

In South Australia the Government insists on local bodies keeping a separate bank account for all money granted for roadworks, and as the Government also requires receipts for such money to be produced for the information of the Audit Inspector, the local body is unable to use the money for any other purpose.

The Government also insists on the local body spending all the money granted to it for main roads before any further grant for that purpose is made.

The Minister of Public Works informed me that the main roads converging for about forty or fifty miles on Adelaide are becoming worn out, and, as it is beyond the means of the local bodies to renew them, it is proposed to raise a loan for the purpose, but no definite scheme has yet been formulated.

There is a large area of South Australia which is not settled and is not within any district, and any necessary works within such area are constructed by the Government.

TASMANIA.

The amount granted as subsidies to local bodies in Tasmania is not large. For the last year £10,250 only was allocated to them. The sums granted varied from £16 to £800. There would appear to be no very well defined basis upon which the allocation is made other than that of precedent.

Prior to the passing of the Local Government Act, 1906, which, *inter alia*, made a considerable reform in local government and abolished many local bodies, it was the custom for Parliament to vote a definite sum yearly for main roads, and to apportion such money among the local bodies, in the manner set forth in a schedule to the Appropriation Act. In addition to this assistance, certain subsidies were given to the Road Trusts on the basis of the rates collected by them, but none got any such assistance who did not collect a rate equal to 1s. in the pound on the annual value of their lands. When the Local Government Act came into force, both these methods of assistance were abolished, and what is now done is to give annually to each local body a subsidy equal to what their district received under the old system. This practice has been found to be unsatisfactory, and the Minister of Public Works and Lands informed me that he favoured classification, and to that end he was calling a conference of local bodies to discuss the matter. He was much interested in my investigation, and asked to be supplied with a copy of my report.

The conditions as to direct votes for roads in Tasmania are somewhat similar to those in New Zealand, and for the last three years votes for roads were as follows:—

Class of Work.	1910.	1911.	1912.
	£	£	£
Roads	133,180	116,550	131,480
Bridges	4,950	18,900	10,094
Tracks	6,000	6,000	5,000
Totals	£144,130	£141,450	£146,574

The only other assistance granted by Government to local bodies is in the grant of Police Court fines. In small municipalities these fines vary from £60 to £100, and in large municipalities from £200 to £300 per annum.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

I was unable to visit this State, and the following meagre information is taken from the Official Year-book of the Commonwealth for 1911:—

There are two main forms of local authority in Western Australia (apart from Boards of Health and a few special Water or Harbour Trusts)—viz., municipalities and road districts. The former correspond to our boroughs and the latter to our counties.

Subsidies are granted to municipalities on the amount of rates collected, but to entitle a municipality to a subsidy it must have levied a general rate of at least 1s. in the pound, and must have collected at least £300 from such rate. Newly constructed municipalities are during the first year of their existence allowed a subsidy of £2 for every pound of general rates collected, but after the first year they participate according to the general provisions. It appears also that municipalities are classified into five classes, and that no subsidy is paid on general rates beyond £3,000.

The Year-book gives no information as to subsidies to road districts, neither does it indicate the object in classifying the municipalities.

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REPORT No. 3.—FORMS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN STATES.

GENERAL.

This report contains a statement of the general forms of local government in existence in each State in Australasia, but it is not burdened with particulars of special forms that apply to one city only—such as to Sydney, Brisbane, or Melbourne—or to special cases such as the Metropolitan Drainage, Sewage, or Water-supply Boards of Sydney, Melbourne, and a few other places, all of which are governed by special Acts, and the latter of which are similar to our Drainage and Sewage Boards in Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin. I have also left out of consideration Harbour Trusts, Fire Boards, Bridge Trusts, Cemetery, Domain, Pastoral and Agricultural Protection Boards, and Irrigation Trusts, which have only local interest, and which are neither numerous nor do they have any effect on the general law, save and except within the limited districts to which they apply.

I have, moreover, dealt in a general way with the forms of local government in each State, and this report does not therefore profess to go minutely into details of differences between the powers of similar local bodies in the different States, as I understand that what is required is a general survey of the whole matter, in such a form as will enable the New Zealand system to be compared with those in force in Australia.