

VICTORIAN YEAR-BOOK,

1895-8.

CONTAINING A
DIGEST OF THE STATISTICS OF VICTORIA,
WITH REFERENCES TO THE
STATISTICS OF THE OTHER AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES
AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

BY
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TWENTY-SECOND ISSUE.



BY AUTHORITY.

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PREFACE.

Soon after the publication of the issue for 1894 the Government directed the attention of the Department to several matters of importance extraneous to its ordinary routine work, and the staff—already weakened by the retirement or death of several of its old experienced officers, and suffering from the effects of retrenchment which retarded the filling of important vacancies—proved unequal to the task of continuing the annual publication of this work, although fairly keeping pace with the demands for the greater volume of information, compiled on improved methods, contained in the *Statistical Register*, and the largely increased demands made by numerous correspondents. It was only by dint of great exertion by all concerned—aided by a small supernumerary staff—that the present volume, covering the period 1894–8, has at length been completed. The next issue is intended to cover the period 1899–1900, and subsequently every effort will be made to resume the annual publication of the work.

Some of the principal extraneous matters referred to above, and dealt with by the Department, are as follow :—

Compilation of elaborate tables in connexion with the proposed imposition of Land and Income Taxes ; Reports on the Conversion and Consolidation of the Public Debt, and on the Commutation of Pensions ; Computation of Interest Tables in connexion with Loans to Farmers and others ; the preparation of voluminous returns in connexion with the Federation Question, and attendance at Conferences thereon.

Added to this, several elaborate series of tables were prepared at various times at the request of Royal Commissions or Boards.

The compilation of information for five years instead of one has necessitated a complete revision of the forms of all the more important tables. The main body of this issue now consists of 1,959 paragraphs, covering 1,132 pages, besides appendices extending over 185 pages, as compared with 1,748 paragraphs covering 928 pages, and an appendix extending over only 47 pages in the edition for 1894. In fact, the whole work has been minutely revised, and much new information added ; whilst in many cases the figures are brought down to various periods in 1899.

The difficulties of reviewing the facts and figures of the period were, moreover, greatly intensified by the extraordinary political activity which has recently prevailed in the colony, resulting in legislation affecting

such subjects as Retrenchment, Direct Taxation, Industrial—more especially Factory—Employment, Bonuses to Industries, and the opening up of markets abroad—so successful in the rapid development of the now important Victorian Butter Industry, the Safeguarding of Trust Funds, Loans Consolidation, Establishment of Sinking Funds, Old-age Pensions, &c., &c.

In the first instance, the present work was published in five sections, as follow :—Section I., Parts, *Constitution and Government*; Section II., Parts, *Finance and Vital Statistics*; Sections III., Parts, *Interchange and Accumulation*; Section IV., Parts, *Production and Defences*; Section V., Parts, *Law, Crime, and Social Condition*, followed by general table of contents, folding sheets, index, and map.

The work is preceded, for the first time, by a complete Table of Contents, which will enable the reader to more readily follow the plan of the work and find any subject desired. This is in addition to the usual index printed at the end of the work.

Part I. (Constitution and Government) has not only been thoroughly revised and brought up to date, but it also contains a resumé of the federal movement up to the submission of the Commonwealth Constitution Bill, as drawn up by the Convention, to the people of Australia; a comparison of Australia with other leading Federations, and a consideration of the financial interests involved.

Part III. contains, in addition to the usual particulars, a short account of the retrenchment effected in 1892–3 and subsequent years, and the consequent reductions made in various branches of the Public Service; details of Revenue and Expenditure in various British and foreign countries, for comparison with those in Australia; a full account of the Income Tax imposed in 1895, illustrated by a series of statistical tables; additional tables indicating the incidence of Customs and Excise taxation, not only in the Australasian colonies, but also in other countries. The tables, and paragraphs referring to Finances of Municipalities have been considerably elaborated, with a view of showing more clearly the true resources and position of those important bodies. Much new matter is also added concerning Loans, new Sinking Funds, and the important question of the Conversion and Consolidation of the Public Debt.

In Part IV. will be found references to the unnecessary coinage of gold, the profit to be derived from Australian Silver Coinage, the flotation of Joint Stock Companies, and to the question of how far the Probate Returns may be relied on as an indication of the diffusion of wealth.

In Part V., besides other additions and improvements, an interesting comparison, for a period of five years, of the Imports and Exports, and duty received, on each article of merchandize, will be found on pages 426-75 ; also statements for four periods of the Imports and Exports of principal articles from and to different countries, on pages 508-17 ; and much fuller information concerning index numbers, than that contained in the previous issue, on pages 519-24.

Some interesting results bearing on the Fertility of Married Women at Various Ages, and some new aspects of the Statistics of Illegitimacy and Ante-marital Concubinage, will be found in Part VI., which also contains special tables showing the Death Rates from Phthisis and Cancer at Various Age-groups at successive census periods.

The provisions of the new Land Act are fully described in Part VII. The following matters, amongst others, are also specially treated of in this part :—Improved Methods of Collecting Agricultural Statistics ; Sugar Production and Consumption in Various Countries ; tables showing the Consumption of Wheat, compiled on a new and more reliable basis ; the Production, Consumption, and Value of Live Stock, Dairy Produce, Wool, and other Pastoral Produce.

A statement, specially compiled for this work, showing the Distribution of Intestate Estates according to the Victorian Law and Practice, appears in Section IX., and will probably prove of general interest.

Part X. contains references to several new matters of interest affecting the social welfare of the State, such as the Reports of the "Unemployment" and "Habitual Drunkards" Boards of Inquiry ; Factory Legislation and its Results ; Old-age Pensions ; and the Amount of Public Subscriptions for Charitable Purposes.

Attention is drawn to a special article in Appendix E, showing a Decrease of Crime in Victoria in spite of the introduction of the system of secular education.

The other appendices furnish later information respecting State and Municipal Revenue and Expenditure than that contained in the body of the work, and contain the usual Tables of Australasian Statistics ; Tables of Trade Index Numbers, now shown for Imports as well as Exports ; and the Complete Tariffs of the Australasian Colonies. The latter will probably become of historical value, seeing that the separate Tariffs of six of the colonies, since federated, will soon be replaced by one uniform Tariff for the whole of Australia, including Tasmania.

The usual three Statistical Summaries are given on two folding sheets, the information being brought down to later dates than those shown in the body of the work.

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- No. 1. General.
No. 2. Agricultural.
No. 3. Australasian.

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