

FOOD SUPPLY AND COST OF LIVING.

Average
consumption
of food in
Australasia.

CONSIDERING the comparatively high rate of wages which prevails, food of all kinds is fairly cheap, and articles of diet which in other countries are almost within the category of luxuries, are largely used, even by the poorer classes. The average quantities of the principal articles of common diet annually consumed in the various Colonies of Australasia are given below :—

Article.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	Queensland.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.	Australasia.
Grain—								
Wheat.....lb.	390	300	246	390	390	362	454	334
Rice.....lb.	11·8	7·1	19·0	12·3	25·2	8·2	8·6	19·7
Oatmeal.....lb.	4·2	6·0	4·3	4·3	4·9	...	...	4·9
Potatoes.....lb.	206·5	353·0	281·0	205·0	99·7	550·0	461·0	305·0
Sugar.....lb.	93·5	90·75	80·0	96·3	106·2	87·0	86·8	91·2
Tea.....lb.	7·8	7·7	8·4	6·5	10·6	6·7	6·2	7·3
Coffee.....oz.	11·5	17·4	10·4	21·9	24·2	10·2	9·2	13·4
Cheese.....lb.	5·2	2·8	...	...	...	...	...	4·0
Butter.....lb.	16·7	10·8	...	...	...	...	...	13·8
Salt.....lb.	43·8	21·0	51·5	10·6	19·4	22·2	33·9	34·2
Meat—								
Beef.....lb.	176·8	155·0	280·0	...	...	60·0	90·0	161·1
Mutton.....lb.	104·8	98·0	90·0	...	...	150·0	110·0	103·7
Pork & Bacon.lb.	9·5	12·0	...	...	...	...	...	10·8

It will be seen that the consumption of wheat varies from 246 lb. in Queensland to 454 lb. in New Zealand, the average consumption being 334 lb. per head. Rice varies greatly in the quantity used, only 7·1 lb. being the consumption of Victoria as against 25·2 lb. in Western Australia. The consumption of oatmeal does not vary much, but it is larger in Victoria than in the

other Colonies. The use of tea is universal in Australia, the consumption being largest in Western Australia and Queensland—with 10·6 lb. and 8·4 lb. respectively. Sugar also enters largely into consumption, the average being 93·5 lb. per head in New South Wales and 90·75 lb. in Victoria. Coffee is not a universal beverage in Australasia, the consumption being a little more than one-ninth that of tea. It is used most largely in South Australia and Western Australia, where the annual demand amounts to 21·9 oz. and 24·2 oz. respectively.

Large consumption of tea.

The consumption per head of potatoes in some of the Colonies is probably less than the foregoing table shows ; thus in the case of Tasmania the returns show a consumption of 550 lb., and in New Zealand 461 lb. It is probable that potatoes are in some years grown in excess of the local requirements, and the market in New South Wales and other continental Colonies not being sufficient to absorb this excess, it remains unconsumed or is given to live stock and poultry ; under the circumstances it is impossible to determine with exactitude the quantity entering into the food consumption of the population.

Consumption of potatoes.

The consumption of meat has been ascertained with exactness for only five Colonies, but these may be taken as fairly representing the whole group. The average quantity of beef consumed in the year amounts to 161 lb. per head, that of mutton to 104 lb., and of pork 11 lb. ; in all, 276 lb. It would appear that each inhabitant of these Colonies requires daily about three-quarters of a pound of meat, and that during the year two sheep are killed for each member of the community, and one bullock to every five persons. It is obvious, therefore, that much meat must be wasted.

Consumption of meat.

The quantity of meat used by the Australasian people, as shown by the above figures, is the most remarkable feature of their diet. The consumption per inhabitant in Germany is 64 lb., in Australia it is four times that quantity, while in the United States, a meat exporting country, the consumption is little more than half that

Meat consumption compared.

of Australasia. The following table shows the meat consumption per head for the principal countries of the world :—

Country.	lb. per Inhabitant.	Country.	lb. per Inhabitant.
Great Britain	109	Holland	57
France	77	Sweden	62
Germany	64	Norway	78
Russia	51	Denmark.....	64
Austria	61	Switzerland	62
Italy	26	United States.....	150
Spain	71	Canada	90
Belgium.....	65	Australasia.....	276

Quantity of food indicative of prosperity.

Judged by the standard of the food consumed, the lot of the population of Australasia must appear far more tolerable than that of the people of most other countries. This will most clearly appear from the following table, the particulars given in which, with the exception of those referring to Australasia, have been taken from Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics :—

Country.	lb. per Inhabitant.						Tea and Coffee— Ounces.	Daily Energy— Foot tons.
	Grain.	Meat.	Sugar.	Butter and Cheese.	Potatoes.	Salt.		
United Kingdom ...	378	109	75	19	380	40	91	3,739
France	540	77	20	8	570	20	66	3,993
Germany	550	64	18	8	1,020	17	78	4,708
Russia	635	51	11	5	180	19	6	3,532
Austria	460	61	18	7	560	14	28	3,502
Italy.....	400	26	8	4	50	18	20	2,152
Spain	480	71	6	3	20	17	6	2,597
Portugal	500	49	12	3	40	17	18	2,659
Sweden	560	62	22	11	500	28	112	4,012
Norway	440	78	13	14	500	40	144	3,627
Denmark.....	560	64	22	22	410	25	140	4,071
Holland	560	57	35	15	820	20	240	4,635
Belgium.....	590	65	27	15	1,050	...	142	5,034
Switzerland	440	62	26	11	140	...	110	2,766
Roumania	400	82	4	9	80	...	8	2,414
Servia	400	84	4	9	80	...	8	2,422
United States.....	370	150	53	20	170	39	162	3,415
Canada.....	400	90	45	22	600	40	72	4,013
Australasia	350	276	91	18	305	34	127	4,470

Taking the articles of the foregoing list, with the exception of tea and coffee, and reducing them to a common basis of comparison, it will be found that the amount of thermo-dynamic power, capable of being generated by the food consumed in Australasia is only exceeded by that of Germany, Holland, and Belgium. For purpose of comparison the figures of Dr. Edward Smith, F.R.S., in his well known work on Foods, have been used, and the heat developed has been reduced to the equivalent weight lifted 1 foot high. In estimating the thermo-dynamic effect of food, grain has been reduced to its equivalent in flour, and regard has been paid to the probable nature of the meat consumed. The figures for potatoes are given as they appear in the Dictionary of Statistics, but it is a probable supposition that but a small proportion of the quantity over 400 lb. set down for any country is required for human consumption, and the figures relating to some of the countries—notably the three just mentioned—are therefore excessive. The substances included in this table are largely supplemented both in America and Europe by other foods, but not more so than in these Colonies; and in the table just given will probably be found a just view of the comparative quantity and food-value of the articles of consumption in each of the countries mentioned. To make such a comparison perfectly just the average amount of work which each individual in the community is called upon to perform should be taken into consideration. In Australasia the proportion of women and children engaged in laborious occupations is far smaller than in Europe and America, and the hours of labour of all persons are also less, so that the amount of food-energy required is reduced in proportion.

In Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics, under the heading of "Diet," is given a measure of the aggregate amount of work performed by persons doing physical and mental labour, and it would appear that the food of an average man, when burnt in the body, should be equal to at least 3,300 foot tons of work daily, that of a woman 2,200, and of a child 1,100 foot tons. For Australasia the average of all persons would be about 2,125 foot

Thermo-dynamic power of foods.

Food consumed in excess of requirements.

tons, whereas, from the table just given, the amount of work which the daily food consumed by each individual in the Colonies from the principal foods consumed is equivalent to, is not less than 4,470 foot tons. The quantity of food consumed in these Colonies would therefore appear to be far in excess of the actual requirements of the population, and though the excess may be looked upon as waste, it is none the less evidence of the wealth of the people whose circumstances permit them to indulge in it.

Tobacco.

The following table gives the annual consumption of tobacco in Australasia and the principal countries of the world. The use of tobacco appears to be more prevalent in Queensland and Western Australia than in any of the other Colonies, while the least consumption is in South Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania. Compared with other parts of the world, the average consumption of Australasia will not appear excessive :—

Country.	lb.	Country.	lb.
Australasia	2·60	Austria-Hungary	3·77
New South Wales	2·91	Italy	1·34
Victoria	2·30	Spain	1·70
Queensland	3·53	Holland	6·92
South Australia	2·12	Belgium	3·15
Western Australia	4·11	Switzerland	3·24
Tasmania	2·20	Sweden	1·87
New Zealand	2·17	Denmark	3·70
United Kingdom	1·41	Turkey	4·37
France	2·05	United States	4·40
Germany	3·00	Canada	2·11
Russia	1·23	Brazil	4·37

Consumption
of intoxicants.

Taking Australasia as a whole it compares very favourably with most of the European countries in the quantity of intoxicants annually consumed by each inhabitant, as the following statement

shows. The figures, which are reduced to gallons of proof spirit from data given in Mulhall's Dictionary of Statistics, would look even more favourable to Australasia were the fact of the large preponderance of males over females in these Colonies made a feature in the comparison :—

Country.	Consumption.	Country.	Consumption.
United Kingdom	gallons. 3·57	Portugal.....	gallons. 3·00
France	5·10	Holland	4·00
Germany	3·08	Belgium	4·00
Russia	2·02	Denmark	5·00
Austria	2·80	Scandinavia	4·36
Italy	3·40	United States	2·65
Spain.....	2·85	Australasia	2·93

The following table shows the consumption for all the Colonies during the year 1891. In the case of South Australia and Western Australia, whence no returns relating to breweries are obtainable, the consumption of beer has been assumed to be the average of the other five Colonies :—

Intoxicants consumed by each Colony.

Colony.	Spirits.		Wine.		Beer, &c.		Equivalent in Alcohol (proof) per inhabitant.
	Total.	Per inhabitant.	Total.	Per inhabitant.	Total.	Per inhabitant.	
	galls.	galls.	galls.	galls.	galls.	galls.	galls.
New South Wales	1,268,368	1·11	961,579	0·84	13,057,982	11·42	2·83
Victoria	1,358,900	1·19	1,069,192	1·72	10,739,218	17·23	3·93
Queensland	465,734	1·16	258,978	0·64	4,243,275	10·56	2·72
South Australia	206,902	0·65	526,419	1·66	3,565,064	11·23	2·61
Western Australia	75,014	1·47	209,819	4·12	572,224	11·23	4·15
Tasmania	92,209	0·64	24,073	0·17	1,329,671	9·29	1·8
New Zealand.....	439,829	0·70	103,023	0·17	4,814,811	7·65	1·74
Total and Means	3,906,956	1·02	4,053,088	1·06	47,322,245	12·33	2·93

The largest consumption of spirits per inhabitant is in Western Australia, Victoria being second. Wine is used most freely in Western Australia, Victoria, and South Australia, and beer in the Colony of Victoria. The average consumption of alcohol in all the Colonies amounts to 2·93 gallons of proof spirit per inhabitant, ranging from 4·15 gallons in Western Australia to 1·74 gallons in New Zealand. The total for Victoria is 39 per cent. larger than that of New South Wales. The figures relating to the production of beer in Victoria may, however, be over-stated, for as no excise duty is levied in that Colony it is quite possible that the returns furnished by the various breweries are greatly exaggerated.

Strength of
Australian
wines and beers.

It is popularly supposed that Australian wines and beers are not heavily charged with spirit as compared with the imported articles; this belief is erroneous. Several descriptions of Australian wines have a natural strength of 30 per cent. of proof spirit, while from analyses recently made it would appear that the strength of these wines offered for sale varies from 24 to 37 per cent. of spirit. On the same authority it was stated that imported beers ranged from 13·88 to 15·42 per cent. in the case of English, and from 9·58 to 11·76 per cent. of proof spirit in Lager, while the local manufacture varied according to the make from 11·21 to 15·12, the average being 13·75 per cent. It is generally understood, however, that since the imposition of excise duties on colonial beer in 1887, the strength of the article has been somewhat reduced, and does not average more than 13 per cent. of proof spirit.

COST OF LIVING.

Sufficient data are not available to enable a calculation to be made of the cost of living in all the Colonies, but with the materials to hand an estimate can be arrived at for New South Wales.

Income and ex-
penditure of
the people.

In the year 1892 an estimate was made of the yearly expenditure of the population of New South Wales, and it was found that

it amounted to £53,445,100. The distribution of this expenditure, together with the rates per inhabitant, is shown below :—

	Total	Per		
	Expenditure.	Inhabitant.		
	£	£	s.	d.
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	17,228,300	14	11	6 $\frac{3}{4}$
Fermented and spirituous liquors	4,512,200	3	16	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Tobacco	1,414,300	1	3	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Clothing and drapery	8,391,600	7	2	0
Furniture	805,900	0	13	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
Rent or value of buildings used as dwellings ...	6,726,700	5	13	10
Locomotion	1,705,600	1	8	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Fuel and light	1,797,300	1	10	5
Personal attendance and service	1,918,000	1	12	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
Medical attendance, medicine, and nursing.....	1,427,800	1	4	2
Religion, charities, education.....	716,400	0	12	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Art and amusement	995,900	0	16	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Books, newspapers, &c.	765,400	0	12	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Postage and telegrams, direct taxation	743,100	0	12	7
Household expenses not included elsewhere ...	2,814,600	2	7	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
Miscellaneous expenses	1,482,000	1	5	1
	53,445,100	45	4	5 $\frac{1}{2}$

Cost of living
New South
Wales.

The conditions of life and the standard of living are much the same in all the Colonies, but it would undoubtedly be incorrect to assume that the average expenditure throughout Australasia is equal to that of New South Wales. Making an arbitrary reduction on the New South Wales rates of 10 per cent. for the other Colonies the expenditure for Australasia would be as follows :—

	Total	Per		
	Expenditure.	Inhabitant.		
	£	£	s.	d.
Food and non-alcoholic beverages	53,448,800	13	11	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Fermented and spirituous liquors	13,998,600	3	11	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Tobacco	4,387,700	1	2	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Clothing and drapery	26,033,900	6	12	1
Furniture	2,500,200	0	12	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Rent or value of buildings used as dwellings ...	20,868,800	5	5	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Locomotion	5,291,400	1	6	10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Fuel and Light	5,575,900	1	8	3 $\frac{3}{4}$
Personal attendance and service.....	5,950,400	1	10	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Medical attendance, medicine, and nursing ...	4,429,600	1	2	5 $\frac{3}{4}$
Religion, charities, education.....	2,222,500	0	11	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Art and amusement	3,089,700	0	15	8
Books, newspapers, &c.	2,374,600	0	12	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Postage and telegrams, direct taxation	2,305,400	0	11	8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Household expenses not included elsewhere....	8,731,900	2	4	3 $\frac{3}{4}$
Miscellaneous expenses	4,597,700	1	3	4
	£165,807,100	42	1	3

Cost of living,
Australasia.

Daily expenditure

The expenditure in New South Wales for the year given amounted to £45 4s. 5½d. per head, or at the rate of 2s. 5½d. per day. The daily expenditure may be thus distributed :—

	Pence per day.	Proportion of Expenditure.
Food	9·6	32·3
Clothing	4·7	15·8
Rent	3·7	12·5
Direct Taxes	0·4	1·3
Sundries	11·3	38·1
	29·7	100·0

Expenditure in other countries.

According to Mulhall the expenditure per inhabitant in the leading countries of Europe and in the United States is :—

Country.	Expenditure per Inhabitant.	Country.	Expenditure per Inhabitant.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
United Kingdom	29 14 9	Norway	19 0 0
France	23 19 4	Denmark	28 11 5
Germany	20 3 4	Holland	20 17 4
Russia	10 1 11	Belgium	25 8 2
Austria	14 4 9	Switzerland	18 0 0
Italy	11 11 0	United States	32 16 2
Spain	15 12 6	Canada	23 6 2
Portugal	11 5 6		
Sweden	20 8 4	Australasia	42 1 3

Cost of living, and earnings.

The table just given affords but a partial view of the question of the cost of living; for if the total earnings of the countries above enumerated be considered as an element of comparison, it will be found that few countries approach New South Wales in the small proportion of income absorbed in providing food for the people. The following table, given on the same authority as the preceding, shows that, while the actual cost of food and drink is £18 7s. 11d. in this Colony, and £17 2s. 3d. in Australasia, as against £14 4s. 9d. in Great Britain, the earnings required to pay for this food are not larger proportionately than

in the countries which show most favourably in the table. The number of working days in the year is assumed to be 300, allowing for thirteen days' sickness and fifty-two Sundays:—

Country.	Average annual cost of food and beverage.	Ratio of cost of food to earnings.	Day's earnings equal to annual cost of food.
	£ s. d.	Per cent.	Days.
United Kingdom	14 4 9	42·2	127
France	12 4 5	44·0	132
Germany	10 18 5	49·1	148
Russia	5 19 7	52·0	156
Austria	7 17 4	50·8	152
Italy	6 4 10	51·2	153
Spain	8 9 0	51·2	154
Portugal	7 3 0	59·1	177
Sweden	9 18 11	45·2	136
Norway	9 15 0	47·6	143
Denmark	11 14 0	36·0	108
Holland	10 8 0	46·0	138
Belgium	12 3 1	43·4	130
Switzerland	8 11 7	45·2	135
United States	9 17 7	25·3	76
Canada	8 9 0	32·5	98
Australasia	17 2 3	32·8	98

Cost of food compared with earnings.