

In order to show more fully the present expensive cost of management of local bodies in the Dominion I have had the following table prepared:—

PERCENTAGE OF COST OF MANAGEMENT OF THE SEVERAL CLASSES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON (a) REVENUE RAISED LOCALLY, (b) GENERAL RATES, AND (c) PUBLIC-WORKS EXPENDITURE.

Class of Local Authority.	(a.) Revenue raised locally.	(b.) General Rates.	(c.) Public-works Expenditure.
1. All boroughs .. .. .	7.02	29.84	10.44
2. Boroughs under 3,000 population .. .. .	14.51	39.32	13.11
3. Boroughs over 3,000 population .. .. .	6.12	27.92	11.82
4. Counties alone .. .. .	15.24	19.49	10.09
5. Road districts separately .. .. .	11.55	15.38	10.04
6. Town districts separately .. .. .	16.12	31.54	12.28
7. River districts .. .. .	11.51	30.81	21.09
8. Land drainage districts .. .. .	14.55	23.54	8.93
9. City and suburban drainage districts .. .. .	18.48	20.95	9.18
10. Water-supply districts .. .. .	8.51	23.48	13.12
—	All Local Authorities (except Harbour Boards).	Harbour Boards.	Total.
Total revenue raised locally .. .. .	£ 2,613,027	£ 808,473	£ 3,421,500
Total general rates .. .. .	1,082,594	34,804	1,117,398
Total cost of management .. .. .	253,551	79,951	333,502
Percentage of cost of management on total revenue raised locally	9.70	9.89	9.75
Percentage of cost of management on total general rates	23.42	..	29.85
Percentage of cost of management on public- works expenditure	11.32	10.89	11.21

#### HOSPITAL AND CHARITABLE AID BOARDS.

Administration formed 4.87 per cent. of total revenue.

Administration formed 9.45 per cent. of the total revenue, less Government subsidy and voluntary contribution.

Administration formed 4.91 per cent. of total expenditure.

I am glad to find, from a perusal of the report of the Counties Conference which was held in August of last year, that the view I have expressed with regard to the desirability of abolishing Road Boards was adopted by the President of that Conference—Mr. Jull—in his opening address, in which he laid down the principle that “the work now done by the Road Boards could be better done by the County Councils.”

With regard to the abolition of the town districts, there is perhaps something more to be said. You will observe that the Bill before you proposes a distinction, some classes of town districts being intended to be selected for raising to the dignity of boroughs or municipalities, whilst others are to be absorbed in the county within which they are situated. This is a matter upon which I think this Conference might very well express an opinion. The statistics show that there are fifty-seven town districts (I exclude Rotorua), of which only thirteen had a total revenue of over £1,000 last year; twenty-one of them had a total revenue of less than £500, including all rates, licenses, tolls, rents, &c., and Government subsidy.

It seems to me that there are three courses open in connection with these bodies: One is to let them to go on as they are, and allow the Act to continue; the second would be to select the more important ones and raise them, as is proposed in this Bill, to the rank of municipalities, throwing the smaller and less important ones into the counties; a third course that might be adopted would be to attach to existing boroughs the Road Boards contiguous to those boroughs, provide for their representation on the local Borough Council, and allow the borough to