

FINANCE AND PUBLIC WEALTH.

THE first century of Australasian history closed on the 26th ^{Australasian} January, 1888. It is impossible to trace step by step the ^{wealth.} progress made during that period, as the data for the purpose are for the most part wanting. Sufficient material is, however, available, from which a comparative statement of the wealth of the colonies at different periods may be deduced. In the following figures the private wealth of the people has alone been considered, the value of the unsold lands of the State, as well as the value of public works, having been omitted. The subjoined table shows the wealth of the whole of Australasia and the increase thereof at intervals of twenty-five years from the date when this territory was first colonized :—

January.	Australasia.	
	Amount of Wealth.	Increase during 25 years.
	£	£
1788	—	Country first colonized.
1813	1,000,000	1,000,000
1838	26,000,000	25,000,000
1863	181,000,000	155,000,000
1888	1,015,000,000	834,000,000

The progress exhibited in this table is marvellous, and as ^{Marvellous} regards ratio quite unprecedented. Though Australasia has but ^{increase.} the population of a province of one of the great European powers, in the wealth and earnings of its people it stands before most of the secondary States, and as regards wealth and income per head of population far before any other country. The following figures are designed to illustrate this truth. Those relating to the United

States of America are computed from data derived from the last census of that country; the other figures are given upon the authority of Mr. M. G. Mulhall.

Value of Public Works.

The figures in regard to the wealth of Australasia do not include the value of State property, which in these colonies consists, besides unsold land, chiefly of railways, telegraphs, water and other works, more or less reproductive. If the value of public works were included, the wealth of Australasia would be 1,296 millions, against which the gross public debt is 174 millions, or 13·4 per centum :—

Wealth of Principal Countries.

Country.	Private Wealth.	Wealth per head.	Public Income per head.	Private Income per head.	Ratio of Public Debt to Wealth.
	Millions.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	℥ cent.
Australasia (1889)	1,148	308	7 13 11	41 14 0	15·20
United Kingdom	8,720	249	2 9 0	35 4 0	8·75
France	8,060	218	4 3 0	25 14 0	11·30
Germany	6,323	140	0 15 0	18 14 0	3·63
Russia	4,343	53	0 16 0	9 18 0	12·70
Austria	3,613	95	1 19 0	16 6 0	11·64
Italy	2,351	82	2 7 0	12 0 0	22·22
Spain	1,593	93	2 2 0	13 16 0	24·53
Belgium	806	145	2 13 0	22 2 0	7·70
Holland	987	240	2 6 0	26 0 0	8·08
United States	9,495	180	2 2 0	40 0 0	3·49
Canada	650	148	1 8 0	26 18 0	6·15
Argentine Republic.....	332	146	2 16 0	.....	.....

Details from which the aggregate wealth can be computed are wanting for some of the colonies, but an estimate has been made which is believed to be fairly exact. In the following table will be found the estimated private wealth of each colony, the average per inhabitant, and the ratio which the public debt bears to the private wealth:—

Private Wealth.—Total and per Inhabitant in each Colony of Australasia for 1889.

Colony.	Private Wealth.		Ratio of Public Debt to Private Wealth.
	Total.	Per Inhabitant.	
	Million £	£	Per cent.
New South Wales	404	366	11·5
Victoria	386	349	9·7
Queensland	106	267	24·4
South Australia	70	218	29·2
Tasmania	31	208	16·2
New Zealand	145	236	25·6
West Australia	6	140	22·9
Total, Australasia	1,148	308	15·2

It will be seen that the ratio of the public indebtedness to private wealth in some of the colonies reaches an extraordinary figure, though in the aggregate this ratio compares very favourably with that of most countries enumerated in the preceding table.

The approximate wealth of Australasia is given in the previous table as 1,148 millions, or £308 per inhabitant. Assuming that the amount of money left by persons who have died, compared with the number of deaths, corresponds with the money possessed by the living, compared with the total population, the sum stated may be roughly verified. Thus, during the five years which ended

PROPORTION OF PROPERTY-OWNERS.

with 1889, the total number of deaths in all the colonies, except New Zealand and Western Australia, was 211,890, and the value of the estates of the persons who died was £64,178,540, so that the average per head was £303—a sum almost identical with that found by a careful valuation of the elements of wealth of each colony which is given above. That the figures coincide so closely is in some degree accidental, as the probate returns of individual colonies show great variation from year to year.

Distribution of property.

If the number of those who leave property at death compared with the total number of deaths in any year, and the value of the estates of such persons, be taken as indicative of the distribution of wealth throughout the rest of the community, it would appear that 12·5 per cent. of the inhabitants of Australasia have property, which is a much wider distribution than obtains elsewhere. The distribution appears most general in South Australia and Victoria. The average value of estates is greatest in Victoria, and least in Tasmania, as the following table shows. The value of estates, however, is not a point upon which much stress can be placed. The occurrence at irregular intervals of the deaths of very wealthy persons tends to give undue importance to the colony affected; for in a population numerically small the average may possibly be affected by one such death:—

Per centage of Persons leaving Property, and Average Value of Estates, 1885–89.

Colony.	Per centage of persons dying who left property to total deaths.	Average Value of deceased Estates.
New South Wales	11·64	£ 2,745
Victoria	14·32	2,786
Queensland	8·16	1,680
South Australia	15·29	1,174
Western Australia	10·70	.....
Tasmania	11·48	1,091
Average	12·49	2,419*

* Western Australia not included.

The total income of the Australasian Governments for the year 1889 amounted to £28,738,025, and their expenditure to £28,126,353, leaving a surplus of £611,672. New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania show a slight deficit, while all the other colonies exhibit a surplus on the year's transactions. As regards New South Wales the deficiency was due to charges accruing in former years, and defrayed in 1889, and not to the failure of the year's revenue to meet the expenditure:—

Revenue and Expenditure, 1889.

Colony.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
New South Wales	9,063,397	9,250,271
Victoria	8,675,990	7,919,902
Queensland	3,614,652	3,550,858
South Australia	2,270,433	2,355,927
West Australia	442,725	386,000
Tasmania	678,909	681,674
New Zealand	3,991,919	3,981,721
Australasia.....	28,738,025	28,126,353

The revenue is mainly derived from taxation, which produced £11,575,411, and from public services, such as railways, post and telegraphs, which yielded £11,069,375; in all £22,644,786, or nearly 79 per cent. of the total revenue. The following table shows the revenue of each Colony, arranged under the various heads:—

Sources of
revenue.

REVENUE PER HEAD.

Public Revenue, 1889.

Colony.	Taxation.	Land.	Public Services.	Other Sources.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales	2,677,169	2,137,563	3,473,123	775,542	9,063,397
Victoria	3,749,670	616,028	3,909,323	400,969	8,675,990
Queensland	1,734,351	656,945	1,029,163	194,193	3,614,652
South Australia...	711,248	174,246	1,118,679	266,260	2,270,433
Western Australia	194,248	87,016	66,997	94,464	442,725
Tasmania	422,644	70,891	131,796	53,578	678,909
New Zealand.....	2,086,081	319,809	1,340,294	245,735	3,991,919
Total, Australasia	11,575,411	4,062,498	11,069,375	2,030,741	28,738,025

Revenue per head.

The revenue per head averaged £7 13s. 11d., varying from £4 11s. 2d. for Tasmania, to £10 6s. 4d. for Western Australia. The rate for each Colony, subdivided into the classification adopted in the previous table, was as follows:—

Revenue per head of Population, 1889.

Colony.	Revenue derived from				Total Revenue.
	Taxation.	Land.	Public Services.	Other Sources.	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	2 8 6	1 18 9	3 2 11	0 14 0	8 4 2
Victoria	3 7 11	0 11 2	3 10 9	0 7 3	7 17 1
Queensland	4 7 4	1 13 1	2 11 10	0 9 9	9 2 0
South Australia...	2 4 3	0 10 10	3 9 7	0 16 7	7 1 3
Western Australia	4 10 6	2 0 7	1 11 3	2 4 0	10 6 4
Tasmania	2 16 10	0 9 6	0 17 9	0 7 2	4 11 2
New Zealand	3 8 0	0 10 5	2 3 8	0 8 0	6 10 1
Australasia	3 2 0	1 1 9	2 19 4	0 10 11	7 13 11

The Colonies differ considerably in respect to the proportion of revenue raised by taxation. Tasmania obtained 62·25 per cent. of its revenue from this source, while New South Wales raised only 29·54 per cent. through taxation. Taking Australasia as a whole, the proportion of revenue derived from taxation has increased from 33·65 to 40·28 per cent. since 1881. The proportion has advanced in all the Colonies, but most especially in New Zealand, Queensland, and Tasmania. In 1881 New Zealand raised 39·26 per cent. of its revenue by taxation, and 53·28 per cent. in 1889; while in Queensland the proportion increased from 37·13 to 47·98 per cent. during the same period.

The proportion of total revenue raised by taxation for each Colony in 1881 and 1889 was :—

Proportion of Revenue derived from Taxation.

Colony.	1881.	1889.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
New South Wales	26·37	29·54
Victoria	39·17	43·22
Queensland	37·13	47·98
South Australia	24·98	31·32
Western Australia.....	42·46	43·87
Tasmania	53·34	62·25
New Zealand	39·26	53·28
Australasia	33·65	40·28

The following table shows the proportion raised by taxation to total revenue in some of the principal countries. With the exception of India and Germany, Australasia raises less by this method of collecting revenue than any of the countries enumerated. The figures, however, prove very little, because in Australasia the railways and telegraphs are State property, which is not the case in most of the countries appearing in the list :—

Proportion of
taxation to
revenue.

Percentage of Revenue derived from Taxation to Total Revenue.

	Per cent.
United Kingdom.....	82·33
France	75·96
Germany (five principal States) ..	30·00
Austria	72·85
Russia	69·19
Belgium	51·16
Holland	79·33
Italy	70·36
Spain.....	70·75
United States	91·64
Canada	41·42
Cape Colony.....	42·55
India	37·58
Australasia	40·28

Taxation per head.

The amount raised in Australasia by taxation, per head of population, in 1881, was £2 9s. 4d., increasing to £3 2s. in 1889. The Colony with the highest burthen of taxation is Western Australia, New South Wales, and South Australia being the most lightly taxed, as the following figures show :—

Taxation per head.

Colony.	1881.	1889.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	2 6 7	2 8 6
Victoria	2 6 1	3 7 11
Queensland	2 19 2	4 7 4
South Australia	1 19 2	2 4 3
Western Australia	3 13 1	4 10 6
Tasmania	2 6 1	2 16 10
New Zealand	2 19 10	3 8 0
Australasia	2 9 4	3 2 0

Revenue from sale of lands.

The practice of treating money derived from the sale and occupation of Crown lands as revenue obtains in all the Colonies, and the money so raised forms one of the largest items of their annual income. The revenue from this source has considerably

fallen off in most Colonies of late years, and must continue to do so as the alienation of the public estate progresses. The proportion of revenue raised from land is highest for New South Wales and lowest for Victoria; but compared with population it is greatest in Western Australia and New South Wales, and least in Tasmania.

Proportion of Revenue derived from Land.

Colony.	1881.	1889.
New South Wales	42·01	23·58
Victoria	16·35	7·10
Queensland	35·15	18·17
South Australia	30·01	7·67
Western Australia	15·90	19·65
Tasmania	4·90	10·44
New Zealand	6·88	8·01
Australasia	25·90	14·13

Revenue from Land per Head of Population.

Colony.	1881.	1889.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	3 14 2	1 18 9
Victoria	0 19 3	0 11 2
Queensland	2 16 0	1 13 1
South Australia	2 2 8	0 10 10
Western Australia	1 7 5	2 0 7
Tasmania	0 4 3	0 9 6
New Zealand	0 10 6	0 10 5
Australasia	1 17 11	1 1 9

The expenditure of the Government of New South Wales is far larger than that of any other Colony of the group; it exceeds that of Victoria by one and a quarter million, and that of New Zealand by more than five and a quarter, and amounted to £9,250,271, out of a total of £28,126,353.

Large expenditure of New South Wales.

The total expenditure for each Colony, distributed under various heads, was :—

Public Expenditure, 1889.

Colony.	Railways and Tramways.	Other Public Works.	Interest on Debt, &c.	Other Services.	Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales	1,782,530	1,687,716	1,805,770	3,974,255	9,250,271
Victoria	1,923,997	1,499,862	1,459,242	3,036,801	7,919,902
Queensland	581,175	432,136	1,059,768	1,477,779	3,550,858
South Australia...	534,331	218,763	798,991	803,842	2,355,927
Western Australia	63,938	33,702	68,170	220,190	386,000
Tasmania	88,568	148,855	209,736	234,515	681,674
New Zealand.....	626,939	452,978	1,616,501	1,285,303	3,981,721
Australasia... £	5,601,478	4,474,012	7,018,178	11,032,685	28,126,353

Details of expenditure.

It will be seen from the foregoing statement that 19·92 per cent. of the whole expenditure is for working the railways and tramways of the colonies, a service not usually undertaken by the State. The ordinary expenses of civil government amount to 39·22 per cent. of the expenditure; public works, post and telegraphs, absorb 15·91 per cent., and the interest on the public debt 24·95 per cent. The rates of expenditure per head of population were as follow :—

Expenditure per inhabitant.

	£	s.	d.
Railway and Tramways	1	10	0
Other Public Works—Post and Telegraphs.....	1	3	11
Interest on public debt.....	1	17	7
Other Services—Civil Government.....	2	19	1
Total.....	£7	10	7

The details for each Colony are shown in the following statement :—

Expenditure per head of Population, 1889.

Colony.	Expenditure on account of				Total Expenditure.
	Railways and Tramways.	Other Public Works.	Interest on Debt, &c.	Other Services.	
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	1 12 3	1 10 7	1 12 9	3 12 0	8 7 7
Victoria	1 14 10	1 7 2	1 6 5	2 15 0	7 3 5
Queensland	1 9 3	1 1 9	2 13 5	3 14 5	8 18 10
South Australia..	1 13 3	0 13 7	2 9 9	2 10 0	7 6 7
Western Australia	1 9 9	0 15 8	1 11 10	5 2 7	8 19 10
Tasmania	0 11 11	1 0 0	1 8 2	1 11 6	4 11 7
New Zealand.....	1 0 5	0 14 9	2 12 8	2 1 10	6 9 8
Australasia...	1 10 0	1 3 11	1 17 7	2 19 1	7 10 7

The most remarkable feature in the general expenditure is the largeness of the amount required to pay interest on the public debt, both in regard to the rate per head and the proportion of total revenue thus hypothecated. The proportion for all colonies is slightly less than one-fourth of the total expenditure, and £1 17s. 7d. per head of population, while the proportion of expenditure for each colony was—

	Per cent.
New South Wales	19·52
Victoria.....	18·43
Queensland	29·84
South Australia	33·91
Western Australia	17·66
Tasmania	30·77
New Zealand	40·59
Australasia	24·95

A casual glance at the figures quoted will lend colour to the suggestion sometimes hazarded that the colonies are too rapidly mortgaging their resources, and that the expense of the public debt will prove a greater burthen than can easily be borne.

However true this may be as far as any individual colony is concerned, it is certainly erroneous as regards the whole of Australasia. Out of the sum required to pay interest, viz., £7,018,178, about £3,160,000 is directly recouped by the profit on public railways, while a further amount is yielded by water supply, sewerage, and other works. Besides this, there is a large indirect revenue obtained by each colony from the opening up of its public lands, and from the construction of break-waters, light-houses, bridges, and other works of public utility.

Interest on
Public Debt of
other countries.

The subjoined table shows the proportion of total expenditure required to pay interest on the public debt in the countries mentioned :—

Per-centage of Interest on Public Debt to total Expenditure,
1889.

United Kingdom	29·65
France	34·82
Germany	11·21
Austria	29·49
Russia	33·25
Belgium.....	30·88
Holland.....	27·97
Italy	30·79
Spain	35·22
United States	12·12
Canada	17·79
Cape Colony.....	33·13
India	5·75
Australasia	24·95

If Australasia is taken as a whole, the proportion required to pay interest on the Public Debt is not large compared with other countries, and, with the exception of India, Germany, Canada, and the United States, the colonies enjoy a more favourable position in this respect than any other of the countries enumerated in the foregoing table.

The following table shows the purposes for which loan money has been raised :—

Purposes for which loans raised.

Colony.	Railways.	Water Supply and Sewerage.	Immigration.	Other Services.	Total.
	£	£		£	£
New South Wales	31,380,504	4,122,823	569,930	10,573,192	46,646,449
Victoria	29,282,228	5,638,628	.....	2,706,526	37,627,382
Queensland	15,374,419	221,170	2,621,727	7,623,634	25,840,950
South Australia...	11,374,903	3,321,300	.....	5,739,297	20,435,500
Western Australia	824,845	5,310	.....	541,826	1,371,981
Tasmania	173,548	.....	235,714	4,609,788	5,019,050
New Zealand.....	13,924,072	560,280	2,143,327	20,535,212	37,162,891
Australasia....	102,334,519	13,869,511	5,570,698	52,329,475	174,104,203

The unexpended balance of loans included in the foregoing table under the heading of "Other Services" is shown below :—

Unexpended balances of Loans.

Balance of Loans unexpended at the end of 1889 :—

Colony.	£
New South Wales	2,314,352
Victoria	1,443,411
Queensland	1,835,249
South Australia	1,766,815
West Australia	30,525
Tasmania	497,692
New Zealand	961,300

The expenditure from loans for all the colonies amounted to £45 19s. 6d. per head, the rate for New Zealand, Queensland, and South Australia being from about £14 to £17 10s. above the average. Of the leading colonies Victoria stands lowest on the list with an expenditure of £33 13s. 1d. New South Wales compares very favourably with most of the colonies, and having regard to her great natural and acquired wealth the debt per head

Public Debt per head of population.

is by no means large, especially as the charge amounts to only 19·52 per cent. of the general expenditure :—

Proportion per head of the Population.

Colony.	Railways.	Water Supply.	Immigration.	Other Services.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	27 19 3	3 13 6	0 10 2	9 8 5	41 11 4
Victoria.....	26 3 10	5 0 10	.....	2 8 5	33 13 1
Queensland	37 16 2	0 10 11	6 8 11	18 14 11	63 10 11
South Australia...	35 1 1	10 4 9	.....	17 13 9	62 19 6
Western Australia	18 17 6	0 2 5	.....	12 8 0	31 7 11
Tasmania	1 2 11	.....	1 11 1	30 8 8	33 2 8
New Zealand.....	22 8 11	0 18 1	3 9 1	33 2 2	59 18 3
Australasia...	27 0 6	3 13 3	1 9 5	13 16 4	45 19 6

The relative burthen of the public debt for each Colony is not to be determined by comparing the gross amount with the population, unless the rate of interest payable is also taken into consideration. Thus the general average interest payable by New South Wales is 3·9 per cent., while New Zealand pays 4·76 per cent., so that a debt of £100 in the former is not more burthen-some than £82 in the latter Colony. To afford an exact basis of comparison, the debt of each Colony is shown in the following statement, as it would be if the interest payable were uniformly 5 per cent. :—

Public Debt of Australasia reduced to a 5 per cent. basis.

Colony.	Total Debt.	Debt per inhabitant.
	£	£ s. d.
New South Wales	36,384,230	32 8 5
Victoria	31,230,072	27 18 7
Queensland	21,189,579	52 2 1
South Australia	16,757,110	51 12 9
Western Australia.....	1,155,208	26 8 8
Tasmania	4,216,002	27 12 7
New Zealand	35,379,072	57 0 8
Australasia	146,311,273	38 12 4

As shown by the following table the loan expenditure of Australasia for 1889 was over nine millions. Victoria expended about three and one-half millions—a sum more than twice the loan expenditure of any other Colony. Against this, however, it may be urged that in previous years the Victorian expenditure has been very moderate. Compared with population several Colonies ranked higher than Victoria, notably Queensland, with £4 2s. 8d. per head. The expenditure for each Colony was :—

Loan Expenditure, 1889.

Colony.	Expenditure.	Expenditure per head of mean population.
	£	£ s. d.
New South Wales	1,464,900	1 6 6
Victoria	3,626,501	3 5 8
Queensland	1,641,704	4 2 8
South Australia	1,259,012	3 18 4
Western Australia	135,112	3 2 11
Tasmania	367,039	2 9 4
New Zealand	515,058	0 16 10
Australasia	9,009,326	2 8 3

The public debt of Australasia in 1861 was £12,388,201, while in 1889 it stood at £174,104,203; the increase therefore was at the rate of nearly 10 per cent. per annum—a much greater ratio of increase than that of the population. The growth of the debt from 1861 is shown in the following table :—

Growth of Public Debt, 1861–1889.

Colony.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1889.
	£	£	£	£
New South Wales ...	4,017,630	10,614,330	16,924,019	46,646,449
Victoria	6,345,060	11,994,800	22,426,502	37,627,382
Queensland.....	70,000	4,047,850	13,245,150	25,840,950
South Australia.....	866,500	2,167,700	11,196,800	20,435,500
Western Australia..	1,750	Nil.	511,000	1,371,981
Tasmania	*486,500	1,315,200	2,003,000	5,019,050
New Zealand	600,761	8,041,913	27,455,218	37,162,891
Australasia.....	12,388,201	38,181,793	93,761,689	174,104,203

* In 1862.

Interest on loans.

In 1884 the nominal rate of interest on New South Wales loans was fixed at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It was not until 1888, however, that any of the other Colonies followed the example thus set them. In the year named Queensland floated a loan of £2,500,000 at an average price of £95 2s. 9d. per cent., and in 1889 Victoria raised £3,000,000 at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., the average realised being £103 6s. Since then all the other colonies, except Western Australia, have been successful in floating their loans at the reduced nominal rate, although in some cases at a discount. It is probable the rate will be further lowered to 3 per cent., for Canada and Ceylon have already raised loans at the latter figure. Since 1883 five $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loans, making a total of £23,500,000, have been floated by the New South Wales Government. That placed on the market in April, 1888, was the most successful floated by the Colony; the average rate, after all incidental charges were paid, was £102 1s. 10d. A similar loan was floated in June, 1889, realising £100 15s. 10d. The 1888 loan carried six months' interest; that of 1889, three months' interest; reducing the former to £100 6s. 10d., and the latter to £99 18s. 4d.

New South
Wales $3\frac{1}{2}$ per
cent. loans.

Victorian $3\frac{1}{2}$ per
cent. loans.

The $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. loan floated by Victoria in 1889 brought an average price of £103 6s. per cent., and after interest and expenses were deducted, the net sum realised was £101 12s. per cent., which is the best price yet obtained for Australasian stock. If the loan be compared with the 1889 loan of New South Wales, just alluded to, there is a difference in its favor of £1 13s. 8d. per cent., the Victorian loan having a currency of 35, and the New South Wales loan 30, years.

Rates of Austra-
lasian loans.

The following statement shows the terms on which the principal colonies were able to borrow in the London market during the past two years. The computations allow for the repayment of the various loans at par on maturity. It will be seen that Victoria is paying the smallest interest to the investors, and New Zealand the highest :—

Australasian Loans, 1889 and 1890, shewing Net Interest to Investors.

Colony.	Date of Negotiation.	Nominal rate of Interest.	Amount.	Currency of Loan.	Average rate per cent. at which sold.	Net amount <i>ex</i> accrued Interest.	Net Interest per cent. to Investors
	1889.	per cent.	£	years.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales..	July ..	3½	3,500,000	30	102 8 0½	101 10 6½	3 8 4
Victoria	Jan. ..	3½	3,000,000	35	103 5 11½	102 14 10	3 7 7
South Australia..	Jan. ..	3½	1,317,800	40	100 1 10	99 4 0	3 10 9
Western Australia	July ..	4	100,000	45	103 15 3	103 1 11	3 12 9
Tasmania	April ..	3½	1,000,000	30 to 50	98 5 8½	97 13 6	3 12 6
New Zealand	October 1890.	3½	2,700,000	50	95 16 8	95 10 2	3 14 1
Queensland	March..	3½	2,264,734	34½	97 16 7	96 7 4	3 13 9
Victoria	April..	3½	4,000,000	34	101 10 4½	100 2 4	3 9 10½

The following table shows the actual interest paid by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and Tasmania, on the last three loans raised by them. Unfortunately the data to compute the interest for the other colonies are not available. It will be seen that New South Wales paid for its most favourable loan, £3 9s. 9d., Victoria only £3 8s. 5d., and Tasmania, £3 12s. 7d. per £100. The details are :—

Australasian Loans, showing actual Interest per cent. payable by the Governments.

Colony.	Date of Loan.	Nominal Rate per cent.	Amount of Loan.	Average Amount per cent. realised, less Charges and accrued Interest.	Actual Interest paid by the Governments.
			£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	1886	3½	5,500,000	92 16 2	3 15 1
"	1888	3½	5,500,000	100 6 10	3 9 9
"	1889	3½	3,500,000	99 18 3½	3 10 1
Victoria "	1888	4	1,500,000	106 18 0½	3 12 9
"	1889	3½	3,000,000	101 11 11½	3 8 5
"	1890	3½	4,000,000	98 19 6	3 11 1
Tasmania	1884	4	800,000	97 12 9	4 2 0
"	1886	4	1,000,000	98 8 5	4 1 2
"	1889	3½	1,000,000	96 8 8	3 12 7

The expense of floating the last three loans on the London market for each of the colonies is shown in the following table, Expense of floating loans.

ACTUAL CREDIT OF THE COLONIES.

from which it appears that the charges for New South Wales are higher than those of the other Colonies :—

Expenses of Floating Loans on Capital Value.

Colony.	Date of Loan.	Nominal Rate per cent.	Amount of Loan.	Expenses per £100 Stock.
			£	£ s. d.
New South Wales.....	1886	3½	5,500,000	1 13 0
„	1888	3½	5,500,000	1 11 5
„	1889	3½	3,500,000	1 13 0
Victoria	1888	4	1,500,000	1 3 1
„	1889	3½	3,000,000	1 2 11
„	1890	3½	4,000,000	1 2 10
Tasmania	1884	4	800,000	0 18 3
„	1886	4	1,000,000	0 18 0
„	1889	3½	1,000,000	1 4 10

The selling price of a loan is not perhaps the most exact test which may be applied to ascertain the credit of a country in the London markets. There are many causes which may combine to influence adversely the price obtained by tender. A truer gauge of credit will be found in the selling price and interest yielded to investors by representative stock at a given date. The following table shows the interest returned by the stock of different colonies in June, 1890, due allowance being made in each case for accrued interest, and for repayment of loans at par at maturity. Similar figures for the same month of 1868 and 1878 have been added :—

Selling price of Colonial stock.

Country.	1868.	1878.	1890.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Canada	5 12 6	4 9 0	3 6 0
New South Wales	5 0 0	3 16 3	3 8 0
Victoria	4 17 6	4 2 6	3 8 4
New Zealand	5 1 3	4 15 0	3 16 7
Queensland	5 6 3	4 5 0	3 11 6
South Australia	5 2 6	4 2 6	3 13 11
Tasmania	5 8 9	4 12 6	3 13 2
Cape of Good Hope	5 1 3	4 11 3	3 14 0
Natal	5 11 3	4 11 3	3 14 7
Mauritius.....	5 5 0	4 8 9	3 16 10
India.....	3 13 9	3 10 6	3 2 9

The improvement in the credit of all the colonies is obvious, and at the rates given New South Wales could borrow £100 to-day at the same cost as £68 could be obtained twenty-two years previously; and Victoria in like manner could borrow £100 now for what she would have had to pay for £70 in 1868. In June, 1890, British consols were selling at a rate which would yield £2 11s. 3d. per cent. interest; Canadian and Indian stock were also selling at slightly better rates than New South Wales. This is certainly anomalous, as there is nothing in the history of these last mentioned countries, or in the nature of their resources, to warrant even the slight preference shown to their stock above that of the more important colonies of Australasia.

Improvement of Colonial credit.

Systems of local government are in force in all the Colonies, but the extent to which the power of self-taxation for local purposes has been availed of is very different in the several Colonies. Thus the whole area of Victoria is practically included within municipalities and shires, and a similar state of things exists in most of the other colonies; but in Western Australia the total number of municipalities in 1889 was only twelve, and in the same year the area under municipal government in New South Wales was not more than 2,166 square miles. In addition to their income from rates, municipalities in all the Colonies receive certain endowments from Government, and their revenues from these two sources are shown in the following table :—

Taxation for local government.

Local Revenue, 1889.

Colony.	Revenue collected locally.	Endowment from Government.	Total Revenue.
	£	£	£
New South Wales	637,354	136,466	773,820
Victoria	1,182,291	433,198	1,615,489
Queensland	108,310	187,916	296,226
South Australia	224,210	90,947	315,157
Tasmania	150,632	9,011	159,643
New Zealand	681,468	101,694	783,162
Australasia	2,984,265	959,232	3,943,497

REVENUE PER HEAD OF POPULATION.

Local and
General
Revenue..

The revenue, both general and local, during 1889, is shown below, the Government endowment of municipalities being omitted in the column showing local revenue, while revenue from local loans is included :—

Local and General Revenue.

Colony.	General.	Local.	Total.
	£	£	£
New South Wales	9,063,397	637,354	9,700,751
Victoria	8,675,990	1,182,291	9,858,281
Queensland	3,614,652	108,310	3,722,962
South Australia	2,270,433	224,210	2,494,643
Western Australia.....	442,725	.....*	442,725
Tasmania.....	678,909	150,632	829,541
New Zealand	3,991,919	681,468	4,673,387
Australasia	28,738,025	2,984,265	31,722,290

* No returns.

The next table shows the same items per head of population :—
Revenue per head of population :—

Colony.	General.	Local.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	8 4 2	0 11 7	8 15 9
Victoria	7 17 1	1 1 5	8 18 6
Queensland	9 2 0	0 5 5	9 7 5
South Australia	7 1 3	0 13 11	7 15 2
Western Australia.....	10 6 4	.....*	10 6 4
Tasmania.....	4 11 2	1 0 3	5 11 5
New Zealand	6 10 1	1 2 2	7 12 3
Australasia	7 13 11	0 16 0	8 9 11

* No returns.

Expenditure
during 1889.

The general and local expenditure during 1889 will be seen from the figures given herewith. The Government endowment has been deducted from the local expenditure as it is already included in the general expenditure. Expenditure from loans raised by the municipalities is, however, included :—

General and Local Expenditure.

Colony.	General.	Local.	Total.
	£	£	£
New South Wales	9,250,271	866,616	10,116,887
Victoria	7,919,902	1,834,071	9,753,973
Queensland	3,550,858	287,097	3,837,955
South Australia	2,355,927	305,157	2,661,084
Western Australia	386,000	.....*	386,000
Tasmania	681,674	138,195	819,869
New Zealand	3,981,721	799,626	4,781,347
Australasia	28,126,353	4,230,762	32,357,115

* No returns.

The general and local expenditure per head of the population for 1889 will be found set forth in the figures subjoined. It is remarkable how closely the general totals of all the Colonies approximate, with the exception of Tasmania, the figures for which are below the rest. It should be remembered, however, that the main railway line had not been taken over by the Government in 1889, but was still in the hands of a company :—

Expenditure per Head of Population.

Colony.	General.	Local.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
New South Wales	8 7 7	0 15 8	9 3 3
Victoria	7 3 5	1 13 4	8 16 9
Queensland	8 18 10	0 14 6	9 13 4
South Australia	7 6 7	0 19 0	8 5 7
Western Australia	8 19 10	.....*	8 19 10
Tasmania	4 11 7	0 18 7	5 10 2
New Zealand	6 9 8	1 6 1	7 15 9
Australasia	7 10 8	1 2 8	8 13 4

* No returns.

TOTAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

Total Revenue
and Expendi-
ture.

The following tables embody the data given in the previous figures relating to revenue and expenditure for the year 1889, and shows the total amount of public money collected and spent in each Colony for general and local purposes. The items of revenue were :—

Total Revenue, 1889.

Colony.	General Revenue.	Local Revenue.	Total Revenue.	Total Revenue per head of Population.
	£	£	£	£ s. d.
New South Wales...	9,063,397	637,354	9,700,751	8 15 9
Victoria	8,675,990	1,182,291	9,858,281	8 18 6
Queensland	3,614,652	108,310	3,722,962	9 7 5
South Australia.....	2,270,433	224,210	2,494,643	7 15 2
Western Australia..	442,725	.....*	442,725	10 6 4
Tasmania	678,909	150,632	829,541	5 11 5
New Zealand	3,991,919	681,468	4,673,387	7 12 3
Australasia	28,738,025	2,984,265	31,722,290	8 9 11

* No returns.

The expenditure out of general and municipal revenue and loans was :—

Total Expenditure, 1889.

Colony.	General.	Local.	From Loans.	Total.	Total per head of Population.
	£	£	£	£	£ s. d.
New South Wales.	9,250,271	866,616	1,464,900	11,581,787	10 9 9
Victoria	7,919,902	1,834,071	3,626,501	13,380,474	12 2 5
Queensland	3,550,858	287,097	1,641,704	5,479,659	13 16 0
South Australia ...	2,355,927	305,157	1,259,012	3,920,096	12 3 11
Western Australia	386,000	.....*	135,112	521,112	12 2 9
Tasmania	681,674	138,195	367,039	1,186,908	7 19 6
New Zealand	3,981,721	799,626	515,058	5,296,405	8 12 7
Australasia	28,126,353	4,230,762	9,009,326	41,366,441	11 1 7

* No returns.

CURRENCY.

The coins circulating in Australasia are those of the United Kingdom. Gold is the standard, the silver and copper current are more properly tokens than coins. Gold coins are legal tender to any amount, silver for an amount not exceeding forty shillings, and bronze for one shilling. The standard weight and fineness of each coin are given below. The least current weight of a sovereign is 122·5 Imperial grains, and a half-sovereign 61·125 grains :—

Coins of United Kingdom current.

Standard weight of coins.

Coins in circulation.

Denomination of Coin.	Standard Weight.	Standard Fineness.	
	Imperial grains.		
Gold { Sovereign	123·27447	{ Eleven-twelfths fine gold, one-twelfth alloy, or decimal fineness ·91666.	
{ Half-sovereign	61·63723		
Silver..... {	Crown.....	436·36363	{ Thirty-seven-fortieths fine silver, three-fortieths alloy, or decimal fineness ·925.
	Double Florin..	349·09090	
	Half-crown	218·18181	
	Florin	174·54545	
	Shilling	87·27272	
{ Sixpence	43·63636		
{ Threepence	21·81818		
Bronze ... {	Penny.....	145·83333	{ Mixed metal, copper, tin, and zinc.
	{ Halfpenny	87·50000	

The only coins struck at the Sydney and Melbourne Mints are of gold, though silver and bronze of English coinage are also issued. The Sydney Branch of the Royal Mint was opened on the 14th May, 1855, and that in Melbourne on the 12th June, 1872. The amount of gold received for coinage up to the end of 1889 was :—

Coinage of Australian Mints.

Gold received for coinage at the Sydney and Melbourne Mints.

Mint.	Weight.	Value.
	oz.	£
Sydney	17,113,910	64,576,152
Melbourne ..	11,268,118	45,127,202

Gold minted at
Sydney and
Melbourne.

Of the total quantity given above as received into the Sydney Mint only 7,296,781 oz. were the produce of New South Wales, and of the total received into the Melbourne Mint 8,928,404 oz. were raised in Victoria. The following table shows the quantity of gold received from each of the colonies and passed into the two Mints :—

Gold received at the Sydney and Melbourne Mints.

Colony in which the Gold was raised.	Sydney Mint.	Melbourne Mint.	Total.
	oz.	oz.	oz.
New South Wales	7,296,781	9,744	7,306,525
Victoria	1,440,969	8,928,404	10,369,373
Queensland	5,945,229	8,603	5,953,832
South Australia	54,063	214,986	269,049
Tasmania	11,805	460,068	471,873
New Zealand	2,121,361	1,548,045	3,669,406
Other Countries	16,726	18,299	35,025
Old Coin, &c.	226,976	79,969	306,945
	17,113,910	11,268,118	28,382,028

Total value of
Australasian
gold.

The total value of gold raised in Australasia to the end of 1889 was £335,906,011, of which amount 32·62 per cent. passed through the Mints. The following shows the issue of coined gold and bullion during the same period :—

Gold Coin and Bullion issued by the Mints.

Mint.	Sovereigns.	Half-sovereigns.	Bullion.	Total Value of Coin and Bullion issued.
Sydney	59,297,500	2,420,500	2,733,568	£ 63,241,318
Melbourne	40,403,650	555,500	4,448,875	45,130,275
Total	99,701,150	2,976,000	7,182,443	108,371,593

Gold minted in
1889.

The quantity of gold received into the Sydney Mint in 1889 was 900,475 oz., valued at £3,340,473, of which only one-eighth was the produce of New South Wales. Queensland contributed four-fifths of the whole, the remainder being chiefly old coin for reminting.

The amount of gold received into the Melbourne Mint for the same year was 761,616 oz., valued at £3,029,731, of which more than three-fourths was the produce of Victoria. The gold coin issued in 1889 from the Sydney Mint was 3,262,000 sovereigns, and 32,000 half-sovereigns. The Melbourne Mint issued 2,732,000 sovereigns during the year. The value of the coinage from the Sydney, Melbourne, and London Mints for 1889 was :—

Gold issued from the Mints.

Gold Coin issued by the Sydney, Melbourne, and London Mints, 1889.

Mint.	Value of Coinage.
Sydney	£ 3,294,000
Melbourne.....	2,732,000
London	7,500,700

BANKING.

The form in which the returns of the various Colonies are prepared does not admit of an exact estimation of the assets of the banks being obtained. Thus, the liabilities of all banks in Australasia at the close of 1889, as ascertained by the returns, was £112,810,466, and the assets £163,913,199, showing an ostensible surplus of £51,102,733 provided by the banks out of their own resources. The amount of capital and reserved profits was £25,925,244, so that it was impossible the larger sum could have been provided by the banks. The probable explanation of the anomaly is that the advances made by the principal office of a bank in one colony to the branches in another are estimated both as debts due to the bank making the advance and also when advanced by the branch bank to its customers. The liabilities of banks trading in Australasia during the last quarter of 1889 was as follows :—

Banking business.

Australasian Bank Liabilities.

Colony.	Notes in Circulation.	Bills in Circulation.	Balance due to other Banks.	Deposits Bearing Interest.	Total Deposits.	Total Liabilities.
	£	£	£	£	£	£
New South Wales	1,516,047	120,498	258,103	23,951,948	33,777,143	35,671,791
Victoria	1,657,082	115,532	269,220	28,654,782	38,768,936	40,810,770
Queensland	665,436	30,634	87,686	7,025,862	10,182,388	10,966,144
South Australia	449,229	11,029	85,768	4,990,183	6,822,502	7,368,528
Western Australia	49,730	5,158	5,397	467,500	837,695	897,980
Tasmania	155,936	61,774	5,575	.....	4,309,610	4,532,895
New Zealand.....	883,114	52,516	32,124	8,432,241	11,594,604	12,562,358
Total, Australasia	5,376,574	397,141	743,873	*73,522,516	106,292,878	112,810,466

* Tasmania not included.

There were deposited during the last quarter of 1889, with the various banks trading in Australasia, £106,292,878; of the sum named £73,522,516—not including deposits in Tasmania—bore interest. The banks of Victoria held £38,768,936, or 36·47 per cent. of the total deposits; those of New South Wales, £33,777,143, or 31·78 per cent. The figures are for the last quarter, and not the average of the year:—

Total Deposits with Banks of Issue during last quarter of 1889.

Colony.	Deposits bearing Interest.	Deposits not bearing Interest.	Total Deposits.
	£	£	£
New South Wales	23,951,948	9,825,195	33,777,143
Victoria	28,654,782	10,114,154	38,768,936
Queensland	7,025,862	3,156,526	10,182,388
South Australia	4,990,183	1,832,319	6,822,502
Western Australia	467,500	370,195	837,695
Tasmania .....	.....	.....	4,309,610
New Zealand	8,432,241	3,162,363	11,594,604
Total	£ *73,522,516	*28,460,752	106,292,878

* Tasmania not included.

Fully two-thirds of the deposits for Australasia bear interest, and the proportion holds good for each of the Colonies, except Western Australia. Tasmania is not given, as most of the returns for that colony do not distinguish the interest-bearing deposits from those non-bearing. The following table shows the reserve of coin and bullion as compared with total liabilities. The proportion varies considerably in the different Colonies, ranging from 31·52 per cent. in Western Australia to 12·76 per

CASH RESERVES AND LIABILITIES.

cent. in Tasmania. New South Wales holds the weakest position amongst the largest Colonies, with a reserve of 14·21 per cent., against 16·41 per cent., the average of Australasia :—

Proportion of Coin and Bullion to Liabilities of Banks.
(Last Quarter, 1889.)

Colony.	Liabilities.	Coin and Bullion.	Per-centage of Cash Reserve to Liabilities.
	£	£	
New South Wales	35,671,791	5,067,578	14·21
Victoria	40,810,770	6,533,037	16·00
Queensland	10,966,144	2,191,893	19·98
South Australia	7,368,528	1,591,381	21·59
Western Australia	897,980	283,071	31·52
Tasmania	4,532,895	578,820	12·76
New Zealand	12,562,358	2,275,169	18·11
Australasia	112,810,466	18,520,949	16·41

Cash reserves
and liabilities at
Call.

The subjoined table shows the percentages of cash reserves to the liabilities at call. The highest reserve is found in South Australia, and the lowest in New South Wales, the average of the last-named Colony considerably affecting the total for the whole group :—

The Cash Reserve held by Banks as against Liabilities at Call
(last quarter, 1889).

Colony.	Deposits at Call and Circulation.	Coin and Bullion.	Percentage Reserve to Liabilities at Call.
	£	£	
New South Wales	11,461,740	5,067,578	44·21
Victoria	11,886,768	6,533,037	54·96
Queensland	3,852,596	2,191,893	56·89
South Australia	2,292,577	1,591,381	69·41
Western Australia	425,083	283,071	66·59
Tasmania	*217,710	578,820	.....
New Zealand	4,097,993	2,275,169	55·52
Australasia	34,234,467	18,520,949	54·10

* Deposits not bearing interest not included.

Considering the population of these colonies the banking operations of Australasia have attained enormous development. The following table from Mulhall's Dictionary shows the capital employed in banking, and the amount of deposits in some of the principal countries. The figures regarding Australasia are brought down to the latest date:—

Capital and Deposits in the Banks of Various Countries.

Country.	Million £.			Amount per Inhabitant.
	Capital.	Deposits.	Total.	
United Kingdom	270	570	840	£ 25
France	55	150	205	6
Germany	85	200	285	6
Russia	45	110	155	2
Austria	36	130	166	5
Italy	31	60	91	3
Spain and Portugal	12	10	22	1
Belgium	7	20	27	5
Holland	6	20	26	7
Scandinavia	11	24	35	4
Europe.....	558	1,294	1,852	.....
United States.....	145	386	531	10
Canada.....	17	18	35	8
Australasia.....	51	106	157	41

In all the Colonies savings banks are provided by the State to enable the working classes to securely invest their surplus earnings. These banks have been developed to a larger extent in Victoria than any other province, and from the number of deposits it would appear that twenty-four persons out of every hundred in Savings Banks.

SAVINGS AND POST OFFICE BANKS.

that Colony have accounts standing in their names in the Savings Banks. The highest average amount per depositor is in Queensland, while the amount of deposits as compared with population is greatest in South Australia :—

Savings and Post Office Banks, 1889.

Colony.	No. of Depositors.	Amount of Deposits.	Average amount per Depositor.	Average amount per head of Population.	Depositors per 100 of Population.
		£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
New South Wales ...	134,914	4,280,083	31 14 4	3 16 3	12·02
Victoria	268,462	4,971,933	18 10 4	4 8 11	24·01
Queensland	43,875	1,597,784	36 8 4	3 18 7	10·79
South Australia	65,815	1,905,632	28 19 1	5 17 5	20·28
Western Australia ...	2,965	31,062	10 9 6	0 14 3	6·78
Tasmania	24,397	497,492	20 7 10	3 5 8	16·10
New Zealand	90,745	2,191,451	24 3 0	3 10 8	14·63
Australasia ...	631,173	15,475,437	24 10 4	4 1 9	16·66

Savings Banks
in other
countries.

The following table shows the like information for some of the principal countries of the world, and is given on the authority of "The Year Book of Commerce" for 1890-91 :—

Country.	No. of Depositors.	Amount of Deposits in Savings Bank.	Average Amount per Depositor.
		£	£ s. d.
United Kingdom	5,800,473	108,127,440	18 13 0
Sweden	1,010,794	13,659,000	13 10 3
Norway	452,736	10,364,000	22 18 0
Holland	499,445	5,980,000	12 0 0
Prussia	5,029,174	144,462,000	28 14 6
Belgium	598,675	10,409,000	17 7 9
Switzerland.....	802,697	23,749,000	29 11 11
Italy	3,508,565	69,188,851	19 14 5
France	5,097,000	92,557,000	18 4 0
United States.....	4,021,523	296,920,000	73 16 7
Australasia	631,173	15,475,437	24 10 4

Total deposits.

If to the amounts deposited in Savings Banks as shown above be added the deposits in Chartered Banks it will be seen that the total sum on deposit in these institutions is equal to over £32 for

each inhabitant of Australasia. The largest amount on deposit as compared with population is found in Victoria with £39 2s. 5d., or nearly £7 above the average of all the colonies. The particulars for each will be found below :—

Total Deposits in Banks of Australasia, 1889.

Colony.	Deposits in Banks. (Averages for the last quarter).	Deposits in Savings Banks.	Total Deposits.	Amount of Deposits per head of Population.
	£	£	£	£ s. d.
New South Wales.....	33,777,143	4,280,083	38,057,226	33 18 3
Victoria	38,768,936	4,971,933	43,740,869	39 2 5
Queensland.....	10,182,388	1,597,784	11,780,172	28 19 4
South Australia.....	6,822,502	1,905,632	8,728,134	26 17 11
Western Australia ...	837,695	31,062	868,757	19 17 7
Tasmania	4,309,610	497,492	4,807,102	31 14 8
New Zealand.....	11,594,604	2,191,451	13,786,055	22 3 1
Australasia.....	106,292,878	15,475,437	121,768,315	32 3 1

LIFE ASSURANCE.

The law does not provide for the publishing of sworn returns by Life Assurance Companies, and although valuable and interesting reports are made annually by some companies, it has been found quite impossible to distinguish the progress of assurance in New South Wales, as distinct from the other Colonies. Most of the companies have extended their business beyond the Colony in which their chief office is established; the following figures therefore refer to Australasia generally, though only to those offices

Law relating to Assurance.

whose head-quarters are in the Colonies. The assets of the twelve societies amount to £14,742,940, of which £7,756,329 are invested in mortgage, £2,396,281 in loans on policies and personal security, £1,249,599 in Government securities, £123,478 in shares, £1,696,014 in freehold and leasehold property, and cash, principally at fixed deposit, £1,023,093, and sundry debts, £498,146. The interest earned during the year amounted to £786,514, being at the rate of 5·95 per cent. ; the total increase in the accumulated funds was £1,444,657, and the net increase £1,401,932.

Analysis of
assurance
business.

New policies.

On analysing the accounts of these Societies, as published, it is seen that the total number of outstanding policies, and the amount they represent, are not given. With regard to new business it will be found that in 1889 there were 30,497 policies issued, to the value of £8,690,542, or an average amount upon each policy of £285. This means an increase of 70 policies, amounting to £101,594, over the transactions of the previous year, and an advance in the average value of the policies by £3—the highest average for the last nine years. Since the end of the year 1880 the Societies in question issued altogether no less than 268,172 new policies, representing an assurance of £73,975,803, but there is nothing in the published accounts to show how many of these policies have lapsed, and how many still remain in force. The new annual premiums, which amount to £277,456, bear an average rate of £3·194 per cent. to the total amount of new assurance—the lowest average for the last nine years.

Premiums
received.

The amount of premiums received in 1889 was £2,149,085, of which sum £257,531 was income from new premiums, and £1,891,554 was for renewals. The amount just given was £162,702 in excess of the income of the previous year. The total receipts, obtained by adding to the premium income the items "consideration for annuities granted," "interest," and other receipts, came to £2,966,917, as against the sum of £2,781,127 in

the year 1888, being an increase of £185,790. The average rate of interest realised by all the offices, as already stated, was 5·95 per cent., an improvement of 0·04 per cent. upon the previous year. The purely mutual offices, however, realised 6·01 per cent.

Claims and surrenders during the year amounted to £992,141, of which sum £658,663 was for claims with bonus additions, £97,625 for endowments and endowment assurances matured, and £235,853 for surrenders, &c. The total amount paid to policyholders in 1889 was £1,060,495, as against £956,689 in 1888. The expenses of the year exceeded those of the previous year by £460,364, but this increase is not nearly so large, relatively, as the increase in the income, the difference being 0·85 per cent. on the premium income, and 0·56 per cent. on the gross income.

The following figures, showing the existing condition of ordinary life assurance in Australia as compared with other parts of the world, are given by Mr. D. M. Luckie, the Government Insurance Commissioner of New Zealand, in his annual report for 1888 :—

Country.	Average Amount of Insurance per head of population.	Average number of Policies per 1000 of population.	Average amount insured per Policy.
	£		£
Australasia	19	65	300
Canada	9	24	376
United Kingdom	12	26	487
United States	8	15	554

It would therefore seem that the practice of insuring life is much more prevalent in Australia than in any of the other countries named; and although the average sum assured by each policy is less than elsewhere, the number of policies is so much greater as

Claims and surrenders.

Prevalence of Life Assurance.

compared with population that the total amount assured, if divided by the number of inhabitants, is considerably higher than is the case in any other country shown in the table.

Money Order
business.

The business transacted in the various Postal Departments under the system of money orders has grown to very large dimensions. This increase is due mainly to the greater facilities now afforded for the transmission of money by this method, though it is also to some extent attributable to the more general appreciation of the system by the working classes. The following is a statement of the business transacted :—

Colony.	Orders issued.		Orders paid.		Total Orders.	
	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.	Number.	Amount.
		£		£		£
N. S. Wales ...	400,487	1,188,227	390,414	1,108,086	790,901	2,296,313
Victoria	251,245	780,590	226,279	705,653	477,524	1,486,243
Queensland ...	110,108	382,343	75,961	263,851	186,069	646,194
South Aus- tralia	69,897	208,060	64,546	201,503	134,443	409,563
Tasmania	64,679	157,963	55,776	130,681	120,455	288,644
New Zealand..	172,076	589,546	150,500	540,891	322,576	1,130,437
Australasia..	1,068,492	3,306,729	963,476	2,950,665	2,031,968	6,257,394

The average amount of each money order was £3 1s. 7d., and the business done by New South Wales greatly exceeded that of any other member of the group. The average value of money orders issued in Great Britain is £2 11s. 8d.

Insolvencies.

During 1889 the largest number of insolvencies took place in New South Wales, the total number for the whole of Australasia

being 3,088, with liabilities amounting to £4,845,952, and assets, as shown in the insolvents' schedules, valued at £4,377,951, leaving a deficiency of £468,001 or £156 for each insolvent; no great reliance can, however, be placed upon the statement either of liabilities or assets, especially of the latter.

Assets and
Liabilities of
insolvents.

Colony.	Number of Insolvents.	As shown in Insolvents' Schedules.		
		Liabilities.	Assets.	Deficiency.
		£	£	£
New South Wales	1,101	794,603	396,723	397,880
Victoria	697	2,389,731	2,627,182	237,451*
Queensland	364	328,175	213,475	114,700
South Australia	190	57,707	31,423	26,284
Tasmania	12	19,993	13,564	6,429
New Zealand	724	1,255,743	1,095,584	160,159
Australasia	3,088	4,845,952	4,377,951	468,001

* Surplus.

In the case of South Australia 95 private arrangements under the Insolvency Act are included in this total, but the liabilities and assets of such are not shown. The total number of cases dealt with by the Courts was therefore only 2,993, the average being as shown above.