

noting opposite to each sum authorized the number and date of the audit half-year within which it was paid.

16. I compared the payments of the years 1885-86, 1884-85, and 1883-84 with the schedules of accounts passed, with the results specified below. As regards the antecedent period I found the schedules so incomplete and unreliable that I was compelled to abandon the task as fruitless. In the accounts of the year 1885-86 I found only one payment (a sum of £10) which did not appear in the accounts-book. I found, however, in that book eight sums authorized but not paid: one of these was a sum of £10 payable apparently to a person other than the recipient of the £10 previously referred to. The name of the latter had, however, been written in pencil over the original name, and I presume the alteration must be regarded as the correction of a clerical error. Of the remaining seven sums, three were repetitions of claims authorized on a previous occasion, three were probably included in larger sums subsequently authorized, and one represents a small sum which I could not find had been paid. In the accounts of the year 1884-85 a comparison of the payments entered in the cash-book with those authorized in the accounts-book exhibited a far less satisfactory result. The payments authorized but apparently not paid numbered twenty-six. In nine instances the sums are evidently repetitions of amounts previously authorized. As regards the others, I can only suppose that they must be represented by other sums paid to the same person. On the other hand, the claims paid but not authorized in the accounts-book numbered fifty-seven. Of these, eleven are for salary paid to the Chairman and officers of the county, two are for advances to the Clerk for petty-cash purposes, and the remainder are payments to divers persons, the majority being for labourers employed on the roads.

17. As respects the year 1883-84, I made the same comparison as in the two subsequent years above referred to. As the result of that comparison, I found that, out of 388 payments made during the year, only 179 were specifically authorized by means of the accounts-book. On the other hand fifty-six payments had been authorized for which no corresponding payments could be found in the cash-book. Many of the sums so authorized are, however, merely repetitions of claims authorized on previous dates.

18. It is observed that up to October, 1883, the payments to labourers employed in the repair of roads were not authorized in the accounts-book, on the ground, presumably, that the resolution of the Council authorizing the performance of the work implied an authority for the payment of the men employed.

19. In the course of my comparison of the sums paid with the sums authorized, I observed that in a large number of instances the authority of the Council to pay was not obtained till after the payment had been made; and, in order to determine to what extent this practice had prevailed, I made a careful examination of the payments made during the financial years 1884-85 and 1885-86, with the following results:—

Year 1884-85.—Of the claims authorized by the Council—				£	s.	d.
On the 5th May, 1884,	1	was paid on the 8th April, amounting to ...	388	17	8	
"	20	were " 1st May " ...	184	11	3	
" 9th June, 1884,	7	" 21st May " ...	801	11	11	
" 7th July, 1884,	3	" 23rd June " ...	818	11	2	
"	6	" 4th July " ...	93	11	4	
" 6th Oct., 1884,	1	" 2nd Sept. " ...	15	0	0	
"	30	" 1st Oct. " ...	198	19	7	
" 26th Nov., 1884	1	" 14th Oct. " ...	17	0	0	
"	5	" 3rd Nov. " ...	241	15	0	
Year 1885-86.—Of the sums authorized—				£	s.	d.
On the 1st June, 1885,	2	were paid on the 7th April, amounting to ...	100	0	0	
"	1	" 17th April " ...	12	4	0	
"	2	" 20th April " ...	30	0	0	
"	3	" 9th May " ...	32	12	6	
"	2	" 22nd May " ...	50	0	0	
" 25th Nov., 1885,	5	" 14th Nov. " ...	36	14	2	

I may remark that the large payments made in the year 1884-85 in anticipation of authority were mainly sums due to contractors—a class of payments necessarily of an urgent character, and which may be held to be covered in each case by the *quasi* authority subsisting in the contract.

20. *The Petty-cash-book*, used to record petty payments of various kinds, the principal items being for postages and telegrams.

21. *The Cash-book* has been kept with some approach to neatness, but is sadly wanting in many important particulars. Page after page occurs in which the date of the year is not entered, so that it is frequently necessary to turn half-a-dozen leaves in order to ascertain to what year the entries relate. On the receipt side no ledger folios are entered in the cash-book till the 1st October, 1880, and on the expenditure side not till the 1st October, 1881, so that for that period it became necessary on every occasion to refer to the index in order to trace the transactions into the ledger. Many of the folios entered in the index are erroneous, and several accounts in the ledger are not indexed at all. The entries in the cash-book supply no information beyond the designation of the ledger account to which they are posted—this designation being frequently erroneous and wanting in uniformity—the name of the payee and the amount thus:—

	£	s.	d.
Roads—D. McKinlay	...	...	...
Roads—J. McDonald	...	...	...
Surveys—R. Parks	...	...	...
Travelling allowances—R. Pritchard	...	...	...
	5	0	0
	13	10	0
	50	0	0
	18	0	0