

When men like the secretary of the leading educational centre in an important town receive penal servitude for embezzlement, we may take it that there is something in the air which urges numbers to go the pace, as the phrase runs, and to emulate those far richer than themselves, cost what it may. Let it be well borne in mind, that for one case of this kind where prosecution follows, there are many instances in which the crime is very naturally condoned, and then, as in one of the six suicides cited above, the unhappy criminal avoids trial, disgrace and doom, by suicide!

The subject is sad, and it is suggestive too. The life insurance expert must needs, in these unquiet times, take heed of more than mere medical examination brings out in respect to lives offered, and unless matters improve in a wonderful way, we may look for quite new factors to be necessarily imported into the calculations of actuaries. We hope, of course, for better things, but really the outlook is not exactly reassuring. Never was the need for all kinds of insurance greater than it is now, for all members of the community, but surely never were the risks more various, and surely never were they so numerous as in these days of advanced thought and a thousand boasted triumphs of Progress. Our despised ancestors, on the whole, possessed a great deal too much common sense to rush to suicide on every slight occasion, or even as a remedy for the graver ills of life. Unhappily many people nowadays seem half hysterical directly any trouble comes, and hence they lose their heads for things which our forefathers bore as a matter of course. The change is marked, and it is one that all underwriters must note and, as far as possible, tabulate with care, for it is certain that these new conditions to which we here allude, cannot fail in time to materially modify the old calculations based on the assumption that the vast majority of the community are at least endowed with common sense, however defective they may be in the ordinary Christian virtues.—(The Insurance Spectator, London, G. B.)

AUSTRALIAN STATISTICS.

The statistical reports of the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria for last year came to hand by last mail. As an exhibit of the financial and trade conditions of the British Colony, which ranks only second to Canada in these respects, these reports are highly interesting, more especially in view of the closer relations which are gradually being established between the different sections of the British Empire, and of the efforts being made to confederate the Australasian provinces after the example set by Canada in 1868. We have taken the leading items, and given them above similar ones for Canada for comparison:—

	Population.	Imports.	Exports.	Foreign trade per head.
	1897.	1897.	1897.	
N. S. Wales...	1,323,460	108,720,000	119,111,400	172.00
Victoria.....	1,176,248	77,270,000	82,337,000	135.00
New Zealand..	729,056	40,270,000	49,570,000	133.00
Queensland...	484,700	36,385,000	46,040,000	170.00
Sth. Australia.	363,044	27,144,000	34,488,000	170.00
West ".....	161,924	32,091,000	21,770,000	332.00
Tasmania.....	171,719	6,838,000	8,588,000	89.00
Totals...	4,410,151	\$328,724,000	\$361,904,000	\$157.00
Canada.....	5,186,000	119,218,000	137,950,650	49.60

The disparity between the foreign trade of the Australasian Colonies which seems to put Canada far into the rear is more in appearance than reality. In the exports and imports of the antipodean colonies are included shipments to and imports from each other. The requisite data for an accurate comparison in these respects would have to be acquired by returns of the inter-provincial trade of the Dominion, which are not available. An evidence of the outside trade of Australia as given in the official returns including the imports and exports from and to each of the group of those colonies is found in the item of wool. In 1896, the imports of wool into New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, amounted to \$19,722,896, and the exports to \$81,950,701. The imports of this article were not for home consumption, but for re-export, so that in the foreign trade of those colonies the same item appears twice over, in the first case as an export of one of the colonies and afterwards as an export of another colony by whose merchants the wool had been imported for re-exportation. When Australasia is confederated, this somewhat misleading feature in the returns of its foreign trade will be corrected, and the comparison with Canada will then not appear so unfavourable to the Dominion.

The same remark may also be made as to the tonnage of Australian Shipping which, though doubtless very large, we believe, is given in the official returns to some extent in duplicate. The following shows the cultivated area, the debt per head and taxation per head of the seven Australasian colonies:—

	Acres. Cultivated.	Debt. Per head. 1897.	Taxation. Per head. 1897.	Revenue. Per head. 1896.
Australasia.		\$	\$	\$
New South Wales..	2,198,231	230.10	9.12	34.71
Victoria.....	3,260,312	196.80	11.25	26.75
New Zealand.....	1,684,443	297.00	17.20	32.70
Queensland.....	386,259	331.00	15.60	37.53
South Australia....	2,604,122	326.50	10.00	36.12
Western ".....	176,397	261.75	41.90	86.10
Tasmania.....	499,535	234.60	14.50	23.38
Totals and Ave..	10,809,299	\$250.00	\$13.21	
Canada.....		50.45	5.52	7.29

* Converted from sterling at par of exchange.

The aggregate of the debts of the 7 Australasian Colonies in 1897 was \$1,102,682,000, which was four times the debt of Canada at same date, and their aggregate population was one-sixth less than that of Canada. The public revenues of those colonies in 1896 aggregated \$146,315,960, as against \$37,829,778, the revenue of Canada the revenues, however, are not derived almost wholly from Customs, and other forms