rachat des offices from municipal revenue, by ruthlessly pruning current expenditure, the royal government, concluding that any town which could so easily raise money was well able to contribute even more to the royal exchequer, would immediately invent new burdens, to meet which Avallon would be obliged to resort

1. Arch. d’Avallon, BB 5, 3 July 1727, & 8 January 1728.
2. Of course, subsequent disappearance of documents relating to these rachats could explain this.
to octrois. Consequently, acting on his advice, the corps de ville obtained permission to levy once again the extraordinary octrois first introduced in 1705, which had financed most of the rachats des offices prescribed during Louis XIV's reign. These octrois comprised heavy dues on all wine, whether for private consumption or retail sale, with the exception of that produced in the inhabitants' own vineyards, and on flour and pork, and on cartage. The normal arrangement was for the towns to surrender the right of collecting these octrois during a specified period of years, to whoever would offer to pay the price of the venal offices: François Arbillot, merchant baker, and Jean Bierry, marchand des bois, levied the dues from 1705-1711 in exchange for paying the 16,247 l. required for the offices of contrôleur des greffes des hôtels de ville, greffier de l'Ecritoire, commissaires aux revues, greffier des rôles de

1. Arch. d'Avalлон, CC 44.
2. Arch. d'Avalлон, CC 46.
3. I.e. on all wine that was not produced in the inhabitants' own vineyards, but which came from within the province of Burgundy, 40s muid de vin, 30s muid de vendage; wine not from Burgundy paid 3 l. muid de vin, 40s muid de vendage. On all flour used by bakers and pastrycooks in Avalлон, there was a tax of 8s. bichet. On all pigs slaughtered in Avalлон, there was a tax of 10s. On every cart entering the town and carrying good for the consumption of the inhabitants (except wine, grain and flour) there was a tax of 2s., and a similar tax of 1s. on every beast loaded with goods.
taillés, échevins, RECEVEURS DES DENTIERS PATRIMONIAUX ET D'OCTROI, and auditeurs des comptes. 1. These same dues, (less those on cartage) were farmed by Simon Goureau marchand taillandier of Avallon, from 1728-1733, in exchange for paying on the town's behalf, 16,000 l. for the rachat des offices created in 1722. 2. But to raise the don gratuit, introduced in 1758, the municipal officials decided to collect the octrois 3. by the règie system, i.e. the taxes were not farmed out, but levied by commis under the direction of the corps de ville. This system never found favour in the eyes of the royal government; it was less reliable than farming out the collection of taxation to private enterprise, and Avallon was consequently permanently in arrears with the payments of the don gratuit. 4. When in 1773, increased dues were authorised their collection by municipal règie was forbidden by the royal government 5. and once more these octrois were farmed out. 7.

Financially these rachats des offices were not a

1. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 46.
2. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 46.
3. Slightly different in detail: 16s.6d. muid de vin non du cru, 20s. boeuf, 6s. veau, 2s. mouton, 10s. porc, 5s. load of wood, de moule, 3s. load of faggots, 5s. load of hay.
4. There are many exhortatory letters from the intendant and the régisseurs du don gratuit in Arch. d'Avallon, CC 50.
5. On all wine produced in the bailliage of Avallon was levied a tax of 40s. muid de vin, 3 l. on all from outside the bailliage; on every boeuf et vache slaughtered was levied 3 l. plus 3d. per livre weight when sold retail; 20s. on every pig slaughtered, 5s. on every cartload of wood entering the town, 20s. on every cartload of hay. On all these dues was an additional purchase tax of 2s. per livre. 6. Arch. nat., H l. 144, 23 & 27.
7. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 49.
total loss to the town, for it was in theory entitled to draw from the royal treasury any salaries attributed to the venal offices it had bought. However in practice their payment was almost invariably in arrears. 111 l. 13s. 8d. p.a. were due to Avallon as owner of the venal municipal offices created in 1722; by 1735 the arrears of these salaries had accumulated to 1226 l. 13s., by 1745 to 2476 l. 14s. 10d. This debt seems gradually to have been paid off by 1756.

There was one major financial scandal in Avallon, Jean Baptiste Ruffier's administration of municipal revenue, 1750-1759. The abnormal circumstances of his appointment to the post of receveur de la ville have been described in an earlier chapter. His conduct in that capacity aroused no suspicions until 17 August 1756, when the municipal officials met for the auditing of Ruffier's accounts for 1755, which were by that time long overdue. Ruffier did not appear, and when the procureur syndic, Caillat, issued a summons requiring him to produce his accounts within three days, he appealed to the intendant of Dijon, Joly de Fleury, to allow him a respite until 14 September 1756. He pleaded that although all the necessary documents had been handed over to his "homme de confiance" Maillot, the notaire who usually helped him to draw

1. Exploiting an edict of February 1755, which abolished all offices of procureur du roi à l'hôtel de ville and attributed that official's functions to the procureur du roi au bailliage, the municipal officials of Avallon had dismissed their procureur syndic Morizot, on 9 October 1755, and installed in his place Jean Caillat, procureur du roi au bailliage. Morizot appealed against this action to St. Florentin, secrétaire d'État de la Maison du Roi, who, on
26 September 1756, ordered Morizot's reinstatement, on the grounds that the edict did not apply to Burgundy. Arch. d'Avallon, BB 14, p.191 & 250.
up his accounts, neither of them had been able to dispatch this business, since litigation in connection with Ruffier's commercial enterprises had necessitated three visits to Paris. For their part, the municipal officials too wrote to Joly de Fleury, on 24 August 1756, complaining not only that the receveur was negligent about submitting his accounts, but also that François Chenal, his father-in-law and one of his sureties, had resigned the latter position, and Ruffier had taken no steps to obtain a fresh surety. On 26 August 1756 Joly de Fleury decided that Ruffier should be granted a month's grace in presenting his accounts.

But the intendant's letter informing the municipal officials of his decision did not reach Avallon until 10 September, and already, the previous day, they had taken further steps against Ruffier. Caillat, acting procureur syndic, had ordered an examination to be made of Ruffier's registers and the chest containing municipal revenue, which was lodged in the receveur's house. On arriving there the échevins were met by Marie Chenal, Ruffier's wife, who announced that her husband was absent and had not left the key of the chest with her. She summoned Philibert Comynet, Ruffier's avocat, who testified that the receveur was attending the lawcourts in Paris, and tried to placate the municipal officials by promising that Ruffier would render his accounts on 30 September. Caillat retorted that their present concern was
not Ruffier's accounts, they merely wished to check the deniers
patrimoniaux, and that it was most inconvenient for Ruffier
to leave the town without making any arrangements for the
handling of its finances. He ordered a cupboard in Ruffier's
house, in which the chest and registers were kept, to be
sealed. On 11 September 1756 Ruffier's son, who was conseiller
au grenier à sel, wrote to Joly de Fleury, asking him to have
the seals lifted: in the world of commerce the imposition of
seals was always taken as a sign of impending bankruptcy, and
the resulting loss of confidence could have serious repercussion
on his father's business. He also discreetly mentioned that
his family had always enjoyed the protection of Madame la
Comtesse de Chastellux.... The Chastellux family was not only
the most powerful in the locality, Madame la Comtesse was
daughter of Aguesseau, and the intendant, writing to the
municipal officials on 12 September 1756 betrayed slight agita-
tion: "j'en suis d'autant plus fâché que vous avez traité ce
receveur avec moins de menagements que son état et son position
actuelle semblaient l'exiger." However he continued to give
them his backing, and advised that although he would not counter-
mand the fixing of seals, the municipal officials would do well
to lift them if thereby Ruffier's son would co-operate and
render the account before 30 September on his father's behalf.
He said that he had recommended this course of action to Ruffier
The municipal officials reported on 16 September that Ruffier fils had left Avallon to avoid responsibility for his father's affairs, and that no other member of the family was willing to do anything to advance the date fixed for the audit. Judging by Joly de Fleury's reply, dated 20 September, it might well have been that Ruffier fils had seen him in person, not only to ask for the removal of the seals, but also to confess what the municipal officials already suspected, that the town's revenue was being used to further Ruffier's private commercial business:

"Le fils du S. Ruffier, Messieurs, qui vous remettra sa lettre demande deux choses qui paraissent également raisonnables et je n'ai pas fait difficulté de les lui accorder.

Le sceau que vous avez apposé dans la maison de votre Receveur comprend non seulement des pièces qui lui sont nécessaires pour la reddition du compte que vous avez fixé au 30 du présent mois; mais encore différents billets qui sont relatifs à son commerce, il paraît donc nécessaire que vous preniez le parti de lui procurer la liberté de faire usage de ces différentes pièces en levant le sceau. Je vous ay déjà prévenu qu'il y avait lieu de penser que l'on ne trouveroit pas des fonds considérables dans la caisse, et qu'ils étoient sans doute employés dans
le commerce du S. Ruffier; son fils en est convenu avec
moy, mais il observe d'un coté que la fortune de son
père est en très bon état, et que d'un autre côté il peut
vous donner un cautiornement jusques à cent mil écus,
si vous le desirez tel... Je ne vois pas qu'il y ait
rien à craindre pour les intérêts de la ville et je vous
recommande de traiter à cet égard le S. Ruffier avec
tout le ménagement que je vous indique.

Mon intention n'est pas au surplus que le receveur
fasse usage à l'avenir pour son commerce des deniers de
la ville, et j'ai exigé que dans quelques mois il vous
representerait la totalité des sommes dont il sera
reliquataire et qu'a lors vous les déposerez dans un
coffre à trois clefs....

When the audit had been held, Ruffier was found to
owe a balance totalling 24,801 l. 10s. 3d. Joly de Fleury was
unperturbed: "les cautions qu'il a fournies ne doivent laisser
rien à craindre à la ville pour la sûreté de ce dépôt." He
merely repeated his order that the revenue should be kept in a
chest with three keys - one to be held by the procureur syndic,
one by the maire, and one by the receveur. By a misunderstanding,
which many thought deliberate, the procureur syndic,
Morizot, a crony of Ruffier, arranged for the identical locks
to be fixed to the chest, instead of the three different ones
intended by Joly de Fleury. Morizot was quickly disabused, but
his trick called attention to his connection with Ruffier and involved him in the latter's eventual downfall.

It was rumours of a sharp deterioration in the business of Ruffier and his associates, combined with his sloth in collecting the town's debts, that ruined the receveur. When the accounts for 1756 were checked, unrecovered debts were found to total 7,152 l. 19s. 4d., and by the following year, this figure had more than doubled. Then in the summer of 1758, the subdélégué, Hugues Préjan, began investigating Ruffier's family and background, and his commercial standing. He wrote to Joly de Fleury on 8 July 1758:

"plusieurs particuliers de ce pays cy craignent pour les deniers patrimoniaux de notre ville....Nous n'avons jamais connus dans ce pays cy le pere du Sr. Ruffier receveur de la ville. Cet homme est venu de Savoye son pays natal s'établir icy, apres avoir porte sur son dos une petite boutique de quinquaille, et a epousé la fille d'un nommé Chenal aussy savoyard demeurant à Avalon leur plus grand bien a toujours été dans leur commerce et dans leur industrie.

Ruffier et sa femme ont toujours parus aises dans leur commerce...ils vendoient en gros et en detail boutique assez bien fournie; quant tout d'un coup depuis trois ans elle a été fermée, et que l'on a debité dans ce pays cy
qu'ils avaient été condamnés, pour faits de contrebande à la commission de valence, en de très grosses amandes, et que le commerce en détail leur avoir été interdit, le bruit a été général, et s'est répandu comme quelque chose de sûr, je ne voudrois cependant point l'affirmer....

Ruffier a un fils unique qui demeure avec luy et qu'il a marie' depuis six ou sept ans avec la fille d'un nommé Jacquet marchand à Villefranche, qui a considerable-ment foiblit dans son commerce, je suis sur de ce fait....

Lorsque Ruffier s'est présenté, et a été accepté pour la recepce de la ville d'Avalon, il a donné pour caution Maurice Chenal son oncle et Betenon son beau frere tous deux marchands a Avalon. Ces deux cautions sont devenues insolubles, le premier a fait faillite et a été obligé de faire cession de bien; l'on a demandé a Ruffier d'autre cautionnement....Quelles sont les cautions que Ruffier a donné, luy, sa femme, son fils et la femme de son fils ses coobliges, l'on doit tous quatre les regarder come n'en faisant qu'un. Ils demeurent ensemble, ne font qu'un menage, font un communauté de tout, surtout de commerce, etants engagés dans plusieurs, dont celuy de vin qu'ils debitent aux foires de Rouen et d'Amiens est le plus considerable, or tous quatre etants dans une communauté si generalle l'un venant à manquer les autres ne peuvent plus subsister."
(He goes on to describe how all of them are rumoured to be suffering setbacks in their commercial dealings). "Voyla Monsieur qu'elles sont les cautions de Ruffier, tous étrangers venus de Savoye... Mons. Ruffier luy meme et son fils sont ils aussy riches qu'ils le paroissent, il faut avouer qu'ils le portent sur un bien haut ton, ils sont en habits, meubles, en repas presque continuels en chaire, et cabriolets, aussy bien et avec le same luxe que quelqu'un qui aurroit dix mil livres de rente. Ces gens ont acquis quelques biens fond, mais l'on ne scoit pas qu'ils ayent remboursés aucune des rentes dont ces fonds sont chargés l'on scoit qu'ils doivent beaucoup, et les payemens des achapts de vin qu'ils ont fait a Avalon et dans les villages voisins sont considérablement retardés, il peut arriver que les ruffiers fassent homner à leurs affaires mais il est de la prudence de ne point se fier jusqu'à negliger les moyens de mettre en sureté les deniers d'une ville... laquelle (somme) court le same risque que la fortune des ruffiers puisquelle est confundue dans son commerce... plus de seize mille livres apartenantes à la ville sont confondus dans son commerce, ce qui est contre toutes les regles...."

In his next letter, dated 18 August 1758, Préjan changed his tune somewhat. He had visited Ruffier on the intendant's orders, and questioned the receveur about the town's
financial affairs:

"il m'a parut y avoir beaucoup d'ordre dans sa recepce,
et vous verrez Monseigneur par le relevé oy joint, qui
est tres exacte et qu'il a affirmé, qu'il se trouve
seulement reliquataire de la somme de cinq mil deux cens
quatre vingt huit livres, huit sols, lesquels il ne m'a
point caché qu'ils étoient confondus dans son commerce.....
luy et ses cautions sont en etat de repondre de cette
petite some.... je ne vois pas qu'il y ayt la moindre
inquietude à avoir sur cet article...."

Préjan went on to explain that the receveur of Avallon always
had difficulty in collecting the money owed by the marchands de
bois; it was customary for them to pay the price of the coupes
de bois in two instalments:

"savoir à Noel l'année suivante le premier payement, et
un an aprés ce dernier, je voudrais cependant que la ville
se relacha un peu de son exactitude sur cet objet, surtout
que lorsque les marchands seroient des habitants d'Avalon
l'on verroit qu'il ny avoit rien a risquer avec eux...."

But Joly de Fleury was obviously not convinced that
Ruffier was a good risk; that he should once more be using
Avallon's revenues to further his own commercial enterprises
after being warned not to, must have severely shaken the
intendant's trust, and on 7 September 1758 he advised St.
Florentin, secrétaire d'état de la Maison du Roi, that the dismissal of both Ruffier, receveur de la ville, and Morizot, procureur syndic, was highly desirable. St. Florentin sent the necessary lettres de cachet to Tavannes, commandant en chef de la province, warning him not to use them until instructed by Joly de Fleury: time and secrecy were needed to check Ruffier and safeguard the town's financial interests. 1.

Following the intendant's orders, Préjan paid Ruffier another visit on 15 October 1758 and established that he owed the town 7654 l. 4s. 9d., and the lettres de cachet were forwarded by Tavannes to the corps de ville of Avallon on 23 November 1758. Ruffier submitted his final account on 18 March 1759, and fulfilled Préjan's estimate of his financial circumstances by promptly paying up all he owed. 2.

Ruffier appears to have accepted his fate meekly; not so the procureur syndic Morizot, whose protectress, Madame de Chastellux, scolded Joly de Fleury roundly for obtaining his dismissal:

"je ne puis m'empêcher de vous avouer combien je suis véritablement fachée du ruffus que vous me faittes de me dire les motifs sur lesquels vous avez porté contre luy (i.e. Morizot) des plaintes a Mgr. de St. Florentin et

1. All these elaborate precautions to ensure secrecy were probably useless, since François, valet de chambre and chirurgien to Joly de Fleury communicated Préjan's confidential correspondence with the intendant to Ruffier, who was a friend of his.
2. All documents relating to the affaire Ruffier are in Arch. d'Avallon, BB 37.
en quoy il s’est deservi luy meme depuis qu’il a ma confiance et qu’il administre ma justice il m’a donne tant de preuves de sa probite… j’en ay parle au sieur Morizot qui n’est point disconvenu d’etre amy du S. Ruffier mais que ce titre ne l’avoyt jamais porté a rien faire contre son devoir...."

Moreover she accused Préjan of engineering Morizot’s downfall in order to obtain the post of procureur syndic for his son-in-law:

"aucuns n’ignorent car ce n’est plus un secret que c’est l’avocat Minard que pour certaines raisons M. votre subdelegue a ete obligé de prendre pour gendre qui dans les vues de remplir la place de sindic a porté le sieur préjan a deservir M. Morizot aupres de vous et a appuyer les calomnies concertter entre luy et ses adherens qui sont en petit nombre...."¹

Joly de Fleury replied firmly and with dignity:

"J’ay deja eu l’honneur de vous mander que les motifs qui avoient determine a destituer M. Morizot de place de sindic d’Avalon n’attaquoient point sa probite: on peut etre tres honneste homme et remplir mal les fonctions de sindic d’une ville: les autres affaires dont M. Morizot est charge ne lui permettoient pas de s’occuper avec des affaires publiques. Je ne vous dissimuleray pas non plus

¹ Letter 13 December 1758, Arch. d’Avallon, BB 34.
que le S. Morizot avait un peu trop du complaisance pour le S. Ruffier son amie: Vous m'accusez Madame d'avoir trop de confiance en mon subdelegué, j'en ai beaucoup sans doute, et je ne l'ai choisi que parce que j'ai cru qu'il en étoit digne. Mais j'ose vous assurer que ce n'est pas sur son témoignage que j'ai jugé M. Morizot, ce sont les faits qui ont décidé et notamment son requisitoire du 7 février 1757 dans lequel il a insisté pour l'uniformité des clefs....

None-the-less, there was a grain of truth in Mme de Chastellux's remarks, for on 25 November 1758 Préjan had written to the intendant — "il n'est plus question que de les remplacer (i.e. Morizot and Ruffier) Vous m'avez promis Monsieur celle de sindic pour M. Minard avocat...." And Mynard was in fact appointed.

The key to the affaire Ruffier was, of course, Avallon's wealth: a misdeemeanour of the kind committed by Ruffier was only possible in a town which had a large surplus of revenue over expenditure. Avallon's sound financial position, which got stronger as the value of timber increased, also explains not only why such a small community was able to afford expenditure on such an extravagant scale, but also why there is an almost total absence of correspondence between

1. Letter 17 January 1759, Arch. d'Avallon, BB 34.
the subdélegué of Avallon and the intendant. The town was so affluent that there was no need for the intendant continually to curb the corps de ville's ambitious schemes, nor interfere in its management of municipal finances.
CONCLUSION.

This chapter may well disappoint by failing to live up to its title. But it would require considerable temerity to claim to have reached, at this stage, very decided conclusions about so comprehensive a subject as municipal administration. Many questions have merely been unearthed and await further investigation, and since it was rarely convenient to raise any of these questions in the main body of this thesis, it would perhaps be fitting to discuss some of them at this point.

Most towns seem to have been run by an oligarchy. Earlier writers have explained this phenomenon as the inevitable consequence of venality in municipal administration; I have attributed it to the exacting nature of civic office in the eighteenth century and to the very restrictive professional and class qualifications required for membership of the corps de ville by the constitutions of many towns. The history of Avallon suggests another factor: electoral influence and intrigue. In Burgundy the maires were instrumental in deciding who should sit on the corps de ville; one would like to know whether in other provinces the outcome of municipal elections could be predetermined and by whom - the maire, the subdélegué, the intendant, the local seigneur, the bishop? It would be
equally interesting to learn whether the decline of the assemblée générale des habitants was not in some towns a consequence of the apathy engendered by thus reducing elections to a mere, predictable, formality.

Further research is also required on certain aspects of the financial administration of towns. Was the intendant's tutelle usually treated with such scant respect as it was in Auxerre? was it more or less difficult to enforce in pays d'états than in pays d'élections? Did towns in pays d'états enjoy financial advantages denied to those in pays d'élections? did they, for example, pay less for rachats des offices when these were negotiated wholesale by the provincial government? The differences, if any, between towns in pays d'états and pays d'élections I myself had hoped to explore by comparing the administration of Joigny, which formerly came within the généralité of Paris, with that of the Burgundian towns of Auxerre and Avallon. Unfortunately this proved impossible because a large part of the municipal archives of Joigny vanished some years ago. A comparison of the financial circumstances of towns in pays d'états and those in pays d'élections remains, therefore, to be attempted.

Another, curiously neglected, topic which invites investigation, is the role of the subdélégué: although something is known about the office, the influence of this official
in local administration has not been properly considered. To define the subdélégué's position in a general way, would probably be difficult, because since his attributes were rather imprecise, and his status almost that of an amateur, there was plenty of room for the individual to follow his own dictates. However, the ascendancy of Robinet de Pontagny in Auxerre surely suggests that the subdélégué could be a power to be reckoned with, and merits further study?

On the other hand, certain propositions in this thesis are unlikely to be changed radically by further research; they can be summarized quite briefly. The purview of municipal administration is fairly well established, and the responsibilities of the corps de ville varied very little in essentials from one town to the next. The decline of the assemblée générale des habitants and the strength and persistence of oligarchy are also well-attested characteristics. That the bailliage officials lost both political and economic power during the eighteenth century, and that they bitterly resented this change in their fortunes, is indisputable; what is not so clear is the extent to which they recovered, during the Revolution, their former influence in local affairs. It seems evident that for towns the most important aspect of venality was not its political implications, but the cost: venality more often damaged municipal finances than municipal autonomy. And
finally, would it not be difficult to deny that the royal government's attitude towards the towns, as towards so many other issues, was determined by financial considerations?
Appendix A.

THE COMMISSAIRE AUX REVUES AND THE COMMISSAIRE DES GUERRES.

There is some confusion between these two posts. I think that the commissaire aux revues was a purely temporary venal creation which did not survive Louis XIV's reign. Certainly it was not one of the municipal offices which were constantly recreated during the eighteenth century, and in the Code municipal of 1760, the functions earlier performed by the commissaire aux revues are attributed to his military superior, the commissaires des guerres. Aubert de la Chénaye des Bois, in his Dictionnaire militaire of 1758, described the latter as a military police officer, in charge of troops during marches, who ironed out difficulties arising from the provision of food and equipment, and arranged billeting in conjunction with the municipal officials. This was essentially a military post: according to regulations laid down in 1776, there were 150 commissaires in all, recruited among army officers with at least five years' service, on the recommendation of their commanding officers. Perhaps the commissaire aux revues was created by temporarily erecting into a separate post that portion of the commissaires des guerres' functions concerned with billeting. However, no matter what the official, the duties he performed in the arrangements for billeting troops were similar.
THE COMPOSITION OF CONSEILS GENERAUX AND CONSEILS POLITIQUES.

1. The conseil politique of Cahors, 1758.

Maire
4 consuls.

2 délégués du chapitre.
2 délégués du présidial.
2 délégués de l'élection.
Maire sortant.
Syndic des habitants.
24 conseillers.

Maire
4 consuls.

2 délégués du chapitre.
2 délégués du présidial.
2 délégués de l'élection.
Maire sortant.
Syndic des habitants.
24 conseillers.

8 chosen from nobles.
12 chosen from bourgeois, avocats médecins, and négociants.
4 chosen from artisans.

2. The assemblée des notables in towns with over 4,500 pop., after the edict of May 1765.

Corps municipal.
6 conseillers de ville.

1 from the principal chapter.
1 from the nobles and military officers.
1 from the bailliage or sénéchaussée.
1 from the bureau de finance.
1 from the officials of other jurisdictions.
14 notables.

2 from the royal household officials, avocats, médecins, bourgeois vivant noblement.
1 from notaires and procureurs.
3 from wholesale and retail merchants, surgeons, and liberal professions.
2 from artisans.

3. The assemblée des notables in towns with 2,000-4,500 pop.

Corps municipal
4 conseillers de ville.

10 notables.

1. from ecclesiastical order.
2. from regal household officials, avocats, médecins, bourgeois vivant noblement.
3. from notaires and procureurs.
4. from wholesale and retail merchants, surgeons and liberal professions.
5. from laboureurs, vignerons and artisans.

4. The assemblée des notables of Givry, 1782.

Officiers municipaux.

18 notables from Givry.

6 from avocats and bourgeois.
6 from notaires, procureurs and merchants.
3 from laboureurs-propriétaires.
3 from vignerons-propriétaires.
6 notables from three outlying parishes, all laboureurs and vignerons propriétaires.

5. The conseil politique of Gueret. 1782.

Corps municipal.

Anciens maires.

12 conseillers.

Doyen du chapitre.
Curé pour la communauté des prêtres.
Lieutenant général de la sénéchaussée.
Maitre particulier des eaux et forêts.
President de l'élection.
President des dépots.
Batonnier des avocats.
Procureur doyen.
One notaire.
Lieutenant des chirurgiens.
One merchant.
One laboureur.

2. J. de Montenon: Un corps de ville provincial à la veille de la Révolution, p.72.
6. The conseil politique of Aubusson, 1786.  

Corps de ville.  
Anciens maires.  
12 conseillers.  

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{5 judicial officials.} \\
&\quad 1 curé. \\
&\quad 1 médecin. \\
&\quad 2 fabricants. \\
&\quad 1 négociant. \\
&\quad 1 laboureur. \\
&\quad 1 nobleman. \\
\end{align*}
\]

7. The assemblée générale of Etampes, 1786.  

Corps municipal.  
6 anciens officiers municipaux.  
2 deputies from each parish in the town.  
18 deputies chosen from principal inhabitants.  
6 ecclesiastics.  
6 gentilhommes.  
6 judicial officials.  

Lieutenent général du bailliage.  
Procureur du roi du bailliage.

1. Arch. nat., E 2620.  
Appendix C:1.

Charges ordinaires de la ville d' Auxerre, vers la fin du XVIIe siècle, as laid down in the arrêt du conseil du 15 mars 1686.

Gages du procureur du fait commun 30 l.
Concierge de l'hôtel de ville, pour gages et cry publicq. 150 l.
Gages du trompette de la ville. 10 l.
Orlogeur 150 l.
Crieur de nuit. 12 l.
Privilège de l'Empereur de l'arquebuse 25 l.
Bois, feu et chandelle pour la Chambre du Conseil. 100 l.
Honoraires des Maîres et Echevins 62 l.
Gages des Assesseurs, Procureurs du Roi et Secrétaire de la ville 1,020 l.
Distribution de cire pour les fêtes de la Purification et du Saint-Sacrement 100 l.
Travaux et entretien des édifices publics 1,200 l.
Gages du chirurgien de l'hôtel-dieu 100 l.
Aux R.P. capucins, prédicateurs de l'Avent et du Carême 100 l.
Entretien du pavé 800 l.
Vin d'honneur, ports de lettres et menues dépenses 135 l.
Gages de deux gardes de la ville. 200 l.

Casaques desdits gardes, étoffe et façon 50 l.
Entretien et conduite des fontaines 200 l.

\[ \text{Total} \quad 4,444 \text{ l.} \]
Appendix C:II.

Etat de la dépense ordinaire de la ville d'Auxerre en 1757.

Honoraire du prédicateur du Carême 60 l.
Honoraire des magistrats de la ville 62 l.
Gages des gardes de la ville pour balayer les places publics. 30 l.
Gages du tambour 20 l.
Gages du chirurgien de l'hôtel-dieu 150 l.
2s. per livre du dixième de la ville 50 l.
Logement du comte de Tavannes 400 l.
Honoraire du prédicateur de l'Avent 40 l.
Gages des assesseurs, procureur du roi et substitut 470 l.
Candles distributed to municipal and bailliage officials 100 l.
Casaques des gardes de la ville 50 l.
Gages de l'horloger 150 l.
Vin d'honneur 135 l. 6s.
Gages des gardes de la ville et cloche de nuit 212 l.
La rente albergue 16 l. 10s.
Deux parties de rente due par la ville à l'hôtel-dieu 183 l. 12s.
Bois, feux, chandelier, papier marqué fournis par le secrétaire. 125 l.
La rente due aux pères bénédictines de cette ville pour le droit d'homme vivant et mourant du bâtiment et collège des pères jésuites. 20 l.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fontainier</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlevement des boues</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages du procureur du fait commun de la ville.</td>
<td>30 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavé de la ville</td>
<td>800 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murs de la ville</td>
<td>1,200 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logement du gouverneur de la ville.</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dixième de la rente sur les entrées de Paris.</td>
<td>100 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roi de l'Arquebuse</td>
<td>25 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empereurs de l'Arquebuse</td>
<td>75 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torches pour processions de Quasimodo et Fête-Dieu.</td>
<td>21 l.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 5,425 l. 8s.

Etat des revenus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rentes et baux à loyer</td>
<td>307 l. 10s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rente on the entrées de Paris</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six parties de rente de Dijon</td>
<td>601 l. 17s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taille négociable</td>
<td>2,675 l. 6s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 4,213 l. 6s.

1. This total should surely be 4,484 l. 13s. ?
Octrois.

Sur la boucherie 5,000 l.
Jauge des tonneaux et 30s. mulâ de vin. 2,412 l.

Total 7,412 l.

This statement was apparently submitted when the town was negotiating with the royal council for a new budget, which appeared in the arrêt of 1760.
Arrêt du conseil 1 January 1760.

Au greffier concierge de l'hôtel de ville, tant pour ses expéditions qu'il sera obligé de fournir gratuitement pour la ville, que pour le Bois, Chandelle de la chambre du conseil 150 l.

Aux tambour et trompette 30 l.

Pour la conduite, nettoyement et entretien du grand horloge 150 l.

Aux maire et Échevins pour leurs gages 62 l.

Au crieur de nuit 12 l.

Ordonne sa majesté que les gages des quatre assesseurs, du procureur du roi et du substitut demeureront réduits sur le pied du denier cinquante à deux cent trente six livres, savoir 44 l. pour chacun assesseur et 60 l. pour ceux du procureur du roi et du substitut 236 l.

Pour la contribution de la ville d' Auxerre à la somme destinée pour le logement du Sieur comte de Tavannes et à la gratification à luy accordée par Sa Majesté en 1743 400 l.

Pour pareille contribution au logement du gouverneur 300 l.

Pour les gages du procureur du fait commun 30 l.

Pour ceux du chirurgien de l'hôtel-dieu 150 l.

Pour les gages et l'habillement des deux gardes de l'hôtel de ville 300 l.

Pour l'honoraire du predicateur du Carême et de l'Avent 100 l.

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
Pour le netoyement des rues et portes de laditte ville et l'enlevement des boues par estimation 1,000 l.

Pour l'entretien des murs, ponts, et portes de laditte ville aussy par estimation 1,200 l.

Pour l'entretien du pavé pareillement par estimation 2,000 l.

A l'abbaye de Saint Germain 20 l.

Au receveur du domaine de sa majesté 16 l. 10s.

Pour les deux parties de rente dues à l'hôtel-dieu dont l'une de seize livres dix huit sols six deniers, et l'autre de cent soixante six livres treize sols quatre deniers 183 l. 11s10

Pour cire blanche que la ville doit aux officiers du bailliage de la ville aux jours de purificatio et du Saint-Sacrement 200 l.

Pour le vin d'honneur, port de lettres et autres menues dépenses par estimation 500 l.

Pour l'entretien et netoyement des fontaines aussy par estimation 300 l.

Pour les reparations et entretien des promenades et des Bans qui y sont construits pareillement par estimation 200 l.

Pour l'entretien et netoyement des pompes aussy par estimation 100 l.
Appendix C:IV.

Déclaration des biens et revenus de la ville et de ses charges, 7 September 1764.
Mémoire que présentent les officiers municipaux de la ville d'Auxerre à Monseigneur le Contrôleur General des finances pour satisfaire à la Déclaration du Roy donnée à Versailles le 11 février 1764.

État des biens et revenus.

Taille négociée 2,675 l. 6s.

Droits d'inspecteur aux boucheries, according to last auction 5,600 l.

Droit patrimonial of 30s. muid de vin, according to last auction 1,737 l.

Droit de jauge à la fabrique des Tonneaux: un sol par chaque muid neuf, six deniers par feuillettes et autres tonneaux à proportion, et sept sols six deniers par année sur chacun atelier de tonnelier et tous faisans ou faisans faire des tonneaux dans ladite ville, according to last auction 236 l.

Rentes -

Interest of 45 l. 12s. p.a. on capital of 4,560 l. lent to province of Burgundy, August 1720. Interest was originally au denier 50, but was reduced to au denier 100 in 1726.

Interest of 113 l. 19s. 6d. p.a. on capital of 11,397 l. 10s. lent to province of Burgundy, March 1731. Interest reduced from au denier 50 to au denier 100.

Interest of 180 l. p.a. on capital of 18,000 l. lent to province June 1731. Interest reduced from au denier 50 to au denier 100.

Interest of 56 l. 3s. 2d. p.a. on capital of 5616 l. lent to province September 1723. Interest reduced as above.

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
Interest of 162 l. on capital of 16,200 l. lent to province June 1731. Interest reduced as before.

Interest of 44 l. 2s. 4d. p.a. on capital of 4,411 l. lent to province, June 1724. Interest reduced as above.

Rente of 1,000 l. p.a. paid from the farm of the octrois on wine entering Paris, created in February 1641, reduced in 1666 from 8,000 l. p.a. to 4,000 l. p.a., 3,000 l. of which was handed over to the college of Auxerre.

Rentes foncières, highest 30 l. p.a. 131 l.

Baux à loyer, highest 70 l. p.a. 268 l.

Droit de minage
The town leased this due from the Hopital de Notre Dame de la Miséricorde de Paris, to whom it belonged, at a cost of 3,000 l. p.a. It was farmed to whoever would pay the 3,000 l. to the hopital plus a fee to the municipality of 300 l. - 500 l.

Dépenses annuelles ordinaires as determined by the arrêt of 3 February 1760, plus the following additional depenses ordinaires, authorised since the arrêt.

Gages des commisaires de police 400 l.

Gratification paid to Arquebuse in place of wine exemption 100 l.

Pension of the maîtresse sage-femme 100 l.

Sonneurs de la cloche pour le balayement des rues 60 l.

Gages du sergent de la compagnie de la ville 25 l.

Dépenses extraordinaires not included in 1760 arrêt.

Reparations des portes, corps de garde, tours, hotel de ville, horloge, fontaines, murs, pavés. 2400 l.

Celebrations to mark the visits of important persons 400 l.
Compensation paid to those whose houses were demolished when straightening the streets 300 l.

Public rejoicings. 400 l.

Upkeep of the fire-fighting equipment 100 l.

For the soldiers of the town, "qui ne sont ny soldés, ny ne jouissent d'aucune exemption et privilège et sont néanmoins presque journallement obligés de faire des patrouilles dans les cas où l'on prévoit qu'il peut y arriver du bruit, et arrêter les personnes suspectes." 300 l.
Appendix C:V.

Etat des Revenus et des Charges de la ville d'Auxerre présente
à Monseigneur l'Intendant de Bourgogne par les Officiers
municipaux. 15 November, 1769.

Revenus.

Rentes foncières worth 64 l. p.a., less deux
vingtièmes and tax of 2s. per l. 57 l. 10s.

Rente on the farm of the entrées de Paris
worth 1,000 l. p.a., less deux vingtièmes
and tax of 2s. per l. and fees of receiveur
in Paris. 867 l. 15s.

Droit patrimonial sur la Boucherie, according
to last auction, "les Baux antérieures
etoient de beaucoup inferieures et qu'on
s'attend à une diminution à la prochaine
adjudication, les Bouchers ne l'ayant porté
ta ce taux que pour éviter une regle genante
pour eux et très couteuse à la ville."

Droit of 30s. muid de vin, according to last
auction "comme les habitants ont la facilité
de faire venir les vins sur des congés
portant d'estimation pour Paris etc. le droit
est sujet a beaucoup de fraudes au moyen il
diminue a chaque adjudication actuellement
les adjudicataires perdent au moins moitï
et l'on s'attend a une tres forte diminution
au prochain Bail."

Droit de jauge des tonneaux, according to last
auction 350 l.

Baux a loyers
"ces loyers sont forts mal payés parce que
les locataires de ces sortes de logement
ne sont point en etat de garnier de meubles
et se retirent souvent sans payer."

Total des revenus 9,214 l. 15s.

1. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 8.
"les Centfilles Orphelines de la miséricorde de Paris sont propriétaires du droit du minage sur les grains du marché d'Auxerre. Pour prévenir les procès fréquents auxquels l'exercice de ce droit exposerait les habitants à l'occasion des ventes de Blé dans les greniers, la ville d'Auxerre a traité du droit des filles de la miséricorde moyennant 3,000 l. p.a. et sous amende ce droit sur lequel il se trouve quelquefois bénéfice, présentement la sousaumodiation est de 3,500 l. p.a.; la miséricorde peuvent exiger une augmentation. Ainsi cet acte d'abonnement ne peut être regardé comme un revenu ordinaire de la ville."

Charges ordinaires.

Charges ordinaires as laid down in 1760 arrêt. 7,640 l. ls.10

In 1760 the wages of the 4 assesseurs, the procureur de roi and the substitut were fixed at 236 l. p.a. These offices were suppressed in 1764-65, and the town ordered to reimburse their holders, and until it could afford to do so, to pay them interest au denier 20 of the amount due. The total cost of the offices is 11,913 l. in all, (1,913 l. to the procureur du roi and 2,500 l. to each of the four assesseurs) and the interest 595 l. 13s., making an extra 359 l.13s. p.a.

Other charges ordinaires not included in the 1760 arrêt.

Gages des commissaires de police. 400 l.
Pension of maitress sage-femme 100 l.
Gages of the sergent de la compagnie de la ville. 25 l.
Indemnity to the Arquebuse 75 l.
Frais du compte annuelle du receveur 36 l.
Pens and paper for the secrétaire 25 l.
Sonneurs de la cloche who warn of street-cleaning 60 l.

Appointement du receveur, fixed provisionally by the assemblée des notables. 200 l.
Appointement du secrétaire fixed provisionally by the assemblée des notables 200 l.

Total des charges ordinaires 9,120 l.14s.10d

Charges extraordinaires.

Visit of the prince de Condé on his way to the Etats, every three years, usually 1,000 l. 333 l. p.a.

Expenses of two deputies to the Etats, usually 450 l. 150 l. p.a.

Le loyer de maison et bois du salpêtrier et voitures du salpêtrier à Dijon ou à Chatillon. Cet article est casuel et fait un objet de dépense pour la ville ou le Bois est très cher... des résidences du salpêtrier à Auxerre qui y sont très fréquentes et très longues 1,100 l.

Rejouissances 200 l.

Entretien des fontaines usually costs 600 l. p.a. and 1760 arrêt allows only 300 l. p.a., therefore extra 300 l.

Entretien de l'hôtel de ville, omitted from 1760 arrêt 150 l.

Upkeep of fire-fighting equipment 100 l.

Actes notariés 30 l.

Expense of printing police sentences and ordonnances of Marechaussée 150 l.

Fire and candle for the corps de garde when there is occasion to call out the night patrol 50 l.

Removal of ice and snow from streets in winter 50 l.
Expenses of legal processes from time to time; from 1760: 14,134 1.11 s.

| Total charges extraordinaires | 2,643 l. |

**Recapitulation.**

| Charges ordinaires         | 9,120 1.14 s.10 |
| Charges extraordinaires    | 2,643 l.        |

| Total                     | 11,763 1.14 s.10 |

| Revenue                   | 9,214 1.15 s.     |
| Deficit                   | 2,548 1.19 s.10   |

**Dettes exigibles.**

- Balance of cost of building quay: 6,711 1.9 s.6d.
- Repayment of municipal offices: 11,913 l.
- Arrears of don gratuit: 6,501 1.4 s.
- Plus money owing to the province as result of bankruptcy of Courrier, vingtième collector.
### Appendix C:VI.

**Etat des biens et revenus d' Auxerre, circa 1776.**

**Biens patrimoniaux.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Montant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rente on the entrées de Paris</td>
<td>875 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentes from the province</td>
<td>537 l. 3s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octroi on wine</td>
<td>975 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Octroi on meat</td>
<td>5,060 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Droit de jauge</td>
<td>270 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentes foncières</td>
<td>67 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baux à loyers</td>
<td>179 l.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total** 7,963 l. 3s.

**Charges ordinaires.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Montant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gages au concierge de l'hôtel de ville, à la charge de fournir gratuitement pour la ville les expéditions des actes ainsi que le bois et la chandelle pour la chambre du conseil.</td>
<td>250 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux tambour et trompettes</td>
<td>30 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au procureur du fait commun</td>
<td>30 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux maires et échevins</td>
<td>62 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au chirurgien de l'hôtel dieu</td>
<td>150 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages des deux valets de villes et leur habillement</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages des deux commissaires de police</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au sonneur</td>
<td>60 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au sergent d'armes</td>
<td>60 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux crieurs de nuit</td>
<td>12 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A la sage-femme</td>
<td>100 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logement du commandant de la province</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logement du gouverneur de la ville</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Honoraire des prédicateurs de l'Avent et du Careme

Rente à l'abbaye de St. Germain

Rente au domaine du roi

Rente à l'hôtel-dieu

Fourniture de cire aux officiers du baillage de la ville les jours de la Purification et de la Fête-dieu.

Droit de remise au receveur et frais du compte

Intérêts des finances liquidés des offices supprimés d'assesseurs, procureur du roi et substitut

Aux empereurs et roi de l'Arquebuse

Intérêts d'une somme de 3,863 l. 3s. due au sieur Boyard de Forterre

Intérêts d'un principal de 2,500 l. du à l'hôpital general

Total 3,733 l. 6s. 2d.

Dépenses extraordinaires.

Entretien du pavé

Entretien de l'horloge

Entretien des promenades publiques

Vin d'honneur, rejoissances publiques, et ports du lettre et paquets

Entretien des fontaines publiques

Entretien des armes de la compagnie des soldats de la ville et gratifications accordées aux soldats.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entretien des sièges royaux du justice et des prisons</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entretien des ports, murs, tours et ponts à la charge de la ville</td>
<td>2,400 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entretien des pompes, crochets, et paniers et autres ustensiles pour arrêter les incendies</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlèvement des boues</td>
<td>1,000 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,300 l.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dettes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A la province de Bourgogne</td>
<td>3,632 l. 14s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au sieur Boyard Forterre</td>
<td>3,863 l. 3s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A l'hôpital general</td>
<td>2,500 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux quatre anciens assesseurs, procureur du roi et substitut, dont les offices ont été supprimés</td>
<td>11,913 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,908 l. 17s.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C:VII.

État des charges de la ville d'Auxerre, arrêt du conseil 18 février 1777.

Gages du greffier 250 l.
Au tambour et trompettes 30 l.
Au crieur de nuit 12 l.
Gages des officiers municipaux 62 l.
Commandant de la province 400 l.
Gouverneur de la ville 300 l.
Procureur du fait commun 30 l.
Chirurgiens de l'hôtel-dieu 150 l.
Gages et habillement des deux valets de ville 300 l.
Honoraires des Predicateurs de l'Avent et du Careme 100 l.
Rentes à l'abbaye St, Germain, domaine du roi et hotel-dieu 220 l. 1s. 10d.
Cire blanche 200 l.
Gages des deux commissaires de police 400 l.
Trois sonneurs pour faire balayer les Rues 60 l.
Gages du sergents d'armes 60 l.
Gages du receveur de la ville 236 l.
Reparations et entretien du pavé 4,000 l.
Reparations et entretien des murs, portes et tours 2,400 l.
Conduitte, netoyement et entretien du Grand Horloge 400 l.

Reparations et entretien des promenades 300 l.
Vins d'honneur et passages du Prince de Condé 1,000 l.
Entretien et netoyement des fontaines 300 l.
Enlevement des boues 1,000 l.
Entretien des Pompes, Panniers pour incendies 300 l.
Empereurs et Rois de l'arquebuse 75 l.
Pension de la sage-femme 100 l.
Netoyement des armes aux soldats de ville 200 l.
Reparations des prisons et Palais de Justice 400 l.
Vingtièmes des revenus patrimoniaux 242 l.
Amodiation du greffe de la police 130 l.
### Appendix C: VIII.

Feydeau's reassessment of Auxerre's charges ordinaires, contained in letter to Necker, 8 August 1780.

**Dettes passives exigibles.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aux élus généraux, 3,632 l. 14s., sur celle de 21,366 l. 13s. à cause de la faillite d'un M. Commier qui était chargé du recouvrement des vingtièmes dont la province a rendu la ville garante.</td>
<td>3,632 l. 14s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Au S. Deschamps, receveur de la ville est du 2,008 l. dont il s'est trouvé en avance par le compte qu'il a rendu pour l'année 1778</td>
<td>2,008 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pour les vingtièmes des revenus patrimoniaux sont dues les années 1778 et 1779</td>
<td>484 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est du à des avocats et procureurs tant de Paris que d'Auxerre pour procès et frais environ</td>
<td>1,500 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A différents marchands et ouvriers pour fourniture de marchandises ou journées ainsi qu'au paveur et jardinier des promenades, environ</td>
<td>3,000 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frais d'obtenir de l'arrêt du Conseil 13 Février 1777 et des lettres patentes 12 mai 1779, enregistrement à la Cour des Aides et Cout de l'Arrêt du Conseil du 14 décembre 1779.</td>
<td>3,520 l. 11s. 6d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,145 l. 5s. 6d.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Créances et recouvrements que la ville peut exercer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rentes sur les entrees de Paris, trois années,</td>
<td>2,655 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deux années de rentes sur les finances de Bourgogne</td>
<td>1,074 l. 6s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Il reste du sur les rôles de la taille négociable en 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779, environ 6,000 l.

Sur les rôles encore plus anciens 1,316 l. 8s.5d.

Debt of adjudicataire des octrois sur le vin et jauge des tonneaux 1,518 l. 2s.6d.

Owing to the town from the succession of the bankrupt vingtième collector 5,455 l. 8s.1d.

Total 18,019 l. 5s.

"le recouvrement de ces créances est peu sur et sera nécessairement long."

**Revenus patrimoniaux.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rente of 1,000 l. on Paris entrées, les vingtièmes and cost of collection.</td>
<td>885 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rente sur les finances de Bourgogne</td>
<td>537 l. 3s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Droit d'inspecteurs aux Boucheries.</td>
<td>5,320 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Droit sur le vin</td>
<td>712 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Droit sur la jauge des tonneaux</td>
<td>188 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentes foncières</td>
<td>122 l. 6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baux à loyer des tours, caves, magasins et portes de la ville</td>
<td>190 l.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 7,954 l. 9s.

**Charges ordinaires et extraordinaires.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1771 figure</th>
<th>Feydeau's figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gages du greffier</td>
<td>250 l.</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Greffier is at same time concierge à l'hôtel de ville, and must provide wood and candles for the town hall, and expedition des actes. He also enjoys lodgings worth 250 l. and the emoluments of the greffe de la police, valued at 130 l. at least. His real wages therefore total 680 l.p.a., and the municipal officials agree that his salary should be reduced to 200 l. p.a.

Aux tambours et trompettes 30 l. 30 l.
Au crieur de nuit 12 l. –
Gages des officiers municipaux. 62 l. 62 l.
M. le commandant de la province 400 l. 400 l.
M. le gouverneur de la ville 300 l. 300 l.
Procureur du fait commun 30 l. –
Chirurgiens de l'hôtel-dieu 150 l. –
Gages et habillement de deux valets de ville Reduction to be effected by making liveries last longer. 300 l. 250 l.
Honoraires des prédicateurs. 100 l. –
Rentes à l'abbaye de Saint-Germain, domaine du roi et hôtel-dieu. 220 l. 1s. 10d. 220 l. 1s. 10d.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>1771 figure</th>
<th>Feydeau's figure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pour la cire</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>This custom of giving candles every year to the municipal and bailliage officials to be suppressed.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages des deux commissaires de police. As they enjoy fines and confiscations, their wages could be reduced to 100 l. each.</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages des deux sonneurs pour faire balayer les rues. Useless; to be suppressed.</td>
<td>60 l.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages du sergent d'armes.</td>
<td>60 l.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gages du receveur</td>
<td>236 l.</td>
<td>150 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prix de l'amodiation d'un emplacement où se trouve la source des fontaines de la ville.</td>
<td>30 l.</td>
<td>30 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparations et entretien du pavé</td>
<td>4,000 l.</td>
<td>2,000 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparations et entretien des murs, portes et tours.</td>
<td>2,400 l.</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduite, nettoyement et entretien du grand horloge.</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparations et entretien des promenades</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vins d'honneur, passage de prince et porte de lettres</td>
<td>1,000 l.</td>
<td>500 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entretien et nettoyement des fontaines</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
<td>500 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>1771 figure.</td>
<td>Feydeau's fig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlèvement des boues</td>
<td>1,000 l.</td>
<td>600 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cet objet est modifié 600 l. ainsi il ne faut pas le porter que pour cette somme.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entretien des pompes etc., pour les incendies</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
<td>100 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aux Empereurs et Rois de l'arquebuse</td>
<td>75 l.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension de la sage-femme</td>
<td>100 l.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is dead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nettoyement des armes aux soldats de ville</td>
<td>200 l.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparations des prisons et du Palais de Justice.</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
<td>150 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As buildings are in a good state of repair this can be reduced.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vingtièmes des revenus patrimoniaux</td>
<td>242 l.</td>
<td>242 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amodiation du greffe de police</td>
<td>130 l.</td>
<td>130 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,285 l. ls. 10d.</strong></td>
<td><strong>6,564 l. ls.10d.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Letter of 22 February 1781 from intendant Feydeau to municipal officials, informing them that the directeur général, Necker, had approved his proposed reductions in the budget drawn up in 1777, and that consequently municipal expenditure in 1781 was to conform to his revised estimates. Arch. dep. de l'Yonne, C 14.
Appendix C:IX.

État des recettes et dépenses, revenus et charges de la ville d'Auxerre, 1780.

Recette.

Rente on the entrees de Paris of 1,000 l., less 110 l. for vingtièmes, and tax of 2s. per l., and 15 l. for expenses of collection

Rente on the province of Burgundy of 601 l. 14s., less 64 l. 14s. for dues and expenses

Droit patrimonial sur la boucherie

Droit patrimonial sur le vin

Droit de jauge

Rentes foncières

Baux à loyer

Taille négociable

Total revenus patrimoniaux

La ville n'a point de revenus d'octrois.

Dépenses.

Dépenses fixes et ordinaires de la Communauté.

Gages ou Honoraires des Officiers de la Communauté.

Consuls

Greffier

Receveur

Valets des consuls


2. A printed form of six pages set out so that details of each town's finances could be filled in by the municipal officials.
Entretenement et Logemens des Officiers Généraux et Particuliers.
Commandant de la Province 400 l.

Depenses diverses
Gages du Maître d'école ou Regens du College 3,000 l.
Gages du chirurgien 200 l.
Gages de l'Horloger 120 l.
Messe pour l'entrée des Consuls 12 l.
Livrée consulaire 100 l.
Flambeaux des Maire et Consuls pour la Fête-Dieu 15 l.

Depenses dites extraordinaires, mais qui se renouvelles presque tous les ans pour la plus grande partie.
Entretenien de l'hôtel de ville 400 l.
Entretenien du pavé 4,000 l.
Entretenien de la Fontaine 300 l.
Frais d'impression 200 l.
Depenses imprévues 1,000 l.

Dettes de la Communauté.
Rentes constituées au denier 20 24,878 l. .3s.
Intérêts: 1,243 l. 18s.
Dettes exigibles (à la province de Bourgogne) 3,632 l. 14s.

Depense ordinaire non compris dans l'imprimée.
Entretenien du Palais 400 l.
Logement du Gouverneur de la ville 300 l.
Gages du procureur du fait commun 30 l.
Gages du tambours 30 l.
Honoraires des predicateurs de l'Avent et du Carême 100 l.
Cire blanche 200 l.
Gages de deux Commissaires de police 400 l.
A un homme qui sonne une cloche trois fois la semaine à l'effet de Balayer les Rues 60 l.
Gages des crieurs de nuit 12 l.
Greffier de la police 130 l.
Sergent d'arme 60 l.
Depenses extraordinaires non compris dans l'imprimée.

Réparations et entretien du grand horloge de la ville  280 l.

Réparations et entretien des promenades et bancs  300 l.

Empereur et roi d'arquebuse  75 l.

Nettoyement des Armes et Gratifications à distribuer au sergent d'arme et soldats de ville  200 l.

Réparations et entretien des murs, portes, tours, et ponts  2,400 l.

Nettoyement des places et portes et l'enlèvement des boues des places et rues  1,000 l.

Entretien des pompes, crochets, paniers, et autres ustensiles nécessaires pour arrêter les incendies  300 l.

Total  18,033 l. 18s.
Appendix C:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1698</td>
<td>95 l.</td>
<td>Jean Regnard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>95 l.</td>
<td>Jean Regnard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>140 l.</td>
<td>Antoine Gauthier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>140 l.</td>
<td>Antoine Gauthier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>140 l.</td>
<td>Antoine Gauthier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1716</td>
<td>130 l.</td>
<td>Charles Lemoyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1721</td>
<td>205 l.</td>
<td>Chaplain and Jouard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1728</td>
<td>235 l.</td>
<td>Edmé Chapelain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td>310 l.</td>
<td>Nicholas Chapelain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>330 l.</td>
<td>Nicholas Chapelain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>300 l.</td>
<td>Antoine Laureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>236 l.</td>
<td>Joseph François</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>350 l.</td>
<td>Pierre Germain Millon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>270 l.</td>
<td>Claude Melot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>188 l.</td>
<td>Louis Bourdilliat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>176 l.</td>
<td>Louis Bourdilliat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Arch. d'Avallen, CC 51, & GG.
Appendix C: XI

farm of the octroi of 30s. par muid de vin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1698</td>
<td>1760 l.</td>
<td>Simon Doulcet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>1500 l.</td>
<td>Jean Bezanger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>1060 l.</td>
<td>Jean Devisiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>1215 l.</td>
<td>André Gramain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>1610 l.</td>
<td>Urbain Duplessis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1730</td>
<td>1200 l.</td>
<td>Claude Lelong de Latour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1736</td>
<td>1180 l.</td>
<td>Daniel Bezard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1742</td>
<td>950 l.</td>
<td>François Bourdilliat (including droit de jauge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1748</td>
<td>1400 l.</td>
<td>François Bourdilliat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>2412 l.</td>
<td>François Bourdilliat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>1737 l.</td>
<td>Joseph François</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>1350 l.</td>
<td>Pierre Esprit Pillon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>975 l.</td>
<td>Pierre Esprit Pillon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>712 l.</td>
<td>Louis Bourdilliat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>400 l.</td>
<td>Louis Bourdilliat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 44, & GG.
Appendix C: XII.

Farm of the droits des inspecteurs aux boucheries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>2,800 l.</td>
<td>Maîtres bouchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1714</td>
<td>2,100 l.</td>
<td>Lazare Chausson (procureur de roi à l'hôtel de ville).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>3,020 l.</td>
<td>Maîtres Bouchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1729</td>
<td>2,200 l.</td>
<td>Jean Herisson, on behalf of all butchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1735</td>
<td>2,000 l.</td>
<td>Michel Mutellé, on behalf of all butchers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>2,300 l.</td>
<td>Pellerin Herisson, maître boucher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>2,300 l.</td>
<td>Pierre Boudin, maître boucher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1754</td>
<td>3,465 l.</td>
<td>Didier Chalan, bourgeois.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>5,000 l.</td>
<td>Maîtres bouchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760</td>
<td>5,600 l.</td>
<td>Joseph François.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1766</td>
<td>6,400 l.</td>
<td>Joseph Mutellé, marchand boucher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1772</td>
<td>5,860 l.</td>
<td>Joseph Mutellé.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1778</td>
<td>5,320 l.</td>
<td>Pierre Defrance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>5,000 l.</td>
<td>Edmé Mutellé.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, CC 49, & GG.
### Appendix C: XIII

Octroi sur le minot de sel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>2,598 l. 3s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1784</td>
<td>6,508 l. 16s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1785</td>
<td>6,369 l. 9s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786</td>
<td>6,661 l. 7s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>6,958 l. 4s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788</td>
<td>6,960 l. 9s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789</td>
<td>4,650 l. 3s.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Arch. d'Auxerre, GG.
Appendix D: I.

Arret 15 Mars 1686, fixing annual budget of Avallon.

1. Au porteur de la grande Porte 10 l.
   Au porteur de la Porte Auxerroise 10 l.
   Au porteur de la petite Porte 10 l.
   Au sergent de la ville 15 l.
   L'entretien et conduite de l'Horloge 40 l.
   Au messager ordinaire de lad. ville à Dijon. 60 l.
   Au messager qui va prendre les lettres de la poste à Noyers 50 l.
   Aux deux gardes des bois 96 l.
   Au Pâtre 5 l.
   Au tambour 6 l.
   Aux deux vicaires pour la publication des billets 6 l.
   Aux marquilliers de St. Lazare, St. Julien et St. Pierre 6 l.

2. Pour le predicateur 150 l.
   Pour l'entretien du Pavé et netoyement des boues 500 l.
   Pour l'entretien des Couverts, des Portes, des Tours, et Murailles 60 l.
   Pour les gages d'une Sage femme 18 l.
   Pour le maître d'écriture 160 l.
   Pour une fondation en l'église St. Lazare 40 l.
   Pour les gages des Échevins 8 l.
   Pour les gages du Sindic 10 l.
   Pour ceux du Secrétaire 40s.
   Pour le vin d'honneur 60 l.
   Pour le droit de banvin 50 l.
   Pour les peres de la doctrine chrétienne qui tiennent le College au lieu de la Maladerie 360 l.
   Pour la Fondation de la Dame de la Riviere suivant la transaction du 10 Nov. 1627 18 l.

Total: 1720 l.

2. 975 arpents de bois per annum will produce about 900 l. Rest of expenditure to be levied on inhabitants.

2. 975 arpents? This must surely be a mistake.
Appendix D:II

Declaration by municipal officials of Avallon of revenue of town in 1710. (1)

1. Various leases 121 l. 12s.
2. Wood, 50½ arpents cut each year, producing on average 1000 l.
3. Octroi patrimonial de 33s. muid de vin producing on average 800 l.

Appendix D: III.

Declaration of revenue and expenditure required by the intendant in order to calculate the dixième to be paid on municipal revenue, 22 September 1712.

Revenue.

Octroi patrimonial of 33s. muid de vin, producing on average 1,000 l.

50 arpents of wood sold annually 900 l.

Lease of various properties. 115 l. 12s.

Expenditure.

As laid down in the arrêt of March 1686, with the following changes:

"ils ne payent plus la somme de trois cens trente livres raportee au penultieame article desdites dépenses parcequ'il a pleuut au roy de retablir aux peres de la doctrine tenans le college d'Avallon la maladerie de cette ville."

Gages d'un procureur du roy en l'hôtel de ville 130 l.

Gages du secrétaire greffier 100 l.

Gages des quatre sergents de maire 24 l.

Entretien d'un lanterne sous le Pavillon et passage de la grande porte 40 l.

Entretien des arbres des promenades 6 l.

Gages de celuiuy qui enseigne les premiers principes de la grand mare (sic!) 20 l.

Appendix D:IV.

État des Situations des revenus de la ville d'Avallon 8 Août 1762 dressé en conséquence des ordres de M. Duflour de Villeneuve 21 Janvier 1762.

Recette.

Octroi sur le vin de 33s. par muid de vin 1950 l.
Octroi sur la boucherie 1750 l.
Cens, rentes, loyers 596 l.
47½ arpents de coupes de bois 5700 l.

Total de la recette 9996 l.

Charges annuelles
Reste à employer annuellement 2604 l.

Il est du à la ville au premier Août 1762:

Deux années de rente à l'hôtel de ville de Paris 275 l.
De Marc, marchand de bois, pour 1760 4179 l. 6s.
De Jean Rouillot pour octrois sur les vins 2935 l.
Other debts 88 l. 3s.4d.

Total 7475 l. 9s.

Emprunt fait suivante la requete 21 janvier 1762. 6000 l.

Dépenses.
(Sums authorised in 1686 arret are in brackets; actual sums now spent in column on right.)

Portier à la grande porte (10 l.) 24 l.
Portier à la porte Auxerroise (10 l.) 10 l.
Portier à la petite porte (10 l.) -
Sergents de ville (15 l.) 30 l.

Entretien de l'horloge (40 l.) 100 l.
Messager à Dijon (60 l.) -
Gardes des bois (98 l.) 400 l.
Messager (50 l.) 150 l.
Au berger ou pâtre (51 l.) 5 l.
Tambour (6 l.) 6 l.
Vicaires (6 l.) 9 l.
Predicateurs (150 l) 215 l.
Marguilliers (6 l.) 6 l.
Entretien de pavé et nettoyement des boues pour les boues seulement (500 l.) 590 l.
Entretien des Couverts des Portes (60 l.) 60 l.
Gages des trois sages femmes (18 l) 156 l.
Pour les maîtres d'écritures (60 l.) 350 l.
Fondation de St. Lazare (40 l.) 40 l.
Gages des échevins (8 l.) 8 l.
Gages du syndic (10 l.) 10 l.
Gages du secrétaire (2 l.) 2 l.
Vins d'honneur (60 l.) 900 l.
College (350 l.) 450 l.
Fondation pour apprentissages des jeunes filles (18 l.) 36 l.
Droits de ban-vin (50 l.) 65 l.

Total (1620 l.) 3622 l.

Nouvelles charges en supplement:

Logement du commandant 420 l.
Cloche pour balayer les rues 50 l.
Gages du maire 12 l.
Lanternes des portes 80 l.
Prix pour les écoliers 300 l.
Sonneurs pour les orvalles (orages ?) 70 l.

Total 962 l.

Autres droits:

Les trois vingtièmes 1362 l.
Entretien des murs corps de garde 600 l.
Entretien du pavé 600 l.
Vins d'honneur pour les passagers 100 l.
Fête de St. Louis 96 l.
Feux de joye 50 l.

Total 2808 l.
Intendant's recommendations for a new arrêt, with following increases. 30 avril 1763.

Portier de la grande porte 30 l., à la charge de faire nettoyer exactement la place et de faire ranger les voitures.

Gages du portier de la porte Auxerroise 6 l. independamment de son logement.

Suprimer les gages particuliers au portier de la petite porte pendant tout le temps que ce portier sera l'un des gardes des bois de la ville.

50 l. de gages à chacun des 4 sergens de ville à la charge qu'ils ne pourront prétendre aucune payements particuliers à l'occasion des services qu'ils seront tenus de rendre soit par les ordres des magistrats soit par ceux du subdélégué même en campagne lorsque le service du Roy ou de la ville l'exige.

Tambour: 18 l. à la charge qu'il sera tenue de faire gratuitement et sans répétition toutes les publications dont il sera chargé de la part des magistrats de la ville.

Supprimer les gages des marquilliers que vous ne payez plus depuis longtemps.

Fixer les gages d'une accoucheuse à 120 l. et permettre de continuer à deux autres le payement annuel de 18 l. per an chacun.

...les gages du plus ancien maître d'écriture à 200 l. et du deuxième à 150 l.

Les gages des magistrats: 50 l. pour le Maire, pour chacun des Echevins 20 l. pour le Sindic 50 l. à condition qu'il n'exigera rien en matière de police même pour le papier, et pour le secrétaire 10 l.*

Pour les vins d'honneur par estimation 1,000 l. sans faire un article particulier de celui que vous présentez aux passagers.

Les gages du grammairien...me paraissent portées à un prix trop fort, il me semble que l'on pourroit les reduire à 300 ou 330 l. ce que l'on payoit anciennement au lieu de 450 l.


* Error ? Secrétaire paid 100 l. p.a.
Four young girls to be apprenticed at 18 l. each instead of two.

Je me propose de faire supprimer entièrement la dépense du jour de la fête St. Louis ayant remarqué dans les comptes qu'elle ne consistait qu'en frais de bouche.

L'entretien de l'horloge, celui d'un messager pour Dijon que vous vous proposez d'établir, l'entretien du pavé, l'enlèvement des boues, l'entretien des lanternes, tous ces objets ne peuvent être porter dans l'arrêt que par estimation sur le pied des baux actuels et à la charge de ne pas passer les nouveaux que de mon autorité.

Je crois qu'il seroit à propos d'en user de même à l'égard de l'entretien de couverture de tous les bâtiments qui sont à la charge de la ville, l'entrepreneur ne pourroit demander son payement annuel qu'à la vue d'une reconnaissance de l'État des couverts et ils seroient toujours en bon État.
## Appendix D:VI.

Farm of octroi patrimonial of 33s. muid de vin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Income</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1692</td>
<td>1250 l. p.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1697</td>
<td>688</td>
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<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>1366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1717</td>
<td>1500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1723</td>
<td>2020</td>
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<td>1729</td>
<td>1734</td>
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<tr>
<td>1735</td>
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<td>1741</td>
<td>1800</td>
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<td>1747</td>
<td>1700</td>
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<td>1753</td>
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<td>1650</td>
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<td>1771</td>
<td>1657</td>
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<tr>
<td>1777</td>
<td>1657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>1653</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1654</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Arch. d'Avalon, CC 46.
   a. Farm of octroi auctioned by subdélégué.
   b. Farm of octroi auctioned by intendant.
   c. Farm of octroi auctioned by secrétaire de l'intendance.
**Farm of octroi on animaux de boucherie.**

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a1704</td>
<td>1100 l. p.a.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1720</td>
<td>2000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1729</td>
<td>1670</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1738</td>
<td>1721</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a1744</td>
<td>1650</td>
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<td>b1750</td>
<td>1690</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1756</td>
<td>1880</td>
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<td>b1762</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1768</td>
<td>1500</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1771</td>
<td>1462</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1777</td>
<td>1505</td>
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<tr>
<td>b1783</td>
<td>1648</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b1789</td>
<td>1648</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Arch. d'Avallon, CC 49.

- Farm auctioned by intendant.
- Farm auctioned by subdélégué.
### Appendix D: VIII.

**Profit of Coupes de Bois.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Profit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1697</td>
<td>875 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1700</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>900 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1706</td>
<td>2323 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>3650 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>2525 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1709</td>
<td>1515 l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1710</td>
<td>1885 l. 6s 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1711</td>
<td>1885 l. 6s 8d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>3217 l. 6s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1713</td>
<td>2771 l. 5s.</td>
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## Taille négociable.

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### Contrôleur des Hendres patrimoniaux
- 64 l. tax of 2s. per l.

### Commissaires aux revues et contrôleur du greffier de l'Hôtel de ville
- 1707: 1700 l. tax of 2s. per l.

### Greffier des rolettes de tailles
- 1780: 2,083 l. tax of 2s. per l.
- 1694: 2,116 l. tax of 2s. per l.
- 1694: 1,160 l. tax of 2s. per l.
- 1715: 1,970 l. tax of 2s. per l.
Appendix D:X.

État des offices municipaux qui ont été créés dans les hôtels de ville de la province de Bourgogne depuis 1689.

4 échevins. Bought 4 June 1709, 5,000 l. for finance principal, and 500 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

Procureur du roi syndic. Bought 14 March 1718, 3,178 l. 18s., i.e. 2,000 l. for finance principal, 100 l. enchère, 200 l. for tax of 2s. per l., 50 l. for marc d'or, 500 l. for office of substitut, 50 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

Secrétaire. Bought 15 July 1718, 2,523 l. 10s., i.e. 2,000 l. finance principal, 200 l. for tax of 2s. per l., 50 l. marc d'or.

Receveur. Bought several times for 5,139 l. 16s. 6d., 1696: 1,932 l. finance principal, 193 l. 4s. for tax of 2s. per l.

1711: 2,400 l. finance principal, 240 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

1712: 100 l. for contrôleur du receveur, 10 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

1696: 70 l. for droit de quittance, 7 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

1697: 150 l. for attribution du sol pour livre.

Contrôleur des deniers patrimoniaux. 543 l. finance principal, 54 l. 6s. for tax of 2s. per l.

Commissaires aux revues et contrôleur du greffe de l'hôtel de ville. 1707: 1700 l. finance principal.

Greffier des rolles de tailles.

1690: 2,086 l. finance principal of office of greffier.

1694: 2,106 l. finance principal of office of vérificateur des rolles, 210 l. 12s. for tax of 2s. per l.

1694: 1,360 l. finance principal of greffier alternatif.

1713: 1,870 l. finance principal of office of greffier, 167 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

1. Arch. d'Avalon, BB 84.
Jures mouleurs de bois. Bought March 1696, 5,000 l. finance principal, 500 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

Auditeurs des comptes. Bought October 1704, 4,000 l. finance principal, 500 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

Mesureurs des grains. Bought December 1698, 900 l. finance principal, 90 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

Garde scel de la mairie. Bought 1696, 666 l. 13s. 4d. finance principal. 66 l. 13s. 4d. for tax of 2s. per l.

Bought again 1697, 1,500 l.

Jures crieurs. Bought December 1692, 720 l.

Voyers experts. 1690, 1696, 1697, costing 882 l. 10s. 8d.

Milice bourgeoise. Bought March 1694, 2,500 l. finance principal 250 l. for tax of 2s. per l.

Auditeurs et examineurs des comptes des arts et métiers. 1700: 3,600 l. paid by communautés des arts et métiers of Avallon.
BIBLIOGRAPHY.

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E. Arrets du conseil.

These arrêts du conseil are arranged in chronological order and there is no subject index; consequently it is usually well-nigh impossible to use them as a source of information on general topics. However, one can trace the reference numbers of arrêts du conseil dealing with the problems of specific towns, by consulting Augustin Thierry's fiches, now deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

G 7. 1304. Receveur des octrois.
G 7. 1551. Conseillers de police.
H 1. 50. Rachat des offices, Artois.
H 1. 102. Rachat des offices, Bourgogne.
H 1. 118. Municipal finance - miscellaneous, Burgundy.
H 1. 140 Commission des dettes, Bourgogne.
H 140 bis. Rachats des offices, Bourgogne.
H 1. 144. Municipal offices in Burgundy, the municipal reform edicts 1764-5.
H 1. 169. Taxation abuses in Cravant.
H 1. 197. Taille négociale and octrois of Auxerre.
H 1. 200 I. Financial administration of towns in Burgundy.
H 1. 205. Union of comté of Auxerre with duchy of Burgundy.
H 1. 1469. Municipal affairs, - miscellaneous, Burgundy.
H 1. 1560. Municipal finance - miscellaneous.
AD I. 14. Municipal administration.
AD I. 18. Gouverneurs des villes.
AD I. 20. Maires, échevins, consuls.
AD IX. 401. Droits réservés.
AD IX. 447 A. Octrois.

Bibliothèque nationale.

Anciens fonds français.

4289. Mémoire concernant la Bourgogne, dressé par Mr. Ferrand, intendant en lad. province.
7509. Recueil des pièces sur l'administration provinciale formé par le Marquis de Castries.
Bibliothèque nationale cont.
Anciens fonds français cont.


11386. États des villes et paroisses, avec indication du nombre de feux, de la généralité de Bourgogne.


Nouvelles acquisitions françaises.
1335. Extraits d'un registre du bailliage et siège présidial d'Auxerre, 1771-1790.


Archives départementales de la Côte d'Or.

Archives départementales de l'Yonne.
C 7. Administration communale de la ville d'Auxerre

C 8. ditto 1773-1789.
C 9. ditto 1782-1789.
C 10. ditto 1755-1789.
C 11. ditto 1742-1789.
C 12. ditto 1751-1789.
C 13. ditto 1688-1784.
C 14. ditto 1730-1789.

IB. 443. Dossier relatif à l'exécution de l'édit du mai 1785.


Archives municipales de la ville d'Auxerre.
AA 18. Députés aux états de Bourgogne.
Archives municipales de la ville d'Auxerre, contd.

BB 32. Délibérations du corps de ville, 1702-1708.
BB 33. ditto. 1708-1724.
BB 34. ditto. 1724-1755.
BB 35. ditto. 1755-1775.
BB 36. ditto. 1775-1779.

These comprise bundles of documents (paquets), largely actes d'assemblée générales des habitants; since they are in a somewhat disorderly condition, I have, when referring to them in footnotes, given the eighteenth century classification after their present-day classification, e.g. BB 48, (Pg. 74, pc. 5), i.e. Paquet 74, pièce 5.

CC 10. Don gratuit.
CC 42. Octrois.
CC 47. Adjudication du droit sur le pain mollet.
CC 44. Adjudication du droit de 30s. par mid de vin.
CC 49. Adjudication du droit des inspecteurs aux boucheries.
CC 51. Adjudication du droit de jauge.
CC 63-73. Municipal accounts, 1690-1755.
CC 37. Octrois extraordinaires.
DD 9. Hotel de ville.
DD 22. Public works - various.
DD 25. Water-supply.
DD 30. Pavé.
DD 31. Pavé extraordinaire, enlèvement des boues.
GG. Municipal accounts, 1758-1789.

Archives municipales de la ville d'Avallon.

BB 5. ditto. 1708-1740.
BB 6. ditto. 1740-1790.
BB 8. ditto. 1698-1713.
BB 9. ditto. 1704-1707.
BB 10. ditto. 1708-1721.
BB 11. ditto. 1721-1738.
BB 12. ditto. 1738-1745.
BB 13. ditto. 1745-1752.
BB 14. ditto. 1752-1757.
BB 15. ditto. 1757-1764.
BB 16. ditto. 1764-1770.
BB 17. ditto. 1770-1779.
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<td><strong>BB 19.1.</strong> Enregistrement des édits, arrêts du conseil et de l'intendance et de tous les actes de l'autorité supérieure concernant la ville et les particuliers. 1619-1741.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 19.2.</strong> ditto. 1741-1780.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 23.</strong> Procès-verbaux distincts d'assemblées générales des habitants. 1650-1759.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 24.</strong> Lettres des ministres, des gouverneurs et des intendants, ou de leurs secrétaires, quelques-unes des personnages influent, au sujet de la nomination des échevins.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 29.</strong> Lettre du maire à l'intendant. 1784-1789.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 33.</strong> Lettres du roi, du ministre et de l'intendant relatives à l'office du procureur-syndic et son substitut. 1735-1779.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 34.</strong> Pièces relatives à la destitution du sieur Morizot, comme procureur-syndic. 1758-1759.1772.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 37.</strong> Affaire Ruffier. 1750-1759.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 38.</strong> Lettres du receveur Comynet à l'intendant. 1763-1789.</td>
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<td><strong>BB 84.</strong> Lettres relatives au paiement des gages affectés aux charges rachetées. 1714-1757. &quot;Reperoire par ordre alphabétique de ce qui concerne la ville et communauté d'Avallon.&quot; exécuté par Jacob Champion, maire.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 44.</strong> Octrois patrimoniaux sur le vin. 1692-1713.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 46.</strong> Adjudications des octrois. 1560-1790.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 48.</strong> Octroi sur les animaux de boucherie. 1704-1789.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 50.</strong> Octroi dit de don gratuit. 1643-1779.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 51.</strong> Adjudications des droits de don gratuit. 1774-1789.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 53.</strong> Règlement pour la reddition des comptes des octrois. 1481-1777.</td>
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<td><strong>CC 295-299.</strong> Municipal accounts. 1692-1699 inc.</td>
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