

This page was added on 03 December 2012 to include the Disclaimer below.
No other amendments were made to this Product

DISCLAIMER

Users are warned that this historic issue of this publication series may contain language or views which, reflecting the authors' attitudes or that of the period in which the item was written, may be considered to be inappropriate or offensive today.

SECTION XXV.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT.

§ 1. Scheme of Parliamentary Government.

1. **General.**—The legislative power of the Commonwealth is vested in the Federal Parliament, which consists of the Sovereign, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. The Sovereign is represented throughout the Commonwealth by the Governor-General, who, subject to the Constitution of the Commonwealth, has such powers and functions as the Sovereign is pleased to assign to him. In each State there is a State Governor, who is the representative of the Sovereign for the State, and who exercises such powers within the State as are conferred upon him by the letters patent which constitute his office, and by the instructions, which inform him in detail of the manner in which his duties are to be fulfilled. The Legislature in each State is also bi-cameral, and consists of (a) a Legislative Council and (b) a Legislative Assembly, or House of Assembly, the legislative powers of these chambers being delimited by the Commonwealth and the State Constitutions. The latter chamber, which is the larger, is always elective; the qualification for the franchise varies in character. The former chamber is, in the case of New South Wales and Queensland, nominated by the Governor-in-Council, but in the other States it is also elective, the constituencies being differently arranged and some property qualification for the electorate being required. In the Federal Parliament, however, the qualifications for the franchise are identical for both Houses.

2. **Number of Members of the Legislatures.**—The following table shews the number of members in each of the legislative chambers in the Commonwealth and in each State at the end of the year 1907:—

PARLIAMENTS OF AUSTRALIA, 1907.

Members in—	C'wealth.	N.S.W.	Victoria.	Q'land.	S. Aust.	W. Aust.	Tas.	Total.
Upper House	36	54	34	43	18	30	18	233
Lower House	75	90	65	72	42	50	35	429
Total ...	111	144	99	115	60	80	53	662

The Upper House is known in the Commonwealth Parliament as the Senate, and in the State Parliaments as the Legislative Council. The Lower House is known as follows:—In the Commonwealth Parliament as the House of Representatives, in the State Parliaments of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, and Western Australia as the Legislative Assembly, and in the State Parliaments of South Australia and Tasmania as the House of Assembly.

3. **The Cabinet and Executive Government.**—The sections of the Commonwealth Constitution Act dealing with the Executive Government are given on p. 30 hereinbefore. In both the Commonwealth and the State Legislatures the forms of Government have been founded on their prototype, the Imperial Government, and the relations established between the Ministry and the representatives of the people are in accordance with those prevailing in Great Britain. The executive powers in the Commonwealth and in the State Governments are vested in the Governor-in-Council. The Executive Council in the Commonwealth and in the majority of the States is co-extensive with a group of departmental chiefs who are usually spoken of as the Cabinet, and who change with the rise and fall of party majorities. In Victoria and Tasmania, however, the Cabinet on leaving office remain members of the Executive Council, though they no longer attend its meetings, and it is in fact an essential feature of the Cabinet system of Government that they should not do so, except to assist the Governor in transacting purely formal business, or to advise on non-political questions.

(i.) *The Executive Council.* This body is composed of the Governor and Ministers appointed by the Governor as shewn hereinafter. They are sworn both as Executive Councillors and as Ministers controlling the administrative departments. The meetings are official in character; they are presided over by the Governor-General (or Governor) and are attended by the clerk, who keeps a formal record of its proceedings. At these meetings the decisions of the Cabinet are put into official form and made effective, appointments are confirmed, resignations accepted, proceedings ordered, and notices and regulations published.

At the commencement of the year 1908 the Executive Council was composed of the following members:—

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE COMMONWEALTH, 1908.

<i>Minister of External Affairs</i>	...	The Hon. ALFRED DEAKIN (Prime Minister).
<i>Treasurer</i>	The Hon. Sir WILLIAM JOHN LYNE, K.C.M.G.
<i>Minister of Trade and Customs</i>	...	The Hon. AUSTIN CHAPMAN.
<i>Attorney-General</i>	The Hon. LITTLETON ERNEST GROOM.
<i>Minister of Defence</i>	...	The Hon. THOMAS THOMSON EWING.
<i>Minister of Home Affairs</i>	...	The Hon. JOHN HENRY KEATING.
<i>Postmaster-General</i>	The Hon. SAMUEL MAUGER.
<i>Vice-President of Executive Council</i>		The Hon. ROBERT WALLACE BEST.
<i>Honorary Minister</i>	The Hon. HUME COOK.

No Minister may hold office for longer than three months unless he is a member of one of the Federal Houses of Parliament.

(ii.) *The Cabinet.* The meetings of this body are private and deliberative. No one is admitted but the actual Ministry of the day, no records of the meetings transpire, and no official notice is taken of the proceedings. The members of the Cabinet being the leaders of the party in power in Parliament, control the bent of legislation and must retain the confidence of the people and also of the Governor-General (or Governor), to whom they act as an advising body. They also in effect wield, by virtue of their seats on the Executive Council, the whole executive force of the community. In summoning, proroguing, or dissolving Parliament the Governor-General (or Governor) is usually guided by the advice tendered him by the Cabinet, though legally he is in no way bound to do so. Particulars of the several Ministries which have been in office since the creation of the Commonwealth are given on pages 39 and 40, hereinbefore.

(iii.) *Constitution of Ministries.* The subjoined table shews the constitution of the Ministries in the Commonwealth and the State Governments at the end of the year 1907:—

CONSTITUTION OF MINISTRIES, 1907.

Ministers with Seats in—	C'wealth.	N.S.W	Vic.	Q'land.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total.
The Upper House ...	2	1	3	2	1	1	2	12
The Lower House ...	6	9	8	6	3	6	3	41
Total ...	8	10	11	8	4	7	5	53

4. **The Appointment of Ministers and of Executive Councillors.**¹—Although it is technically possible for the Governor to make and unmake cabinets at his pleasure, under all ordinary circumstances his apparent liberty in choosing his Executive Council is virtually restricted by the operation of constitutional machinery. When a Ministry is defeated in Parliament or at the polls the procedure both in the Commonwealth and the State Parliaments generally, though not invariably, follows that prevailing in the Imperial Parliament. The members of the Ministry tender their resignations to the Governor-General or Governor, whose duty it is to announce his intention of accepting them. The resignations are not actually accepted at once, for in that case the offices would become vacant and business would be at a standstill. The outgoing Premier usually suggests to the Governor the name of the most prominent member of the Opposition, and the Governor thereupon "sends for" the person suggested; and if the latter accepts the responsibility he endeavours to form a Ministry; if he fails he informs the Governor, who applies to some other person. The distribution of portfolios is first arranged by the proposed Ministers themselves and is then submitted to the Governor for approval, which is given as a matter of course unless the list contains the name of any person against whom serious objections exist. Before appointing the persons named to the various offices the Governor accepts the resignations of the outgoing Ministers, and also appoints to seats in the Executive Council such members of the new Ministry as do not already hold them. The seats in Parliament being ordinarily vacated by their acceptance of office the new Ministers must go before their constituencies, and the result of these by-elections usually decides the attitude of the Opposition. In the Commonwealth Parliament, however, seats are not vacated by the acceptance of office. It may be seen from what has been stated above that only certain persons can in practice be chosen as members of a Ministry. The Cabinet must be chosen so that the following conditions are fulfilled:—(a) The members must belong to one or other of the Legislative Chambers and also to the same political party; (b) that party must possess a majority in the House of Representatives or in the Legislative Assembly or House of Assembly as the case may be; (c) the Ministers must carry out a concerted policy; (d) they must acknowledge the leadership of one chief Minister; and (e) must be under a joint responsibility, signified by resignation *en bloc* in the event of Parliamentary censure.

5. **The Resignation of Ministers.**—A Ministry is bound to resign either when it fails to command a majority in the House of Representatives, the Legislative Assembly, or the House of Assembly, as the case may be, or when a want of confidence has been clearly shewn, either (a) by a vote of censure, (b) by a declaration of want of confidence, or (c) by a vote disapproving of some act of the Government. In such cases the Ministry must either resign or must appeal to the country.

6. **Enactments of the Parliament.**—In the Commonwealth all laws are enacted in the name of the Sovereign, the Senate, and the House of Representatives. The subjects with respect to which the Commonwealth Parliament is empowered to make laws are enumerated in the Constitution Act (see pp. 27-8 hereinbefore). In the States laws are enacted in the name of the Sovereign by and with the consent of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly or House of Assembly. The Governor-General or the State

1. See Jenks' "Government of Victoria," pp. 269 *et seq.*

Governor acts as Viceroy as regards giving the Royal Assent to or vetoing Bills passed by the Legislatures, or reserving them for the special consideration of the Sovereign. In the States the Councils and Assemblies are empowered generally, subject to the Commonwealth Constitution, to make laws in and for their respective States in all cases whatsoever. Subject to certain limitations, they may alter, repeal, or vary their Constitution. Where a law of a State is inconsistent with a law of the Commonwealth the latter prevails, and the former is, to the extent of the inconsistency, invalid.

7. Powers and Functions of the Governor-General and of the Governors.—The Governor-General and the State Governors act under the authority of the commissions by which they are appointed and of letters patent under the Great Seal of the United Kingdom, and according to instructions issued by the Colonial Office and passed under the Royal Sign Manual and Signet.

(i.) *The Governor-General.* The office of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Commonwealth was constituted by letters patent issued on the 29th October, 1900, in pursuance of the provisions of the Commonwealth Constitution Act. The powers and duties of the Governor-General were further defined by Royal instructions passed on the same date. The principal and most important of his functions, legislative, as well as executive, are expressly conferred upon him by the terms of the Constitution itself. He is the custodian of the Great Seal of the Commonwealth, and has the appointment of political officers to administer Departments of State of the Commonwealth.

- (a) His legislative functions are exercised with respect to proposed laws as finally passed by the Federal Houses of Parliament. Such Bills are presented to the Governor-General for his assent in the King's name, on receiving which they become law throughout the Commonwealth. The Governor-General may, however, withhold his assent, or may reserve any Bill for the King's pleasure. He may return to the House in which it originated any proposed law with suggested amendments. Up to the end of the year 1907 the only Bill which had not received the Governor-General's assent when presented to him was the Customs Tariff (British Preference) Act 1906, which was reserved for the signification of the King's pleasure thereon. The King may disallow any law within one year from the date on which it was assented to by the Governor-General.
- (b) The Governor-General's executive functions are, under ordinary circumstances, exercised on the advice of his responsible Ministers. Various specific powers are vested in him by the Constitution; he may summon or prorogue Parliament and may dissolve the House of Representatives. He is the Commander-in-Chief of the military and naval forces of the Commonwealth, and is invested by the Crown with the prerogative of mercy in case of offences committed against the laws of the Commonwealth.
- (c) The Governor-General is also invested with authority in certain matters of Imperial interest, such as the control of the naval and military forces of the Commonwealth; the observance of the relations of foreign States to Great Britain, so far as they may be affected by the indirect relations of such States to the Commonwealth; and the treatment of neutral and belligerent ships in Commonwealth waters in time of war.

The Governor-General may not leave the Commonwealth without having first obtained leave from the Imperial Government, to whom he is alone responsible for his official acts. The present Governor-General is the Right Honourable Henry Stafford, Baron Northcote, G.C.M.G., G.C.I.E., C.B. He was appointed in August, 1903, and assumed office on the 21st January, 1904.

(ii.) *The State Governors.* The powers and functions of the State Governors are, within their respective States, very similar to those exercised by the Governor-General for the Commonwealth. A State Governor is the official head of the State Legislature.

and assents in the name of the Crown to all Bills passed by the Parliament, reserving for the Royal Assent certain classes of Bills, which are regulated by the Constitution Acts and by the instructions issued by the Imperial Government. The Governors are, under ordinary circumstances, guided by their Executive Councils, the chief matters in which the exercise of discretion is required being the granting or withholding of a dissolution of Parliament when required by a Premier; the appointment of a new Ministry; or the assenting to, vetoing, or receiving of Bills passed by the legislative chambers.

It is proposed to deal with the constitution of the States and the parliamentary and administrative government both of the Commonwealth and of the States more fully in a future issue of this book.

8. Cost of Parliamentary Government.—The following statement shews the cost of parliamentary government in the Commonwealth and in each State, as well as in the whole of Australia, for the year ended the 30th June, 1907 :—

COST OF PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT, 1906-7.

Particulars.	C'th.	N. S. W.	Vict.	Q'ld.	S. A.	W. A.	Tas.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Governor's salary	10,000	5,000	5,000	3,000	4,000	4,000	2,750	33,750
Governor's establishment and contingencies	8,612	1,123	...	1,957	...	1,527	753	13,972
Allowances and expenses of members of Parliament	51,129	23,877	16,523	16,452	10,002	14,873	8,776	141,637
Salaries and expenses of Ministers Executive Council—salaries and expenses	11,947	6,622	8,306	7,185	4,610	6,927	3,433	49,030
Salaries of officers and staff, contingencies, <i>Hansard</i> , library, refreshment rooms, water, power, light, postage, stationery, etc ...	887	850	281	251	...	122	1	2,392
Electoral office—salaries and contingencies	27,745	29,775	16,179	17,103	14,246	13,100	490	118,638
Cost of elections	35,800	2,149	...	3,973	2,816	2,923	522	48,183
Commissions & Select Committees	36,906	18,261	24,745	6,818	4,568	1,999	72	93,369
	6,848	6,136	1,649	759	23	91	...	15,506
Total	£ 189,874	93,793	72,688	57,498	40,265	45,562	16,797	516,477

The cost of parliamentary printing is not generally given; for the Commonwealth it was £12,346, and for Tasmania £1383, for the year 1906-7.

§ 2. Parliaments and Elections.

1. Qualifications for Membership and for Franchise.—The subjoined summary gives particulars as to the legislative chambers in the Commonwealth and State Parliaments, and shews concisely the qualifications necessary for membership and for the franchise in each House. Persons who are otherwise eligible, either as members or voters, are generally disqualified on the usual grounds of being of unsound mind or attainted of treason, being convicted of certain offences, and, as regards membership, on the grounds of holding a place of profit under the Crown, being pecuniarily interested in Government contracts, or being an undischarged bankrupt.

Particulars of the numbers of electors on the roll, of electors who voted, and of the percentage which the latter formed on the former at recent elections, are given for the Commonwealth and for each individual State on pages 798 to 802 hereinafter:—

PARLIAMENTS AND ELECTORATES.

Particulars.	Commonwealth.	New South Wales.	Victoria.
1. Senate and Legislative Councils.			
<i>Number of Members</i> ...	36	54. May not be less than 21	34
<i>Qualification for Membership</i> ...	Adult British subjects natural-born or naturalised for 5 years, if (a) eligible to vote at the elections for the Senate, and (b) resident for at least 3 years within the Commonwealth	Male adult natural-born or naturalised British subjects	Male natural-born or naturalised British subjects of the age of 30 years or upwards, (a) if possessed of a freehold property of the annual value of at least £50 for one year previous to the election, and (b) in the case of naturalised subjects if a resident of the State for 10 years
<i>Period for which elected or nominated</i> ...	6 years	For life	6 years
<i>Allowance to Members</i> ...	£600 each per annum	None	None
<i>Qualification for Franchise</i>	Adult British subjects of either sex who have lived in Australia for 6 months continuously. Aboriginal natives of Australia, Asia, Africa, or the islands of the Pacific, except New Zealand, cannot vote at federal elections unless they have acquired a right to vote at elections for the Lower House of a State Parliament	(Nominated)	Male adult British subjects, if either (a) the owner of a freehold of the annual value of £10 or of a leasehold of property rated at £15, or (b) a graduate of a British university, matriculated students of Melbourne University, qualified legal and medical practitioners, ministers of religion, certificated schoolmasters, and naval and military officers. Naturalised subjects must be of 3 years' standing, and must have resided in the State for 12 months
2. Legislative Assemblies.			
<i>Number of Members</i> ...	75	90	65
<i>Qualification for Membership</i> ...	The same as for the Upper House	Male adult British subjects if qualified to vote at an election of members of the Legislative Assembly, unless disqualified under the Constitution Acts or the Federal Elections Act 1900	Male adult natural-born British subjects or aliens naturalised for the period of 5 years, if resident in the State for not less than 2 years
<i>Period for which elected</i> ...	Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years	Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years	Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years
<i>Allowance to Members</i> ...	£600 each per annum	£300 each per annum	£300 each per annum
<i>Qualification for Franchise</i>	The same as for the Upper House	Adult naturalised subjects of either sex, who have resided in the State continuously for one year after naturalisation, and adult natural-born subjects who have resided in the State for a continuous period of 1 year	Male adult natural-born subjects or naturalised for 1 year prior to the 1st January or the 1st July in any year, if (a) enrolled as ratepayer, or (b) if holding an electors' right and enrolled on the general or supplementary roll

SUMMARY, 1907.

Queensland.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.
<p>43</p> <p>Male adult natural-born or naturalised British subjects</p> <p>For life</p> <p>None (Nominated)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Male natural-born or naturalised British subjects if (a) of the age of 30 years or upwards, and (b) if resident in the State for 3 years</p> <p>6 years</p> <p>£200 each per annum</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex who are either (a) owners of a freehold of the annual value of £50, (b) owners of a leasehold rated at £20, with at least 3 years to run or containing a right of purchase, (c) occupiers of a dwelling-house rated at £17, (d) proprietors of a Crown lease on which they own improvements to the value of £50, or (e) ministers of religion, head schoolmasters, post-office or railway station-masters, or head police-station officers. Voters must have been enrolled for 6 months prior to the election</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Male natural-born or naturalised British subjects of the age of 30 years or upwards, if (a) in the case of natural-born subjects, resident in the State for 2 years, and (b) in the case of naturalised subjects, if naturalised for 5 years previous to the election and resident in the State during that period</p> <p>6 years</p> <p>£200 each per annum</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex who have resided in the State for 6 months, and who either (a) own a freehold estate to the value of £100, (b) occupy a house or own leasehold property rated at £25, (c) hold Crown leases or licenses to the value of not less than £10 per annum, or (d) are on the electoral list of a municipality or road-board district in respect of property of the annual value of £25. Aboriginal natives may only acquire the franchise in respect of a freehold qualification</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Male natural-born or naturalised British subjects of the age of 30 years or upwards, if qualified to vote at the election for the Legislative Council</p> <p>6 years</p> <p>£100 each per annum</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex who have resided in the State for 12 months, if either (a) possessing freehold to the annual value of £10 or leasehold to the value of £80, or (b) graduates of a British university, qualified legal or medical practitioners, or naval or military officers</p>
<p>72</p> <p>All persons qualified and registered to vote at the elections of members of the Legislative Assembly are eligible as members</p> <p>Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years</p> <p>£300 each per annum</p> <p>Male adult British subjects who either (a) have resided for 6 months in an electoral district, (b) own freehold estate of the value of £100, (c) have occupied a house of the annual value of £10 for at least 6 months, or (d) leasehold estate. Aboriginal natives may vote only under the freehold qualification</p>	<p>42</p> <p>Any person qualified for the franchise of the House of Assembly is eligible for membership</p> <p>Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years</p> <p>£200 each per annum</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex who have been registered on the electoral roll for 6 months. In the Northern Territory only natural-born British subjects and naturalised Europeans or Americans may vote</p>	<p>50</p> <p>Male adult British subjects, if resident in the State for 12 months. Naturalised subjects must have been naturalised for 5 years and have resided in the State for 2 years previous to the election</p> <p>Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years</p> <p>£200 each per annum</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex who have resided in the State for 6 months, and who either (a) own freehold to the value of £50, (b) hold a household or leasehold property to the value of £10 per annum, (c) hold a pastoral, agricultural, occupation, or mining lease or license from the Crown to the value of £5 per annum, or (d) are registered on the roll of a municipality or roads board. Aboriginals may only be registered in respect of freehold property</p>	<p>35</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex, if (a) they have resided in the State for 6 months continuously and (b) they are enrolled on the electoral lists</p> <p>Duration of Parliament, which is limited to 3 years</p> <p>£100 each per annum</p> <p>Adult British subjects of either sex who have resided in the State for 12 months¹</p>

2. **The Federal Parliament.**—The Senate consists of thirty-six members, six being returned by each of the original federating States. Members of this chamber are elected for a term of six years, but by a provision in the Constitution a certain number retire at the end of every third year, although they are eligible for re-election. In accordance with the Constitution the total number of members of the House of Representatives must be as nearly as possible double that of the Senate. In the House of Representatives the States are represented on a population basis, and the numbers stand at present as follows:—New South Wales, 27; Victoria, 22; Queensland, 9; South Australia, 7; Western Australia, 5; Tasmania, 5—total, 75. The Constitution provides for a minimum of five members in each original State. Members of the House of Representatives are elected for the duration of the Parliament, which is limited to three years. In elections for Senators each State is counted as a single electorate, but an elaborate scheme of subdivision had to be undertaken in order to provide workable electorates in each State for members of the House of Representatives. Members of both Houses are paid at the rate of £600 per annum.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Since the establishment of the Commonwealth there have been three elections for the Senate and for the House of Representatives. Further information as to the Commonwealth Parliaments since their inception is given on page 38 hereinbefore. Particulars regarding the number of electors enrolled and the number of electors to whom ballot-papers were issued at the last two elections may be found in the tables given hereunder:—

FEDERAL ELECTIONS OF THE 16TH DECEMBER, 1903, AND THE 12TH DECEMBER, 1906.

State.	Electors Enrolled.			Electors to whom Ballot Papers were Issued.			Percentage of Voters to Electors Enrolled.			
	Males.	Fem.	Total.	Males.	Fem.	Total.	Males.	Fem.	Total.	
THE SENATE.										
New South Wales	(1903)	360,285	326,764	687,049	189,877	134,487	324,364	52.70	41.16	47.21
	(1906)	392,077	345,522	737,599	229,657	151,682	381,339	58.57	43.90	51.70
Victoria ...	(1903)	302,069	310,403	612,472	171,830	141,648	313,478	56.89	45.63	51.18
	(1906)	335,886	336,168	672,054	200,252	171,933	368,185	62.30	51.14	56.72
Queensland ...	(1903)	127,914	99,166	227,080	79,938	44,569	124,507	62.49	44.94	54.83
	(1906)	150,037	121,072	271,069	79,567	44,972	124,539	53.03	37.14	45.94
South Australia ...	(1903)	85,947	81,828	167,775	55,736	19,049	54,785	41.58	25.28	32.65
	(1906)	97,454	95,664	193,118	43,318	27,139	70,457	44.45	28.43	36.51
Western Australia	(1903)	74,754	42,188	116,942	26,878	6,270	33,148	35.96	14.86	28.35
	(1906)	91,427	54,046	145,473	37,130	15,532	52,712	40.67	28.74	36.23
Tasmania ...	(1903)	43,515	38,753	82,268	23,729	13,292	37,021	54.53	34.30	45.00
	(1906)	47,306	42,903	90,209	29,164	19,715	48,879	61.65	45.95	54.18
Commonwealth	(1903)	994,484	899,102	1,893,586	527,937	359,315	887,312	53.09	39.96	46.86
	(1906)	1,114,187	995,375	2,109,562	628,135	431,033	1,059,168	56.38	43.30	50.21

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

New South Wales	(1903)	303,254	274,763	578,017	164,133	118,381	282,514	54.12	43.08	48.88
	(1906)	363,723	314,777	678,500	216,150	141,227	357,377	59.43	44.87	52.67
Victoria ...	(1903)	241,134	247,089	488,223	142,460	120,329	262,789	59.08	48.70	53.83
	(1906)	335,886	336,168	672,054	200,262	171,999	368,265	62.30	51.16	56.73
Queensland ...	(1903)	114,550	88,375	202,925	74,042	41,689	115,731	64.64	47.17	57.03
	(1906)	150,037	121,072	271,109	79,540	44,942	124,482	53.01	37.12	45.92
South Australia ...	(1903)	23,856	25,789	49,645	12,394	7,728	20,122	51.95	29.97	40.53
	(1906)	42,065	38,578	80,643	19,850	12,669	32,519	47.19	32.84	40.32
Western Australia	(1903)	41,500	28,324	69,824	16,824	4,409	21,233	40.54	15.57	30.41
	(1906)	91,427	54,046	145,473	36,976	15,740	52,716	40.44	29.12	36.24
Tasmania ...	(1903)	43,515	38,753	82,268	23,729	13,284	37,013	54.53	34.28	44.99
	(1906)	47,306	34,839	82,145	23,753	16,441	40,194	62.87	47.19	55.35
Commonwealth	(1903)	767,809	703,093	1,470,902	433,582	305,820	739,402	56.47	43.50	50.27
	(1906)	1,020,917	899,480	1,920,397	585,535	403,018	988,553	57.35	44.81	51.48

In the Senate the figures for the year 1906 show that ballot-papers were issued to a little more than half the electorate, and are a slight improvement on those for the year 1903, when only about 47 per cent. of the electors visited the polls. Allowing for the various causes which may have prevented those qualified from recording their votes, it cannot be said that the electors of the Commonwealth have, so far, set a high value on the privilege of the franchise. In the elections for the House of Representatives the figures for both years shew an improvement in percentage of voters as compared with the returns for the Senate; nevertheless they cannot be looked upon as satisfactory. In every instance the percentage of female voters is very far below that of the males.

3. The Parliament of New South Wales.—The Legislative Council is in this State a nominee chamber, the Legislative Assembly being an elective body. Theoretically the Legislative Council may contain an unlimited number of members, but in practice the number is restricted to between fifty and sixty, the members at the latest available date being fifty-four. Members are appointed by the Governor, acting on the advice of the Executive Council. The tenure of the seat is for life; four-fifths of the members must be persons not holding any paid office under the Crown, but this is not held to include officers of His Majesty's sea or land forces on full or half pay, or retired officers on pensions. The Legislative Assembly consists of ninety members, who hold their seats during the existence of the Parliament to which they are elected. The duration of any single Parliament is limited to three years.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Since the introduction of responsible Government in New South Wales there have been twenty complete Parliaments, the first of which opened on the 22nd May, 1856, and was dissolved on the 19th December, 1857, while the twentieth opened on the 23rd August, 1904, and closed on the 20th August, 1907. The average duration of the Parliaments was two years and five months. The first session of the twenty-first Parliament was opened on the 26th September, 1907.

Particulars of voting at the last five elections but one are given below:—

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, NEW SOUTH WALES.

Date of Opening of Parliament.	Electors upon the Roll.	Members Returned.	Members Unopposed.	Contested Electorates.			
				Electors Qualified to Vote.	Votes Recorded.	Percentage of Votes Recorded.	Percentage of Informal Votes.
7th August, 1894	298,817	125	1	254,105	204,246	80.38	1.62
13th „ 1895	267,458	125	8	238,233	153,034	64.24	0.88
16th „ 1898	324,339	125	3	294,481	178,717	60.69	0.92
23rd July, 1901	346,184	125	13	270,861	195,359	72.13	0.79
23rd August, 1904	Males 363,062 Females 326,428	90	2	304,396 262,433	226,057 174,538	74.26 66.51	0.59

The franchise was extended to women in 1902, and was exercised for the first time at a State election in 1904.

4. The Parliament of Victoria.—Both of the Victorian legislative chambers are elective bodies, but there is a considerable difference in the number of members of each House, as well as in the qualifications necessary for members and electors. In the Legislative Council the tenure of the seat is for six years, but one member for each province retires every third year, except in the case of a dissolution, when one half of the newly elected members hold their seats for three years only. Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected for the duration of Parliament, which is limited to three years. An elector for the Legislative Assembly may only vote once, plurality of voting having been abolished in 1899; an elector, however, qualified in more than one district, may select that for which he desires to record his vote.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Since the introduction of responsible government in Victoria there have been twenty complete Parliaments, the first of which was opened on the 21st November, 1856, and closed on the 9th August, 1859, while the twentieth opened on the 29th June, 1904, and closed on the 21st February, 1907. The first session of the twenty-first Parliament opened on the 9th July, 1907.

Statistics regarding the last three elections will be found below:—

STATISTICS OF VICTORIAN ELECTIONS, 1902 TO 1907.

Year.	Legislative Council.				Legislative Assembly.			
	Electors on Roll.	Electors in Contested Districts.	Voters in Contested Districts	Per-centage.	Electors on Roll.	Electors in Contested Districts.	Voters in Contested Districts.	Per-centage.
1902 ...	134,087	*	*	*	290,241	216,063	141,471	65.47
1904 ...	172,495	104,843	61,382	58.54	264,709	223,600	140,127	62.66
1907 ...	180,738	78,512	27,152	34.58	260,787	191,131	117,098	61.26

* Not contested.

As the table shews, the proportion of voters for the Legislative Council is considerably less than that for the Lower House.

5. **The Parliament of Queensland.**—No limit is set by the Constitution Act to the number of members of the Legislative Council of Queensland, the total at the latest available date being forty-three. Members are appointed by the State Governor, and it is provided that not less than four-fifths of the members must consist of persons not holding any office under the Crown, except officers of His Majesty's sea or land forces on full or half-pay, or retired officers on pensions. The members are nominated for life. The Legislative Assembly is composed of seventy-two members, returned from sixty-one electorates, eleven electorates returning two members each, the others being single electorates.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Since the establishment of responsible government in Queensland there have been sixteen complete Parliaments, the first of which opened on the 29th May, 1860, and dissolved on the 20th May, 1863, while the sixteenth parliament opened on the 23rd July, 1907, and closed on the 10th December, 1907. The seventeenth parliament is now in session. Statistics regarding the elections of 1902, 1904, and 1907 are given below:—

ELECTIONS FOR QUEENSLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Year.	Number of Seats.	Number of Candidates Nominated.	Candidates sent to the Poll.	Electors Enrolled.			Electors who Voted.			Percentage of Electors Voting in Contested Electorates.		
				Males.	Females	Total.	Males.	Females	Total.	Males.	Females	Total.
				1902	72	159	154	108,548	—	108,548	80,076	—
1904	72	140	117	103,943	—	103,943	60,265	—	60,265	74.16	—	74.16
1907	72	185	179	125,140	95,049	220,189	—	—	152,049	73.42	68.64	71.61

The election of 1907 was the first State election in Queensland at which women voted, the privilege being conferred under Act 5 Edw. VII., No. 1. Some of the returns did not separate the sexes in the figures respecting the number of electors who voted, and the percentage of males and females was therefore calculated on the total returns where the subdivision was made.

6. **Parliament of South Australia.**—In this State there is a Legislative Council composed of eighteen members and a House of Assembly with forty-two members, both chambers being elective.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Since the inauguration of responsible government in South Australia there have been eighteen complete Parliaments, the first of which was opened on the 22nd April, 1857, and dissolved on the 1st September, 1859, while the

eighteenth was opened on the 20th July, 1905, and terminated on the 10th October, 1906. The first session of the nineteenth Parliament opened on the 30th November, 1906. Particulars of voting at the last three elections are given below :—

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Year.	Electors on Rolls.			Electors Who Voted.			Percentage of Electors Voting.	
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.								
1900 ...	38,688	9,854	48,542	21,403	3,907	25,310	55.32	39.65
1902 ...	38,413	13,496	51,909	29,978	7,940	37,918	78.04	58.83
1905 ...	39,011	13,873	52,884	28,820	8,328	37,148	73.88	60.03
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.								
1902 ...	77,147	72,030	149,177	53,471	36,545	90,016	62.14	49.22
1905 ...	95,396	92,249	187,645	64,330	50,246	114,576	67.43	54.47
1906 ...	96,724	93,438	190,162	60,109	45,997	106,106	69.31	50.73

The proportions of votes recorded to total persons entitled to vote in each of the three years given above were as follows:—Legislative Council, 52.14, 73.05, and 70.24 per cent. ; and Legislative Assembly, 55.80, 61.06, and 60.34 per cent.

It is interesting to note that South Australia was the first of the States to grant women's suffrage (under Act No. 16 of 1894), the franchise being exercised for the first time at the Legislative Assembly election on the 25th April, 1896.

7. The Parliament of Western Australia.—In this State both chambers are elective. For the Legislative Council there are thirty members, each of the ten electorates returning three members, while the Legislative Assembly is composed of fifty members, one member being returned by each of the fifty electoral divisions. At the expiration of two years from the date of election to a seat in the Legislative Council, and every two years thereafter, the senior member for the time being for each province retires. Seniority is determined (a) by date of election, (b) if two or more members are elected in the same day, then the senior is the one who polled the least number of votes, (c) if the election be uncontested, or in case of an equality of votes, then the seniority is determined by the alphabetical precedence of surnames and, if necessary, Christian names. Members of the Legislative Assembly are elected for three years.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Since the establishment of responsible government in Western Australia there have been five complete parliaments, the first of which was opened on the 30th December, 1890, and was dissolved on the 22nd March, 1893, while the fifth Parliament was opened on the 28th July, 1904, and dissolved on the 5th October, 1905. The first session of the sixth Parliament commenced on the 23rd November, 1905. Particulars relating to the last three parliamentary elections are given in the table below. The figures refer to electors for the Assembly only, no returns being published with regard to voting at Council elections :—

ELECTIONS FOR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Year.	Electors on the Roll.			In Contested Districts.			Votes Recorded.			Proportion of Electors Voting.		
	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Males.	Females.	Total.
1901	74,874	16,648	91,522	67,967	14,775	82,742	29,332	8,255	38,077	44	56	46
1904	108,861	54,965	163,826	88,524	49,791	138,315	43,285	23,500	66,785	49	47	48
1905	79,025	42,697	121,722	65,296	36,706	102,002	33,482	19,435	52,917	51	53	52

8. **The Tasmanian Parliament.**—In Tasmania there are two legislative chambers—the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly, both bodies being elective. The Council consists of eighteen members, returned from fifteen districts, Hobart returning three, Launceston two, and the remaining thirteen districts sending one member each. At the present time there are thirty-five House of Assembly districts, each district returning one member, but, in accordance with the Constitution Amendment Act of 1906, upon the expiration of the present Assembly, either by dissolution or by effluxion of time, there will be five House of Assembly districts (*i.e.*, the Commonwealth electoral districts), each district returning six members. The last-elected Parliament will not expire till March, 1909, so that, unless the House is previously dissolved, the existing electoral system will remain in force until that date.

(i.) *Particulars of Elections.* Particulars of the voting at the last three elections are given hereunder. The figures refer to elections for the Assembly only, as, owing to the conditions of tenure of seat in the Legislative Council, only a very small proportion of the districts conduct elections each year:—

ELECTIONS, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, TASMANIA.

Year.	Electors on Roll.		Electors in Contested Districts.		Votes Recorded.		Percentage of Electors Voting.	
	Males	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1900 ...	39,002	...	29,022	...	18,872	...	65.02	...
*1903 ...	43,999	...	40,267	...	23,766	...	59.87	...
†1906 ...	47,400	41,629	37,120	33,415	23,128	17,194	62.30	51.46

* Manhood suffrage, Act 64 Vic., No. 5. † Universal adult suffrage, Act 3 Edward VII., No. 13.