

I think no one who looks at the above figures carefully will deny that the people of this country are paying a heavy price for the administration of local government, and no further proof is wanted of the statement that the multiplicity of local bodies is certain to lead to increasingly large expense in connection with local government.

There can be no doubt that the Road Boards, some of the Town Boards, the River Boards, and the Land Drainage Boards should be capable of being absorbed by the County Councils; and where the functions and responsibilities of River Boards, Land Drainage Boards, and Water-supply Boards extend over and beyond the existing county boundaries, a simple method of grouping the counties interested for the particular purpose of dealing with the water-supply should easily be found, in order that the bodies to which I have referred might be absorbed and consolidated with the counties. Increased powers are also necessary to facilitate the grouping of contiguous boroughs and areas.

Taking some of the Road Boards, Town Boards, and Land Drainage Boards as examples, I find the following:—

ROAD DISTRICTS.

| | General Rates raised. | Cost of Management. | Cost of Management Per Cent. of General Rates. |
|------------|--------------------------|------------------------|---|
| | £ | £ | |
| (a.) | 69 | 98 | 142.03 |
| (b.) | 200 | 107 | 53.50 |
| (c.) | 163 | 236 | 144.78 |
| (d.) | 70 | 52 | 74.29 |
| (e.) | 56 | 38 | 67.88 |

TOWN DISTRICTS.

| | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|--------|
| (a.) | 54 | 42 | 77.78 |
| (b.) | 701 | 400 | 57.06 |
| (c.) | 20 | 15 | 75.00 |
| (d.) | 261 | 319 | 122.22 |
| (e.) | 164 | 257 | 156.71 |
| (f.) | 70 | 45 | 64.29 |
| (g.) | 437 | 219 | 50.11 |
| (h.) | 160 | 87 | 54.37 |
| (i.) | 333 | 278 | 83.48 |
| (j.) | 10 | 15 | 150.00 |

LAND DRAINAGE DISTRICTS.

| | | | |
|------------|-----|-----|--------|
| (a.) | 95 | 57 | 60.00 |
| (b.) | 30 | 41 | 136.66 |
| (c.) | 184 | 214 | 116.30 |
| (d.) | 34 | 108 | 317.65 |
| (e.) | 111 | 116 | 104.50 |
| (f.) | 8 | 5 | 62.50 |
| (g.) | 186 | 164 | 88.17 |
| (h.) | 50 | 27 | 54.00 |

The cases which I have quoted to you may be regarded as “shocking examples of local government run riot,” and I think you will have very little difficulty in coming to the same conclusion as the author of the Bill which is now before you—namely, that administration of this kind should be abolished.