

1914.
NEW ZEALAND.

SUBSIDIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN AUSTRALIA.

REPORT BY MR. W. S. SHORT, ASSISTANT UNDER-SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Laid on the Table of the House by Leave.

Public Works Department,
Wellington, New Zealand, 15th April, 1913.

SIR,—

Re Subsidies and Local Government in Australia.

In pursuance of the direction of Cabinet of 23rd December last, that I was to investigate and report as to the working of subsidy systems in New South Wales and as to the systems of local government in the various Australasian States, I have the honour to make the following statement:—

I arrived in Sydney on 4th February, 1913, and at once received every possible assistance from the Director-General of Public Works, Mr. Davies, and from Mr. Garlick, the officer in charge of the Local Government Branch of the Public Works Department. These gentlemen gave me much valuable information. They also put me in touch with such representative men as the President, Vice-president, and Secretary of the Shires Association, and the Mayors and Town Clerks of many suburban and other boroughs and shires; the Mayors of Bathurst, Wellington, and Newcastle, N.S.W.; and many other people in New South Wales, some of whom take an active interest in local government matters—one edits a local government journal, and others regularly write articles to the newspapers on these subjects.

I also saw the various Ministers in charge of local government matters and of public works in the States of Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania; and in each case I met with courtesy and assistance. In all these cases the Secretaries of the various departments and the officers in actual charge of the working of local government in the various States gave me all the information and help I could assimilate within the time at my disposal.

In this manner I believe I have been able to obtain a fair grasp of the actual working of subsidy systems and of local government in all parts of Australia, with the exception of Western Australia, which time did not permit me to visit.

In order that the matter may be simplified, and so that any one of the subjects dealt with may be considered apart from the others, I have written three separate reports, each of which will be complete in itself. These reports are—(1.) Subsidies and State assistance to local bodies in New South Wales. (2.) Subsidies and State assistance to local bodies in Australia generally. (3.) Forms of local government in all the Australian States.

I have, &c.,

W. S. SHORT,
Assistant Under-Secretary.

The Hon. the Minister of Public Works and Acting Minister of Finance,
Wellington, New Zealand.

REPORT No. 1.—SUBSIDIES AND STATE ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL BODIES IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

It is necessary to state that, outside a large area in New South Wales in which there are no local bodies, and which lies far back and is known as “the Western Division,” and outside Sydney and Newcastle districts, which are governed by special Acts and where there are also special Boards, and leaving out a few Harbour and Cemetery Trusts, Pastoral and Agricultural Boards, &c., there are two main forms of local bodies in New South Wales—viz., shires and municipalities. The former correspond with our counties, and the latter with our boroughs. They are both dealt with under one enactment—viz., the Local Government Act, 1906, and its amendments of 1907 and 1908. Under these Acts subsidies to local bodies are called “endowments.”

Three sorts of endowments or assistance are given—viz., (i) Endowments to shires; (ii) endowments to municipalities; and (iii) national works.