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CHAPTER VII.

PUBLIC JUSTICE.

§ 1. Lower (Magistrates') Courts.

1. **General.**—In considering the criminal returns of the various States, due allowance must be made for certain factors, such as the relative powers of the courts, both lower and higher, etc. In the case of lower courts, the actual number of laws in each State the breach of which renders a person liable to fine or imprisonment must be taken into account. Again, the attitude of the magistracy and police towards certain classes of offences is a factor, for in the case of liquor laws, or laws connected with vagrancy or gaming, the views of the magistrates, and instructions issued to the police, may be responsible for considerable variations in the returns. The strength and distribution of the police forces, and the age-constitution and distribution of the population of the States, also influence the results. Due weight should also be given to the prevalence of undetected crime, but information on this point is not available for all States. It may be mentioned that each State has its own separate judicial system, the Commonwealth jurisdiction being confined to the High Court of Australia, which is largely a Court of Appeal intermediate to the Privy Council although it has also original jurisdiction, the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration and the Federal Court of Bankruptcy. Full particulars regarding the judicial power of the Commonwealth will be found in Chapter III. of the Commonwealth Constitution.

2. **Powers of the Magistrates.**—Preceding issues of the Official Year Book contain a brief statement of the powers of the magistrates in the various States (see No. 22, p. 462), but this information is not repeated in the present volume.

3. **Cases Tried at Magistrates' Courts.**—The total number of cases tried at Magistrates' Courts in each State is given below for the five years 1934 to 1938:—

CASES TRIED AT MAGISTRATES' COURTS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| New South Wales .. | 127,960 | 134,900 | 144,707 | 125,791 | 115,521 |
| Victoria .. | 57,070 | 65,973 | 82,118 | 74,222 | 79,056 |
| Queensland(a) .. | 28,922 | 31,909 | 34,359 | 33,467 | 35,434 |
| South Australia .. | 15,916 | 17,299 | 17,213 | 19,543 | 20,729 |
| Western Australia .. | (b) 14,575 | 19,255 | 22,611 | 24,430 | 24,822 |
| Tasmania .. | 7,197 | 8,345 | 8,948 | 8,388 | 9,236 |
| Northern Territory .. | 401 | (a) 308 | (a) 370 | (a) 461 | (a) 591 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 210 | 135 | 165 | 216 | 308 |
| Total .. | 252,251 | 278,124 | 310,491 | 286,518 | 285,697 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

(b) Principal offence only counted in multiple charges.

Investigation of the returns shows that considerable variations in the figures for single States are occasioned by breaches of new Acts, or the more stringent enforcement of the provisions of existing Acts. Any deductions drawn from the total returns as to the increase or otherwise of criminality must, therefore, be largely influenced by a careful analysis of the detailed list of offences. Thus, the considerable increase in the total offences in Victoria for the year 1936 as compared with the previous year was chiefly due to a rise of 14,800 in the miscellaneous class, the bulk of which consisted of charges under the Motor Car, Education and Licensing Acts, and breaches of the Traffic Code which came into operation in June, 1936.

4. **Convictions.**—The figures given in the tabulation above include, of course, a number of people who were wrongly charged, and statistically are not of general importance. A classification of convictions in connexion with the persons who appeared before the lower courts in each State during 1938 is given in the following table :—

CONVICTIONS AT MAGISTRATES' COURTS, 1938.

| Offence. | N.S.W. | Vic. | Qld.(a) | S.A. | W.A. | Tas. | N.T.(a) | A.C.T. | Aust. |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|------------|------------|----------------|
| Against the Person .. | 1,507 | 613 | 266 | 181 | 174 | 104 | 21 | 13 | 2,879 |
| Against Property .. | 10,030 | 5,448 | 2,199 | 1,104 | 1,952 | 856 | 40 | 42 | 21,671 |
| Forgery and Offences against the Currency .. | 114 | 3 | 2 | 2 | I | .. | i | .. | 123 |
| Against Good Order .. | 39,819 | 17,009 | 13,158 | 4,634 | 5,583 | 924 | 239 | 151 | 81,517 |
| Other Miscellaneous .. | 45,463 | 45,768 | 16,422 | 12,420 | 15,424 | 6,721 | 217 | 77 | 142,512 |
| Total .. | 96,933 | 68,841 | 32,047 | 18,341 | 23,134 | 8,605 | 518 | 283 | 248,702 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

The following table shows the number of convictions in each year from 1934 to 1938 :—

CONVICTIONS AT MAGISTRATES' COURTS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| New South Wales .. | 104,018 | 110,135 | 117,490 | 103,272 | 96,933 |
| Victoria .. | 45,748 | 54,666 | 70,752 | 64,772 | 68,841 |
| Queensland(a) .. | 25,997 | 29,527 | 31,575 | 29,893 | 32,047 |
| South Australia .. | 13,728 | 14,838 | 14,920 | 17,297 | 18,341 |
| Western Australia .. | 13,585 | 17,966 | 21,120 | 22,777 | 23,134 |
| Tasmania .. | 6,464 | 7,658 | 8,347 | 7,927 | 8,605 |
| Northern Territory .. | 365 | (a) 262 | (a) 316 | (a) 397 | (a) 518 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 187 | 125 | 155 | 195 | 283 |
| Total .. | 210,092 | 235,177 | 264,675 | 246,530 | 248,702 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

5. **Convictions for Serious Crime.**—While the figures given in the preceding table refer to the entire body of convictions, the fact must not be overlooked that they include a large proportion of offences of a technical nature, many of them unwittingly committed

against various Acts of Parliament. Cases of drunkenness and minor breaches of good order, which, if they can be said to come within the category of crime at all, at least do so in a very different sense from some other offences, also help to swell the list. The following table has therefore been prepared for the purpose of showing the convictions at magistrates' courts for what may be regarded as the more serious offences, i.e., against the person and property, either separately or conjointly, and forgery and offences against the currency. Owing to the smallness of the population, the rates for the Northern Territory are subject to considerable variation.

CONVICTIONS FOR SERIOUS CRIME AT MAGISTRATES' COURTS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| NUMBER. | | | | | |
| New South Wales .. | 11,920 | 12,069 | 13,220 | 12,468 | 11,651 |
| Victoria | 4,438 | 4,955 | 5,240 | 5,289 | 6,064 |
| Queensland(a) .. | 2,329 | 2,311 | 2,400 | 2,278 | 2,467 |
| South Australia .. | 1,434 | 1,382 | 1,121 | 1,246 | 1,287 |
| Western Australia .. | (b) 1,404 | 1,691 | 1,741 | 2,011 | 2,127 |
| Tasmania | 856 | 936 | 963 | 1,007 | 960 |
| Northern Territory .. | 26 | (a) 15 | (a) 32 | (a) 26 | (a) 62 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 13 | 11 | 21 | 25 | 55 |
| Total | 22,420 | 23,370 | 24,738 | 24,350 | 24,673 |

PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION.

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| New South Wales .. | 45.43 | 45.62 | 49.55 | 45.99 | 42.82 |
| Victoria | 24.24 | 26.94 | 28.36 | 28.44 | 32.47 |
| Queensland(a) .. | 24.24 | 23.77 | 24.39 | 22.71 | 24.50 |
| South Australia .. | 24.58 | 23.62 | 19.08 | 21.08 | 21.72 |
| Western Australia .. | (b) 31.79 | 37.97 | 38.69 | 43.99 | 46.24 |
| Tasmania | 37.35 | 40.76 | 41.68 | 42.14 | 40.73 |
| Northern Territory .. | 52.71 | (a) 29.41 | (a) 61.97 | (a) 45.07 | (a) 106.04 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 14.04 | 11.72 | 21.51 | 24.40 | 49.44 |
| Total | 33.57 | 34.75 | 36.50 | 35.41 | 35.78 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

(b) Principal offence only counted in multiple convictions.

6. Rate of Convictions, 1881 to 1938. Statistics of convictions reveal a consistent increase in the rate of serious crime from 1925 to 1931, when 37.1 convictions per 10,000 of the population were recorded. Following this comparatively high figure the rate declined to 32.43 in 1933 but has since risen considerably. The rate of convictions over a series of years is included below; only the more serious offences particularized in the preceding sub-section have been taken into consideration.

RATE OF CONVICTIONS FOR SERIOUS CRIME AT MAGISTRATES' COURTS :
AUSTRALIA, 1881 TO 1938.

| Year. | | | | | | Convictions per 10,000 Persons |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|--------------------------------------|
| 1881 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 69.3 |
| 1891 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 44.8 |
| 1901 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 29.1 |
| 1911 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 24.6 |
| 1921 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 29.2 |
| 1931 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 37.1 |
| 1938 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 35.8 |

7. **Committals to Superior Courts.**—(i) *General.* In a previous paragraph it has been pointed out that comparisons of criminality based on a consideration of the total returns from magistrates' courts are somewhat inadequate, inasmuch as the figures include numbers of cases which are merely technical breaches of laws having in some instances a purely local significance. The committals to higher courts give a better basis of comparison, although even in this connexion allowance must be made for the want of uniformity in jurisdiction. A classification of the offences for which persons appearing in the lower courts were committed to higher courts in each State in 1938 is given below :—

COMMITTALS TO SUPERIOR COURTS, 1938.

| Offence. | N.S.W. | Vic. | Qld. (a) | S.A. | W.A. | Tas. | N.T. (a) | A.C.T. | Aust. |
|--|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|--------------|
| Against the Person | 471 | 247 | 119 | 73 | 66 | 18 | 1 | 2 | 997 |
| Against Property | 1,383 | 1,614 | 146 | 108 | 116 | 41 | .. | 2 | 3,410 |
| Forgery and Offences against the Currency | 136 | 89 | 3 | 19 | 20 | 2 | 1 | .. | 270 |
| Against Good Order | 12 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | .. | .. | 24 |
| Other Miscellaneous | 46 | 63 | 10 | 19 | 3 | 2 | .. | .. | 143 |
| Total | 2,048 | 2,016 | 282 | 220 | 206 | 66 | 2 | 4 | 4,844 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

The table below gives the number of committals in each year from 1934 to 1938, with the rate of such committals per 10,000 of the population :—

COMMITTALS TO SUPERIOR COURTS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| NUMBER. | | | | | |
| New South Wales | 1,732 | 1,748 | 1,620 | 1,771 | 2,048 |
| Victoria | 1,531 | 1,587 | 1,482 | 1,545 | 2,016 |
| Queensland (a) | 256 | 209 | 238 | 251 | 282 |
| South Australia | 325 | 269 | 237 | 230 | 220 |
| Western Australia | 144 | 102 | 113 | 181 | 206 |
| Tasmania | 62 | 79 | 71 | 91 | 66 |
| Northern Territory | 9 | (a) 8 | (a) 10 | (a) 16 | (a) 2 |
| Australian Capital Territory | .. | 1 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Total | 4,059 | 4,003 | 3,775 | 4,088 | 4,844 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

COMMITTALS TO SUPERIOR COURTS—*continued.*

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------|----------|----------|---------|
| PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION. | | | | | |
| New South Wales .. | 6.6 | 6.6 | 6.1 | 6.5 | 7.5 |
| Victoria | 8.4 | 8.6 | 8.0 | 8.3 | 10.8 |
| Queensland(a) .. | 2.7 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.8 |
| South Australia .. | 5.6 | 4.6 | 4.0 | 3.9 | 3.7 |
| Western Australia .. | 3.3 | 2.3 | 2.5 | 4.0 | 4.5 |
| Tasmania | 2.7 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 3.8 | 2.8 |
| Northern Territory .. | 18.2 | (a) 15.7 | (a) 19.4 | (a) 27.7 | (a) 3.4 |
| Australian Capital Territory .. | .. | 1.1 | 4.1 | 2.9 | 3.6 |
| Total | 6.1 | 6.0 | 5.6 | 5.9 | 7.0 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

(ii) *Rate of Committals since 1881.* With occasional variations the rate of committals for serious crime has remained fairly stable during recent years, and if the comparison be carried back further, the movement in the rate has undergone very little change during the present century. The rate at intervals since 1881 is as follows:—

RATE OF COMMITTALS TO SUPERIOR COURTS: AUSTRALIA, 1881 TO 1938.

| | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | 1881. | 1891. | 1901. | 1911. | 1921. | 1931. | 1938. |
| Committals per 10,000 inhabitants .. | 12 | 11 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 7 |

8. *Drunkenness.—(i) Cases and Convictions.* The number of cases of drunkenness and the convictions recorded in connexion therewith during the period 1934 to 1938 will be found in the following table:—

DRUNKENNESS: CASES AND CONVICTIONS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | | 1935. | | 1936. | | 1937. | | 1938. | |
|----------------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|--------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| | Cases. | Convictions. | Cases. | Convictions. | Cases. | Convictions. | Cases. | Convictions. | Cases. | Convictions. |
| New South Wales | 26,872 | 26,344 | 28,450 | 27,823 | 31,383 | 30,297 | 29,672 | 27,651 | 29,610 | 27,181 |
| Victoria | 8,666 | 7,244 | 10,221 | 9,217 | 10,390 | 10,247 | 10,433 | 10,296 | 11,311 | 11,128 |
| Queensland(a) .. | 7,583 | 7,531 | 8,383 | 8,362 | 10,436 | 10,409 | 10,450 | 10,183 | 11,410 | 11,187 |
| South Australia .. | 2,430 | 2,418 | 2,748 | 2,737 | 2,639 | 2,628 | 2,529 | 2,520 | 2,662 | 2,653 |
| Western Australia .. | 2,016 | 1,909 | 2,686 | 2,671 | 2,870 | 2,849 | 2,708 | 2,678 | 2,513 | 2,479 |
| Tasmania | 312 | 309 | 410 | 411 | 386 | 384 | 379 | 365 | 349 | 334 |
| Northern Terr. .. | 159 | 154 | (a) 134 | (a) 134 | (a) 87 | (a) 87 | (a) 145 | (a) 145 | (a) 156 | (a) 151 |
| Aust. Cap. Terr. | 95 | 95 | 55 | 55 | 63 | 63 | 92 | 91 | 133 | 133 |
| Total | 48,133 | 46,094 | 53,096 | 51,410 | 58,263 | 56,964 | 56,408 | 53,929 | 58,150 | 55,246 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

Under the heading "drunkenness" are included cases of ordinary drunkenness, drunkenness and disorderliness, and habitual drunkenness. In the figures quoted for Western Australia, convictions for disorderliness attributable to drink were formerly included in the second category, but since 1929 the returns relate only to drunkenness either as a single or concurrent offence.

The number of convictions is, as might naturally be expected, almost identical with the number of cases. Until 1936 this was not so in the case of Victoria for in this State offenders are generally discharged on a first appearance and no conviction is recorded, a similar procedure being also adopted in the case of those arrested on Saturday and detained in custody till Monday. Since 1936, however, these cases have been included as convictions. The number of convictions recorded for New South Wales does not include cases where offenders were admonished and discharged.

(ii) *Convictions per 10,000 of Population.* The convictions for drunkenness per 10,000 of the population during each of the years from 1934 to 1938 are given hereunder:—

CONVICTIONS FOR DRUNKENNESS PER 10,000 INHABITANTS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| New South Wales | 100.4 | 105.2 | 113.6 | 102.6 | 100.0 |
| Victoria | 39.6 | 50.1 | 55.5 | 55.5 | 59.6 |
| Queensland(a) | 78.4 | 86.0 | 105.8 | 102.3 | 111.1 |
| South Australia | 41.5 | 46.8 | 44.7 | 42.8 | 44.8 |
| Western Australia | 45.3 | 60.0 | 63.3 | 58.9 | 53.9 |
| Tasmania | 13.5 | 17.9 | 16.6 | 15.6 | 14.2 |
| Australian Capital Territory | 102.6 | 58.6 | 64.5 | 89.3 | 119.6 |
| Total | 68.9 | 76.4 | 84.0 | 78.9 | 80.1 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

In the twenties the convictions for drunkenness averaged approximately 100 per 10,000 inhabitants, but the rate fell away considerably during the depression years and was only 57.1 in 1931. With the improvement in the social condition of the people following that year, the average rose steadily to 84.0 in 1936, but has declined somewhat since. Figures for the consumption of beer have followed a very similar course. From an average of 11½ gallons consumed per head of the population for some years prior to the depression the amount declined to 7.32 gallons in 1931, and thereafter rose each year to more than 12 gallons in 1938-39.

The convictions for drunkenness taken by themselves are not an altogether satisfactory test of the relative sobriety of the inhabitants of each State, inasmuch as several important factors must be taken into consideration. The age and sex constitution of the people, for example, are by no means identical in all the States. (Owing to the smallness of the population the figures for the Northern Territory are, of course, abnormal and have not, therefore, been included in the above table.) The avocations of the people affect the result, since persons engaged in strenuous callings are, on the whole, more likely to indulge in alcoholic stimulants than those employed in less arduous ones. The distribution of the population is also a factor, the likelihood of arrest or summons for drunkenness obviously being greater in the more densely populated regions, while allowance must be made for the attitude of the magistracy, the police and the public generally in regard to the offence. Due account also must be taken of the effect of legislation dealing with the limitation of hours during which liquor may be sold in hotels.

(iii) *Consumption of Intoxicants.* The following table shows the consumption of spirits, wine and beer per head of the population in Australia during each year of the quinquennium 1934-35 to 1938-39:—

CONSUMPTION OF INTOXICANTS IN AUSTRALIA.

| Year. | Consumption per Head of Population. | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Spirits. | Wine. | Beer. |
| | Imp. Galls. | Imp. Galls. | Imp. Galls. |
| 1934-35 | 0.21 | } 0.36 | 8.68 |
| 1935-36 | 0.21 | | 9.60 |
| 1936-37 | 0.21 | | 10.34 |
| 1937-38 | 0.22 | | 11.62 |
| 1938-39 | 0.22 | | 12.13 |

(iv) *Treatment of Drunkenness.* (a) *General.* Though the problem of the correct method of dealing with dipsomania is by no means an easy one, it seems fairly clear that the present plan of bringing offenders before magistrates, and subjecting them to the penalty of imprisonment or fine, has little deterrent effect, as the same offenders are constantly reappearing before the courts. Further, the casting of an inebriate into prison and placing him in his weakened state in the company of professional malefactors certainly lowers his self-respect, and doubtless tends to swell the ranks of criminals. Examination of the prison records in New South Wales some years ago disclosed the fact that over 40 per cent. of the gaol population had commenced their criminal career with a charge of drunkenness. During the last few years the dangers of moral contamination in this way have been more accurately appreciated, and a system of classification of prisoners has been adopted whereby the petty offender is as far as possible kept from association with the more evilly-disposed.

(b) *Remedial.* Legislation has been passed in each State providing for the commitment of inebriates to special Government institutions. The laws in the various States are as follows:—New South Wales, Inebriates Act 1912; Victoria, Inebriates Act 1928; Queensland, Inebriate Institutions Act 1896; South Australia, Inebriates Act 1908 amended in 1920 and 1934, Convicted Inebriates Act 1913 amended in 1934; Western Australia, Inebriates Act 1912-19; Tasmania, Inebriates Act 1885, Inebriate Hospitals Act 1892. Curative work was first undertaken by the Government of New South Wales in 1907. In most cases the institutes are connected with the gaols, and, naturally, custodial measures are still a strong feature in their management; nevertheless, the results of remedial measures have been encouraging.

9. *First Offenders.*—In all the States statutes dealing with first offenders have been in force for many years. Existing legislation is as follows:—New South Wales, Crimes Act 1900 amended in 1924 and 1929, First Offenders (Women) Act 1919; Victoria, Crimes Act 1928; Queensland, Criminal Code Acts 1899 to 1931; South Australia, Offenders Probation Act 1913 amended in 1934; Western Australia, Criminal Code Act 1913; Tasmania, Probation of Offenders Act 1934. The method of procedure is practically the same in all cases, i.e., with regard to most first offenders the magistrate or judge is empowered to allow the offender to go free on recognizances being entered into for his good behaviour for a certain period. In practice, this humane law has been found to work excellently, very few of those to whom its provisions have been extended having been found to relapse into crime.

10. *Children's Courts.*—Special courts for the trial of juvenile offenders have been established in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand, while Children's Courts, although not under that title, are provided for by the Maintenance Act of 1926 in South Australia. The object of these courts is to avoid, as far as possible, the unpleasant surroundings of the ordinary police court.

§ 2. Superior Courts.

I. Convictions at Superior Courts.—The following is a list of the principal offences for which persons were convicted in superior courts during 1938 :—

CONVICTIONS AT SUPERIOR COURTS, 1938.

| Offence. | N.S.W. (a) | Vic. | Qld. (a) | S.A. | W.A. | Tas. | N.T. (a) | A.C.T. | Aust. |
|--|---------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|
| I. OFFENCES AGAINST THE PERSON. | | | | | | | | | |
| Murder | 6 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | .. | 2 | .. | 13 |
| Attempted Murder | 4 | 1 | 2 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | 8 |
| Manslaughter | 4 | .. | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | .. | 16 |
| Rape | 2 | 5 | 1 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | 9 |
| Other Offences against Females | 48 | 51 | 20 | 18 | 7 | 10 | .. | .. | 154 |
| Abduction | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 |
| Unnatural Offences | 26 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 3 | .. | .. | 50 |
| Abortion and Attempts to Procure | 7 | .. | 1 | 4 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | 13 |
| Bigamy | 19 | 13 | 6 | 2 | 4 | .. | 1 | .. | 45 |
| Suicide, Attempted | .. | .. | .. | 3 | .. | 3 | .. | .. | 6 |
| Assault, Aggravated | .. | .. | 9 | 1 | 2 | .. | 2 | .. | 14 |
| Assault, Common | 28 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 5 | .. | .. | 2 | 46 |
| Other Offences against the Person | 44 | 22 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 5 | .. | 81 |
| Total | 188 | 103 | 55 | 48 | 29 | 18 | 13 | 2 | 456 |
| II. OFFENCES AGAINST PROPERTY. | | | | | | | | | |
| Burglary and Housebreaking | 374 | 237 | 47 | 57 | 26 | 11 | .. | 2 | 754 |
| Robbery and Stealing from the | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Person | 37 | 29 | 12 | 2 | 4 | 1 | .. | .. | 85 |
| Horse-stealing | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7 |
| Cattle-stealing | 3 | 2 | 2 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 7 |
| Sheep-stealing | .. | 5 | .. | 5 | 2 | .. | .. | .. | 12 |
| Embezzlement and Stealing by | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Servants | 10 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 3 | .. | .. | .. | 32 |
| Larceny, Other | 46 | 148 | 5 | 6 | 14 | 3 | 2 | .. | 224 |
| Unlawfully using Horses, Cattle and | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Vehicles | 5 | .. | .. | .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. | 7 |
| Receiving | 44 | 15 | 3 | 4 | .. | 2 | .. | .. | 68 |
| Fraud and False Pretences | 39 | 38 | 4 | 12 | 1 | 5 | .. | .. | 99 |
| Arson | 6 | 6 | 1 | .. | 1 | 1 | .. | .. | 15 |
| Malicious Damage | .. | 1 | .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 3 |
| Other Offences against Property | 12 | 5 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | 4 | .. | 22 |
| Total | 577 | 498 | 81 | 95 | 53 | 23 | 6 | 2 | 1,335 |
| III. FORGERY AND OFFENCES AGAINST THE CURRENCY. | | | | | | | | | |
| Forgery and Uttering Forged | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Instruments | 19 | 23 | 5 | 19 | 3 | 2 | 4 | .. | 75 |
| Offences in relation to the Currency | 16 | 1 | .. | 1 | 3 | .. | .. | .. | 15 |
| Total | 29 | 24 | 5 | 20 | 6 | 2 | 4 | .. | 90 |
| IV. OFFENCES AGAINST GOOD ORDER | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | .. | .. | 10 |
| V. OTHER MISCELLANEOUS. | | | | | | | | | |
| Conspiracy | 7 | 6 | .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 15 |
| Perjury and Subornation | 1 | 6 | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | 8 |
| Other Offences | .. | 3 | .. | 6 | .. | 9 | .. | .. | 18 |
| Total | 8 | 15 | .. | 8 | 1 | 9 | .. | .. | 41 |
| Grand Total | 804 | 642 | 142 | 172 | 90 | 55 | 23 | 4 | 1,932 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

The number of convictions at superior courts and the rate per 10,000 of the population are given below for each of the years 1934 to 1938 :—

CONVICTIONS AT SUPERIOR COURTS.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| NUMBER. | | | | | |
| New South Wales(a) .. | 862 | 766 | 623 | 695 | 804 |
| Victoria.. .. | 550 | 569 | 533 | 565 | 642 |
| Queensland(a) | 129 | 222 | 154 | 173 | 142 |
| South Australia | 206 | 172 | 171 | 183 | 172 |
| Western Australia | 81 | 55 | 52 | 103 | 90 |
| Tasmania | 55 | 54 | 47 | 42 | 55 |
| Northern Territory | 4 | (a) 6 | (a) 10 | (a) 14 | (a) 23 |
| Australian Capital Territory | .. | .. | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | 1,887 | 1,844 | 1,592 | 1,776 | 1,932 |

PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION.

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| New South Wales(a) | 3.3 | 2.9 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 2.9 |
| Victoria.. .. | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2.9 | 3.0 | 3.4 |
| Queensland(a) | 1.3 | 2.3 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 1.4 |
| South Australia | 3.5 | 2.9 | 2.9 | 3.1 | 2.9 |
| Western Australia | 1.8 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 2.3 | 2.0 |
| Tasmania | 2.4 | 2.4 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 2.3 |
| Northern Territory | 8.1 | (a) 11.8 | (a) 19.4 | (a) 24.2 | (a) 39.3 |
| Australian Capital Territory | .. | .. | 2.0 | 1.0 | 3.6 |
| Total | 2.8 | 2.7 | 2.3 | 2.6 | 2.8 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

The rate of convictions has improved during recent years, the figure for 1936 being the lowest on record. Owing to the smallness of the population and the particular conditions prevailing there the rates for the Territories naturally show considerable variation.

2. **Habitual Offenders.**—Some account of the methods adopted in each State in connexion with habitual offenders is given in preceding issues of the Official Year Book (see No. 22, pp. 469-70).

3. **Capital Punishment.**—There were five executions in Australia during the period 1934 to 1938. Three took place in New South Wales (two in 1935-36 and one in 1937-38) and two in Victoria (both in 1936).

Under the Criminal Code Amendment Act of 1922 capital punishment was abolished in Queensland.

In the early days of the history of Australia the penalty of death was attached to a large number of offences, many of which at the present time would be dealt with in the lower or magistrates' court. With the growth of settlement, and the general amelioration in social and moral conditions, the list was, however, considerably curtailed, and the existing tendency is practically to restrict death sentences to cases of murder. It may be remarked in cases of rape, which is a capital offence in some of the Australian States,

the penalty has been but sparingly inflicted during the last few years. Juries are reputed to be loth to convict on this charge, owing to the uncertainty whether sentence of death will be pronounced.

The average annual number of executions in Australia from 1861 to 1880 was 9; from 1881 to 1900, 6; from 1901 to 1910, 4; from 1911 to 1920, 2; while the average for the last ten years has fallen to one.

§ 3. Civil Courts.

1. Lower Courts.—The total number of complaints entered together with the amounts awarded to plaintiffs during 1938 are given in the table hereunder. Particulars for earlier years will be found in preceding issues of the Official Year Book.

CIVIL CASES AT LOWER COURTS, 1938.

| State. | 1938. | State or Territory. | 1938. |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------|---|
| New South Wales | { Cases No. 68,940 Amount £ 368,106 | Western Australia | { Cases No. 27,674 Amount £ 166,512 |
| Victoria .. | { Cases No. 103,718 Amount £ 710,492 | Tasmania .. | { Cases No. 17,124 Amount £ 59,187 |
| Queensland (a) .. | { Cases No. 15,515 Amount £ 166,660 | Australian Capital Territory .. | { Cases No. 500 Amount £ 3,267 |
| South Australia .. | { Cases No. 25,250 Amount £ 156,350 | Total .. | { Cases No. 258,721 Amount £ 1,630,574 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

Particulars in regard to the amount of judgments involved in the 543 civil cases in the Northern Territory during the year ended 30th June, 1939, are not available.

The figures just given represent the returns from the Small Debts Courts in New South Wales, the Petty Sessions Courts in Victoria, the Petty Debts Courts in Queensland, the Local Courts of South Australia and Western Australia, the Courts of Requests in Tasmania, and the Court of Petty Sessions in the Australian Capital Territory.

2. Superior Courts.—In the next table will be found the transactions on the civil side in the Superior Courts during the year 1938. The particulars given below include the number and amount of judgments entered by default or consent, and differ from those in issues of the Official Year Book prior to No. 29 which related in most States only to cases actually tried during the year.

The New South Wales returns refer to judgments in the District Courts only, and are exclusive of 2,039 judgments signed in the Supreme Court, for which the amount is not available.

CIVIL CASES AT SUPERIOR COURTS, 1938.

| State. | 1938. | State or Territory. | 1938. |
|--------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| New South Wales | { Causes No. 6,931 Amount £ 334,169 | Western Australia | { Causes No. 136 Amount £ 142,250 |
| Victoria .. | { Causes No. 3,366 Amount £ 216,265 | (b) Tasmania .. | { Causes No. 273 Amount £ 23,784 |
| Queensland (a) .. | { Causes No. 451 Amount £ 83,338 | Australian Capital Territory .. | { Causes No. 4 Amount £ 745 |
| South Australia .. | { Causes No. 343 Amount £ 32,457 | Total .. | { Causes No. 11,504 Amount £ 833,008 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

(b) Judgments signed and entered.

3. Divorces and Judicial Separations.—The following table shows the number of petitions for divorce filed in each State during 1938, and the number of divorces granted:—

PETITIONS FOR DIVORCE AND DIVORCES GRANTED, 1938.

| State. | Petitions for Divorce. | | | Divorces Granted. |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | By Husband. | By Wife. | Total. | |
| New South Wales | 1,112 | 1,224 | 2,336 | 1,431 |
| Victoria | 399 | 547 | 946 | 827 |
| Queensland (a) | 147 | 155 | 302 | 201 |
| South Australia | 127 | 175 | 302 | 243 |
| Western Australia | 130 | 195 | 325 | 255 |
| Tasmania | 57 | 55 | 112 | 109 |
| Northern Territory (a) .. | 3 | 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Australian Capital Territory .. | 3 | 4 | 7 | 4 |
| Total | 1,978 | 2,356 | 4,334 | 3,074 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

The grounds on which divorces and judicial separations were granted during 1938 in each State are given in the following table:—

GROUND ON WHICH DIVORCES AND JUDICIAL SEPARATIONS WERE GRANTED, 1938.

| Grounds on which Granted. | N.S.W. | | Vic. | | Qld.(a) | | S.A. | | W.A. | | Tas. | | N.T.(a) | | A.C.T. | | Aust. | |
|----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. |
| Adultery | 311 | 3 | 182 | 3 | 100 | .. | 138 | .. | 111 | .. | 26 | .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. | 870 | 9 |
| Bigamy | 7 | .. | 6 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 13 | .. |
| Cruelty | 5 | 3 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | 12 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 18 | 4 |
| Cruelty and Drunkenness .. | 10 | 1 | 7 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 19 | 1 |
| Drunkenness .. | 16 | 1 | 6 | .. | .. | .. | 7 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 29 | 1 |
| Desertion | 1,079 | 1 | 613 | .. | 95 | .. | 73 | .. | 138 | .. | 82 | .. | 2 | .. | 4 | .. | 2,086 | 1 |
| Imprisonment for Crime .. | 3 | .. | 3 | .. | 1 | .. | 3 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10 | .. |
| Insanity | .. | .. | 7 | .. | 5 | .. | 8 | .. | 3 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 18 | .. |
| Other | .. | .. | 2 | .. | .. | .. | 8 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 11 | .. |
| Total | 1,431 | 9 | 827 | 3 | 201 | .. | 243 | 1 | 255 | .. | 109 | .. | 4 | .. | 4 | .. | 3,074 | 13 |

(a) Year ended 30th June, 1939.

The number of divorces and judicial separations in each State during the period 1934 to 1938 is shown below. The figures refer in the case of divorces to decrees made absolute in each year and include decrees for nullity of marriage.

DIVORCES AND JUDICIAL SEPARATIONS.

| State. | 1934. | | 1935. | | 1936. | | 1937. | | 1938. | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. | Divorces. | Judicial Separations. |
| New South Wales | 1,092 | 13 | 1,133 | 15 | 1,160 | 12 | 1,272 | 11 | 1,431 | 9 |
| Victoria | 621 | .. | 602 | 6 | 689 | 1 | 797 | 3 | 827 | 3 |
| Queensland (a) | 153 | 1 | 152 | .. | 162 | 2 | 210 | .. | 201 | .. |
| South Australia | 189 | 1 | 212 | 1 | 213 | .. | 207 | 3 | 243 | 1 |
| Western Australia | 157 | .. | 159 | .. | 192 | .. | 236 | .. | 255 | .. |
| Tasmania | 60 | .. | 86 | 1 | 61 | 1 | 30 | .. | 109 | .. |
| Northern Territory (a) .. | .. | .. | 2 | .. | 4 | .. | 4 | .. | 4 | .. |
| Australian Capital Territory .. | 10 | .. | 11 | .. | 2 | .. | 3 | .. | 4 | .. |
| Total | 2,282 | 15 | 2,357 | 23 | 2,483 | 16 | 2,759 | 17 | 3,074 | 13 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

The average annual number of divorces and judicial separations in Australia at decennial periods from 1871 to 1930 and the proportion per 10,000 existing marriages were as follows:—

DIVORCES AND JUDICIAL SEPARATIONS: AUSTRALIA.

| | 1871-80. | 1881-90. | 1891-1900. | 1901-10. | 1911-20. | 1921-30. |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Averages | 29 | 70 | 358 | 401 | 707 | 1,699 |
| Per 10,000 existing marriages .. . | 0.98 | 1.74 | 6.86 | 6.15 | 8.13 | 15.45 |

The rapid increase of divorce during the period 1891-1900 occurred largely in New South Wales and Victoria where legislation passed respectively in 1892 and 1889 made the separation of the marriage tie comparatively easy.

The following table shows the numbers and proportions of divorced males and females according to age in Australia at each Census from 1891 onwards. Prior to 1911 no record was made of divorced persons in South Australia, so that no definite comparisons can be made to extend beyond that date.

DIVORCED PERSONS: AGE DISTRIBUTION, AUSTRALIA, 1891 TO 1933.

| Age last Birthday. | Number. | | | | | Proportion per 10,000 of the Sex. | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|-------|-------|--------|-----------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1891. (a) | 1901. (a) | 1911. | 1921. | 1933. | 1891. (a) | 1901. (a) | 1911. | 1921. | 1933. |
| MALES. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Years— | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | .. | .. | 2 | 11 | .. | .. | .. | 0 | 0 | .. |
| 20-24 | 10 | 21 | 27 | 55 | 73 | .. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25-29 | 37 | 77 | 137 | 321 | 501 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 18 |
| 30-34 | 60 | 167 | 286 | 580 | 1,100 | 4 | 11 | 17 | 26 | 44 |
| 35-39 | 68 | 262 | 321 | 661 | 1,575 | 7 | 17 | 21 | 34 | 69 |
| 40-44 | 41 | 233 | 361 | 592 | 1,777 | 5 | 19 | 25 | 35 | 77 |
| 45-49 | 34 | 154 | 407 | 533 | 1,614 | 5 | 17 | 30 | 37 | 77 |
| 50-54 | 27 | 131 | 338 | 498 | 1,256 | 4 | 19 | 31 | 37 | 73 |
| 55-59 | 28 | 76 | 204 | 425 | 877 | 6 | 14 | 28 | 36 | 66 |
| 60-64 | 16 | 55 | 134 | 281 | 611 | 4 | 12 | 26 | 31 | 53 |
| 65-69 | 5 | 33 | 76 | 155 | 477 | 2 | 9 | 19 | 28 | 51 |
| 70-74 | 5 | 14 | 43 | 86 | 270 | 3 | 5 | 14 | 26 | 41 |
| 75-79 | 1 | 7 | 12 | 27 | 122 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 14 | 34 |
| 80-84 | .. | 3 | 14 | 7 | 35 | .. | 5 | 16 | 7 | 25 |
| 85 and over .. | .. | 1 | 6 | 1 | 10 | .. | 5 | 17 | 2 | 17 |
| Age 15 and over | 332 | 1,234 | 2,368 | 4,233 | 10,298 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 23 | 42 |
| FEMALES. | | | | | | | | | | |
| Years— | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15-19 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 20-24 | 16 | 56 | 71 | 168 | 230 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| 25-29 | 60 | 168 | 239 | 526 | 960 | 4 | 11 | 13 | 22 | 37 |
| 30-34 | 49 | 244 | 332 | 756 | 1,565 | 5 | 18 | 21 | 34 | 66 |
| 35-39 | 40 | 287 | 374 | 713 | 1,939 | 5 | 24 | 26 | 37 | 82 |
| 40-44 | 26 | 178 | 366 | 621 | 1,880 | 4 | 19 | 29 | 38 | 81 |
| 45-49 | 19 | 107 | 319 | 496 | 1,598 | 4 | 16 | 29 | 37 | 80 |
| 50-54 | 10 | 52 | 229 | 405 | 1,066 | 2 | 10 | 27 | 34 | 65 |
| 55-59 | 4 | 28 | 79 | 280 | 662 | 1 | 6 | 14 | 28 | 51 |
| 60-64 | 1 | 11 | 59 | 217 | 485 | .. | 3 | 13 | 28 | 42 |
| 65-69 | .. | 10 | 38 | 70 | 287 | .. | 3 | 10 | 14 | 32 |
| 70-74 | 1 | 5 | 14 | 25 | 136 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 21 |
| 75-79 | .. | .. | 16 | 14 | 58 | .. | .. | 10 | 7 | 16 |
| 80-84 | .. | 1 | 2 | 2 | 12 | .. | 2 | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| 85 and over .. | .. | .. | 1 | 3 | 4 | .. | .. | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Age 15 and over | 228 | 1,149 | 2,140 | 4,304 | 10,888 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 24 | 46 |

(a) Exclusive of South Australia.

4. Probates.—Information in regard to probates and letters of administration will be found in Chapter XXV. "Private Finance."

5. Bankruptcies.—Particulars relating to bankruptcy in each State up to the end of the year 1927 were incorporated under this heading in preceding issues of the Official Year Book. Under the terms of the Bankruptcy Act 1924-1933 jurisdiction in bankruptcy and insolvency was taken over by the Commonwealth from 1st August, 1928. The Act makes provision for the declaration of districts, and each State (except Queensland) has been declared a bankruptcy district. The bankruptcy district of New South Wales includes the Australian Capital Territory, while Queensland has been divided into three districts corresponding to the three Supreme Court districts in that State. The Northern Territory was also declared a separate bankruptcy district. Operations under the Act for the year ended 31st July, 1939, are given in the following table. For the purposes of comparison, figures for each of the preceding two years have been appended to the table.

COMMONWEALTH BANKRUPTCY ACT RETURNS, 1938-39.

| Heading. | | N.S.W. | Vic. | Qld. | S. Aust. | W. Aust. | Tas. | Nor. Terr. | Australia |
|---|---------------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|------------|-----------|
| Sequestration Orders and Orders for Administration of Deceased Debtors' Estates | Number .. | 295 | 295 | 94 | 160 | 44 | 51 | 1 | 940 |
| | Liabilities £ | 306,200 | 211,630 | 117,200 | 270,593 | 61,326 | 25,975 | 2,030 | 994,954 |
| | Assets £ | 127,713 | 64,087 | 87,392 | 157,035 | 30,624 | 5,620 | 908 | 473,379 |
| Compositions, etc., after Bankruptcy | Number .. | 8 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 2 | .. | 10 |
| | Liabilities £ | 5,915 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,038 | .. | 6,953 |
| | Assets £ | 3,263 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 324 | .. | 3,587 |
| Compositions, etc., without Bankruptcy | Number .. | 4 | 7 | 1 | 460 | 71 | 3 | .. | 546 |
| | Liabilities £ | 1,402 | 11,747 | 554 | 1,742,717 | 129,216 | 2,511 | .. | 1,888,147 |
| | Assets £ | 758 | 13,063 | 200 | 1,169,708 | 104,326 | 1,948 | .. | 1,290,003 |
| Deeds of Arrangement .. | Number .. | 217 | 120 | 48 | 2 | 2 | 5 | .. | 403 |
| | Liabilities £ | 377,529 | 206,235 | 102,838 | 2,783 | 3,069 | 9,903 | .. | 702,357 |
| | Assets £ | 318,932 | 133,329 | 61,676 | 1,284 | 1,693 | 11,434 | .. | 528,348 |
| Total, 1938-39 | Number .. | 524 | 431 | 143 | 622 | 117 | 61 | 1 | 1,809 |
| | Liabilities £ | 691,046 | 429,612 | 220,592 | 2,016,093 | 193,611 | 39,427 | 2,030 | 3,592,411 |
| | Assets £ | 450,666 | 210,479 | 149,268 | 1,328,027 | 136,643 | 19,326 | 908 | 2,295,317 |
| Total, 1937-38 | Number .. | 465 | 387 | 136 | 463 | 108 | 54 | .. | 1,613 |
| | Liabilities £ | 552,260 | 464,095 | 195,100 | 1,508,490 | 202,195 | 31,878 | .. | 2,954,018 |
| | Assets £ | 335,272 | 196,640 | 149,100 | 1,096,978 | 153,815 | 17,954 | .. | 1,949,759 |
| Total, 1936-37 | Number .. | 472 | 344 | 207 | 480 | 106 | 62 | 2 | 1,673 |
| | Liabilities £ | 671,666 | 446,865 | 323,255 | 1,632,519 | 237,956 | 55,382 | 4,658 | 3,372,301 |
| | Assets £ | 471,781 | 141,404 | 222,767 | 1,152,099 | 177,490 | 34,600 | 3,975 | 2,204,116 |

The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Report for the year ended 31st July, 1929, states that comparative tables have not been prepared in relation to State bankruptcy or insolvency for previous years, as the methods of collection and presentation do not afford a reliable common basis. It is also pointed out that the procedure in certain States has been largely influenced by the procedure in force prior to the passing of the Commonwealth Act, and that, therefore, no particular significance attaches to the large number of compositions, etc., in South Australia and Western Australia. The Bankruptcy Act 1930 created a Federal Court of Bankruptcy and gave power to appoint two Judges thereto. In 1930 a Federal Judge in Bankruptcy was

appointed to deal with bankruptcy work, in addition to the State Judges, in New South Wales and Victoria, the Courts in these States having been unable to cope with the business. All the bankruptcy cases in these States are now heard by the Federal Judge who sits in Sydney and Melbourne alternately.

6. **High Court of Australia.**—Under the provisions of Section 71 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act, the judicial power of the Commonwealth is vested in a Federal Supreme Court, called the High Court of Australia, and in such other courts as the Parliament creates or invests with federal jurisdiction. The Federal High Court possesses both original and appellate jurisdiction. The powers of the Court are defined in Chapter III. of the Constitution Act and in the Judiciary Act 1903-1937. At present the Court consists of a Chief Justice and five other judges. Sittings of the Court are held in the capitals of the various States as occasion may require. The High Court functions as a Court of Appeal for Australia. The following statement shows the transactions of the High Court for the years 1938 and 1939. Figures for previous years are given in preceding issues.

TRANSACTIONS OF COMMONWEALTH HIGH COURT, 1938 AND 1939.

| Original Jurisdiction. | 1938. | 1939. | Appellate Jurisdiction. | 1938. | 1939. |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------|-------------------------|-------|---|
| | Number of writs issued | 26 | | 45 | Number of appeals, set down for hearing.. |
| Number of causes entered for trial .. | 29 | 2 | Number allowed .. | 49 | 21 |
| Verdicts for plaintiffs | 15 | 9 | Number dismissed .. | 48 | 66 |
| Verdicts for defendants | 3 | 1 | Otherwise disposed of | 15 | 11 |
| Otherwise disposed of | 8 | 8 | | | |
| Amount of judgments | £6,656 | £37,481 | | | |

During the years 1938 and 1939 respectively the Court dealt also with the following : Appeals from Assessments under Taxation Assessment Act, 24, 57; Special cases stated for the opinion of the Full Court, 8, 10; Applications for Prohibitions, etc., 9, 54. The fees collected amounted to £711 in 1938 and £777 in 1939.

7. **Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration.**—A more or less detailed statement regarding the operation of this Court, which was established under the provisions of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1904-1934, will be found in the Chapter dealing with Labour, Wages, etc.

§ 4. Police and Prisons.

1. **General.**—In early issues of the Official Year Book (see No. 4, p. 918) a résumé was given of the evolution of the police force in Australia up to the passing of the Police Act of 1862 (25 Vic. No 16) in New South Wales.

2. **Strength of Police Force.**—(i) *General.* The strength of the police force in each State during the five years ended 1938 is given in the table hereunder. It may be mentioned that the police forces (with the exception of the small body of Commonwealth police maintained in the Northern Territory and at the Australian Capital) are entirely under State control, but, by arrangement, the Commonwealth Government utilizes their services in various directions, such as the collection of particulars for Commonwealth electoral rolls, etc.

STRENGTH OF POLICE FORCES.

| State or Territory. | Area of State in Sq. Miles. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| New South Wales.. | 309,432 | 3,600 | 3,593 | 3,726 | 3,816 | 3,801 |
| Victoria .. | 87,884 | 2,170 | 2,247 | 2,289 | 2,280 | 2,279 |
| Queensland (a) .. | 670,500 | 1,320 | 1,325 | 1,363 | 1,390 | 1,395 |
| South Australia (a) | 380,070 | 766 | 817 | 837 | 882 | 894 |
| Western Australia (a) | 975,920 | 583 | 592 | 585 | 582 | 601 |
| Tasmania (a) .. | 26,215 | 281 | 284 | 282 | 283 | 284 |
| Northern Territory (a) | 523,620 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 43 | 43 |
| Aust. Cap. Territory | 940 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 15 | 17 |
| Total .. | 2,974,581 | 8,775 | 8,913 | 9,138 | 9,291 | 9,314 |

(a) 30th June of year following.

The figures for New South Wales for 1938 are exclusive of 12 "black trackers", (i.e., natives employed in detection of offenders chiefly in outlying districts) and 4 matrons, while the Victorian returns are exclusive of 3 matrons and 1 black tracker. For Queensland the figures exclude 38 black trackers, for South Australia 3 wardresses and 3 black trackers, and for the Northern Territory 37 black trackers. There are also 38 black trackers and 4 female searchers in Western Australia not included in the table. According to the returns, women police are employed in all the States, the respective numbers included in the table above being:—New South Wales 8, Victoria 8, Queensland 2, South Australia 14, Western Australia 4, and Tasmania 1. Their work is mainly preventive, and the importance and usefulness of their duties have been referred to in very high terms by the Chief Officers of Police. In his Report for the year 1938 the Inspector-General of Police in New South Wales refers to the valuable assistance rendered by the women police to detectives and the ordinary police in connexion with crimes against women and children, and to the protection given to lost children at large public carnivals. They also carry out escort duties in respect of female prisoners. The experience in other States has been of a similar nature.

(ii) *Proportion to Population.*—The average number of inhabitants in the various States to each police officer during the same period is shown in the following table. In considering these figures allowance must, of course, be made for the unequal area and unequal distribution of the population of the various States.

POLICE FORCES IN RELATION TO POPULATION.

| State or Territory. | Number of Persons per Sq. Mile, 1933 Census. | Inhabitants to each Police Officer. | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
| New South Wales .. | 8.41 | 732 | 740 | 720 | 710 | 720 |
| Victoria .. | 20.71 | 847 | 820 | 809 | 816 | 822 |
| Queensland (a) .. | 1.41 | 733 | 740 | 728 | 722 | 729 |
| South Australia (a) .. | 1.53 | 763 | 718 | 703 | 672 | 666 |
| Western Australia (a) .. | 0.45 | 764 | 756 | 777 | 791 | 774 |
| Tasmania (a) .. | 8.68 | 814 | 809 | 825 | 827 | 833 |
| Northern Territory (a) .. | 0.01 | 125 | 130 | 133 | 134 | 144 |
| Aust. Cap. Territory .. | 9.52 | 707 | 666 | 652 | 683 | 674 |
| Total .. | 2.23 | 764 | 758 | 745 | 740 | 744 |

(a) 30th June of year following.

3. **Duties of the Police.**—In addition to the ordinary employment attaching to their office, the police are called upon to perform many duties which in other countries are carried out by various functionaries. Thus, in New South Wales, it has been estimated that one-fifth of the time of the force was taken up in extraneous duties unconnected with the protection of life and property, while the cash value of the services rendered to other Government departments was stated as over £200,000 per annum. The Queensland Commissioner refers to the circumstance that in 1938-39 no less than 54 important subsidiary offices were held by the police. In South Australia, the Commissioner alludes to the large number of subsidiary duties performed by police officers, and mentions that for the year ended June, 1939, over 250,000 inquiries were made on behalf of other departments. While these special tasks doubtless involve some degree of sacrifice of ordinary routine duties, the fact that the general intelligence of the police is adequate for their performance, besides being most creditable, results in a large saving of the public money.

4. **Interstate Police Conferences.**—In February, 1921, a Conference of the chief officers of the police forces of the various States was held in Melbourne. In addition to the discussion of matters of common interest, arrangements were made for the interchange of detectives. The results were so satisfactory that it was decided to hold similar Conferences annually. Amongst other matters discussed at the Hobart Conference in 1927, particular attention was given to the subject of traffic regulation in view of the large and increasing number of motor vehicles. Conferences were held at Melbourne in 1928, and at Perth in 1929, but owing to the need for economy no further meetings have been held.

5. **Prison Accommodation and Prisoners, 1938.**—The table below shows the number of prisons in each State, the accommodation therein, and the number of prisoners in confinement at the end of 1938:—

PRISON ACCOMMODATION AND PRISONERS, 1938.

| State or Territory. | Number of Prisons. | Accommodation in— | | Prisoners at End of Year. |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| | | Separate Cells. | Wards. | |
| New South Wales (a) | 22 | (b) 2,311 | .. | 1,364 |
| Victoria | 12 | 1,316 | 446 | 1,084 |
| Queensland | 6 | 544 | 94 | 265 |
| South Australia | 15 | 754 | 173 | 235 |
| Western Australia | 19 | 607 | 506 | 294 |
| Tasmania (a) | 1 | 142 | 4 | 116 |
| Northern Territory | 3 | 14 | 90 | 17 |
| Total | 78 | 5,688 | 1,313 | 3,375 |

(a) Year ended 30th June following.

(b) Total accommodation.

The figures refer to prisoners under sentence and are exclusive of aborigines. There are no gaols in the Australian Capital Territory, but there are lock-ups attached to the police stations at Canberra and Jervis Bay, where offenders are held while awaiting trial, and sentences not exceeding one week imposed by a magistrate may be served.

6. **Prisoners in Gaol, 1934 to 1938.**—The number of prisoners in gaol at the 31st December in each of the years 1934 to 1938 and the proportion per 10,000 of the population are given in the following table. The figures refer to prisoners under sentence and are exclusive of aborigines.

PRISONERS IN GAOL.

| State or Territory. | 1934. | 1935. | 1936. | 1937. | 1938. |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| NUMBER. | | | | | |
| New South Wales (a) .. | 1,398 | 1,330 | 1,183 | 1,176 | 1,364 |
| Victoria.. .. | 1,225 | 1,159 | 1,092 | 1,030 | 1,084 |
| Queensland | 339 | 301 | 272 | 276 | 265 |
| South Australia | 294 | 260 | 242 | 231 | 235 |
| Western Australia | 249 | 264 | 264 | 260 | 294 |
| Tasmania (a) | 100 | 104 | 114 | 87 | 116 |
| Northern Territory | 19 | 19 | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| Total | 3,624 | 3,437 | 3,185 | 3,078 | 3,375 |

PER 10,000 OF THE POPULATION.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| New South Wales (a) .. | 5.3 | 5.0 | 4.4 | 4.3 | 5.0 |
| Victoria.. .. | 6.7 | 6.3 | 5.9 | 5.5 | 5.8 |
| Queensland | 3.5 | 3.1 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 2.6 |
| South Australia | 5.0 | 4.4 | 4.1 | 3.9 | 3.9 |
| Western Australia | 5.6 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 5.7 | 6.4 |
| Tasmania (a) | 4.3 | 4.5 | 4.9 | 3.6 | 4.9 |
| Total | 5.4 | 5.1 | 4.7 | 4.5 | 4.9 |

(a) 30th June of year following.

After remaining stationary at 6.5 per 10,000 for the four years ended 1932 the proportion of prisoners in gaol to the total population declined to 4.9 in 1938, which figure contrasts most favourably with that obtaining in 1891 when the proportion was as high as 16 per 10,000. Rates for the Northern Territory have not been included on account of the abnormal conditions prevailing there.

7. Improvement in Prison Methods.—In previous issues of the Official Year Book a more or less detailed account was given of the improvements effected in each State during recent years in regard to methods of prison management (see Official Year Book No. 22, pp. 471-4), but this information is not repeated in the present volume.

§ 5. Cost of Administration of Justice.

1. Expenditure by the States.—The table below shows the expenditure from Consolidated Revenue during the year 1938-39 in connexion with the administration of justice in each of the States.

It is difficult to obtain comparable figures of the total costs of the various services under this heading, and net costs have been substituted for gross expenditure in this issue of the Official Year Book. It will be noted that in the States of South Australia and Western Australia the receipts for legal fees and registrations exceed the actual expenditure under "Justice".

NET EXPENDITURE ON JUSTICE IN EACH STATE, 1938-39.

| State. | Net Expenditure. | | | Per Head of Population. | | |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------|----------|-------------------------|---------|----------|
| | Justice. | Police. | Prisons. | Justice. | Police. | Prisons. |
| | £ | £ | £ | s. d. | s. d. | s. d. |
| New South Wales .. | 178,941 | 1,445,819 | 199,625 | 1 4 | 10 7 | 1 6 |
| Victoria .. | 104,903 | 796,626 | 103,202 | 1 1 | 8 6 | 1 1 |
| Queensland .. | 66,095 | 580,581 | 35,144 | 1 4 | 11 6 | 0 8 |
| South Australia .. | -27,876 | 306,387 | 36,171 | -0 11 | 10 4 | 1 3 |
| Western Australia .. | -28,062 | 251,311 | 28,466 | -1 3 | 10 10 | 1 3 |
| Tasmania .. | 22,780 | 118,478 | 15,071 | 1 11 | 10 0 | 1 3 |
| Total .. | 315,881 | 3,499,202 | 417,679 | 0 11 | 10 1 | 1 2 |

2. Commonwealth Expenditure.—The expenditure shown in the foregoing table is that incurred by the State Governments only, and does not include expenditure in connexion with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, which is given hereunder for the period 1935-36 to 1938-39:—

EXPENDITURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

| Year. | Gross Expenditure. | Receipts. | Net Expenditure. |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ |
| 1935-36 | 239,702 | 97,116 | 142,586 |
| 1936-37 | 252,158 | 102,613 | 149,545 |
| 1937-38 | 263,319 | 107,600 | 155,719 |
| 1938-39 | 281,497 | 111,036 | 170,461 |

The totals for each year include expenditure in connexion with patents and copyright which amounted in 1938-39 to £71,126. As pointed out previously, the Commonwealth took over jurisdiction in bankruptcy in August, 1928, and the expenditure thereon in 1938-39 amounted to £44,551, including the salary of the Federal Judge, £2,500. Expenditure in connexion with the Australian Capital Territory police amounted in 1938-39 to £7,034, while £3,429 was expended on miscellaneous items including the Law Court, Titles Office and Industrial Arbitration Board. Revenue in connexion with the Attorney-General's Department amounted for the year to £111,036, comprising £67,914 for patents, copyright, trademarks and designs, £30,770 for bankruptcy and £12,352 miscellaneous including fees and fines.

In addition to the foregoing a sum of approximately £32,000 was expended in the Northern Territory by the Department of the Interior on the administration of justice including the costs of the police force and prisons.