

# "A GREAT TALLY."

MR. COGHLAN'S LATEST VOLUME.

## WHAT WE EAT AND DRINK.

Mr. Coghlan's statistical account of the "Seven Colonies of Australasia, 1901-1902," just to hand, covers a far wider field than in previous years. The general plan of earlier issues has been followed, but additional chapters have been added. These deal with the discovery of Australia, the constitution of the Commonwealth, the constitutions of the states, Commonwealth finance, industrial history, and include a chronological table of principal occurrences in Australia and New Zealand. In addition, the scope of several of the usual divisions of the work has been greatly enlarged. The historical portion of the work is well done, and invests the publication with a more general interest than usually attaches to statistical records.

Preparatory to entering upon the purely statistical portion of his work, Mr. Coghlan devotes a chapter to the climate of Australasia. It is interesting to note, in view of the White Australia agitation, that the tables of temperature records given induce the statist to remark:—"Judging by the figures . . . it must be conceded that a considerable area of the continent is not adapted for colonisation by European races." The interior of the Northern Territory of South Australia has a mean summer temperature of over 95 degrees, while the whole of the country north of the 25th parallel, and between the meridians of 120deg. and 140deg., excepting the seaboard, has a mean temperature in excess of 90deg. Fahr. The mean temperature of Sydney corresponds with that of Barcelona, in Spain, and Toulon, in France. According to Mr. Coghlan, the harsh things occasionally said of the summer climate of western New South Wales are undeserved. He points out that the town of Bourke, for instance, has a mean summer temperature 4deg. less than that of New Orleans, and 1.3deg. less than Cairo, though both are on the same parallel. The mean temperature of Melbourne corresponds with that of Washington, Madrid, Lisbon, and Messina. Of the 2,946,700 square miles comprised in the mainland of Australia, nearly one-half, viz., 1,219,600 square miles, has an annual rainfall of under 10in., while less than a third of the total area receives an average of over 20in. This is the lowest average in New Zealand.

As usual, Mr. Coghlan deals exhaustively with the questions of food supply and cost of living. He gives the following table of the average quantities of the principal articles of common diet annually consumed in the various states:—

Article.	New South Wales.		Victoria.	Queensland.	South Australia.	West Australia.	Tasmania.	Australasia.
	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.	lb.
Wheat . . .	257.3	312.8	334.8	380.0	513.1	434.2	369.0	
Rice . . .	9.7	6.9	17.7	10.2	19.9	6.3	9.8	
Oatmeal . . .	7.0	6.9	4.1	5.4	10.0	15.6	7.5	
Potatoes . . .	197.7	250.2	166.3	128.4	179.2	528.1	264.9	
Sugar . . .	107.8	93.0	123.8	100.2	114.5	90.5	101.9	
Tea . . .	7.9	6.9	7.4	8.1	9.8	6.2	7.3	
Coffee . . .	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.8	0.8	0.3	0.6	
Cheese . . .	3.7	3.2	4.2	2.6	6.2	2.6	3.7	
Butter . . .	19.6	12.6	12.5	12.2	28.1	12.3	16.3	
Salt . . .	42.8	17.2	62.7	17.0	18.8	19.3	34.0	
Beef . . .	166.5	122.1	280.0	127.0	147.3	132.4	151.1	
Mutton . . .	118.8	75.7	90.0	75.0	147.9	89.8	100.5	
Pork and bacon . . .	11.9	11.5	12.5	11.4	26.7	15.7	12.4	

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The figures show that the consumption of wheat per head is lowest in Victoria and highest in West Australia. The Victorian average is 47lb. below that for the Commonwealth, and 56lb. below the average for Australasia. Mr. Coghlan regards the figures relating to the consumption of meat as the most striking feature of the foregoing table. The average for Australasia works out at about three-quarters of a pound daily per inhabitant. In Great Britain the average annual consumption of flesh meat is 109lb. per inhabitant, in France 77lb., Spain 71lb., Germany 64lb., Austria 61lb., Canada 90lb., and in the United States 150lb., but for Australasia the average is 264lb. These and other figures relating to the food supply are held by the statistician to indicate that the quantity of food consumed in Australasia is far in excess of actual requirements. Though the excess may be looked upon as waste, it is regarded as evidence that the circumstances of the people enable them to indulge in it.

The average consumption of tobacco in Australasia is about the same now as it was 10 years ago, but the figures for the various states have undergone considerable alteration. In Victoria the average has dropped nearly half a pound per inhabitant, but there has been an increase of 11.5lb. in West Australia, and smaller increases in Tasmania and New Zealand. The average annual consumption in the various states is as follows:—West Australia, 4.39lb.; Queensland, 3.00lb.; New South Wales, 2.67lb.; New Zealand, 2.35lb.; Victoria, 2.13lb.; Tasmania, 2.13lb.; South Australia, 1.91lb. West Australia, having a relatively greater adult male population, leads also in the consumption of alcoholic spirits, the average annual consumption being 1.54 gallons per inhabitant; Queensland is next with 1.08 gallons, New South Wales third, 0.77 gallons, and Victoria fourth with an average of 0.76 gallons. Wine is used most freely in South Australia, Victoria, and West Australia, but the last-named state leads in the consumption of beer, with an average of 24.40 gallons per inhabitant. No other state approaches this record, the next on the list being Victoria with an average of 12.16 gallons per inhabitant. The total consumption of malt liquors for the Commonwealth states showed increase slightly in volume during the 10 years 1890-1900, but the average per inhabitant fell from 13.59 gallons to 12.00 gallons. In New Zealand, however, there was a considerable increase. During the 10 years the consumption of malt liquors in that colony increased from 4,922,577 gallons to 6,986,900 gallons, and the average per inhabitant from 7.92 gallons in 1890 to 9.15 gallons in 1900. During the same period the consumption of spirits in the Commonwealth states fell from 1.04 gallons per inhabitant to 0.82, but in New Zealand it increased from 0.70 to 0.72. This latter increase, however, is more than covered by the decline in the average consumption of wine, which fell from 0.19 gallon to 0.15 gallon per inhabitant.

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The adoption of a uniform tariff makes the question of the cost of living in the various states less contentious than formerly. The fiscal policy has ceased to be a factor in the calculation as between state and state. Mr. Coghlan explains that such differences as exist in the total expenditure of the various states is now rather one of consumption than of prices. The cost of providing food and beverages, other than intoxicants, consumed in Australia during 1901 is set down at £49,235,000. Adding £14,249,000 for expenditure on wines, spirits, and beer, the statist works out the expenditure on all food and beverages at £16/18/11 per inhabitant, or 11.1d. per day. Excluding intoxicants, the average expenditure was £13/2/10 per inhabitant—an average of 8.6d. Fresh meat cost 20.9 per cent. of the whole, bread 10.9 per cent., milk, butter, and cheese 13.6 per cent., vegetables and fruits 13.8 per cent., sugar 6.2 per cent., tea, coffee, cocoa 3.8 per cent., and intoxicants 22.4 per cent. In a further table dealing with the whole range of necessary expenditure, the total cost of living is worked out at £38/0/6 per inhabitant. The cost of living in other countries is given as follows:—United Kingdom, £29/14/9; France, £23/19/4; Germany, £20/3/4; Russia, £10/1/11; Denmark, £28/11/5; Holland, £20/17/4; Canada, £23/6/2; United States, £32/16/2. Australia has therefore by far the highest average, but the statist explains that such a comparison has little meaning, unless regard be paid to the amount of income available for expenditure, and the purchasing power of money.

The whole-souled high tariffists will find some instructive reading in the chapter dealing with the price-level of imports and exports. Since 1864 the prices of Australian produce exported have declined more than 48 per cent. The sharpest decline was during the five years 1889-1894, when prices fell 32 per cent. In 1898-1899 this decline was made up through the improved price of wool, the low price of which, however, caused a further fall in price-level in 1900. To express the position in another way, 20/ in 1900 would purchase the same articles of domestic export which in 1864 would have cost nearly 30/, prices having fallen 48.7 per cent. during the thirty-six years. There has also been a steady decline in the price-level of imports, but not sufficient to balance the fall in exports, although quite enough to destroy the contention that the fall in prices was due to a protectionist policy.

The net cost of public primary instruction in Australasia in 1901 was £2,335,042. This is equivalent to £3/19/11 for each child in average attendance, but if the cost of school buildings is taken into account the amount reaches £4/8/3 per child. The following are the figures for the various states and New Zealand:—

	Excluding School Premises.		Including School Premises.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
New South Wales .. .. .	3	19 11	4	7 5
Victoria .. .. .	4	9 0	4	13 11
Queensland .. .. .	3	11 8	4	1 3
South Australia .. .. .	3	6 3	3	12 7
West Australia .. .. .	4	3 3	5	18 3
Tasmania .. .. .	3	8 3	3	19 8
New Zealand .. .. .	3	18 6	4	8 2

Compared with the figures for 1897-98, the increase in the cost of education was—New South Wales, 6/10 a scholar; Victoria, 6/11; Queensland, 4/10; South Australia, 5/3; Tasmania, 12/8; New Zealand, 1/10.

West Australia showed a decrease of no less than 10/1 a scholar.

For all Australasia the value of lands in private hands in 1901 was £411,747,000, out of a total wealth of £1,032,000,000, a proportion of 38 per cent. The total wealth gives an average of £240 per inhabitant for Australasia, and £243 for the Commonwealth, as against an average of £300 in 1890. At the close of 1901 Australasia owed to persons outside its boundaries a sum approximating to £387,772,000, or £84 per inhabitant. Of this sum £146,420,000 represents private investments, and £241,352,000 the outstanding liabilities of the states and local governing bodies. The amount of interest paid yearly by Australasia to London on all forms of investment is calculated to be £16,261,000 per annum. The income derived from private sources during 1901, per inhabitant, was as follows:—

West Australia .. .. .	£64.1
New South Wales .. .. .	£47.3
Queensland .. .. .	£47.3
South Australia .. .. .	£43.1
Victoria .. .. .	£42.7
Tasmania .. .. .	£42.0
New Zealand .. .. .	£46.7

Mr. Coghlan deals with the whole range of public and private finance with his customary thoroughness, and touches upon the necessity for retrenchment and increased taxation to balance the states' accounts. "A little consideration will show," he writes, "that it is idle, so far as concerns some of the states, to expect a return from the Commonwealth equal to satisfying their needs, on the basis of expenditure indulged in by them during 1902. Whereas a tariff from which £7,940,000 is obtainable would, at the present time (1902), satisfy the requirements of the New South Wales Treasurer, it would take one yielding £13,550,000 to satisfy South Australia."