

Victorian Year-Book, 1923-24.

INTRODUCTION.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION, AREA, AND CLIMATE.

Area of Victoria. Victoria is situated at the south-eastern extremity of the Australian continent, of which it occupies about a thirty-fourth part, and it contains about 87,884 square miles, or 56,245,760 acres. It is bounded on the north and north-east by New South Wales, from which it is separated by the River Murray, and by a straight line running in a south-easterly direction from a place near the head-waters of that stream, called The Springs, on Forest Hill, to Cape Howe. On the west it is bounded by South Australia, the dividing line being about 242 geographical miles in length, approximating to the position of the 141st meridian of east longitude, and extending from the River Murray to the sea. On the south and south-east its shores are washed by the Southern Ocean, Bass Strait, and the Pacific Ocean. It lies between the 34th and 39th parallels of south latitude and the 141st and 150th meridians of east longitude. Its extreme length from east to west is about 420, its greatest breadth about 250, and its extent of coast-line nearly 600 geographical miles. Great Britain, exclusive of the islands in the British Seas, contains 88,756 square miles, and is therefore slightly larger than Victoria.

The southernmost point in Victoria, and in the whole of the Australian continent, is Wilson's Promontory, which lies in latitude 39 deg. 8 min. S., longitude 146 deg. 26 min. E.; the northernmost point is the place where the western boundary of the State meets the Murray, latitude 34 deg. 2 min. S., longitude 140 deg. 58 min. E.; the point furthest east is Cape Howe, situated in latitude 37 deg. 31 min. S., longitude 149 deg. 59 min. E.; the most westerly point is the line of the whole western frontier, which, according to the latest correction, lies upon the meridian 140 deg. 58 min. E., and extends from latitude 34 deg. 2 min. S. to latitude 38 deg. 4 min. S., a distance of 242 geographical miles.

Climate. From its geographical position, Victoria enjoys a climate more suitable to the European constitution than any other State upon the Continent of Australia. In the sixty-eight years ended with 1923 the maximum temperature in the shade recorded at the Melbourne Observatory and the Weather Bureau was 111·2 deg. Fahr., on the 14th January, 1862; the minimum was 27 deg., on the 21st July, 1869; and the mean was 58·4 deg. Upon the average, on only four days during the year the thermometer rises above 100 deg. in the shade, and on nineteen days the temperature reaches 90 deg. or over; generally, on about two nights during the year it falls below freezing point. Sultry nights are of rare occurrence. It is only occasionally that a high minimum is recorded. The minimum reading

approximates to 70 deg. on an average on only two nights in any one year. The maximum temperature in the sun ever recorded (*i.e.*, since 1859) was 178·5 deg., on the 14th January, 1862. The mean atmospheric pressure noted, first at the Observatory 91 feet above the sea level, and later at the Weather Bureau 115 feet above sea level, was, during the sixty-six years ended with 1923, 30·012 inches; the average number of days on which rain fell each year was 137, and the average yearly rainfall was 25·61 inches. The mean relative humidity of the atmosphere is 68 per cent.; on very warm days it is often 12 per cent., and it has been as low as 2 per cent. The severity of the heat is not so much felt as it would be if there were a relatively high wet bulb, as the temperature by such bulb seldom exceeds 75 deg. The average number of hours of sunshine daily is 6·3, and fogs occur, on an average, on only 18 days in the year.

MOUNTAINS AND HILLS, RIVERS AND LAKES.

Mountains and Hills. The highest mountain in Victoria is Mount Bogong,* situated in the county of the same name, 6,509 feet above the sea-level; the next highest peaks are—Mount Feathertop, 6,306 feet; Mount Nelson, 6,170 feet; Mount Fainter, 6,160 feet; Mount Hotham, 6,100 feet; Mount McKay, 6,030 feet; and Mount Cope, 6,027 feet; all situated in the same county; also the Cobboras, 6,030 feet, situated between the counties of Benambra and Tambo. These, so far as is known, are the only peaks which exceed 6,000 feet in height; but, according to a list which appears in the *Year-Book* for 1915-16, there are 39 peaks between 5,000 and 6,000 feet high, and 40 between 4,000 and 5,000 feet high; it is known, moreover, that there are many peaks rising to upwards of 4,000 feet above the level of the sea whose actual heights have not yet been determined.

Rivers. With the exception of the Yarra, on the banks of which the metropolis is situated; the Goulburn, which empties itself into the Murray about eight miles to the eastward of Echuca; the La Trobe and the Mitchell, with, perhaps, a few other of the Gippsland streams; and the Murray itself, the rivers of Victoria are not navigable except by boats. They, however, drain the watershed of large areas of country, and many of the streams are used as feeders to permanent reservoirs for irrigation and water supply purposes. The Murray, which forms the northern boundary of the State, is the largest river in Australia. Its total length is 1,520 miles, for 1,200 of which it flows along the Victorian border. Several of the rivers in the north-western portion of the State have no outlet, but are gradually lost in the absorbent tertiary flat country through which they pass.

* The highest mountain on the Australian Continent is Mount Kosciusko, in New South Wales, one peak of which is 7,328 feet high.

Lakes. Victoria contains numerous salt and fresh-water lakes and lagoons; but many of these are nothing more than swamps during dry seasons. Some of them are craters of extinct volcanoes. Lake Corangamite, the largest inland lake in Victoria, covers 90 square miles, and is quite salt, notwithstanding that it receives the flood waters of several fresh-water streams. It has no visible outlet. Lake Colac, only a few miles distant from Lake Corangamite, is a beautiful sheet of water, $10\frac{1}{2}$ square miles in extent, and quite fresh. Lake Burrumbeet is also a fine sheet of fresh water, embracing 8 square miles. The Gippsland lakes—Victoria, King, and Reeve—are situated close to the coast, and are separated from the sea by only a narrow belt of sand. Lake Wellington, the largest of the Gippsland lakes, lies to the westward of Lakes Victoria and King, and is united to the first-named by a narrow channel. South-east of Geelong is Lake Connewarre, connected with the sea at Point Flinders.

A list of mountains and hills, rivers and lakes in Victoria appears in the *Victorian Year-Book* for 1915-16. This was revised by the Surveyor-General, Mr. A. B. Lang, and contains information in regard to heights, lengths, and areas respectively.

FLORA OF VICTORIA.

An article on the "Flora of Victoria" by the late J. R. Tovey appeared in the *Year-Book* for 1921-22 on pages 3 to 8 and an addendum thereto by Mr. J. W. Audas in the *Year-Book* for 1922-23, on pages 3 and 4.

FURTHER ADDENDUM TO THE ABOVE ARTICLE.

By J. W. Audas, F.L.S., F.R.M.S. (*National Herbarium, Melbourne*).

During the period 1923-24 a very useful publication entitled *A Census of the Plants of Victoria* was published by the Field Naturalists' Club. The work contains the botanical and vernacular names of over 2,000 native plants, their distribution and other details; also a list of the weed introductions.

A number of species and one genus new to science were added to the list of the Flora during the year, namely:—*Choristemon humilis* H. B. Williamson (*Epacridaceæ*), new genus and species endemic to Victoria; *Kochia excavata* J. M. Black, "Bottle Blue Bush" (*Chenopodiaceæ*), a small saltbush indigenous to South Australia and Victoria. The following orchidaceous plants have been recently named by Dr. R. S. Rogers, of Adelaide:—*Microtis oblonga*, from Victoria and South Australia; *Prasophyllum Colemanæ*; *Prasophyllum Tadgellianum*, Victoria and New South Wales; and *Pterostylis decurva*, *Callistemon subulatus* Cheel, "Needle Bottle Brush" (*Myrtaceæ*).

During the period four species not previously recorded for this State have been added to the list of the native Flora—*Bassia tricornis* F.v.M., "Three-horned Saltbush" (*Chenopodiaceæ*);

Centipeda thespidioides F.v.M., "Desert Sneezeweed" (*Compositæ*);
Minuria denticulata Benth, "Toothed Minuria" (*Compositæ*);
Pultenaea acerosa R. Br., "Bristly Bush Pea" (*Leguminosæ*).

EXOTICS.

Eleven foreign plants have been recorded as growing wild for the first time, namely:—

Antholyza æthiopica L., "African Corn Flag" (*Iridaceæ*), a native of South Africa which has escaped from gardens; *Iris germanica* L., "German Iris or Common Flag" (*Iridaceæ*); *Leycestria formosa* Wallich, "Himalayan Honey Suckle," a native of India; *Lychnis divaricata* Reichb, "Spreading Lychnis" (*Caryophyllacæ*), a native of Sicily and Spain; *Lycopsis arvensis* L., "Bugloss" (*Boraginaceæ*), native of Europe; *Oxalis hirta* L., "Hairy Wood Sorrel" (*Oxalidaceæ*), native of South Africa; *Reseda lutea* L., "Cut-leaf Mignonette" (*Resedaceæ*), a native of Europe and Asia; *Rubus ideaus* L., "Common Raspberry," a native of Europe and Asia; *Solanum villosum* Lam., "Hairy Nightshade," a native of Europe, Asia, and Africa; *Stachys obtusifolia* McOwan, "Blunt-leaf Hedge Nettle" (*Labiata*), a native of South Africa; *Tradescantia virginica* L., "Common Spiderwort" (*Commelinaceæ*), a native of North America.

PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY OF VICTORIA.

An article on the "Physical Geography and Geology of Victoria," by Mr. W. Baragwanath, Director of Victorian Geological Survey, appeared in the *Year-Book* for 1920-21, on pages 3 to 13, and an addendum thereto in the *Year-Book* for 1921-22.

THE FAUNA OF VICTORIA.

An article on the "Fauna of Victoria," by the late T. S. Hall, M.A., D.Sc. (University of Melbourne), and Mr. J. A. Kershaw, F.Z.S., Curator of the National Museum, Melbourne, appeared in the *Year-Book* for 1916-17, and addenda thereto by Mr. Kershaw in the *Year-Books* for 1918-19 and 1920-21.

THE HISTORY OF VICTORIA.

An article on this subject contributed by Ernest Scott, Professor of History in the University of Melbourne, appeared in the *Year-Book* for 1916-17, pages 1 to 31.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF LEADING EVENTS.

The *Year-Book* for 1916-17 contained, on pages 31 to 50, a chronological table of leading events in Victorian history for the years 1770 to 1900 inclusive, and of leading events in Victorian and other history for the years 1901 to 1916 inclusive. The leading events in the five years 1917 to 1922 were given in the volumes relating to those years.

Some of the principal events in Victorian and other history during 1923 are given in the table which follows:—

1923. 9th January	..	Mr. T. A'Beckett Weigall, K.C., appointed as acting judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria.
2nd February	..	The Hon. W. M. Hughes, P.C., resigned the position of Prime Minister of the Commonwealth. Mr. S. M. Bruce took up the duties of the office.
3rd March	..	Death of the Hon. Sir Peter McBride, formerly Agent-General for Victoria, at Cannes, in the south of France, aged 56 years.
5th March	..	The Broken Hill Proprietary's steel works at Port Waratah, Newcastle, re-opened after being shut down for many months.
31st March	..	Departure of the Governor of Victoria (Lord Stradbroke) and Lady Stradbroke on a visit to England.
10th May	..	Appointment of Mr. Donald Mackinnon as Commonwealth Commissioner in the United States.
24th May	..	Resignation of the Prime Minister of Great Britain (Mr. Bonar Law) on account of ill-health and appointment of Mr. Stanley Baldwin.
6th June	..	Death of Sir Denison Miller, Governor of the Commonwealth Bank, at Sydney, aged 63 years.
16th June	..	Death of Alderman Sir David Valentine Hennessy, Lord Mayor of Melbourne, 1912 to 1917.
8th July	..	Death of the Hon. D. McLeod, the oldest member of the Legislative Assembly, aged 86 years.
2nd August	..	Death of Mr. Warren Harding, President of the United States.
2nd September	..	Great earthquake in Japan. The cities of Yokohama and Tokio and other cities were almost completely destroyed. The loss of life was estimated at more than 100,000 persons, and the damage to property at £200,000,000.
19th September	..	The Broken Hill Proprietary Company resumed work at Broken Hill after a long period of idleness.
30th October	..	Death of Mr. Bonar Law, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, aged 65 years.
31st October	..	Police strike in Melbourne. Six hundred and twenty-five police refused duty. Special constables were sworn in temporarily. Subsequently the positions were filled by new appointments.
20th November	..	Sir Wm. M. McPherson resigned the position of Treasurer in the Lawson Government.
11th to 13th December	..	Elections for the British House of Commons. As a result of the voting the Ministry was so weakened that it was defeated in the House soon after Parliament met. A Labour Ministry, led by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, then assumed office.

PROGRESS OF STATE SINCE 1842.

The following table has been prepared to illustrate the advance made by the State since 1842, the year of the introduction of representative government into New South Wales, which then included the Port Phillip district. Figures are given for the year 1850, as this was the year immediately preceding the separation of the Colony

STATISTICS OF VICTORIAN PROGRESS, 1842 TO 1923.

	1842.	1850.	1861.	1871.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1911.	1923.
Population, 31st December ..	23,799	76,162	541,800	717,412	879,886	1,157,678	1,209,900	1,339,915	1,625,380
Revenue .. £	87,296	259,433	2,592,101	3,734,422	5,186,011	8,343,588	7,712,099	9,204,503	21,634,677
Expenditure from Revenue .. £	124,631	196,440	3,092,021	3,659,534	5,108,642	9,128,699	7,672,780	9,194,157	21,611,309
Public Funded Debt .. £	..	..	6,345,060	11,994,800	22,426,502	43,638,897	49,546,275	57,983,764	118,562,029
Gold produced .. oz.	..	1,967,453	1,855,477	858,850	576,400	542,074	789,562	105,514	105,514
Wool produced .. lbs.	2,752,330	16,345,468	22,640,745	37,177,646	45,970,560	76,508,635	73,235,138	101,803,644	102,467,950
Butter produced .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	16,703,786	16,703,786	16,703,786	84,355,939
Agriculture—									
Land in cultivation .. acres	8,124	52,341	427,241	793,918	1,582,998	2,512,593	3,647,459	5,386,247	7,049,429
Wheat bushels	55,360	556,167	3,607,727	4,500,795	8,714,377	13,679,268	12,127,382	34,813,019	35,697,220
Oats	66,100	99,535	2,136,480	3,299,889	3,612,111	4,455,551	6,724,900	9,699,127	8,093,459
Wine gallons	..	4,621	47,568	713,589	539,191	1,554,130	1,981,475	1,362,420	1,717,490
Live Stock—Horses .. No.	4,065	21,219	84,057	181,643	278,195	440,696	892,237	472,080	494,947
" Cattle	100,792	378,806	628,092	799,509	1,286,677	1,812,104	1,602,384	1,547,569	1,785,660
" Sheep	1,404,333	6,032,783	6,239,238	10,002,381	10,267,265	12,928,148	10,811,790	12,882,665	11,765,520
" Pigs .. ..	..	9,260	43,480	177,447	239,926	286,780	350,370	333,281	204,982
Total Imports—Value .. £	277,427	744,925	13,532,452	12,341,995	16,718,521	21,711,608	18,927,340	23,150,198*	..
" Exports—Value .. £	193,783	1,041,796	13,823,606	14,557,820	16,252,103	16,006,743	18,646,097	23,806,275*	..
Imports, Oversea—Value .. £	..	..	10,991,377	9,201,942	11,481,567	13,802,598	12,686,880	21,839,224	46,608,239
Exports .. .. .. £	..	..	12,209,794	12,843,451	12,318,128	11,403,922	13,075,259	18,924,277	34,768,655
Shipping tonnage	78,025	195,117	1,090,002	1,355,025	2,411,902	4,715,109	6,715,491	9,907,046	13,230,320
Railways open miles	..	..	214	276	1,247	2,764	3,238	3,496	4,341
Telegraph wire .. ..	..	..	2,586	3,472	6,626	13,980	15,356	16,405	32,594
Postal business—Letters .. No.	97,490	381,651	6,109,929	11,716,166	26,308,347	62,526,448	83,973,199	143,483,191	178,682,295
" Newspapers	147,160	381,158	4,277,179	5,172,970	11,440,732	22,729,005	27,104,344	†	37,204,106
Savings Bank Deposits .. £	..	52,897	582,796	1,117,761	2,569,438	5,715,687	9,662,006	18,213,040	54,677,508†
Factories—									
Number of .. ..	..	..	531	1,740	2,488	3,111	3,249	4,873	7,096
Hands employed .. ..	..	..	4,395	19,468	43,209	52,225	66,529	102,176	152,625
Value of machinery, plant, land, and buildings .. £	..	..	..	4,725,125	8,044,296	16,472,859	12,298,500	16,613,348	43,423,240
Value of articles produced .. £	..	..	..	..	13,370,836	22,390,251	19,478,780	36,660,854	111,286,343
State Education—									
Number of Primary schools ..	..	61	671	988	1,757	2,233	1,967	2,050	2,405
Expenditure on Education .. £	..	..	162,547	274,384	546,285	726,711	701,034	1,052,418	2,549,061
Total value of rateable property in municipalities .. £	..	..	29,638,091	50,166,078	87,642,459	203,351,360	185,101,993	265,083,727	455,209,974
Friendly Societies—									
Number of members .. ..	..	..	7,166	35,706	47,908	89,269	101,045	139,308	145,254
Total funds .. .. .. £	..	..	..	213,004	475,954	961,933	1,370,604	2,122,602	3,547,798

NOTE.—In a few instances in the earlier years, where it is not possible to give figures for the exact date or period shown, those for the nearest dates or periods are given. Gold was discovered in 1851, in which year the return was 145,137 oz. Butter figures were not collected prior to 1891.

* These figures relate to the calendar year 1909. † Owing to the Commonwealth authorities having discontinued the keeping of records of Inter-State trade the value of the total imports and exports of the State are not available for a later year.

† Including deposits in the Commonwealth Savings Bank. ‡ Not available.

from New South Wales. The subsequent years are census years except the last:—

Victorian Year-Book, 1923-24.

The population of the State at the end of 1842 was 23,799; at the end of 1923 it had increased to 1,625,380. During the period 1842-1923 the revenue steadily increased from £87,296 to £21,631,677. There was no public debt until after separation. In 1861 the State indebtedness was £6,345,060; in 1923 the funded debt had reached £118,562,029, which has been spent on revenue-yielding and other works of a permanent character. The land in cultivation in 1842 was slightly over 8,000 acres; it now amounts to 7,049,429 acres. The value of oversea imports in 1861 was £10,991,377; in 1922-23 it was £44,608,239. Oversea exports amounted to £12,209,794 in 1861, and to £33,768,655 in 1922-23. No railways or telegraphs were in existence up to the end of 1855; in 1861 there were 214 miles of railway open, and in 1923 there were 4,341 miles; 2,586 miles of telegraph wires had been erected up to 1861, and 32,594 miles up to the 30th June, 1923. Postal business in letters and newspapers has expanded rapidly during the period covered by the table, and there has also been a large increase in Savings Bank deposits, which rose from £52,697 in 1850 to £54,677,508 in 1923.

The expenditure on education amounted to £162,547 in 1861, and had increased to £2,549,061 in 1922-23. Members of friendly societies numbered 7,166 in 1861 and 145,254 in 1922—the funds amounting to £213,000 in 1871 and £3,549,798 in 1922. Hands employed in factories rose from 19,468 in 1871 to 152,625 in 1922-23. The total value of rateable property in municipalities, which was £29,600,000 in 1861, was £455,209,974 in 1922-23.

CONSTITUTION AND GOVERNMENT.

The Present Constitution.

After the establishment of the Federal Government it became evident that the representation of the States in the States Houses was excessive, and steps were taken to reform the States Constitutions. Accordingly an Act "to provide for the Reform of the Constitution" was passed in Victoria and reserved for the Royal assent on 7th April, 1903. After an interval of some months the Royal assent was proclaimed on 26th November, 1903. This Act, entitled *The Constitution Act 1903*, provided for a reduction in the number of responsible Ministers from ten to eight, and in their salaries from £10,400 to £8,400 (since increased to £10,000); and decreased the number of members of the Legislative Council from 48 to 35, including one special representative for the State railways and public servants; but increased the number of electoral provinces from fourteen to seventeen, each being now represented by two members elected for six years—one retiring every three years by rotation, except at a general election, when one-half of the members are to be elected for only three years. The property qualification of members of the Council was reduced from £100 to £50 as the annual value of the freehold, and that of electors

Reform Act
1903.