

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS.

PRIOR to 1842 no municipal institutions existed in Australasia. On the 20th July of that year an Act of the Legislative Council of New South Wales (6 Vic. No. 3) was assented to, providing for the incorporation of Sydney, and on the 12th of the following month another Act (6 Vic. No. 7) was passed, which granted municipal government to Melbourne. In the former case the town was raised to the dignity of a city. Melbourne was, however, proclaimed a town, and remained as such till 1847, at which date letters patent were received conferring the same privilege as that enjoyed by Sydney. In 1849 municipal government was instituted in South Australia by the incorporation of Adelaide. In New Zealand an Act was passed in 1852, dividing the Colony into six provinces, the local administration of which was vested in provincial Councils. This system remained in force till 1876, when the measure was repealed, and the whole Colony, except the area within the forty-one boroughs then existing, was subdivided into counties, and a system of local county government came into operation. In 1858 Hobart, in Tasmania, was incorporated, and in 1859 systems of local government were initiated in Queensland and Western Australia by the incorporation of Brisbane and Perth. In Victoria a general system of local government came into force in 1874. Queensland adopted a general system in 1879, and South Australia in 1887.

Commencement
of municipal
government in
Australasia.

The power of corporate bodies to impose taxation for local purposes differs considerably in New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia, from that existing in the remaining Colonies of the group. As will be seen in the following table, the Colonies mentioned have a considerable area outside local supervision; the

Powers of
corporate bodies.

Small area
incorporated in
some Colonies.

disproportion between the incorporated and unincorporated areas in New South Wales is specially marked. The incorporated and unincorporated areas and the various classes of municipal divisions for each Colony for which there is information were as given herewith. The returns from New Zealand and Western Australia are not to hand :—

Colony.	Incorporated Areas, divided into—	Area of Incorporated Districts.	Area still under control of Central Government.
		sq. miles.	sq. miles.
New South Wales	Boroughs and Municipalities ...	2,426	308,274
Victoria	Cities, Towns, Boroughs, and Shires	87,078	806
Queensland	Boroughs, Shires, and Divisions	668,252	245
South Australia...	Corporations and District Council Divisions	42,527	28,084
Tasmania.....	Municipalities, Town Districts, and Road Trusts	11,160	15,056

Rates—how
assessed.

In New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, the rates are assessed on the annual value ; in Queensland, on the capital value ; and in New Zealand the property within counties and road districts is assessed on the capital value, while in boroughs and town districts both descriptions of assessment are adopted. The returns for each Colony were :—

Colony.	Capital Value.	Annual Value.
	£	£
New South Wales	144,277,400	8,697,503
Victoria	203,351,360	13,733,770
Queensland	49,154,977	*
South Australia	*	2,543,526
Tasmania.....	*	1,384,238
New Zealand	75,920,027	2,117,392

* No returns.

The annual value shown for Tasmania is to a certain extent overstated by the fact that the same property may be rated separately for one or more assessments, as for Municipal, Road

Trust, or Town Board purposes. The New Zealand returns are similarly affected, some of the various divisions overlapping, but the error from this source can be but small. There are no returns from Western Australia.

The revenue and expenditure of local bodies previously particularised is given below. In the receipts, the amount of the Government endowment is specified, while in the expenditure the outlay on public works is similarly treated :—

Total Revenue and Expenditure.

Colony.	Receipts.			Expenditure.		
	Government.	Rates, &c.	Total.	Public Works.	Other.	Total.
New South Wales.....	168,306	826,608	994,914	649,230	441,306	1,090,536
Victoria.....	514,375	1,365,436	1,879,811	1,201,275	896,111	2,097,386
Queensland.....	159,253	347,983	507,236	341,219	189,550	530,769
South Australia.....	131,843	218,980	350,823	222,988	130,543	353,531
Tasmania.....	26,182	120,534	146,716	.....	.....	151,405
New Zealand.....	118,941	846,168	965,109	495,252	460,399	955,651

Through the inclusion of the Loan Accounts in the general returns, the expenditure per inhabitant in each case, shows an excess over the revenue per head. A vigorous works policy must, however be maintained till the various incorporated areas are improved to the extent that will satisfy the demands of permanent settlement.

The revenue of local bodies per head of population in incorporated districts, and per square mile of territory in incorporated area, was, as far as could be ascertained, as follows :—

Revenue per head.

Colony.	Receipts per Inhabitant.			Receipts per Square Mile of Incorporated Area.		
	Government.	Other Sources.	Total.	Government.	Other Sources.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£	£	£
New South Wales ...	0 4 11	1 4 0	1 8 11	69·4	340·7	410·1
Victoria ...	0 9 0	1 3 10	1 12 10	5·9	15·7	21·6
Queensland ...	0 8 2	0 17 10	1 6 0	0·2	0·5	0·7
South Australia ...	0 8 8	0 14 6	1 3 2	3·1	5·2	8·3
Tasmania ...	0 3 6	0 16 2	0 19 8	2·3	10·8	13·1
New Zealand ...	0 3 9	1 6 10	1 10 7	...	...	...

The large revenue obtained per square mile in New South Wales is due to the circumstance already explained, that the area incorporated is small compared with the total territory of the Colony, and comprises for the most part only urban settlements.

Water and
Sewerage works
in New South
Wales.

The Country Water Supply and Sewerage Act of New South Wales was passed in 1880. Under the provisions of this measure municipalities outside the county of Cumberland are entitled to construct, or have constructed for them by the Government, works for water supply and sewerage, provided the construction of the same be approved by the Governor-in-Council, and the municipalities agree to pay back the original cost of the works, with interest at the rate of 4 per cent. per annum. The Government pays the certified cost of the works, and the municipalities repay the Government by instalments extending over a period of sixty years. Under the operations of this Act twelve water supply works have been carried out by the Government and three by municipal councils. The amount advanced by the Government to local bodies under this Act to the end of 1892 was £299,580.

Water Supply
and Irrigation
Works in
Victoria.

The Government of Victoria, prior to the establishment of the Trusts for Water Works, Irrigation, and Water Supply, advanced money from the Public Loans Account to local bodies requiring assistance to construct these works. The amount advanced for the development of the services to June, 1892, was £385,177, which has to be repaid into a sinking fund, or by annual instalments. The amount so repaid is £66,822. The figures just given are exclusive of the advances to the city of Ballarat for the water supply works, as these are now under a special commission. The outstanding debt of the Ballarat Water Commission is given on page 322. Under a special Act, the Government have power to advance funds to shires for the construction of tramways, and £60,511 has been so advanced up to June, 1892. In Queensland and New Zealand the Governments have advanced £682,897 and

£468,249 respectively for municipal purposes. In the former Colony the whole amount has been paid out of General Loans Account.

The amount of outstanding municipal loans for each Colony ^{Municipal loans.} furnishing returns is shown below. The figures include the liabilities to the Government :—

Colony.	Outstanding Loans.
	£
New South Wales	2,093,355
Victoria	3,522,468
Queensland	1,333,527
Tasmania	416,500
New Zealand	3,027,392

Against these gross liabilities sinking funds are established in ^{Sinking funds.} some of the Colonies. The amount to the credit of local bodies in New South Wales and Victoria, was £162,747 and £225,216 respectively ; there is also a fund in Queensland, but the amount accumulated cannot be given.

BOARDS AND TRUSTS.

In addition to the various forms of local government already ^{Local Boards and Trusts.} mentioned there are bodies known as Boards, or Trusts, whose function it is to construct and supervise certain works which, generally speaking, have been established for the benefit of districts differing from, and in most cases larger than, the areas incorporated for ordinary municipal purposes. These bodies are usually composed of members representing respectively the central government, the municipalities affected by the works in question, and other persons directly interested in the particular undertakings ; and as a rule they raise the funds necessary for carrying out the works they control, by means of rates on the

assessed value of the properties benefited, just as is the case in regard to municipalities.

New South
Wales.

In New South Wales there are the following Boards:—Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage, which commenced by taking charge of the Water Supply in 1888, and assumed control of the Sewerage system in 1889; Hunter River District Board of Water Supply, formed in 1892; and the Wollongong Harbour Trust, instituted in 1889. This last-named body is the only one of the kind in the Colony, the works connected with shipping, and the improvements to navigation at Sydney, Newcastle, and other ports, being still carried out at the expense and under the supervision of the central government. An Act was assented to in 1890 empowering a private company, known as the Illawarra Harbour and Land Corporation, to construct works that would convert Lake Illawarra, some 50 miles south of Sydney, into a navigable port, by cutting a canal between the Lake and the sea. Nothing has yet been done, however, towards the actual carrying out of this work. There is also a Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, on which the municipalities within the metropolitan area are represented, and towards the annual expense of which they contribute one-third.

Victoria.

In Victoria the port of Melbourne is under the control of a Harbour Trust, which was established as far back as 1877. A Tramway Trust, representing twelve of the metropolitan municipalities has been formed under the provisions of an Act passed in 1883. This body was intrusted with power to construct tramways through the streets of the municipalities interested, the requisite funds being raised by loans on the security of the tramways and the revenues of the municipal bodies connected with the undertaking. The Trust had the option of either working the tramways themselves or leasing them to a private company. They adopted the latter alternative, and the tramways are being worked on a thirty-two years' lease, commencing from 1884. In 1891 the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works was established,

to construct and supervise all works connected with water supply, ^{Victoria.} sewerage and drainage, in Melbourne and its suburbs. The Government is not directly represented on this Board, while on the Board of a similar nature in Sydney three members are nominated by the State. The reason for this is that in New South Wales the Government constructed the works and is responsible for the debt incurred in order to do so, while in Victoria the Board carries out the work of construction, in addition to the maintenance and management to which the operations of the Sydney Board are confined. Throughout Victoria there are Water Works Trusts and Irrigation and Water Supply Trusts. During 1892 there were fifty-three of the Water Works Trusts, by whom £863,870 was spent in construction, and there were twenty-nine Irrigation and Water Supply Trusts, by whom £812,859 was expended. The loan liability undertaken by the Government for the former service was £679,864, and for the latter £787,733. The annual value of the property liable to be rated by the Waterworks Trust is £900,000, and by the Irrigation and Water Supply Trust, £295,932. As in New South Wales, the municipal bodies are represented on the Fire Brigade Boards, and bear a proportionate share of the expenses.

In Queensland the water supply service forms part of the local ^{Queensland.} government system; the works are proposed by the municipal bodies, but the Government constructs and supervises them, and when completed hands them over to the local authorities with their attendant liabilities. The latter form a debt to the State which is repaid in instalments.

In South Australia and Western Australia there are no Boards ^{South Australia and Western Australia.} or Trusts of any importance beyond the municipal bodies already mentioned. In the former Colony, however, extensive municipal powers exist for the construction of important local works.

In Tasmania six Marine Boards, forming part of the local ^{Tasmania.} government system, have been established in different parts of

the Colony. The rural police come under the local government system, as the ratepayers who enjoy the benefits of police protection are obliged to bear the cost of administration. The control of the police is, however, under officers appointed by the central government.

New Zealand.

In New Zealand there are, in addition to the ordinary forms of Municipal Government, River and Harbour Boards, which are established throughout the Colony. The number of each at the end of 1891 was respectively twenty-eight and twenty-one. There is also a Drainage Board at Christchurch.

Returns of
Boards and
Trusts.

Complete returns of the Boards and Trusts for each Colony are not readily obtainable; the following table, however, gives important details in connection with some of these bodies:—

Board or Trust.	Receipts.			Expendi- ture.	Out- standing Loans.
	Govern- ment.	Other.	Total.		
New South Wales—	£	£	£	£	£
Metropolitan Board of Water Supply and Sewerage, 1892	...	243,813	243,813	241,368	5,001,529
Hunter District Water Sup- ply and Sewerage .....	...	...	...	...	*417,322
Wollongong Harbour Trust..	5,000	2,660	7,660	5,847	.....
Victoria—					
Melbourne Harbour Trust...	...	180,328	180,328	478,649	2,000,000
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works .....	...	...	...	...	2,248,917
Melbourne Tramways Trust	...	...	...	...	1,630,000
Water Works Trusts .....	...	...	...	...	679,864
Irrigation and Water Supply Trusts .....	...	...	...	...	787,733
Ballarat Water Commission	...	...	...	...	287,439
Queensland—					
Water Works	148,663	80,596	229,259	210,149	682,897
Tasmania—					
Marine Boards	23,303	21,764	45,067	61,490	.....
Light-houses	1,136	11,439	12,575	17,685	.....
Campbelltown Water Trust	...	601	601	793	.....
Road and Bridge Trusts.....	12,083	20,591	32,674	32,700	.....
Town Boards	1,889	967	2,856	3,098	3,500
New Zealand—					
River Boards	100	11,181	11,281	9,010	46,491
Harbour Boards	8,690	392,608	401,298	418,350	3,276,300
Drainage Board.....	...	17,557	17,557	17,455	200,000

* Water supply only.

As regards the Hunter District Board of Water Supply and Sewerage in New South Wales, and the Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works in Victoria, no details can be given. The former service was only established in 1892, and with regard to the latter, although it was instituted in 1891, no particulars are yet to hand, with the exception of the outstanding loan liabilities. The outstanding loans of Boards and Trusts for New South Wales constitute part of the Public Debt; the same is true also with regard to the amounts for Victoria, except the loans of the Tramway Trust, and the Melbourne Harbour Trust, which are not guaranteed. The liabilities shown for Queensland also form part of the Public Debt of that Colony, but the amounts given for New Zealand are not advanced from the General Loan Account. In the foregoing table, as well as in the one on page 319, referring to outstanding municipal loans, the advances made by the Governments to the borrowing bodies are included.

Recently formed
Boards.

Loans part of
Public Debt.