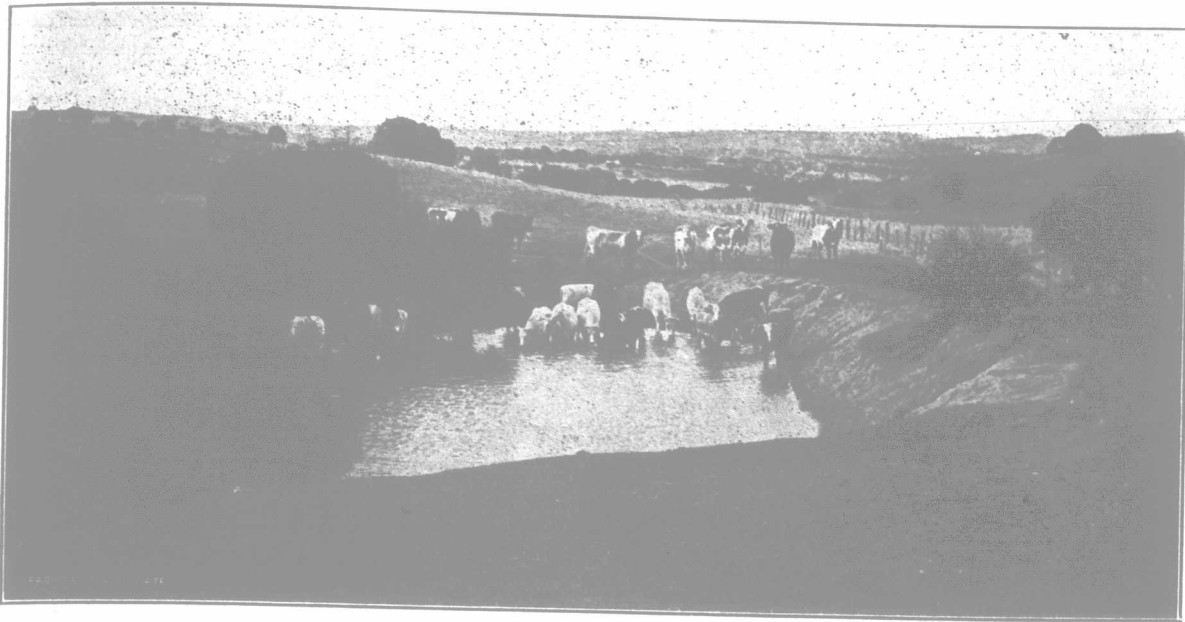




Cattle at Tank, Newmarracarrn.

all civilized countries in the world, with the Dominion of Canada possessing figures of 1.81 per square mile, a close second. When it is considered that Great Britain owns to figures representing 613 persons to the square mile, the paucity of inhabitants in both the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia may be appreciated. A feature, however, upon which Australia has cause for congratulation is that 95.06 per cent. of her population are either Australian born or British.

In any other British country than Canada, the mind would reel at the immensity of the distances of which Australians speak so glibly. An area of three million square miles presents a very fair indication of that which is to follow when the great southern Commonwealth is under discussion. Her climate, one of the finest in the world, has no place for the tropical, the temperate and sub-tropical being her two extremes. Only in two of her large cities, during the history of Australia, has the temperature dropped below freezing point, and as 27.7 and 27.0 degrees Fahrenheit are absolute record figures in Hobart and Victoria, respectively, it will be conceded that no hardships from cold confront the dwellers in the island continent. That her climate is one of the best, brightest and most healthful in the world, is amply borne out by her death-rate, which, with the exception of New Zealand, is the lowest of all countries. The figures per thousand of population, New Zealand 9.2, Australia 10.2, England & Wales 14.7, and Russia 30.0, speak far more eloquently and convincingly than words, and will support the contention advanced by the Commonwealth that, for general salubrity of climate, that of Australia leaves little to be desired.

By reason of her geographical position and the absence of striking physical features, Australia is far less subject to extremes of weather than are regions of similar area in other parts of the globe; and, latitude for latitude, Australia is far more temperate. Thus, in parts of Europe, Asia, and North America, winter blizzards alternate with summer heat waves. In Asiatic Siberia, the extreme range of shade temperatures in summer and winter is no less than 171 degrees, and in North America 153 degrees, or about double the Australian range, which is only about 81 degrees. Thus it is that, in the great farming districts of Australia it is hardly ever necessary to house live stock, while people can live comfortably in cheaply-constructed houses which would be considered almost uninhabitable in countries where the climate is rigorous.

From North to South, and from East to West, the Australian continent extends 2,000 and 2,400 miles, respectively. Her coast line, exclusive of minor indentation, measures 12,210 miles. As regards the general appearance of her land surface, Australia may be described as a plateau, fringed by a low-lying, well-watered coast. In the early days of the settlement of Australia, it was thought that the interior of the continent consisted chiefly of desert plains; as settlement progressed, however, it was discovered that this area contained exclusive tracts of excellent country.

Although Australia is pre-eminently a pastoral country, the value of the returns from the flocks and herds far exceeding that from any other industry, nevertheless figures show the agricultural industry to be of considerable importance, and, judging by the great advance in recent years, bids fair to occupy a still more distinguished place as a factor in Australian wealth. In the year 1890 Australia's production of wheat was 27,118,259 bushels, a steady advance of nearly 100 per cent. in a decade, despite the checks to progress due to the vagaries of the season. The industry is now approaching the 100,000,000 mark.

In Australia the drouths will probably ever remain, but, with reasonable care and the proper conservation of water and of fodder, they will be looked upon in future days as by no means evils without redeeming features, but rather as one of the provisions by which nature enables the soil to re-establish those properties which have been exhausted during a succession of bountiful seasons. The beneficial effect of resting the soil in times of drouth is shown by the extraordinarily rapid recovery, by the increased fertility, and by the abundance of the harvests in the seasons immediately following the drouths. Next to wheat, the hay crop is the most important in the Commonwealth, over 20 per cent. of the cultivated area being under the crop. In other countries, the hay is principally made of other grasses, but here it is found very profitable to use wheat and oats for hay-making, yield per acre being from two to four tons. Barley is also used to a less extent, and in New South Wales and Queensland excellent hay is made from lucerne. Root and tuber crops of all sorts thrive excellently in the Commonwealth, but potatoes and onions are the most important of this class grown. The grape-vine flourishes in all the States on the mainland of Australia, but vine-growing is carried on most extensively in S. Australia and Victoria. Excellent raisins and currants are also produced in the other States, but until recently no statistics were collected. Sugar-cane is grown in New South Wales and Queensland, and minor crops, such as tobacco, hops, grass seed, millet, coffee, cotton, arrowroot, in the Commonwealth generally. Dates and rice also flourish, and olives of excellent quality are grown in South Australia. In Papua, transferred to the Commonwealth Sept. 1st, 1906, there are considerable areas of rich land, which may be acquired by settlers on easy terms. The most reliable and lucrative plantation industries are para rubber and cocoanuts, but all sorts of tropical fruits, fibres and spices, in addition to many valuable drug-yielding plants, have been proved to thrive to perfection.

The briefest reference only can be made to the great variety of fruits which the Commonwealth is capable of producing. For example, in Queensland, excellent pineapples, bananas, mangoes, cus-

tard apples, granadillas, and other tropical fruit can be grown. In Tasmania, the Island State, separated from the mainland by Bass Straits, all English cereals, fruits and flowers will grow, and many that in England are reared only in green-houses. Oranges and lemons are also grown, equal, if not superior, to anything that reach Covent Garden Market; while grapes, peaches, apricots and nectarines are produced almost anywhere in Australia in the open.

The fact that Australian hens have made remarkable records in egg-laying competitions serves to indicate the suitability of climatic and other conditions for poultry-raising, and in wheat districts many farmers make a considerable sum annually by breeding turkeys. The poults rarely die off, as they do in districts where, during their early stages of life there are heavy dews. In every State there are good cold-storage depots to which eggs may be sent when local markets are glutted. The charges in such cases are purely nominal. The system of egg-circles has been inaugurated in S. Australia, and large quantities of eggs are forwarded in refrigerated vessels to the British markets, where they realize good prices.

Bee-farming is a successful industry in New South Wales and South Australia. The indigenous flora is rich in nectar, and the quantities of honey stored in single hives are astonishingly large, sometimes reaching 400 pounds.

The Dependency of Papua comprises 90,540 square miles of the southern section of New Guinea, and lies wholly within the tropics, and, to men possessed of moderate capital, offers unique opportunities for the profitable pursuit of tropical agriculture. The territory possesses large areas of some of the richest agricultural lands in the tropics, easily accessible by good harbors and navigable rivers.

During 1909, slightly over 29 per cent. of the total yield from all industries was contributed by the pastoral industry, which in round figures represented \$250,000,000.

It is perhaps needless to remark that Australia, in the size of her sheep flocks and general value of her production from the sheep-breeding industry, far exceeds any other country in the world. The sheep flocks of Australia exceed 90 millions, the only other countries which approach these figures being the Argentine Republic, with 67 millions, and Russia, with 61 millions.

Maize is now grown extensively in all the States. Under natural conditions, from 60 to 80 bushels per acre are often produced, but, under irrigation, and in certain districts favored with heavy summer rains, 120 bushels per acre are commonly harvested. The bulk of the maize grain harvested in Australia is used for horse feed, but, with the growth of dairying, this crop, which can be depended upon to produce 20 tons of nutritious green fodder per acre, is being largely availed of.

Large areas in the interior of the continent, which, be it remembered, is by no means a desert, as was once popularly supposed, have been proved suitable for the breeding of cattle and horses. Indeed, the possibilities of this portion of Australia have, so far, remained almost undeveloped. Even when fed on the natural herbage of the country, the Australian horse has been found to possess a remarkable degree of speed and endurance, and these good qualities have been greatly enhanced by careful breeding. Little need be said in regard to the capacity of the Commonwealth for the production of high-class racing stock, in view of the world-wide renown gained



Farm Scene, Northam, Western Australia.