

be more readily estimated in a single one of the tables of weights and measures. The tables from which the per capita consumption of sugar, tea, coffee and dried fruit has been calculated, were compiled from the Annual Sessional Papers on Trade and Commerce; the per capita consumption of beer, spirits, etc., is the calculation of the inland revenue officials, and may be found in Statistical Year Book for the current year.*

The consumption of these articles is recognized as one of the best tests of the prosperity of a country. The middle classes everywhere are well provided with the comforts and decencies of life, in which class these articles are placed, although sugar is rapidly becoming a necessary of life; and an extension of the consumption of these goods means that the working classes are consuming more, the middle class, it being presumed already, using as much as they desire. In a country like Canada, where as we have seen there are few extremes of wealth, an increased consumption means that the whole body of the people are consuming more.

An increased consumption of any article may mean one of three things,—(1) it may result from a fall in price, which enables the people to consume more without spending more; (2) it may mean a rise in the average income, which enables the people to spend more on one article than they have been doing, without curtailing their consumption of other articles; (3) it may mean simply that the form of consumption has changed and that the well-being of society is the same, or but slightly increased. In all probability, the increased use of cocoa, from the value of \$44,249 in 1880† to \$158,849 in 1896 has been due to a mere change in the form of consumption; and the addition of this amount to the consumption of the community probably does not indicate a corresponding increase of spending power. The increase in the use of sugar and tea is due, not to increased

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†Average of three years.