

## ACCUMULATION.

## PRIVATE WEALTH.

The returns of the Probate Office provide a means whereby an approximate estimate may be made of the private wealth of the people. Of course the estimate must only be taken as a rough approximation, but it will be shown how far the method can be relied on, and what are its defects. The property left by persons who died during the five years, 1898 to 1902, is the basis whereby the property owned by the people living, as shown by the census of 1901, is estimated. A period of five years is taken, because the returns for a single year may be unduly inflated by the falling in of one or several very large estates. The average amount left by each adult who died during the period named is assumed to be the average amount owned by each adult alive at the census of 1901. The accumulated wealth of an individual is believed to be greater at a more advanced than at a less advanced age, and is probably greatest at death. Whatever advantage there may be is probably counter-balanced by some items which cannot be brought into the computation. In Victoria, for instance, deposits in Savings Banks up to £100, and life insurance policies up to £200, may be divided amongst those entitled without taking out probate or administration. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Probate and Administration Act, making chargeable with probate duty settlements and deeds of gift intended to evade payment of the duty, it is probable that some of these escape detection, and would also be unaccounted for in the calculation. The following is a statement on the basis explained, of the private wealth in several Australian States and New Zealand:—

## PRIVATE WEALTH: AVERAGE DURING 1898 TO 1902 IN VICTORIA, NEW SOUTH WALES, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND.

State of—	Estates of Deceased Persons. Net Amount Sworn to.	Deaths of Adults.	Average Amount left by each Adult.	Adults at Census, 1901. †	Private Wealth. ‡	
					Total.	Per Head.
	£		£		£	£
Victoria ...	25,633,200*	53,213	482	651,143	313,851,000	261
New South Wales	24,027,400	46,710	514	700,480	360,047,000	266
South Australia	6,383,000*	12,591	507	186,327	94,468,000	260
Dominion of New Zealand	11,329,700	24,645†	459	437,208†	200,678,000	246†

\* Estimated.

† Including Maoris.

‡ It is only at the time of a census that the adult population is accurately known in the different States, consequently it is only at such a period that the amount of private wealth can be reasonably estimated on the basis adopted.

It must be remembered that the wealth represented by this estimate is the private wealth "in" the State, and not that "of" the State. Probates, &c., of persons dying out of the State leaving property in the State are included in the figures quoted; but on the other hand, many Victorians have large interests, pastoral, mining, and other, in the other States. Taking the net incomes from property of absentees at the same date as the estimate, and capitalizing the same on a 4 per cent. basis, the income-returning property owned by outside investors in Victoria would appear to be about £26,340,000.

It has been found impossible to give a similar estimate of wealth for Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, owing to the probate returns for those States being incomplete or apparently not accounting for anything like the whole of the property left by persons dying. In regard to New Zealand also it is probable that the wealth thereof has been somewhat under-estimated, as it is stated in the New Zealand Official Year-Book that certain estates upon which no duty is payable are not included in their returns. The Registrar-General of New Zealand estimates the average wealth during 1898-1902 on a somewhat similar basis to that above adopted, to be £227,326,000 or £279 per head, which is slightly higher than in the three Australian States for which estimates are given. At the 31st December, 1906, the estimate determined from the five years ended with that date was £304,654,000, or an average of £335 per head, excluding Maoris; but it has been explained that some exceptionally valuable estates came into the probate accounts during 1906.

Diffusion of  
wealth.

The diffusion of wealth appears to be far wider in Victoria and South Australia than in New South Wales or New Zealand, according to the proportion of adults who die leaving property in respect of which probate or administration is taken out. For the reason previously mentioned, the comparison must be restricted to these three States and New Zealand. The following are the number of persons who died leaving property, as shown by the probate returns, the number of adult deaths, and the proportion of the former to the latter during the five years, 1898-1902:—

DIFFUSION OF WEALTH IN SEVERAL AUSTRALIAN STATES AND NEW ZEALAND. 1898-1902.

	Deaths of Adults.	Estates Proved.	
		Number.	Number per 1,000 Deaths of Adults.
Victoria ...	53,213	19,014	357
New South Wales	46,710	12,627	269
South Australia ...	12,591	4,422	351
New Zealand ...	24,645	6,855	278

It is thus shown that more than one-third of the adults who died in Victoria and South Australia during the five years, 1898-1902, was possessed of accumulated property in respect of which it was found necessary to obtain probate or letters of administration. An allowance should be made for the number of probates sealed of persons dying out of the State; but it is estimated that 5 per cent. would cover this.

Estimates of private wealth in various countries have been published by Mulhall, from which the following table has been taken. The figures relate to the year 1895, and no later information is available.

Private  
wealth in  
other  
countries.

PRIVATE WEALTH OF PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD.

Country.	Wealth per Head.	Country.	Wealth per Head.
	£		£
France ...	252	Europe ...	139
United States ...	234	Spain ...	135
Denmark ...	230	Sweden and Norway ...	114
Holland ...	183	Austria ...	104
Switzerland ...	164	Greece ...	101
Germany ...	156	Danubian States ...	90
Argentina ...	154	Portugal ...	87
Belgium ...	154	Russia ...	61

In a paper read before the British Association in 1903, Sir Robert Giffen put forward estimates of the aggregate income and wealth of the people of the British Empire as follow:—

Wealth of  
the British  
Empire.

AGGREGATE INCOME.

	£
United Kingdom ...	1,750,000,000
Canada ...	270,000,000
Australasia ...	210,000,000
India ...	600,000,000
South Africa ...	100,000,000
Remainder of Empire ...	200,000,000
<b>Total ...</b>	<b>3,130,000,000</b>

CAPITAL OR WEALTH.

	£
United Kingdom ...	15,000,000,000
Canada ...	1,350,000,000
Australasia ...	1,100,000,000
India ...	3,000,000,000
South Africa ...	600,000,000
Remainder of Empire ...	1,200,000,000
<b>Total ...</b>	<b>22,250,000,000</b>

Taking the population of three of the several divisions of the Empire set forth in the above tables, as nearly as possible to the date mentioned, the average income and wealth as at that date have

been found to be as shown in the following statement. The information has not been obtained for India and South Africa, owing to the heterogeneous character of the population in those places:—

INCOME PER HEAD OF POPULATION.

			£	s.	d.
United Kingdom	...	...	42	4	2
Canada	...	...	50	5	4
Australasia	...	...	46	3	10

CAPITAL OR WEALTH PER HEAD OF POPULATION.

			£	s.	d.
United Kingdom	...	...	361	16	1
Canada	...	...	251	6	8
Australasia	...	...	241	19	5

It will be seen from these figures that although the accumulated wealth per head was 44 per cent. more in the United Kingdom than in Canada, and 50 per cent. more than in Australasia, yet the average income was greater in the latter countries by 19 per cent. and 9½ per cent. respectively than in the United Kingdom. These results are perfectly consistent when comparing old and new communities—the older community showing a greater accumulated wealth, whilst the newer—for obvious reasons—show a greater income per head.

Property  
left by  
deceased  
persons.

The property left in Victoria by deceased persons has, for the first time, been tabulated according to age at death. In this tabulation for 1908, care has been taken to ascertain the net as well as the gross value of such property. By dealing similarly with the records of the next three or four years, it is anticipated that a fairly accurate estimate will be obtained of the average property left by persons dying at specified ages during these years. It is proposed to apply this average to the numbers living at each age as disclosed at the census in 1911, and it is hoped that by this means it will be possible to obtain a reliable estimate of the private wealth of the people. The accompanying table shows, in various age groups, the number and value of estates of deceased persons of either sex in connexion with which probate or letters of administration were granted during 1908, also the proportions borne by such values to the number of estates and total deaths, and the amount of duty collected on the estates.

In addition to providing data for estimating the wealth of the community, the figures in this table disclose some interesting facts. The resident adults who left property at death in 1908 numbered 2,614 males, or 41 per cent. of the deaths over the age of 21 years, and 1,429 females, or 29 per cent. of adult female deaths. The average value of property left by males is about two and a half times that left by females, and the statement previously made that the accumulated wealth of an individual is greatest at advanced ages is proved by the figures up to age 90. It appears that the average wealth, both of those leaving property and of all deceased persons,

reaches its maximum in the age group 80 to 90. In the case of females, the ratio of estates to deceased persons is highest for the age group 60 to 70 (37 per cent.), while the ratio for males at each age group between 50 and 90 is practically uniform at about 44 per cent., and is higher than that for other periods of life. The precaution of making a will is adopted by a larger proportion of males than of females, and in the case of males by a steadily increasing proportion as age advances.

ESTATES OF DECEASED PERSONS, 1908.

Age at Death.	Estates.		Value of Estates.					Amount of Duty.
	Total Number.	Percent-age Intes-tate.	Gross.		Net—after deducting Liabilities.			
			Real.	Personal.	Real and Personal.	Average to each Estate.	Average to total Deaths in each Age Group.	
<b>MALES.</b>								
			£	£	£	£	£	£
Under 15 years ..	4	100·0	58	523	581	145	0·26	4
15 to 21 ..	19	100·0	3,001	3,116	4,206	221	17	91
21 to 30 ..	90	67·8	7,209	34,546	35,058	389	86	1,329
30 to 40 ..	148	50·7	77,746	86,737	91,929	621	176	3,898
40 to 50 ..	353	42·8	180,370	235,450	292,493	825	336	10,567
50 to 60 ..	343	32·9	409,127	335,152	584,263	1,703	754	32,034
60 to 70 ..	459	25·9	648,612	518,813	946,811	2,063	891	53,343
70 to 80 ..	744	18·4	1,228,717	891,293	1,729,317	2,324	1,029	92,912
80 to 90 ..	429	12·8	779,516	1,079,084	1,758,786	4,100	1,832	136,366
90 years and up-wards ..	41	29·3	49,252	86,103	128,380	3,131	1,284	7,863
Unspecified ..	7	42·8	5,516	2,694	8,066	1,152	..	550
Absentees ..	197	25·9	44,628	251,714	282,764	1,435	..	14,985
<b>Total Males</b>	<b>2,834</b>	<b>28·2</b>	<b>3,433,752</b>	<b>3,525,225</b>	<b>5,862,654</b>	<b>2,069</b>	<b>665</b>	<b>353,942</b>
<b>FEMALES.</b>								
			£	£	£	£	£	£
Under 15 years ..	6	100·0	1,268	1,111	2,346	391	9	51
15 to 21 ..	37	54·1	2,042	6,449	7,595	205	19	145
21 to 30 ..	101	61·4	19,180	21,576	34,882	345	68	740
30 to 40 ..	160	51·2	45,244	31,897	112,636	704	172	5,117
40 to 50 ..	186	35·5	88,672	59,400	114,923	618	210	3,685
50 to 60 ..	308	30·2	160,311	163,314	283,114	919	338	10,640
60 to 70 ..	424	23·3	182,853	173,664	319,926	755	260	10,875
70 to 80 ..	189	14·3	121,952	144,638	243,141	1,286	362	12,124
80 to 90 ..	21	19·0	4,192	13,168	17,090	814	192	570
90 years and up-wards ..	3	66·6	35	1,034	1,025	342	..	28
Unspecified ..	76	38·2	50,443	82,946	128,753	1,094	..	9,546
<b>Total Females</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>32·4</b>	<b>676,192</b>	<b>749,197</b>	<b>1,265,431</b>	<b>837</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>53,521</b>
<b>Total Males and Females</b>	<b>4,345</b>	<b>29·7</b>	<b>4,109,944</b>	<b>4,274,422</b>	<b>7,128,085</b>	<b>1,641</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>407,463</b>

The following figures prove that the economic conditions prevalent in Victoria during the last thirty years have led to a wide and growing diffusion of wealth amongst the people:—

Period.	Percentage of Adults who died leaving Estates which went through the Probate Office, &c. Yearly Average.			
1879-83	...	...	...	22.6
1884-88	...	...	...	25.9
1889-93	...	...	...	30.3
1894-98	...	...	...	33.3
1899-1903	...	...	...	36.7
1904	...	...	...	37.3
1905	...	...	...	36.8
1906	...	...	...	37.4
1907	...	...	...	38.6
1908	...	...	...	38.1

#### RATEABLE PROPERTY: TOTAL AND GROUND VALUES.

Rateable property.

The whole of Victoria, with the exception of about 650 square miles—600 in the county of Wonnangatta and the whole of French Island—or  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of the area of the State, being divided into municipalities for the purposes of local government, the value of real property, based on the municipal valuations, can be given with some degree of accuracy. Returns are obtained annually from each city, town, borough, and shire; and the following figures show the net annual rateable value and the capital value estimated by the municipalities over a series of years:—

#### RATEABLE PROPERTY: ANNUAL AND CAPITAL VALUES, 1880 TO 1909.

Year ended 30th Sept.	Estimated Value of Rateable Property.		Year ended 30th Sept.	Estimated Value of Rateable Property.	
	Annual.	Capital.		Annual.	Capital.
1880	£ 7,117,946	£ 83,847,418	1895	10,641,200	167,197,780
1881	7,175,289	87,642,459	1896	10,393,000	168,427,700
1882	7,433,812	91,792,547	1897	10,345,535	171,253,984
1883	7,692,706	95,610,959	1898	10,152,500	168,611,906
1884	8,098,814	103,795,832	1899	10,134,108	168,456,523
1885	8,793,490	114,283,570	1900	10,283,500	169,911,900
1886	9,621,135	125,878,748	1901	10,537,497	174,141,754
1887	10,153,771	137,885,701	1902	10,885,087	185,101,993
1888	11,913,473	167,383,210	1903	11,188,932	203,902,919
1889	12,931,526	187,558,511	1904	11,437,830	209,143,730
1890	13,265,543	194,313,646	1905	11,743,270	210,920,174
1891	13,733,770	203,351,360	1906	11,795,143	216,615,624
1892	13,605,990	197,366,940	1907	12,174,325	222,598,941
1893	12,779,600	189,461,350	1908	12,638,900	232,725,666
1894	11,676,079	174,984,851	1909	13,123,958	242,688,771

It will be observed from the table that there has been a steady increase each year since 1899 in the annual value of rateable property, as estimated by the municipalities. The capital values given are not to be relied upon for purposes of accurate comparison. The great bulk of the municipalities capitalize the

net annual value on a 5 per cent. basis; but about 28 per cent. of them assume the capital value to be much less in proportion to the annual value, some estimating 19, 16, 15, 12, 10, down to as low as 8 years' purchase, whilst in one case 7 years' purchase is given as the capital value. Twenty years' purchase is adopted by thirteen of the metropolitan municipalities, one adopting 17, one 13 years', two 15 years', and four 12 years'; whilst of thirty-nine country towns, twenty adopt from 7 to 12 years' purchase as the basis, one returning figures showing 14 years', five 15 years', one 16 years', one 17 years', and eleven 20 years' purchase as the capital value. Of the 146 shires, 124 adopt 20 years' purchase in estimating the capital value, the others adopting from 19 to 8 years'.

The following is an estimate for the last six years of the capital value of land with and without improvements, the latter of which is commonly called the unimproved value, but should more correctly be termed the ground value:—

Landed property capital and ground values.

VALUE OF LAND WITH AND WITHOUT IMPROVEMENTS, 1903-4 TO 1908-9.

Year.	Annual Rateable Value.	Capital Value with Improvements.	Unimproved or Ground Value.
Urban.			
	£	£	£
1903-4	5,366,477	93,376,880	46,688,440
1904-5	5,498,471	94,583,732	47,291,866
1905-6	5,664,425	99,354,665	49,677,332
1906-7	5,779,231	100,801,295	50,400,647
1907-8	5,944,691	103,666,178	51,833,089
1908-9	6,080,447	106,149,960	53,074,980
Rural.			
1903-4	6,071,353	115,766,850	77,177,900
1904-5	6,244,799	116,336,442	77,557,628
1905-6	6,130,718	117,260,959	78,173,973
1906-7	6,395,094	121,797,646	81,198,431
1907-8	6,694,209	129,059,488	86,039,659
1908-9	7,043,511	136,538,811	91,025,874
Total.			
1903-4	11,437,830	209,143,730	123,866,340
1904-5	11,743,270	210,920,174	124,849,494
1905-6	11,795,143	216,615,624	127,851,305
1906-7	12,174,325	222,598,941	131,599,078
1907-8	12,638,900	232,725,666	137,872,748
1908-9	13,123,958	242,688,771	144,100,854

Improvements are estimated at one-half in the case of urban and one-third in the case of rural properties, which are about the proportions that are found to prevail in New Zealand, according to the valuations of the Valuer-General, revised to 1908. If the Victorian estimate were based upon the New Zealand proportion, without distinguishing urban and rural, the ground value in 1908-9 would be about £154,500,000, which is approximate to the above estimate. These proportions have also been checked by an examination of the census returns, which give the number of rooms in each house, and the materials of which same were built. In Melbourne city an average of £100, and in suburbs and country towns £70 per room for brick, &c., houses was allowed; whilst in urban districts £45 per room, and in rural £40 per room, was allowed for wooden houses. On this system the above estimates were verified as being remarkably close, allowing for other improvements, besides houses, in rural districts.

## ROYAL MINT.

Royal Mint  
returns.

The Melbourne branch of the Royal Mint was established in 1872, the date of opening being the 12th June. In the following table particulars are given, for the period 1872 to 1904 and for each of the last four years, showing the quantity of gold received at the Mint, where the same was raised, and its coinage value; also gold coin and bullion issued during the same periods:—

## ROYAL MINT RETURNS, 1872 TO 1908.

Gold Received.		1872 to 1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
<i>Gross Weight.</i>						
Raised in Victoria ...	oz.	20,300,477	783,761	848,298	754,810	736,875
" New Zealand ..		2,800,535	127,174	132,529	103,764	90,411
" Western Aus- tralia ..		2,756,152	21,453	18,700	20,772	20,255
" elsewhere ..		2,077,410	94,685	54,764	58,823	83,580
Total ...		27,934,574	1,027,073	1,054,291	938,169	931,121
Coinage Value ...	£	110,268,160	3,984,132	4,100,195	3,645,704	3,614,643
Gold Issued.						
Coin—						
Sovereigns ...	No.	101,523,017	3,633,838	3,657,874	3,332,691	3,080,148
Half-Sovereigns ...		1,094,725	...	82,000	...	405,034
Bullion—Quantity ...	oz.	1,963,422	82,935	95,114	80,648	93,461
" Value ...	£	8,195,155	349,768	400,820	314,022	363,914
Total value Coin and Bullion ...	£	110,265,535	3,983,606	4,099,694	3,646,713	3,646,579

Since the opening of the Mint 31,885,228 ounces of gold have been received thereat, the coinage value, at £3 17s. 10½d. per ounce standard, being £125,642,834, thus averaging £3 18s. 10d. per ounce gross. Of the total quantity of gold received at the Mint 23,424,220 ounces were raised in Victoria, 3,254,414 ounces in New Zealand, and 2,837,332 ounces in Western Australia. The average value of Victorian gold received at the Mint during the year 1908 was £3 19s. 2d. per ounce gross, £3 19s. 1d. being the value of the gold and 1d. the value of the silver contained therein. The output of the Mint since its establishment comprises 115,227,568 sovereigns, 1,581,759 half-sovereigns, and 2,315,580 ounces of gold bullion; the total value of coin and bullion being £125,642,126.

Since the establishment of the Melbourne Mint, the gold coin exported from Victoria, less that imported, has amounted to £98,084,154, or less by £17,934,293 than the total gold coin issued from the Mint. The following particulars are given of the value of gold and silver coin and bullion imported and exported during each of the last five years:—

Interchange  
of coin and  
bullion.

INTERCHANGE OF COIN AND BULLION, 1904 TO 1908.

Imports of—	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Gold Coin ... ..	£ 79,100	£ 26,500	£ 100,900	£ 124,600	£ 258,086
„ Bullion ... ..	896,528	894,237	818,007	714,985	661,989
Silver Coin ... ..	5,427	17,998	36,403	123,925	50,825
„ Bullion ... ..	1,356	676	968	113,756	75,339
Exports of—					
Gold Coin ... ..	3,949,911	1,620,520	4,416,808	2,306,240	3,913,770
„ Bullion ... ..	494,100	378,777	493,369	354,304	449,508
Silver Coin ... ..	7,228	9,550	17,089	9,960	20,605
„ Bullion ... ..	1,167	2,687	8,592	112,971	73,057

The imports and exports of gold and silver display considerable fluctuations. The net exports of gold coin and bullion in 1906 amounted to £3,991,270, exceeding the value of the total production of gold in Victoria during the same year by £710,792; in 1904 and 1908 also the net exports exceeded the production, but in 1907 the production was 62 per cent. more than, and in 1905 three times, the net exports. The Victorian production of gold for 1908 was valued at £2,849,838.

## BANKING.

Finances of  
banks.

On 31st December, 1908, there were eleven banks of issue in Victoria, possessing 614 branches or agencies, being an increase of 6 on the number of branches for the previous year. The financial position of these banks, on 31st December in each of the last five years, is shown by the following return:—

## VICTORIAN BANK RETURNS, 1904 TO 1908.

In Victoria.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
<b>LIABILITIES.</b>					
Deposits bearing interest*	£ 20,896,017	£ 23,055,743	£ 24,232,979	£ 24,615,431	£ 23,975,491
Deposits not bearing interest	10,778,780	12,068,153	13,390,841	13,631,858	12,659,502
Notes in circulation ...	858,345	835,499	886,922	889,357	841,604
Other ...	220,201	463,449	366,950	480,046	332,467
Total ...	32,753,343	36,422,844	38,877,692	39,616,692	37,809,064
<b>ASSETS.</b>					
Coin and Bullion ...	6,351,576	8,056,666	6,918,743	8,043,780	7,310,729
Debts due to Banks ...	29,293,210	29,918,226	31,495,558	33,238,732	33,711,188
Property ...	1,951,171	1,919,230	1,901,999	1,844,237	1,779,182
Other ...	531,635	617,213	633,184	605,331	611,900
Total ...	38,127,592	40,511,335	40,949,484	43,732,080	43,412,999
<b>CAPITAL AND PROFITS.</b>					
Capital stock paid up	14,412,175	13,961,695	12,965,593†	13,441,231†	13,610,852†
Reserved Profits (ex Dividend)	4,263,499	4,414,059	4,672,901	5,234,983	5,860,550
Last Dividend—					
Amount ...	437,251	469,218	482,883‡	549,604‡	567,647‡
Average rate per cent. per annum	6·55	7·07	7·12	7·84	7·98

\* Including perpetual inscribed stocks which, in 1908, amounted to £1,003,277.—† Excluding £1,000,000 guaranteed by the Government of New Zealand, but which was included prior to 1906.—‡ Half-yearly dividend in the case of nine banks.

Although the Victorian liabilities of the banks, at the close of the year 1908, show a decrease when compared with 1907, yet they have increased to the extent of £5,055,721 since 1904. During the same interval the Victorian assets have increased by £5,285,407. In the course of the same period (1904-8) there have been considerable fluctuations in the excess of assets over liabilities, such excess being in 1904 £5,374,249, in 1906 £2,071,792, and in 1908 £5,603,935. It must be borne in mind that the figures represent only the assets and liabilities *within* the State, of which sworn returns are rendered to the Government quarterly as required by law.

An indication of the recovery in banking business is revealed by the annual increase in dividends paid and reserved profits. Compared with 1904, the average rate of dividend had increased in 1908 by 22 per cent., and the amount of reserved profits by 37 per cent.

The amount of Government deposits with banks in Victoria during each of the last fifteen years was as follows:—

Government deposits in banks.

£			£		
1894 ... ..	2,303,450	1902 ... ..	2,455,773		
1895 ... ..	2,405,285	1903 ... ..	2,201,989		
1896 ... ..	2,338,970	1904 ... ..	3,117,683		
1897 ... ..	2,260,566	1905 ... ..	3,576,895		
1898 ... ..	1,796,075	1906 ... ..	3,903,702		
1899 ... ..	2,705,243	1907 ... ..	2,665,655		
1900 ... ..	2,840,102	1908 ... ..	2,210,549		
1901 ... ..	2,557,811				

There are twenty-two banks in Australasia, many of which do business in several States. Eleven do business in Victoria and Queensland, thirteen in New South Wales, seven in South Australia, six in Western Australia, and five in Tasmania and New Zealand. The amounts of deposits, advances, notes in circulation, and coin and bullion for the quarter ended 31st December, 1908, are as follows:—

Banks in Australia and New Zealand.

#### AUSTRALASIAN BANKING BUSINESS, 31ST DECEMBER, 1908.

State, &c.	Deposits.*	Advances, &c.	Notes in Circulation.	Coin and Bullion.
	£	£	£	£
Victoria ... ..	35,631,716	33,711,188	841,604	7,310,729
New South Wales ... ..	43,197,282	39,182,317	1,763,104	9,600,447
Queensland ... ..	15,750,442	15,707,993	...	2,385,354
South Australia ... ..	8,601,570	6,049,031	495,079	1,878,055
Western Australia ... ..	4,960,284	5,698,662	336,106	2,135,738
Tasmania ... ..	3,619,070	3,015,794	158,278	712,523
Australia ... ..	111,760,364	103,364,985	3,594,171	24,022,846
New Zealand ... ..	20,315,739	23,725,832	1,607,222	4,585,755
Australasia ... ..	132,076,103	127,090,817	5,201,393	28,608,601

\* Excluding perpetual inscribed stocks, which amount to £1,003,277 in Victoria, £649,987 in New South Wales, £78,828 in Queensland, and £313,272, in South Australia.

These figures have been taken from the *Australasian Insurance and Banking Record*. In Queensland Treasury notes have taken the place of bank notes. Except in Western Australia, and New Zealand deposits exceed advances outstanding.

As compared with the previous year, deposits have decreased by £2,360,125 in the whole of Australasia, decreases occurring in Victoria £1,630,746, Western Australia £233,180, Tasmania £30,498, and New Zealand £2,423,991, but increases in New South Wales £1,199,942, Queensland £320,743, and South Australia £437,605. Advances, compared with the previous year, show an increase in Australia of £3,498,229, each State showing an increase, which, in the case of New South Wales, amounted to £1,991,367. In New Zealand the advances of 1908 exceed those of the previous year by £1,272,980. Notes in circulation have decreased by £56,027 in Australia; in New Zealand there has been also a decrease of £34,636. Coin and bullion decreased by £993,598 in Australia, and by £398,811 in New Zealand.

Melbourne  
Clearing  
House.

The following table shows the particulars respecting the clearances through the Melbourne Clearing House for the twelve years, 1897-1908:—

MELBOURNE CLEARING HOUSE—TRANSACTIONS, 1897-1908.

Year.	Clearances.			Payments in Coin.	Average Weekly Clearances.
	Notes.	Cheques, Bills, &c.	Total.		
	£	£	£	£	£
1897	10,827,000	133,016,000	143,843,000	18,145,000	2,766,211
1898	10,292,000	132,383,000	142,675,000	18,605,000	2,743,750
1899	11,011,661	147,901,947	158,913,608	20,447,663	3,056,030
1900	10,577,293	149,371,785	159,949,078	19,953,585	3,075,944
1901	11,059,519	159,367,162	170,426,681	21,505,100	3,277,436
1902	10,967,723	159,057,401	170,025,124	21,869,162	3,269,714
1903	10,322,250	156,371,148	166,693,398	21,505,741	3,205,642
1904	9,813,956	164,352,306	174,166,262	21,606,342	3,349,351
1905	9,979,716	177,652,709	187,632,425	24,562,534	3,608,316
1906	11,007,506	209,034,550	220,042,056	27,839,446	4,231,573
1907	11,537,939	225,035,841	236,593,780	29,281,793	4,549,876
1908	11,211,842	210,141,833	221,353,675	26,226,196	4,256,801

From this table it is seen that there has been a large increase in the transactions of the Clearing House since 1897. Compared with that year, the weekly average for 1908 shows an increase of 54 per cent.

Savings  
Banks.

The two classes of Savings Banks which formerly existed in Victoria, viz., the Post Office and the Trustees, were, in 1897, merged into one institution controlled by the Savings Banks Commissioners, and guaranteed by the Government. The interest allowed to depositors at 30th June, 1908, was at the rate of 3 per cent. on sums up to £100; and 2½ per cent. on sums over £100 up to £250; but

no interest was allowed on any excess over £250. On 1st January, 1909, the rate of interest was increased to  $3\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. on amounts up to £100 and to 3 per cent. on amounts between £100 and £250. The following are the particulars of depositors and deposits for a number of years:—

## SAVINGS BANKS : DEPOSITORS AND DEPOSITS, 1875 TO 1908.

On 30th June.	Number of Depositors.		Amount remaining on Deposit.	
	Total.	Per 1,000 of Population.	Total.	Average to each Depositor.
			£	£ s d.
1875 ... ..	65,837	81	1,469,949	22 6 6
1880 ... ..	92,115	108	1,661,409	18 0 9
1885 ... ..	170,014	174	3,337,018	19 12 7
1890 ... ..	281,509	252	5,262,105	18 13 10
1895 ... ..	338,480	286	7,316,129	21 12 3
1900 ... ..	375,070	314	9,110,793	24 5 9
1901 ... ..	393,026	327	9,662,006	24 11 8
1902 ... ..	410,126	340	10,131,604	24 14 1
1903 ... ..	418,511	347	10,341,857	24 14 3
1904 ... ..	432,867	358	10,582,808	24 9 0
1905 ... ..	447,382	369	10,896,741	24 7 2
1906 ... ..	466,752	380	11,764,179	25 4 1
1907 ... ..	491,318	394	12,792,590	26 0 0
1908 ... ..	511,581	404	13,428,676	26 5 9

The best evidence of the growing habit of thrift, as well as of the wide diffusion of wealth amongst the middle and poorer classes in Victoria, is contained in the Savings Banks returns, the number of depositors in proportion to population, having increased by 29 per cent. since 1900, and by 60 per cent. since 1890. On 30th June, 1908, more than two persons out of every five in the State (including children and infants, who themselves number more than one-third of the population) were depositors with a credit balance, on the average, of over £26. Of the amount on deposit in 1908, 35 per cent. belonged to depositors with accounts up to £100 each, 40 per cent. with accounts over £100 and up to £250, and 25 per cent. with accounts over £250. The aggregate of the excess over £250—the money on deposit for which interest is not allowed—was, on 30th June, 1908, £692,802.

It should, however, be pointed out that about 141,000 of the accounts remaining open were small sums under £1 left by depositors who had ceased to operate their accounts, and the total amount at their credit was about £20,400. If these figures be withdrawn from those in the preceding table it would appear that there were 370,581 active accounts with £13,408,276 at credit—an average of £36 3s. 7d. per depositor; and the number of depositors per thousand of the population becomes reduced to 293.

The next statement shows the assets and liabilities of savings banks in Victoria, the former indicating the manner in which deposits are invested or held:—

SAVINGS BANKS, ASSETS AND LIABILITIES, 30TH JUNE, 1908.

<i>Assets.</i>		£
With Treasurer of Victoria—Certificate representing Post Office Savings Bank Deposits, taken over 30th September, 1897 ... ..		1,340,559
Government Debentures ... ..		7,115,687
Bank Fixed Deposits Receipts (in name of Treasurer of Victoria) ... ..		1,847,032
Savings Bank Mortgage Bonds and Debentures (Advance Dept.) ... ..		765,304
City of Melbourne Debentures ... ..		33,704
Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works Debentures ... ..		746,179
Mortgage Securities ... ..		1,341,646
Mortgage Properties foreclosed or in possession ... ..		139,092
Melbourne Trust Ltd. Debentures and Shares ... ..		5,311
Accrued Interest, &c., on Investments ... ..		178,874
Bank premises ... ..		140,000
Advances Department ... ..		311
Inter-State Transfer Account ... ..		1,917
Commercial Bank—Current Accounts ... ..		31,679
Cash at various Savings Banks, Agencies, and Trustees' Bankers ... ..		104,373
Total ... ..		13,791,668
<i>Liabilities.</i>		£
Depositors' balances, with interest to date ... ..		13,428,676
Other liabilities ... ..		1,650
Surplus Funds allotted as follow:—		
Reserve Fund ... ..	£300,000	
Depreciation Fund ... ..	44,851	
Profit and Loss Account ... ..	9,555	
Fidelity Guarantee Fund ... ..	6,936	
Total Surplus Funds ... ..		361,342
Total ... ..		13,791,668

Savings  
Banks  
loans to  
farmers.

For the purpose of making advances to farmers an advance department was established in 1896 by the Act amalgamating the Post Office and Commissioners' Savings Banks. Funds for this purpose are raised by sale of mortgage bonds for £25 each, and by debentures in denominations of £100 and over, redeemable at fixed dates not more than fifteen years from date of issue. The total issues up to 30th June, 1908, amounted to £2,304,622, of which mortgage bonds for £873,750 have been redeemed or repurchased, leaving £1,430,872 outstanding; of this amount £651,882 is held by the public, and the balance by the Commissioners themselves out of Savings Banks funds. The amount advanced during the year 1907-8 was £143,180, making, with the amounts previously advanced, a total of £2,254,488, of which £1,029,057 has been repaid, leaving the amount outstanding on 30th June, 1908, at £1,225,431, representing 3,030 loans, which thus averaged £404. As a measure of the

safety with which the advance department has been conducted, it may be mentioned that the instalments of principal in arrear amounted on 30th June, 1908, to only £136, and the interest in arrear to £210.

## TRANSACTIONS UNDER CRÉDIT FONCIER SYSTEM TO 30TH JUNE, 1908.

		At 30th June, 1907.	During 1907-8.	At 30th June, 1908.
Loans raised	... ..	£ 2,183,600	121,022	2,304,622
„ repaid	... ..	£ 694,250	179,500	873,750
„ outstanding	... ..	£ 1,489,350	...	1,430,872
Applications received	... ..	No. 10,305	704	11,009
„ „ amount	... ..	£ 4,891,187	344,703	5,235,890
Applications granted	... ..	No. 6,455	435	6,890*
„ „ amount	... ..	£ 2,824,500	192,140	3,016,640*
Amounts advanced—				
To pay liabilities	... ..	£ 1,872,792	122,438	1,995,230
„ Crown rents	... ..	£ 80,438	2,875	83,313
For improvement and development of land	... ..	£ 158,078	17,867	175,945
Total advanced	... ..	£ 2,111,308	143,180	2,254,488
Amounts repaid	... ..	£ 860,257	168,800	1,029,057
„ outstanding	... ..	£ 1,251,051	...	1,225,431

\* Including £538,785 offered to, but not accepted by, 1,038 applicants.

The Savings Banks of Australasia comprise Trustee banks in Victoria and South Australia—those of Victoria being guaranteed by and under the supervision of the Government—Government banks in Queensland and Western Australia; Government and Trustee banks in New South Wales; Government and Joint Stock banks in Tasmania; and Government and private banks in New Zealand. The number of depositors in these banks, and the amount on deposit, including interest, are given in the succeeding table. The figures relate to the date, 30th June, 1908, except those of the Joint Stock banks of Tasmania, which are made up to the end of February, 1908, and those of the New Zealand banks, which relate to the date, 31st December, 1907.

Savings  
Banks in  
Australasia.

## SAVINGS BANKS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: 1907-8.

State.	Number of Depositors.		Amount remaining on Deposit.	
	Total.	Per 1,000 of the Population.	Total.	Average to each Depositor.
Victoria	511,581	404	£ 13,428,676	£ s. d. 26 5 0
New South Wales	435,618	276	17,849,384	40 19 6
Queensland	100,324	182	4,921,881	49 1 2
South Australia	172,278	433	5,820,161	33 15 8
Western Australia	67,695	252	2,879,882	42 10 10
Tasmania	55,620	308	1,560,950	28 1 3
Australia	1,343,116	316	46,460,934	34 11 10
New Zealand	364,422	392	12,825,063	35 3 10
Australasia	1,707,538	330	59,285,997	34 14 5

The number of depositors in proportion to population in Victoria is greater than in the other States (excepting South Australia) and New Zealand, although the average amount standing to the credit of each depositor is not so large. It has already been shown that the diffusion of wealth, as evidenced by the proportion of persons dying and leaving property, is wider in Victoria than elsewhere, and this is corroborated by the above figures. More than one-third of the population of Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand are depositors, more than one-fourth in New South Wales, Western Australia, and Tasmania, and more than one-sixth in Queensland.

The following table shows the number and proportion to population of depositors, amount of deposits, and average to each depositor in Savings Banks in Great Britain, other European countries, and the United States:—

## SAVINGS BANKS IN GREAT BRITAIN AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Country.	Year.	Number of Depositors.		Amount remaining on Deposit.	
		Total.	Per 1,000 of the Population.	Total.	Average to each Depositor.
			£		
			£ s. d.		
England and Wales	1907	10,839,893	308	172,182,172	15 17 8
Scotland	1907	1,054,691	220	24,382,342	23 2 4
Ireland	1907	580,223	133	13,089,158	22 11 2
United Kingdom	1907	12,474,807	281	209,653,672	16 16 1
Austria	1905	5,575,745	203	219,651,233	39 7 11
Belgium	1905	2,311,845	323	31,147,852	13 9 6
France	1905-7	12,245,414	312	194,894,570	15 18 4
Italy	1906	6,659,847	198	123,236,606	18 10 1
Netherlands	1905	1,583,620	283	18,510,333	11 13 9
Russia	1905	5,665,998	39	19,938,847	34 4 7
Sweden	1906	2,007,499	376	39,262,491	19 11 2
Norway	1906	826,873	356	22,413,872	27 2 2
Denmark	1906	1,352,490	522	46,357,493	34 5 6
United States	1907	8,588,811	100	758,261,367	88 5 8

Savings Banks in various countries.

World's stocks of money and coinage.

The following statements give the approximate stocks of gold, silver, and paper money in the principal countries of the world for 1906, and the world's coinage of gold and silver for 1907. The information has been extracted from reports issued by the Directors of the Mints of the United States and Great Britain:—

APPROXIMATE STOCKS OF MONEY IN THE PRINCIPAL COUNTRIES OF  
THE WORLD AT THE CLOSE OF 1906.

Country.	Value of—		
	Gold.	Silver.	Uncovered Paper.
	£	£	£
Argentina ... ..	21,103,000	*	60,269,000
Austria-Hungary ... ..	62,961,000	21,638,000	24,515,000
Belgium ... ..	6,391,000	5,077,000	25,850,000
British Empire—			
Australasia ... ..	25,686,000	2,055,000	*
Canada ... ..	12,822,000	1,377,000	14,898,000
India ... ..	69,311,000	124,073,000	7,993,000
South Africa ... ..	12,617,000	4,110,000	*
United Kingdom ... ..	100,010,000	24,001,000	24,001,000
Egypt ... ..	28,768,000	3,082,000	*
France ... ..	190,360,000	84,475,000	55,317,000
Germany ... ..	211,713,000	45,145,000	54,885,000
Italy ... ..	44,282,000	6,514,000	30,946,000
Japan ... ..	16,459,000	9,904,000	19,912,000
Mexico ... ..	8,219,000	11,672,000	10,521,000
Netherlands ... ..	9,432,000	10,808,000	11,877,000
Russia ... ..	193,034,000	16,007,000	*
Spain ... ..	18,679,000	35,693,000	19,953,000
Turkey ... ..	10,274,000	8,219,000	*
United States ... ..	327,402,000	143,573,000	125,511,000
Other Countries ... ..	46,000,000	112,504,000	362,622,000
Total ... ..	1,415,576,000	669,927,000	849,070,000

\* No information.

WORLD'S COINAGE DURING THE YEAR 1907.

Country.	Gold.	Silver.	Nickel, Copper, Bronze, &c.
	£	£	£
United Kingdom ... ..	20,575,400	2,039,900	236,900
Australasia ... ..	10,844,000	...	...
India (a) ... ..	...	17,390,500	180,100
British Colonies and Dependencies (b) ... ..	...	1,566,500	36,200
Austria-Hungary ... ..	945,400	650,300	12,800
China ... ..	...	1,401,700	2,055,500
France and Tunis ... ..	15,598,400	3,302,600	36,000
Germany and German East Africa ... ..	3,345,800	4,313,900	289,700
Japan (a) ... ..	3,179,500	1,608,500	...
Mexico ... ..	2,700,500	2,109,100	20,500
Russia ... ..	...	1,170,200	34,600
Turkey ... ..	1,978,900	271,300	...
United States and Philippines (a) ... ..	16,588,000	3,496,000	691,600
Other Countries ... ..	361,700	3,546,000	1,084,200
Total ... ..	76,117,600	42,866,300	4,778,100

(a) Financial Year, 1906-7

(b) Inclusive of coins struck at Calcutta and Bombay (during the Financial Year, 1906-7) and at the "Mint," Birmingham.

## PRICES, ETC., OF GOVERNMENT STOCKS.

Compara-  
tive prices  
of Victorian  
stocks.

Selecting one of the leading 4 per cent. and one of the leading 3½ per cent. Victorian stocks, and finding the highest prices quoted in 1885 and each subsequent year, an adequate idea may be formed of the general course of prices in London during the last twenty-four years. These are shown in the following table, together with the equivalent returns to the investor.

PRICES OF VICTORIAN REPRESENTATIVE STOCKS IN LONDON,  
1885 TO 1908.

Year.	Highest Prices quoted on Stock Exchange		Minimum Return to Investor.	
	4 per cents. (due 1920).	3½ per cents. (due 1923).	4 per cents.	3½ per cents.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1885	104½	...	3 15 10	...
1886	107½	...	3 13 2	...
1887	108½	...	3 13 1	...
1888	114½	...	3 6 5	...
1889	114½	105	3 5 8	3 5 5
1890	111½	103½	3 8 0	3 7 0
1891	109½	100½	3 10 3	3 9 9
1892	106½	98	3 13 9	3 13 5
1893	103½	93½	3 18 6	4 3 4
1894	106½	99½	3 15 2	3 10 2
1895	111½	105½	3 9 0	3 6 1
1896	116½	109½	3 2 7	3 1 6
1897	115	108½	3 4 0	3 2 7
1898	113½	107½	3 5 1	3 3 6
1899	114	107½	3 4 5	3 2 10
1900	111½	105½	3 6 8	3 5 0
1901	112½	106½	3 5 3	3 4 1
1902	112½	104½	3 5 3	3 6 0
1903	107½	101½	3 11 2	3 10 0
1904	107	98½	3 11 10	3 14 5
1905	107	100½	3 11 6	3 11 6
1906	105½	101½	3 13 4	3 10 7
1907	105	100½	3 14 2	3 11 8
1908	105½	101½	3 12 1	3 10 5

The minimum return to the investor is calculated after allowing for accrued interest and redemption at par at maturity.

The following are the means between the highest and lowest prices of Australasian stocks in London during each of the last fifteen years. The stocks selected are the representative issues of 4 and 3½ per cents. :—

Prices of  
Austral-  
asian  
stocks.

## MEAN PRICES OF AUSTRALASIAN STOCKS IN LONDON, 1894 TO 1908.

Year.	Victoria.	New South Wales.	Queens-land.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
FOUR PER CENTS. REDEEMABLE IN—							
	1920.	1933.	1915.	1917-36.	1934.	1920-40.	1929.
1894 ..	103½	107¾	105¾	105¾	108½	..	107¾
1895 ..	104¾	113¾	109¾	109¾	117½	..	109¾
1896 ..	111½	118½	111½	111½	124½	..	112¾
1897 ..	113	120¾	113	112	121½	..	114¾
1898 ..	111½	117½	109¾	110	118½	..	112½
1899 ..	110	115½	109	108½	116½	..	111
1900 ..	109	114¾	108½	108	115	110½	111½
1901 ..	110¾	114¾	107½	107	113	109½	113
1902 ..	108¾	112¾	105½	105	112¾	110	111½
1903 ..	104½	107¾	102¾	102	109	107¾	107¾
1904 ..	104½	107½	102¾	101½	107	105½	106
1905 ..	105¾	107¾	103¾	103	107	106½	107¾
1906 ..	103¾	108¾	102¾	102	108	105¾	107¾
1907 ..	102½	106¾	101¾	101	107	104¾	106
1908 ..	103¾	107¾	102¾	102	107	104¾	107¾
THREE AND A HALF PER CENTS. REDEEMABLE IN—							
	1923.	1924.	1924.	1939.	1915-35.	1920-40.	1940.
1894 ..	95¾	99½	95½	97¾	..	96¾	99¾
1895 ..	98	104½	102½	104½	..	102¾	103¾
1896 ..	104½	108	106½	108	..	107	106
1897 ..	106½	109¾	106¾	111	..	108½	107¾
1898 ..	104	106½	104	108	..	107¾	106½
1899 ..	103	105½	103¾	106¾	..	103	105½
1900 ..	103¾	105	103½	105	102½	102¾	105
1901 ..	104	104¾	102¾	104	101¾	102¾	106¾
1902 ..	102½	103½	101¾	103½	100¾	103	105½
1903 ..	98	99½	97½	101½	98½	100	102½
1904 ..	96¾	97½	96	98¾	95¾	98	99
1905 ..	98½	99¾	98½	99	97½	99	98½
1906 ..	100	100	99	100	99	98	100
1907 ..	98¾	99½	97	99	96½	97½	99
1908 ..	99½	100	98	99½	98½	98	99

The earlier years in this table are marked by a series of rapid rises in the prices of all the stocks quoted, but in 1898 prices began to recede and this process continued until 1904. In 1905 they hardened, and they were generally sustained in 1906, but in 1907 a fall took place on which a partial recovery was made in 1908. The prices in 1908 are on about the same level as those of 1894, in the case of the four per cent. stock, and are slightly higher in the case of the three-and-a-half per cents. These figures, however, as they stand, do not afford an indication of the real values of the stocks concerned; the table simply shows the mean between the highest and lowest prices for the year.

Investors' return from Australasian stocks.

The best method of comparing the value of stocks over a series of years, or of comparing the different values placed upon the stocks of different States by investors, is to show the actual or effective rate of interest the investor is satisfied with, as evidenced by the mean between the highest and lowest quotations during the year. This is done in the following table, allowance being made for an average of three months' accrued interest, which is deducted from the market price before the computation is made. In computing the yield to the investor, the gain or loss incurred by redemption at par at maturity is taken into account:—

INVESTORS' INTEREST RETURN FROM AUSTRALASIAN STOCKS,  
1894, 1897, 1900, 1902, AND 1904 TO 1908.

Year.	Victoria.	New South Wales.	Queensland.	South Australia.	Western Australia.	Tasmania.	New Zealand.
FOUR PER CENTS.							
	Per cent. £ s. d.						
1894	3 17 2	3 13 7	3 13 10	3 13 9	3 13 0	..	3 13 4
1897	3 5 1	3 2 2	3 2 2	3 4 1	3 1 3	..	3 6 2
1900	3 8 8	3 6 4	3 7 6	3 7 10	3 6 2	3 7 0	3 9 0
1902	3 8 4	3 8 2	3 11 10	3 11 8	3 8 0	3 6 9	3 8 5
1904	3 14 0	3 13 0	3 16 2	3 19 9	3 13 0	3 13 2	3 13 9
1905	3 12 11	3 12 5	3 13 5	3 15 4	3 12 8	3 11 1	3 11 6
1906	3 14 11	3 11 5	3 15 1	3 16 5	3 11 8	3 11 8	3 11 3
1907	3 17 0	3 13 6	3 18 2	3 18 2	3 12 10	3 13 0	3 13 3
1908	3 14 1	3 11 7	3 15 6	3 15 1	3 12 5	3 12 1	3 11 3
THREE AND A HALF PER CENTS.							
	Per cent. £ s. d.						
1894	3 15 11	3 11 11	3 16 4	3 12 10	..	3 15 2	3 11 0
1897	3 3 11	3 0 6	3 3 7	3 1 0	..	3 1 1	3 3 11
1900	3 6 10	3 5 0	3 6 10	3 5 9	3 7 7	3 7 3	3 6 4
1902	3 7 10	3 6 8	3 9 0	3 7 6	3 10 3	3 6 9	3 5 6
1904	3 16 0	3 14 10	3 16 10	3 12 7	4 2 2	3 14 11	3 11 9
1905	3 14 0	3 11 8	3 13 10	3 11 10	3 19 0	3 12 8	3 12 0
1906	3 11 5	3 10 5	3 12 3	3 10 0	3 15 0	3 13 8	3 10 4
1907	3 14 4	3 12 2	3 15 6	3 11 11	4 2 9	3 16 8	3 11 5
1908	3 12 5	3 10 10	3 13 10	3 11 2	3 18 9	3 14 5	3 11 3

NOTE.—Where the date of redemption is optional, the earliest date has been adopted for the calculation.

Taking the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cents. as being the representative stocks, it appears that, almost without exception, those of New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand, yield least to the investor, being practically alike, and returning of late years little more than the nominal rate of interest, and that those of Western Australia yield most, the net return to the investor being  $4\frac{1}{8}$  per cent. in 1907, and just under 4 per cent. in 1908.

The following is a statement of the interest return to the investor in the principal issues of Colonial stocks and in British Consols, as indicated by the mean between the highest and lowest market prices quoted during the years 1900 and 1908:—

Representative British and Colonial stocks in London.

INTEREST ON MEAN PRICES OF BRITISH CONSOLS AND COLONIAL STOCKS, 1900 AND 1908.

Country.	Date of Maturity.	Rate of Interest on Stock.	Return to Investor Per Cent.		
			1900.	1908.	Increase.
United Kingdom ..	Inter-minable	2½*	£ s. d. 2 10 0	£ s. d. 2 18 8	£ s. d. 0 8 8
Canada .. ..	1938	3	3 0 0	3 5 8	0 5 8
" .. ..	1947	2½	2 17 1	3 8 7	0 11 6
Ceylon .. ..	1934	4	3 6 11	3 10 4	0 3 5
New South Wales ..	1924	3½	3 5 0	3 10 10	0 5 10
South Australia ..	1939	3½	3 5 9	3 11 2	0 5 5
New Zealand .. ..	1940	3½	3 6 4	3 11 3	0 4 11
New Zealand .. ..	1929	4	3 9 0	3 11 3	0 2 3
New South Wales ..	1933	4	3 6 4	3 11 7	0 5 3
Tasmania .. ..	1920-40	4	3 7 0	3 12 1	0 5 1
Victoria .. ..	1923	3½	3 6 10	3 12 5	0 5 7
Western Australia ..	1934	4	3 6 2	3 12 5	0 6 3
New Zealand .. ..	1945	3	3 3 2	3 12 7	0 9 5
Natal .. ..	1937	4	3 10 1	3 13 3	0 3 2
Hong Kong .. ..	1918-43	3½	3 7 5	3 13 8	0 6 3
Jamaica .. ..	1934	4	3 10 11	3 13 8	0 2 9
Queensland .. ..	1924	3½	3 6 10	3 13 10	0 7 0
Victoria .. ..	1920	4	3 8 8	3 14 1	0 5 5
Tasmania .. ..	1920-40	3½	3 7 3	3 14 5	0 7 2
Newfoundland .. ..	1935	4	3 11 1	3 14 6	0 3 5
Cape Colony .. ..	1923	4	3 10 4	3 14 7	0 4 3
New South Wales ..	1935	3	3 0 11	3 14 11	0 14 0
South Australia ..	1917-36	4	3 7 10	3 15 1	0 7 3
British Guiana .. ..	1935	4	3 12 3	3 15 5	0 3 2
Queensland .. ..	1915	4	3 7 6	3 15 6	0 8 0
Trinidad .. ..	1917-42	4	3 7 8	3 17 4	0 9 8
Victoria .. ..	1929-49	3	3 4 10	3 17 8	0 12 10
Cape Colony .. ..	1929-49	3½	3 5 3	3 17 11	0 12 8
Western Australia ..	1915-35	3½	3 7 7	3 18 9	0 11 2
Quebec .. ..	1937	3	3 10 7	4 1 2	0 10 7
Natal .. ..	1929-49	3	3 4 9	4 6 5	1 1 8
Natal .. ..	1914-39	3½	3 7 11	4 7 0	0 19 1
Queensland .. ..	1922-47	3	3 6 1	4 7 3	1 1 5
British Guiana .. ..	1923-45	3	3 7 2	4 11 0	1 3 10
Trinidad .. ..	1922-44	3	3 6 11	4 14 3	1 7 4
Western Australia ..	1916-36	3	3 12 0	5 2 0	1 10 0
South Australia .. ..	1916 or later	3	3 10 2	5 8 7	1 18 5

\* Consols carried 2½ per cent. interest until 1908; but the rate of interest to a permanent investor in 1900 is only reckoned at 2½, which is now the permanent rate.

It would appear from this table as if the Australian and other Colonial 3 per cent. stocks were not viewed with approbation by the British investor; but as most of these stocks are payable at the option of the Governments between extremes of 20 or 25 years, and the

computation of returns to investors has been made on the assumption of redemption of the loans at the earliest dates, such returns are higher than the probabilities warrant. Since the market rate of interest is about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., it is not at all likely that the Governments will endeavour to redeem at the earliest date, unless under the unlikely condition of a fall in interest below 3 per cent. Therefore, in the case of these stocks, it would be a fairer comparison to calculate the return to the investor on the assumption of redemption at the latest optional date. Under these circumstances, the interest realized by the purchasers of the various 3 per cent. Australian and other Colonial stocks in 1900 and 1908 would be as follows:—

Stocks.	Return to Investor.—Per cent.		
	1900.	1908.	Increase.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.
South Australia, 1916 or later ...	3 3 11	3 10 5	6 6
Victoria, 1929-49 ...	3 3 8	3 11 8	8 0
Queensland, 1922-47 ...	3 3 11	3 13 6	9 7
Western Australia, 1916-36 ...	3 6 10	3 15 6	8 8
British Guiana, 1923-45 ...	3 4 9	3 16 5	11 8
Trinidad, 1922-44 ...	3 4 7	3 17 5	12 10
Natal, 1929-49 ...	3 3 8	3 17 5	13 9

It is thus seen, on comparison with the yields of the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  and 4 per cents. shown in the previous tables, that there was no real preference exhibited in favour of any particular stock in 1908.

Prices of  
stock and  
debentures  
in Mel-  
bourne.

The amount of Victorian Government stock and debentures, under certain loans payable in Melbourne, outstanding on 30th June, the price in January, and the return to the investor per cent. for recent years, are as follows. The market prices are taken from the *Australasian Insurance and Banking Record*:—

PRICES OF STOCK AND DEBENTURES IN MELBOURNE: 1899 TO 1909.

Year.	Amount Out- standing on 30th June.	Price in January.	Return to
			Investor per cent.
	£		£ s. d.
3 % Stock, due 1917 or at any time thereafter.			
1899 ...	2,790,482	100 $\frac{1}{2}$	2 19 8
1900 ...	3,059,511	100-100 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 19 11
1901 ...	3,146,000	98 $\frac{1}{2}$ -99 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 0 7
1902 ...	3,195,619	99 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 0 4
1903 ...	3,196,933	97	3 1 10
1904 ...	3,120,492	92 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 4 10
1905 ...	3,155,773	88 $\frac{3}{4}$	3 7 7
1906 ...	3 153,067	93	3 4 6
1907 ...	3,197,732	91 $\frac{1}{2}$	3 5 7
1908 ...	3,226,585	89	3 7 5
1909 ...	...	87	3 9 0

PRICES OF STOCK AND DEBENTURES IN MELBOURNE: 1899 TO 1909—  
*continued.*

Year.	Amount Out- standing on 30th June.	Price in January.	Return to Investor per cent.		
			£	s.	d.
3 % Debentures, due 1921-30.					
1901	532,000	97½-97½	3	2	9
1902	1,000,000	95-95½	3	4	10
1903	1,000,000	93½-93½	3	7	1
1904	1,000,000	88-90	3	13	2
1905	1,000,000	87½-88	3	15	3
1906	997,400	93	3	8	7
1907	993,150	90	3	12	10
1908	985,950	89	3	14	8
1909	...	86½-87	3	18	8
4 % Debentures, due 1913-23.					
1899	746,795	111-112	3	1	2
1900	746,795	112	2	19	6
1901	746,795	105-107½	3	8	2
1902	746,795	106	3	8	0
1903	746,795	104½	3	10	9
1904	746,795	103	3	12	10
1905	746,795	103½	3	10	3
1906	746,795	104½-105	3	6	5
1907	746,795	104	3	7	3
1908	746,795	102½	3	10	8
1909	...	103½	3	6	0

The prices quoted in this table do not include any allowance for accrued interest, the practice on the Melbourne Stock Exchange differing from that on the London Exchange, where accrued interest is included in prices quoted.

In computing the returns to investors, the 3 per cent. stock has been regarded as interminable, since it is at the option of the Government whether it be redeemed in 1917, or at any time thereafter; and, as before explained, with reference to other Colonial stock, it is extremely unlikely that redemption will take place at the earliest date. For the 3 per cent. debentures it has been assumed that redemption will be made at the latest optional date, viz., 1930. For the 4 per cent. debentures the earliest date has been assumed, since the nominal interest is in excess of the market rate. For the years 1901, 1902, and 1903, the 4 per cent. debentures gave the highest yield per cent., but since then the investor in the 3 per cent. debentures has had the highest return each year. In 1909 the 4 per cent. debentures gave a lower return to the investor than either the 3 per cent. stock or 3 per cent. debentures. It appears that the yields realized by the investor in Victoria from 3 per cent. stock and 4 per cent. debentures in January, 1909, were considerably lower than those generally realized by the investor in Colonial stocks on the British market during 1908.

## INSURANCE.

Life assurance.

There are eighteen companies transacting life assurance business in Victoria. Six of these companies have their head offices in Victoria, four in New South Wales, four in America, and four in the United Kingdom. The returns are not required to be lodged with the Registrar-General before the end of September, consequently returns for 1908 have been obtained direct from all the companies except one, for which the figures of the preceding year have been given. This does not affect the comparison of 1908 with previous years, as the number of policies of this office was inconsiderable in comparison with the total. The following are the number and amount of policies in force in Victoria in companies whose head offices are inside, and in those whose head offices are outside Victoria during the years 1900 to 1908; the figures include industrial business amounting to £2,271,520 in 1908:—

## LIFE POLICIES IN FORCE IN VICTORIA, 1900 TO 1908.

Year.	Companies with Head Offices in—				Total.
	Victoria.	New South Wales.	United Kingdom.	America.	
NUMBER.					
1900 ..	59,997	105,851	1,203	5,662	172,713
1901 ..	70,115	117,958	1,130	6,833	196,036
1902 ..	76,958	125,075	1,052	7,837	210,922
1903 ..	77,938	127,364	1,004	8,555	214,861
1904 ..	84,006	130,366	950	8,890	224,212
1905 ..	84,108	133,117	914	9,029	227,168
1906 ..	87,894	138,546	841	7,810	235,091
1907 ..	89,359	145,203	805	7,018	242,385
1908 ..	95,601	152,219	751	6,146	254,717
AMOUNT.					
	£	£	£	£	£
1900 ..	8,268,635	14,917,162	554,124	2,575,941	26,315,862
1901 ..	9,267,205	15,952,982	523,560	2,821,142	28,564,889
1902 ..	9,610,224	16,798,243	477,934	2,991,761	29,878,162
1903 ..	9,458,538	17,175,972	458,820	3,137,237	30,230,567
1904 ..	9,692,186	17,646,043	434,030	3,208,084	30,980,343
1905 ..	9,702,730	18,242,212	426,840	3,214,742	31,586,524
1906 ..	10,010,359	18,973,956	393,765	2,868,727	32,246,807
1907 ..	10,375,502	19,814,689	377,906	2,544,255	33,112,352
1908 ..	10,836,282	20,674,898	344,859	2,201,808	34,057,847

The policies dealt with in the preceding table include ordinary life assurance, endowment assurance, and pure endowment. The companies are required to distinguish between assurance and endowment in their returns to the Registrar-General; but it would appear that some have included endowment assurance as well as endowment under the latter head, thus rendering impossible a comparison between the three classes of policy referred to above.

The increase in the number and amount of policies since 1900 has been most satisfactory—an increase of 47.5 per cent. in the number of policies, and 29.4 per cent. in the amount. It will be seen that 97.3 per cent. of the policies, and 92.5 per cent. of the amount assured, are in Australian offices, of which there are ten doing business in Victoria.

The percentage of policies held in Australian and foreign offices in Victoria in 1908, and the percentage increase or decrease since 1900, are as follows:—

Life policies.  
Growth of  
business,  
Australian  
and foreign  
companies.

LIFE ASSURANCE POLICIES: PERCENTAGE AND GROWTH OF VICTORIAN BUSINESS IN AUSTRALIAN AND FOREIGN OFFICES.

Companies with Head Offices in—	Percentage in 1908 of—		Increase per cent. in 1908 as compared with 1900.	
	Total Policies.	Total Amount Assured.	Number.	Amount.
Victoria .. ..	37.5	31.8	59.3	31.0
New South Wales ..	59.8	60.7	43.8	38.6
United Kingdom ..	.3	1.0	-37.6*	-37.8*
America .. ..	2.4	6.5	8.5	-14.5*
<b>Total .. ..</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>29.4</b>

\* The minus sign denotes a decrease.

Thus, while there has been a very large increase in the business of the Australian offices, there has been a large falling off in the business of the British companies, which, however, have for many years ceased to accept new business. There has also been a marked decline in the amounts assured with American companies, of which only one is now competing for new business. Compared with 1905, when these companies attained their maximum business, there has been a falling off of 31.9 per cent. in the number of policies, and of 31.5 in the amount, whilst the Australian offices exhibit increases of 14.1 and 12.8 per cent. respectively in the same interval.

The business transacted by the different offices comprise many varieties of assurance, but these may be grouped into three large classes—(1) simple assurance payable only at death, which may be termed ordinary assurance; (2) endowment assurance, payable at the end of a specified term or at previous death; (3) endowments payable only should a person named survive a specified term. An endeavour has been made to obtain direct from each office the business under each of these classes. In the cases of two of the offices—one, an American, and the other a New South Wales office—the separation between ordinary assurance and endowment assurance could not be effected. The following table shows the available information on the subject—distinguishing between ordinary and

Classifica-  
tion of  
assurance  
policies.

industrial business, and also between those offices whose headquarters are situated respectively as shown in previous tables:—

LIFE ASSURANCE POLICIES IN FORCE IN VICTORIA, 1908.

Assurance Companies with Head Offices in—	Ordinary Assurance.		Endowment Assurance.		Pure Endowment.		Total.	
	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.	No.	Amount.
		£		£		£		£
	<b>Ordinary Business.</b>							
Victoria .. .. .	16,333	4,670,751	29,833	4,814,510	5,733	542,285	51,949	10,027,546
United Kingdom ..	651	326,891	99	17,818	1	150	751	344,859
New South Wales ..		83,056		18,999,856		3,112	86,168	19,300,514
America .. .. .		5,533		2,106,426		53	5,586	2,113,408
Total, Ordinary Business	No. 135,555	£30,936,052			8,899	850,275	144,454	31,786,327
	<b>Industrial Business.</b>							
Victoria .. .. .	18,572	322,003	10,301	253,292	14,779	233,441	43,652	808,736
New South Wales ..	21,935	396,845	40,235	880,318	3,881	97,221	66,051	1,374,384
America .. .. .	560	88,400					560	88,400
Total, Industrial Business	41,067	807,248	50,536	1,133,610	18,660	330,662	110,263	2,271,520
	<b>Total Business.</b>							
Victoria .. .. .	34,955	4,992,754	40,134	5,067,802	20,512	775,726	95,601	10,836,282
United Kingdom ..	651	326,891	99	17,818	1	150	751	344,859
New South Wales ..		145,226		20,276,819		6,993	152,219	20,674,898
America .. .. .		6,093		2,194,826		53	6,146	2,201,808
Grand Total	No. 227,158	£32,876,910			27,559	1,180,937	254,717	34,057,847

An analysis of this table shows that 56.7 per cent. of the policies and 93.3 per cent. of the amount assured in Victoria belong to the "ordinary" business, and 43.3 per cent. of the policies and 6.7 per cent. of the amount belong to the "industrial" business. The average amount of policy in the former category is £220, whilst—calculated from the returns of those societies which distinguish between ordinary assurance and endowment assurance—the average amount of the ordinary assurance policy is £329, that of the endowment assurance policy £174, and that of the pure endowment £95. In these companies the total amounts of the policies in the two forms of assurance were very similar, viz., £15,419,364 for ordinary assurance, and £14,971,124 for endowment assurance, the figures for pure endowment being £850,275. In the industrial branch of the business the average amount of policy is £20.6, and there is not much variation in the average policies of the three classes, viz., ordinary assurance £19.6, endowment assurance £22.4, and pure endowment £17.7, the total amounts of the several policies being £807,248, £1,133,610 and £330,662 respectively. Taking these figures in

conjunction with those of the ordinary business (with the restriction before mentioned) it would seem that there is a preference slightly in favour of ordinary assurance. But a better test, perhaps, of popularity would be furnished by the number of policies in the respective classes. In the ordinary business there are 46,730 simple assurance, and 86,242 endowment assurance policies, and in the industrial 41,067 and 50,536 policies respectively. Judged by these figures, endowment assurance must be regarded as the popular form.

The following are the number and amount of annuity policies in force in Victoria at the end of each of the last nine years, distinguishing between those in force in companies whose head offices are inside, and those whose head offices are outside Victoria:—

ANNUITY POLICIES IN FORCE IN VICTORIA, 1900 TO 1908.

Year.	Head Offices in Victoria.		Head Offices outside Victoria.		Total.	
	Number.	Amount per Annum.	Number.	Amount per Annum.	Number.	Amount per Annum.
1900 ..	65	£ 3,877	189	£ 12,307	254	£ 16,184
1901 ..	81	4,221	229	15,150	310	19,371
1902 ..	85	4,958	269	15,990	354	20,948
1903 ..	91	4,850	294	13,971	385	18,821
1904 ..	101	7,275	308	14,108	409	21,383
1905 ..	117	7,253	308	14,179	425	21,432
1906 ..	137	8,146	320	14,270	457	22,416
1907 ..	144	8,181	336	15,007	480	23,188
1908 ..	157	8,845	324	14,163	481	23,008

The annuities at the close of 1908 exceed those at the close of 1900 by 89 per cent. in number and 42 per cent. in amount.

Of the 324 annuities held in 1908 in companies whose head offices were outside Victoria, 232 for £9,907 per annum were in New South Wales offices, 2 for £347 in English offices, and 90 for £3,909 in American offices. It is noteworthy that there was only one annuity in the industrial branch, and that for only £6 per annum.

Insurance—  
other than  
Life.

The following table shows the transactions of insurance companies doing other than life business and operating in Victoria in 1904, 1905, 1906, and 1907:—

INSURANCE—OTHER THAN LIFE: 1904 TO 1907.

Nature of Insurance.	Year.	Receipts.			Expenditure.		
		Premiums.	Other.	Total.	Losses.	Other.	Total.
		£	£	£	£	£	£
Fire and Marine	1904	559,518	33,614	593,132	230,626	220,029	450,655
	1905	550,138	36,874	587,012	248,947	225,972	474,919
	1906	587,502	36,245	623,747	240,357	235,910	476,267
Fire ...	1907	496,667	28,484	525,151	227,871	208,076	435,947
Marine ...	1907	136,534	6,285	142,819	109,474	44,202	153,676
Accident and Guarantee	1904	47,110	2,756	49,866	19,085	21,649	40,734
	1905	53,539	4,072	57,611	23,508	19,990	43,498
	1906	60,799	3,872	64,671	18,585	26,701	45,286
Accident ...	1907	57,190	2,254	59,444	20,343	30,556	50,899
Guarantee ...	1907	11,047	1,710	12,757	2,129	4,953	7,082
Other (Live Stock, Burglary, Plate Glass)	1904	7,655	593	8,248	4,348	2,175	6,523
	1905	9,853	658	10,511	4,477	2,448	6,925
	1906	10,672	737	11,409	6,093	3,330	9,423
Live Stock ...	1907	16,109	465	16,574	9,102	3,549	12,651
Burglary ...	1907	2,563	66	2,629	1,027	1,234	2,261
Plate Glass ...	1907	5,428	532	5,960	1,778	2,808	4,586
Totals	1904	614,283	36,963	651,246	254,059	243,853	497,912
	1905	613,530	41,604	655,134	276,932	248,410	525,342
	1906	658,973	40,854	699,827	265,035	265,941	531,076
	1907	725,538	39,796	765,334	371,724	295,378	667,102

NOTE.—Premiums exclude Re-insurances and Returns. Losses also exclude Re-insurances.

The total amount at risk is not available, but it is obvious, from the extent of the premiums, that the amount covered must be very considerable. In 1907 the fire premiums received amounted to £496,667, and the losses to £227,871; the marine premiums and losses to £136,534 and £109,474 respectively; the accident premiums and losses to £57,190 and £20,343, the guarantee premiums and losses to £11,047 and £2,129, the live stock premiums and losses to £16,109 and £9,102, the burglary premiums and losses to £2,563 and £1,027, and the plate glass premiums and losses to £5,428 and £1,778 respectively. The total amount of premiums on all these classes of insurance for the four years 1904 to 1907 was £2,612,324, and the losses £1,167,750, or 44 per cent. of the premiums. It will be observed that there has been a large and steady increase in accident and guarantee business during the four years dealt with, while the premium income for 1907 in connexion with live stock, burglary, and plate glass insurance was more than three times the amount for the year 1904.

## BUILDING SOCIETIES.

Building societies in Victoria date from an early period in the history of the State, and up to 1892 their business was extensive. Since then it has been comparatively small, although the figures of recent years show that an improvement has taken place in building society business. The following table gives particulars of the principal items of business during the last five years:—

Building Societies.

## BUILDING SOCIETIES: 1904 TO 1908.

—	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Number of societies ...	32	28	31	30	29
" shareholders	6,970	5,881	6,920	6,949	6,420
" borrowers	6,275	6,351	7,418	7,638	7,770
During the year—	£	£	£	£	£
Advances ...	131,307	154,507	253,029	316,516	272,245
Repayments ...	243,492	237,898	316,005	344,051	347,302
Working expenses ...	20,959	20,084	24,060	24,264	33,554
At end of year—					
Deposits ...	721,548	716,601	712,186	694,095	665,285

A glance at the above figures will show the substantial improvement in building society business between 1904 and 1908. Although, compared with 1904, there were three societies less in 1908, yet there has been an advance of 107 per cent. in the advances made and of 43 per cent. in the repayments, whilst the liabilities to depositors have been reduced by about 8 per cent. It will also be noticed that this form of liability has been continuously reduced since 1904. Under ordinary circumstances a reduction of deposits might be taken as an indication of want of confidence in the societies, but in the present instance it means the release of temporarily locked-up deposits. The total assets of the building societies on 31st December, 1908, amounted to £2,505,249, of which £1,363,060 consisted of loans on mortgage, and £1,088,922 of properties in possession or surrendered. Of the total liabilities, viz., £2,361,351, £1,249,888 was due to shareholders, £292,090 to debenture holders, and £665,295 to depositors. The total reserved funds at the same date amounted to £218,806.

## MORTGAGES, LIENS, ETC.

A statement of the number and amount of registered mortgages and releases of land in each of the last five years is hereunder. Generally, in about 13 per cent. of the mortgages the amount of the loan is not stated, so that the amounts appearing in the following table may be taken as understating the total by about that proportion. No account is taken of unregistered or equitable mortgages to banks

Land mortgages and releases.

and individuals, as there is no public record of these dealings; nor are building society mortgages over land held under the *Transfer of Land Act* included, they being registered as absolute transfers. Besides releases registered as such, some mortgages are released or lapse in other ways, e.g., by a transfer from mortgagor to mortgagee, by sale by mortgagee, or by foreclosure.

## LAND MORTGAGES AND RELEASES: 1904 TO 1908.

Registered During Year.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Mortgages—					
Number ..	8,562	8,665	8,964	10,523	11,563
Amount £	7,982,671	5,957,242	7,139,501	8,937,305	8,787,077
Releases—					
Number ..	7,081	7,175	8,318	8,034	8,721
Amount £	4,884,665	5,143,295	6,896,972	7,222,827	5,694,406

Stock mortgages, liens on wool and crops.

The number and amount of stock mortgages, liens on wool, and liens on crops registered during each of the last five years were as follow. Releases are not shown, as releases of liens are not required to be registered, the latter being removed from the register after the expiration of twelve months; and very few of the mortgagors of stock trouble to secure themselves by a registered release.

## STOCK MORTGAGES, LIENS ON WOOL AND CROPS: 1904 TO 1908.

Security.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Stock Mortgages—					
Number ..	821	900	747	799	743
Amount £	135,295	161,841	141,154	171,145	136,731
Liens on Wool—					
Number ..	156	154	152	150	153
Amount £	63,463	58,061	56,396	65,898	45,666
Liens on Crops—					
Number ..	1,867	1,673	1,086	503	445
Amount £	111,730	91,050	80,580	52,280	65,607
Total—					
Number ..	2,844	2,727	1,985	1,452	1,341
Amount £	310,488	310,952	278,130	289,323	248,004

The large number of liens on crops in 1904, is due to the fact that 1,286 were liens to the Board of Land and Works, under the *Seed Advances Act* 1903. There were 1,095 such liens in 1905, 624 in 1906, 174 in 1907, and 208 in 1908.

Two forms of security are taken by lenders over personal chattels, viz., a bill of sale, and a contract of sale for letting and hiring. The former is a simple mortgage of the chattels, whilst the latter purports to be an absolute sale of the chattels to the lender, with an agreement by the lender to hire the goods back to the borrower at a certain rental, which takes the place of interest. The number and amounts of those filed in each of the last five years are as follows:—

Bills and  
contracts  
of sale.

BILLS AND CONTRACTS OF SALE: 1904 TO 1908.

Security.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
Bills of Sale—					
Number ..	2,725	2,200	1,998	1,407	1,428
Amount £	189,433	181,375	184,911	167,292	223,324
Contracts of Sale—					
Number ..	364	265	161	152	189
Amount £	11,715	7,860	5,184	5,376	8,216

Before filing a bill of sale, 14 days' notice of intention to file must be lodged with the Registrar-General, within which period any creditor may lodge a "caveat" to prevent the filing of the bill without the payment by the borrower of his claim. To circumvent this, the practice arose, in 1877, whereby the borrower purported to sell the chattels to the lender, who hired them back to the borrower, and this became the form of security more generally adopted until 1887, when a decision was given that if there were any tacit understanding that the transaction should be considered as a loan, the security would be void unless registered as a bill of sale. In consequence of this, the number of contracts of sale has gradually decreased, until in 1906 the bills of sale were more than twelve times their number, and the amount secured thirty-six times as great. In 1908, the number of bills was seven and a half times the number of contracts, and the amount secured thereby twenty-seven times as great.

Trading  
companies  
registered.

A statement of the number and nature of trading companies floated and registered in Victoria during the nine-year period 1894-1902, and during each of the last six years, is appended:—

TRADING COMPANIES REGISTERED IN VICTORIA, 1894 TO 1908.

Nature of Company.	1894 to 1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.
<b>FINANCE—</b>							
Land, property, investment	19	5	...	5	...	7	3
Finance, agency, &c. ...	10	2	...	3	2	6	2
Insurance ...	3	...	2	1	...	...	1
<b>TRADE—</b>							
Cycling ...	13	...	2	2	...	...	3
Export ...	5	...	1	...	...	1	...
Produce ...	15	1	4	3	...	2	5
Supply and trading ...	12	5	5	6	10	12	14
Merchants' imports ...	26	2	1	5	5	2	6
<b>TRANSPORT—</b>							
Carrying ...	9	1	...	...	1	1	1
Railways and rolling-stock	5	...	...	...	1	...	...
Tramways ...	4	...	...	...	...	1	...
Steamship ...	5	2	1	...	1	1	2
Others ...	9	...	2	1	2	...	1
<b>INDUSTRIAL—</b>							
Bacon curing ...	6	...	1	...	...	1	2
Brewing ...	5	...	2	1	...	6	1
Bricks, tiles ...	6	...	...	...	...	1	...
Electric ...	5	...	2	3	...	3	...
Engineering, machinery ...	9	...	1	11	10	8	15
Explosives, &c. ...	5	...	...	...	...	3	1
Freezing ...	5	...	...	1	1	2	...
Manufacturing (undefined)	11	2	...	9	7	5	1
Tobacco ...	5	1	1	...	...	1	...
Preserving ...	10	...	2	...	...	1	2
Printing ...	6	1	...	3	1	2	2
Wine-making ...	4	2	...	...	...	...	...
Others ...	144	17	10	5	6	14	29
<b>PRIMARY PRODUCTION—</b>							
Cultivation ...	2	...	2	...	2	4	...
Dairying, &c. ...	78	5	16	8	4	6	1
Mining, prospecting, &c. ...	35	1	1	2	9	6	4
Gold saving, extracting, &c. ...	9	...	1	3	...	1	1
Pastoral ...	5	...	...	1	1	2	1
<b>MISCELLANEOUS—</b>							
Newspaper, magazine ...	22	1	5	1	2	2	1
Public halls ...	16	...	...	1	2	...	2
Other ...	64	8	14	10	8	8	13
Total ...	587	56	76	85	75	109	114

The figures in the above table refer only to companies registered under Part I. of the *Companies Act* 1890, and are, therefore, exclusive of ordinary mining companies, of which 74 were registered during 1908 under Part II. of the Act. Insurance companies doing

life business only, as well as building societies, are also excluded. From the above figures, it may be ascertained that of the 1,102 new companies registered during the last fifteen years, 421, or 38 per cent., were industrial; 211, or 19 per cent., were connected with primary production; 168, or 15 per cent., with trade; 71, or 7 per cent., with finance; 51, or 5 per cent., with transport; whilst 180, or 16 per cent., were of a miscellaneous character, including newspapers, magazines, public halls, and various societies and associations. Those industrial companies, included under the term "others," are principally companies registered for the manufacture of a particular patented article, but include a number of companies formed for the manufacture of various commodities and for the treatment of natural products.

According to records in the Registrar-General's office, there were 1,303 trading companies in 1908 actively engaged in the operations for which they were formed, as against 1,337 in 1907, 1,305 in 1906, 1,131 in 1905, 1,115 in 1904, 1,143 in 1903, 1,073 in 1902, 1,074 in 1901, 989 in 1900, 953 in 1899, 924 in 1898, 781 in 1897, and 799 in 1896, prior to which year this information was not obtainable. In addition to the above there were 13 insurance companies doing life business only in 1908, and a large number of mining companies, but how many is not known.

Number of existing companies.

The following table shows the particulars of the Registered Co-operative Societies for 1908:—

Registered co-operative societies.

REGISTERED CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, 1908.

Number of Societies	...	...	...	35
Number of Shareholders	...	...	...	23,462
Total Sales during Year	...	...	...	£546,002
Other Receipts	...	...	...	£6,000
Wages and Salaries for Year	...	...	...	£47,998
Other Working Expenses	...	...	...	£38,319
Net Profit	...	...	...	£8,047
Liabilities at end of Year—				£
Paid-up Capital	...	...	...	112,431
Reserves	...	...	...	7,875
Bank Overdraft	...	...	...	47,778
Sundry Creditors	...	...	...	65,908
Other Liabilities	...	...	...	32,445
Total Liabilities	...	...	...	£266,437
Assets at end of Year—				£
Real Estate, Stock and Fittings	...	...	...	196,234
Sundry Debtors	...	...	...	68,149
Cash in Hand and on Deposit	...	...	...	9,418
Other Assets	...	...	...	2,716
Total Assets	...	...	...	£276,517

As compared with 1907 there has been an increase of 8 in the number of societies, and 2,464 in the number of shareholders. The total liabilities have increased by £42,163—£15,258 of which is due to increased capital. The total assets have also increased by £42,724.

Of the thirty-five co-operative societies, fourteen were engaged in the purchase of farmers' requisites or the sale of farm and garden produce, ten as general distributors, two each in the manufacture of jams, &c., bread making, and meat supplying, and one each in supplying coachbuilders' materials, co-operative credit banking, fish selling, printing and publishing, and eucalyptus oil distilling.

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