

# VICTORIAN YEAR-BOOK, 1903.

## INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

Victoria is situated at the south-east extremity of the Australian continent, of which it occupies about a thirty-fourth part, and 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 right 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's Straits, 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 88,309 square miles, and is therefore slightly larger than Victoria.

The southernmost point in Victoria, and, consequently, in the whole of Australia, is Wilson's Promontory, which lies in latitude  $39^{\circ} 8' S.$ , longitude  $145^{\circ} 26' E.$ ; the northernmost point is the place where the western boundary of the State meets the Murray, latitude  $34^{\circ} 2' S.$ , longitude  $140^{\circ} 58' E.$ , the point furthest east is Cape Howe, situated in latitude  $37^{\circ} 31' S.$ , longitude  $149^{\circ} 59' E.$ ; the most westerly point is the line of the whole western frontier, which, according to the latest correction, lies upon the meridian  $140^{\circ} 58' E.$ , and extends from latitude  $34^{\circ} 2' S.$  to latitude  $38^{\circ} 4' S.$ , or 242 geographical miles.

The area of the Australian Commonwealth is estimated to be somewhat under three million square miles; but that area, added to the area of New Zealand, amounts to nearly

Area of  
Victoria.

Areas of  
Australian  
States  
and New  
Zealand.

three million one hundred thousand square miles. The following are the areas of the different States, as officially computed:—

#### AREA OF STATES AND NEW ZEALAND.

	Sq. Miles.
Victoria ... ..	87,884
New South Wales ... ..	310,700
Queensland ... ..	668,497
South Australia ... ..	903,690
Western Australia ... ..	975,920
Tasmania... ..	26,215
Total Australia ... ..	2,972,906
New Zealand ... ..	104,471
Total Australasia ... ..	3,077,377

Position of  
Austral-  
asian  
capitals.

The following are the latitudes and longitudes of the capital cities of the different Australian States and New Zealand, the positions being the observatories at Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide, the Barracks Observatory at Hobart, the Survey Office Observatory at Wellington, and the Government House at Perth:—

#### POSITION OF CAPITAL CITIES.

State or Colony.	Capital City.								
	Name.	Latitude S.			Longitude E.				
		°	'	"	°	'	"		
Victoria ... ..	Melbourne ... ..	37	49	53	144	58	32		
New South Wales ... ..	Sydney ... ..	33	51	41	151	12	23		
Queensland ... ..	Brisbane ... ..	27	28	0	153	1	36		
South Australia ... ..	Adelaide ... ..	34	55	34	138	35	4		
Western Australia ... ..	Perth ... ..	31	57	24	115	52	42		
Tasmania ... ..	Hobart ... ..	42	53	25	147	19	57		
New Zealand ... ..	Wellington ... ..	41	16	25	174	46	38		

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 forty-six years ended with 1903, the maximum temperature in the shade recorded at the Melbourne Observatory was 111·2° Fahr., viz., on the 14th January, 1862; the minimum was 27°, viz., on the 21st July, 1869; and the mean was 57·4°. Upon the average, on four days during the year, the thermometer rises above 100° in the shade; and, generally, on about three nights during the year, it falls below freezing point. The maximum temperature in the sun ever recorded (i.e., since 1857) was

178·5°, viz., on the 4th January, 1862. The mean atmospheric pressure, noted at an Observatory 91 feet above the sea-level, was, in the forty-six years ended with 1903, 29·94 inches; the average number of days on which rain fell was 132, and the average yearly rainfall was 25·61 inches.

## PRINCIPAL EVENTS.

The following are the dates of some of the principal events connected with the history of Victoria since 1895. For principal events prior to that year the reader is referred to the issue of this work for 1895-8. A detailed statement of the discovery and early history of the State will be found in the issue for 1884-5, page 10, et seq.

1895. January ... Conférence at Hobart of the Premiers of Australia and Tasmania, at the instance of the Premier of New South Wales, to further consider the subject of Federation; at which it was agreed to commit the duty of framing a Federal Constitution to a convention strictly chosen by the electors, to whom it was afterwards to be referred for acceptance or rejection, and a draft *Enabling Bill* was adopted to give effect to this object.
1895. January 29th—First Income Tax Act passed, taxing all income received, with £200 exemption, except in case of an absentee; income from property charged double the rates of that derived from personal exertion.
1896. March 7th—Federal Enabling Act, on the lines just described, passed in Victoria. Similar measures were likewise passed about the same time by New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.
- „ July 28th—Factory legislation passed providing for the appointment of Wages Boards, consisting of an equal number of members representative of the employers and employes respectively, to determine minimum rates of wages, &c.; and limiting the working hours in furniture factories where Chinese are employed—to from 7·30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on week days, and to not later than 2 p.m. on Saturdays, and lessening unfair competition in all factories.
1897. March 4th—Election by the people of delegates—ten for each colony—to the Australasian Federal Convention, held in Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania; and in South Australia on the 6th. The delegates for Western Australia were elected by members of Parliament.
- „ March 22nd—Australasian Federal Convention opened in Adelaide, at which the following colonies were represented: Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania. The first session closed on 23rd April. The second session opened in Sydney on the 2nd and closed on 24th September. The third session opened in Melbourne on the 20th January, and closed on the 16th March, 1898. At this Convention a Draft Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia was framed and adopted for submission to a popular referendum of the various States represented.

1898. June 3rd—Referendum to the electors in Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania, and in South Australia on the following day, for the acceptance or rejection of the Draft Bill drawn up by the Convention. The Bill was accepted by large majorities in three of the colonies, and by a majority of 5,000 in New South Wales; but as the statutory number of 80,000 affirmative votes required in New South Wales was not reached (71,600 being recorded) the Bill was considered as rejected by that colony.
1899. January 28th—Conference of the Premiers of all the Australian colonies and Tasmania held in Melbourne, to consider the amendments suggested in the Draft Commonwealth Bill by the Parliament of New South Wales, at which a provisional compromise was arrived at.
- „ July 27th—Enabling Acts having been passed by Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania, the amended Draft Commonwealth Bill was submitted to the electors, who approved of same by large majorities, the voting in Victoria being 152,653 for, and 9,805 against.
- „ August 30th—Abolition of Plural Voting. Principle of “one man one vote,” introduced for the future elections to the Legislative Assembly.
1899. October 28th—Departure of the First Victorian Contingent (257 Mounted Rifles and Infantry) on the outbreak of war in South Africa between Great Britain and the Boers. Contingents also despatched by the other Australasian colonies and Canada.
1900. January 13th—Departure of Second Contingent of 264 mounted men for South Africa.
- „ February 22nd—Conference of Statisticians of the six Federating States in Sydney to estimate on a uniform basis the populations of the different States so as to decide the number of members of the House of Representatives to be allotted to each State in the first Federal Parliament.
- „ February 26th—Another statistical Conference, at which the New Zealand Statistician was also present, to arrange for the collection and compilation of the Census of 1901 upon a uniform principle. Conference closed on 3rd March.
- „ March 10th—Despatch of the Victorian Bushmen's Contingent and Cameron's Scouts (276 officers and men) for service in South Africa.
- „ May 1st—Departure of the Fourth (Imperial Bushmen's) Contingent of 629 officers and men for service in South Africa.
- „ July 9th—*The Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act* passed, with several amendments, by the Imperial Parliament.
- „ July 31st—Departure of Naval Contingent for service in China—197 officers and men.
- „ „ „ Western Australia joins the Federation. Bill referred to and accepted by that State. Voting—for the Bill, 44,800; against the Bill, 19,691.
- „ October 29th—Appointment of Earl of Hopetoun as the first Governor-General of the Commonwealth.

1900. December 27th—First *Old Age Pensions Act* passed, making temporary provision out of the general revenue for the helpless poor, aged 65 or over, at a rate not exceeding 10s. per week for each unmarried, or 7s. 6d. for each married person. A more comprehensive permanent measure was subsequently passed on 11th December, 1901.
1901. January 1st—Proclamation and inauguration of the Commonwealth at Sydney, and swearing in of the Rt. Hon. E. Barton, first Prime Minister, and other members of the Ministry. Representatives from different parts of British Empire present, including representatives of Imperial and Indian regiments. State departments of Customs and Excise transferred, whilst those of the Post and Telegraph and Defence followed on 1st March.
- „ January 22nd—Death of Queen Victoria. Accession of King Edward VII. His Majesty's coronation took place on 9th August, 1902.
- „ February 15th—Despatch of Fifth (Imperial) Contingent—1,014 officers and men—for South Africa.
- „ March 31st—Eleventh census of Victoria, and third simultaneous census of Australia and New Zealand. Population enumerated:—In Victoria, 1,201,341, viz., 603,843 males and 597,458 females; in all the Australian States, 3,782,943, viz., 1,983,352 males and 1,799,591 females; and in New Zealand, 772,719, viz., 405,992 males, and 366,727 females (exclusive of 43,101 Maoris).
- „ May 9th—Opening of the first Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, in Melbourne, by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cornwall and York, Heir-Apparent to the Throne, under commission from His Majesty King Edward VII.
- „ October 8th—Interstate free trade established by the introduction of a provisional tariff by resolution of the Commonwealth House of Representatives.
1902. January 20th—Conference of Statisticians of all the Australian States and New Zealand, convened for the purpose of securing uniformity in the preparation of statistical returns, met in Hobart. Conference closed 12th February. This was the first Conference of the kind since 1875.
- „ September 16th—The Commonwealth Tariff finally passed.
1903. January 2nd—Death of Lieut.-Col. Sir Fredk. Sargood, Senator, formerly, M.L.C., one of the largest merchants of the Commonwealth, whilst on a trip through New Zealand. Accorded a public funeral.
- „ January 19th—Strike of coal miners of the Gippsland collieries. The immediate cause of the strike was a reduction of 1s. per day in their wages.
- „ February 7th—Re-organisation of the Cabinet; reduction of the number of Ministers from 9 to 7; and amalgamation of the two law departments.
- „ March 4th—Appointment of Mr. Thomas Tait, of Montreal, Canada, as Chief Commissioner of the Victorian Railways, announced by the Premier in the Legislative Assembly. Mr. W. Fitzpatrick, Acting Commissioner, and Mr. C. Hudson, General Manager of the Tasmanian Railways, appointed as subordinate Commissioners.

1903. March 16th—Preferential trade. Notice of motion by Mr. Chas. McArthur, M.P. for Liverpool in the House of Commons:—"That the recent developments in the fiscal and commercial policy of foreign countries which are ousting British trade, demand the serious consideration of the Government in concert with the Colonial Governments where necessary, with a view to safeguarding the trade of the Empire."
- " March 17th—Manning of the British Navy. The Naval Reserves Commission, Sir E. Gray, M.P., Chairman, recommends that the Colonies should give assistance in war time similar to that given to the army; and that a portion of the complement of every British man-of-war at a foreign station should consist of colonial reserve men.
- " April 15th to 22nd—Conference of Premiers, held at Sydney. Temporary settlement, pending appointment of the Interstate Commission, of the rival claims to the waters of the River Murray. The question of taking over of States' debts by the Commonwealth and several other matters were also considered.
- " May 9th—Railway Strike. The engine-drivers and firemen left their engines at midnight on 8th May. Traffic was for several days almost entirely suspended, a few suburban trains only being run. After two or three days a modified service was provided. The immediate ostensible cause of the strike was an order by the Government that the executives of the different societies of railway employees should withdraw from affiliation with the Trades Hall, which order most of the officers concerned refused to obey.
- " May 15th—Termination of the railway strike, the men surrendering unconditionally. The majority were allowed to resume their former duties.
- " " " Preferential trade. Speech by Rt. Hon. Jos. Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, urging the necessity of British reciprocity with respect to preferential customs duties.
- " July 24th—Resignation of Right Hon. C. C. Kingston, Minister of Trade and Customs, from the Commonwealth Ministry. The principal point of difference between Mr. Kingston and his colleagues, which led up to his resignation, was the non-applicability of the proposed Conciliation and Arbitration Bill to vessels trading in Australian waters.
- " August 10th—Appointment of Lord Northcote as Governor-General of the Commonwealth officially announced.
- " August 22nd—Announcement of future policy by the Premier, the Hon. W. H. Irvine, at Nhill. To assist the development of Victoria closer settlement would receive special attention, to aid which compulsory land resumption would, if necessary, be resorted to; and improved mining tenures were promised. The *Factories Act* would be extended in a modified form.
- " September 12th—Death of the Hon. Duncan Gillies, Speaker of the State Legislative Assembly, and Premier of the colony from 18th February, 1886, to 5th November, 1890.

1903. September 18th—Preferential trade. Resignation of Rt. Hon. Jos. Chamberlain from the Imperial Ministry. Mr. Chamberlain's colleagues were not prepared to go the whole length advocated by him in regard to fiscal reform. Mr. Chamberlain resigned to avoid embarrassing the Prime Minister, and in order to educate the people in regard to the preferential trade scheme, and the tax on food involved, which he could do more effectually in an unofficial capacity.
- „ October 6th—Inauguration of the Federal High Court, and the swearing in of Sir Samuel Griffith, late Chief Justice of Queensland, as Chief Justice, and of the Right Hon. Sir Edmund Barton, K.C., late Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and the Hon. R. E. O'Connor, K.C., as judges.
- „ October 29th—Factories Bill. Conference between the two State Houses, to arrange a compromise. The Bill was agreed to in an amended form.
- „ October 29th—Speech at Ballarat by Hon. Alfred Deakin, new Prime Minister (formerly Attorney-General) of the Commonwealth, Opening of the election campaign and declaration of Ministerial policy. Preferential trade was fully dealt with, and the principle affirmed.
- „ November 24th—Departure of the State Governor, Sir Geo. Sydenham Clarke, he having been appointed as one of a committee of three to advise the Imperial authorities as to the reorganisation of the War Office.
- „ December 16th—Commonwealth elections. Female franchise exercised for the first time in Victoria.
- „ December 24th—Prorogation of the State Parliament. This is memorable as being the last meeting of the unreformed Parliament. The new Parliament is to consist of a smaller number of members, and the constitution of the Upper House is altered, and its franchise broadened. Several other reforms have also been provided for.
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