

Some Features of Progress in Australia

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It is characteristic of British imperial sentiment that the ties of fraternal affection and interest which bind the Overseas Dominions to one another are scarcely less strong than those which bind each of them to their common Mother Land. The warmth of the reception recently accorded to the Australian cadets on their visit to Canada is only one amongst many evidences of this fact. A glance, therefore, at the progress made during the present century by the great Commonwealth of Australia will be of interest at this time. This is equally so, whether the conditions in Australia be similar to or different from those of the Dominion of Canada. The facts and figures relating to Australia are largely derived from a new edition of the Commonwealth Official Year Book.

Australian Constitution and Government.

Like Canada the Commonwealth of Australia is a confederation of states, which prior to confederation were independent of one another, with full powers of self-government and owing direct allegiance to the British Crown. Australian federation was accomplished in 1900 by an imperial statute known as the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act under which the six "original states" of Australia, viz. New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and Western Australia, achieved national unity. The Australia Act of Union of 1900 is interesting as well for points of difference as for points of resemblance as compared with the British North America Act of 1867, when Canada was constituted a Dominion. The principle of federation is entirely different in that the Parliament of the Australian Commonwealth can only legislate upon the subjects assigned to it, whilst each State has liberty to legislate upon any subject not specifically reserved to the Commonwealth Parliament. This is the federal principle of the United States; but in Canada the opposite plan is followed whereby certain specific subjects are reserved to the provinces leaving the Dominion Parliament free to legislate upon all others. There is also an important difference in the system of bi-cameral representation. In Australia the qualification for membership of the Senate is the same as for membership of the lower House, and is upon the widest popular basis. Thus a candidate has only to be a British subject, at least 21 years of age, who has been resident for at least three years in the Commonwealth. The Senators are elected directly by the people upon the same franchise as for the House of Representatives, the chief difference between the two Houses being that the Senate is a smaller body and is elected for six years, subject to the proviso that half of the Senators retire for the purposes of a new election every third year. In cases of irreconcilable opposition between the two chambers both may be dissolved; and, if upon a general election of both bodies, the opposition reappears, the question at issue may be decided by the absolute majority of a joint session of both Houses.

Area and Population.

Australia, frequently described as an "island-continent" comprises an area of 2,974,581 square miles, or about four-fifths of the area of Canada, viz. 3,729,665 square miles. The Australian coast-line, exclusive of minor indentations, measures over 12,000 miles, which is about the same as the two coastal lines of Canada, viz. 5,000 miles on the Atlantic and 7,000 miles on the Pacific shores. The latest population figures for Australia give a total of 4,872,059 in 1913. In this total the aboriginal population is not included, it is estimated not to exceed 100,000. The following table shows how the population of 1913 is distributed by States:

State.	Population.
New South Wales	1,831,716
Victoria	1,412,119
Queensland	660,158
South Australia	440,047
Western Australia	320,684
Tasmania	201,675
Northern Territory	3,672
Federal Territory	1,988

Total 4,872,059

The mean density of the Australian population is 1.67 per square mile, with which figure the average

density of the population of other English-speaking countries may be compared, as for instance: Canada, 1.93; Newfoundland, 1.47; United States, 32.08; New Zealand, 10.77, and the Union of South Africa, 12.63. In Argentina the average density is 5.99.

The birth-rate of the Commonwealth, i.e., the number of births per 1,000 of the mean population, was 28.3 in 1913; this rate compares with 24 in Ontario, 37.7 in Quebec, 25.2 in Nova Scotia, 36.3 in Manitoba, 20.9 in Saskatchewan, 24.3 in Alberta and 18.6 in British Columbia, all for the same year. In the United Kingdom the rate was 23.9 for 1912. The death-rate in Australia per 1,000 of the mean population was 10.8 in 1913, as compared with 12.7 in Ontario, 10.5 in Prince Edward Island, 14.5 in Nova Scotia, 13.1 in Manitoba, 9 in Alberta, and 9.3 in British Columbia. The death-rate for the United Kingdom in 1912 was 13.8. Immigration into Australia has considerably increased during the last decade. In 1906, the number of immigrant arrivals was 57,646; in 1912 the total reached the record one of 163,990, and in 1914 the number of immigrants was 110,701. The vast majority of immigrants are of British nationality, the number of British immigrants in 1914 being 93,136, or 84 per cent of the total. Australia shows, in marked degree the same tendency towards urban agglomeration that exists in other countries. What, however, is particularly noticeable in Australia is the comparatively large populations of the metropolitan cities. Taking the capitals of the Six States it will be found that no less than 1,890,400, or nearly 39 per cent of the entire population dwell therein. In the case of Melbourne (Victoria), and Adelaide (South Australia), the populations number close upon half of the whole population of the State, viz., 46.10 per cent, Melbourne, and 45.68 per cent, Adelaide. The two largest cities are Sydney (New South Wales), with 725,400 and Melbourne (Victoria), 651,000 at the end of 1913. In Canada the two largest cities had a population in 1911 of 477,480, Montreal, and 376,500, Toronto, whilst the total population of the six largest cities in the Dominion was 1,170,576.

Seat of the Australian Federal Government.

The federal territory comprises about 900 square miles, acquired from the State of New South Wales at Canberra, with the right of access by railway to a federal seaport at Jervis Bay, 123 miles distant. The new territory is now being developed for federal purposes, 12 square miles being reserved for the city site, and 100,000 acres for parks, roads, a military college, and other purposes outside the city area. This will leave 359,520 acres for occupation under conditions still to be finally determined. Up to June 30, 1914, a total of \$2,328,582 had been expended in the preparation of the territory for the purposes of the federal capital, the principal items of expenditure being for buildings, electric supply, roads, water, sewerage, health, administration, education, afforestation, and railway construction.

Climate and Agricultural Production.

Climatologically, Australia presents a great variety of features. The area within the Temperate Zone is 1,825,261, and that within the Tropical Zone is 1,149,320 square miles. The altitudes range up to over 7,300 feet. On the coast the rainfall is often abundant and the atmosphere moist; but in some portions of the interior the rainfall is very limited and the atmosphere is dry. Snow is rare except on the Australian Alps, where it lies for several months in winter and where the night temperatures fall below zero. The range of temperature is low, the extreme over a large part of Australia amounting to not more than about 80 deg. In Canada the range in most parts exceeds 130 deg. and in the west, at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, it is as much as 166 deg. The climatic conditions, therefore, in Australia make it a country eminently suitable for pastoral production; and consequently from an imperial point of view the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia are mutually supplementary, the one furnishing grain and the other wool. Australia is, in fact, the largest sheep-raising country in the world, possessing in 1913 85,057,402 head, as compared with 80,401,486 in Argentina (1911), 74,066,167 in the Russian Empire (1912), and 52,362,000 in the United States (1912). Moreover, Australia excels in the quality of its wool, the climate and general condi-

tions being favorable to the breeding of the Merino sheep and the production of the finest staple. The introduction of the Merino sheep into Australia is an interesting story. Over 100 years ago, when the landowners and farmers of Great Britain under the enthusiastic leadership of George II. were striving to improve the national agriculture, Merino sheep came greatly into fashion. King George first introduced the breed into Great Britain from Spain in 1788, and the wool was exhibited at the Annual Sheep Shearings then common. On one of these occasions was exhibited a pair of worsted stockings of the usual size, manufactured from Merino wool so fine that both stockings at once had been passed through a lady's ring. Specimens of the Merino breed were at this time taken out to Australia by Captain Macarthur, one of the pioneer sheep breeders of New South Wales. If Captain Macarthur was not the first to introduce the Merino into Australia, he did much to establish it there, and eventually the success of the breed on the Australian continent precluded successful wool competition on the part of the British home grazers who turned their attention to the improvement of sheep-breeding along the lines of early maturity and perfection of symmetry for the production of mutton as the primary consideration. During more recent years Australia has given great attention to the cross-breeding of sheep for the production of mutton as well as of wool for export. Crosses between the Merino and the Lincoln and the Merino and the Leicester breeds of sheep have proved exceedingly valuable, furnishing both a good quality of wool and an excellent carcass for exportation. During the present century, the Australian export trade in mutton and lamb preserved by cold process, has made great progress: in 1903 these exports were of the value of \$2,396,595; seven years afterwards, in 1910, their value had grown to \$10,526,568, and the average for the two years, 1912 and 1913, was \$10,930,496. The United Kingdom draws its imports of raw wool from upwards of 26 principal countries, the total importation in 1913 amounting to 800,580,815 lbs. of the value of \$166,681,121. Out of the total wool imported into the United Kingdom in 1913, 645,416,995 lbs., of the value of \$134,275,201, came from countries of the British Empire, the proportions being 86 per cent of the whole as regards quantity and 81 per cent of the value. The wool imported from Australia amounted to 265,078,480 lbs., of the value of \$15,627,720, the quantity representing 33 and the value 36 per cent of the total imports. As the quantity of wool imported from New Zealand in 1913 was 181,181,381 lbs., the total from Australia and New Zealand, viz., 446,259,862 lbs., was more than half the total British imports. Although the pastoral industry occupies this important place in Australian rural economy, the cultivation of general field crops has, within recent years, made extraordinary progress—a progress which is, in this respect, relatively if not absolutely as striking as that of Canada. In 1865-66, about the time of Canadian Confederation, the area of field crops under cultivation in Australia was 1,585,714 acres; in 1900-1 it was 8,812,463. In Canada the acreage under field crops in 1900 was 12,942,491, not counting hay. For the year 1913-14 the total area under crop in the Commonwealth had increased to 14,683,012 acres, the highest yet attained, and representing an increase of 5,870,549 acres since the beginning of the century. In Canada the corresponding acreage of field crops under cultivation in 1914 was 33,436,675. Both in Australia and in Canada, wheat is, of course, the principal crop, and in 1913-14 the area under wheat in Australia was 9,287,398 acres, or 63 per cent of the total. In Canada in 1914, the wheat area was 10,293,000 acres, or 30 per cent of the total. The recent growth of the area under wheat in Australia has been especially remarkable, it has nearly doubled during the present century, having grown from 5,666,614 acres in 1900-1 to 9,287,398 acres in 1913-14. Whilst the total acreage under wheat is not greatly below that of Canada, the average yield per acre, and consequently the total yield is not nearly so good. Also, owing to climatic conditions, and especially recurrent years of drought, the yield per acre greatly fluctuates. During the six years ended 1913-14, for instance, the highest yield per acre of wheat for the whole Commonwealth was 13.73 bushels in 1909-10, and the lowest was 7.54 bushels in 1901-02. The average for the ten seasons ended 1913-14 was 11.18 bushels. The Canadian average runs considerably higher than this, the highest on record being that of the past season, 25.89 bushels per acre and the lowest 14.89 1915 was 20.17 bushels.

(To be continued in next issue.)