

VICTORIAN YEAR-BOOK, 1895-8.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

1. Victoria is situated at the south-east extremity of the Australian continent, of which it occupies about a thirty-fourth part, and contains about 87,884 square miles, or 56,245,760 acres. It is bounded on the north and north-east by the colony of New South Wales, from which it is separated by the River Murray, and by a right line running in a south-easterly direction from a place near the head-waters of that stream, called The Springs, on Forest Hill, to Cape Howe. On the west it is bounded by South Australia, the dividing line being about 242 geographical miles in length, approximating to the position of the 141st meridian of east longitude, and extending from the River Murray to the sea. On the south and south-east its shores are washed by the Southern Ocean, Bass's Straits, and the Pacific Ocean. It lies between the 34th and 39th parallels of south latitude, and the 141st and 150th meridians of east longitude. Its extreme length from east to west is about 420, its greatest breadth about 250, and its extent of coast-line nearly 600 geographical miles. Great Britain, exclusive of the islands in the British seas, contains 88,309 square miles, and is therefore slightly larger than Victoria.

2. The southernmost point in Victoria, and, consequently, in the whole of Australia, is Wilson's Promontory, which lies in latitude $39^{\circ} 8' S.$, longitude $145^{\circ} 26' E.$; the northernmost point is the place where the western boundary of the colony meets the Murray, latitude $34^{\circ} 2' S.$, longitude $140^{\circ} 58' E.$; the point furthest east is Cape Howe, situated in latitude $37^{\circ} 31' S.$, longitude $149^{\circ} 59' E.$; the most westerly point is the line of the whole western frontier, which, according to the latest correction, lies upon the meridian $140^{\circ} 58' E.$, and extends from latitude $34^{\circ} 2' S.$ to latitude $38^{\circ} 4' S.$, or 242 geographical miles.

3. The area of the Australian continent is estimated to be somewhat under three million square miles; but that area, added to the areas of Tasmania and New Zealand, amounts to nearly three million

one hundred thousand square miles. The following are the areas of the different colonies:—

AREAS OF AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

Victoria	87,884
New South Wales	309,175
Queensland	668,224
South Australia	903,425
Western Australia	975,920
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Total Australia	2,944,628
Tasmania	26,375
New Zealand	104,471
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Total Australasia	3,075,474

4. It will be noticed that Victoria is by far the smallest colony on the Australian continent, and the smallest of the group except Tasmania. If the whole continent were to be divided into 100 equal parts, the area of Victoria would embrace 3 such parts, that of New South Wales 10, that of Queensland 23, that of South Australia 30, and that of Western Australia 34. Victoria is thus less than a third of the size of New South Wales, little more than an eighth of that of Queensland, about a tenth of that of South Australia, and less than an eleventh of that of Western Australia.

5. It may be mentioned that the area of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand is less by 680,528 square miles than the area of the Continent of Europe (3,756,002 square miles), but exceeds by 47,883 square miles the area of the United States, exclusive of the Alaska territory (3,027,591 square miles).

6. The following are the latitudes and longitudes of the capital cities of the different Australasian Colonies, the positions being the observatories at Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, and Adelaide, the Barracks Observatory at Hobart, the Survey Office Observatory at Wellington, and the Government House at Perth:—

LATITUDES AND LONGITUDES OF CAPITALS OF AUSTRALASIAN COLONIES.

Colony.	Capital City.		
	Name.	Latitude S.	Longitude E.
		° ' "	° ' "
Victoria	Melbourne ...	37 49 53	144 58 32
New South Wales	Sydney ...	33 51 41	151 12 23
Queensland	Brisbane ...	27 28 0	153 1 36
South Australia	Adelaide ...	34 55 34	138 35 4
Western Australia	Perth ...	31 57 24	115 52 42
Tasmania	Hobart ...	42 53 25	147 19 57
New Zealand	Wellington ...	41 16 25	174 46 38

7. From its geographical position, Victoria enjoys a climate more Climate. suitable to the European constitution than any other colony upon the Continent of Australia. In the thirty-nine years ended with 1897, the maximum temperature in the shade was $111\cdot2^{\circ}$ Fahr., viz., on the 14th January, 1862; the minimum was 27° , viz., on the 21st July, 1869; and the mean was $57\cdot4^{\circ}$. Upon the average, on four days during the year, the thermometer rises above 100° in the shade; and, generally, on about three nights during the year, it falls below freezing point. The maximum temperature in the sun ever recorded (*i.e.*, since 1857) was $178\cdot5^{\circ}$, viz., on the 4th January, 1862. The mean atmospheric pressure, noted at an Observatory 91 feet above the sea-level, was, in the thirty-four years ended with 1897, 29·94 inches; the average number of days on which rain fell was 131, and the average yearly rainfall was 25·48 inches.*

8. The following are the dates of some of the principal events Principal events. connected with the discovery and history† of Victoria :—

1770. April 19th.—Victorian land first discovered by Capt. James Cook, R.N., in command of His Majesty's ship *Endeavour*.—("Point Hicks," believed to be the present Cape Everard in Gippsland.)

1798. June 4th.—Western Port discovered and entered by Surgeon George Bass, R.N.

„ Nov. and Dec.—The existence of a strait between Australia and Tasmania proved by Midshipman Matthew Flinders, R.N., who, accompanied by Bass, sailed round the latter island in the sloop *Norfolk*.

1800. Dec. 4th to 9th.—Bass's Straits first sailed through from the westward by Lieutenant James Grant, R.N., in H.M.S. *Lady Nelson*, a gun brig of sixty tons burthen, bound from England to Port Jackson. On this occasion Grant discovered and gave the present names to Capes Bridgewater, Nelson, and Sir William Grant; Portland Bay; the Lawrence and Lady Julia Percy Islands; Capes Otway, Patton, Liptrap, &c.

1802. January 5th.—Entrance to Port Phillip Bay discovered by Acting-Lieutenant John Murray, R.N., in the *Lady Nelson*. Heads entered by the launch on 2nd February, and by the vessel on 15th February.

„ April 26th.—Port Phillip Bay entered and examined by Flinders, who had been promoted to the rank of Commander. He was not aware that the Bay had been previously discovered by Murray.

1803. Jan. and Feb.—Port Phillip Bay surveyed and the Yarra and Saltwater Rivers discovered by Charles Grimes, Surveyor-General of New South Wales, and party.

„ October 7th.—Attempt to colonize Port Phillip by Colonel David Collins in charge of a party of convicts.

1804. January 27th.—Port Phillip abandoned by Collins as unfit for settlement.

1824. Dec. 16th.—Hume and Hovell arrived at Corio Bay, having travelled overland from Sydney.

* For further information respecting the meteorological observations, not only for Melbourne, but also for other parts of the colony, see concluding portion of part "Vital Statistics," *post*. A chapter on "Meteorology and Climate" was given in the *Victorian Year-Book*, 1874.

† A detailed statement of the Discovery and Early History of the Territory now embraced within the limits of the Colony of Victoria was given in the *Victorian Year-Book*, 1884-5, page 10 *et seq*.

1826. Attempt made early in the year to colonize Western Port on its eastern side, near the site of the present township of Corinella, by Captain S. Wright, of H.M. 3rd Regiment, the Buffs, in charge of a party of convicts. This expedition was sent from New South Wales in consequence of a report that the French contemplated a settlement on the south coast of Australia. This intention, if ever seriously entertained, having been abandoned by the French, and the locality being sterile and scrubby, the establishment was withdrawn early in 1828.
1834. Nov. 19th.—Permanent settlement founded at Portland Bay by Edward Henty.
1835. May 29th.—John Batman arrived in Port Phillip and made a treaty with the natives for a grant of 600,000 acres of land. This treaty was afterwards disallowed by the Imperial Government.
- „ August 28th.—John Pascoe Fawkner's party sailed up the Yarra in the *Enterprise* and founded Melbourne on the site previously selected by Batman. (Fawkner followed shortly after, and landed on the 18th October.)
1836. April to Oct.—Major (afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel Sir) Thomas Livingstone Mitchell made extensive explorations in the Port Phillip District, the western portion of which he named Australia Felix.
- „ Sept. 29th.—Regular Government established under Captain William Lonsdale, who was sent from Sydney to act as Resident Magistrate of the Port Phillip District.
1837. March 2nd.—Governor Sir Richard Bourke arrived from Sydney and gave the name of Melbourne to the metropolis of the new settlement.
- „ June 1st.—First sale of Crown lands took place in Melbourne. Average price of half-acre town lots, £35.
1838. Sept. 12th.—First census of the colony. Population enumerated, 3,511, viz., 3,080 males and 431 females.
1839. Sept. 30th.—Mr. Charles Joseph La Trobe arrived from Sydney and took charge of the Port Phillip District under the title of Superintendent. The territory over which he exercised jurisdiction was much smaller than the present colony of Victoria, being bounded on the east and west by the 146th and 141st meridians, and on the north by the 36th parallel. (For boundaries of Victoria see paragraph 1 *ante*.)
1841. March 2nd.—Second census. Population enumerated, 11,738, viz., 8,274 males and 3,464 females.
1842. August 12th.—Melbourne incorporated as a Town by Act of the Legislature of New South Wales 6 Vict. No. 7.
1846. March 2nd.—Third census. Population enumerated, 32,879, viz., 20,184 males and 12,695 females.
1847. June 26th.—Royal Letters Patent erecting the Town of Melbourne into a City signed at this date; gazetted in Sydney on the 5th February, 1848.
1849. October 12th.—Geelong incorporated as a Town by Act of the Legislature of New South Wales 13 Vict. No. 40.
1851. February 6th.—“Black Thursday.”—A day of tremendous heat and destructive fire, whereby a large tract of country was devastated. Some lives were lost, numbers of sheep, cattle, and horses perished, and a vast amount of property was destroyed.
- „ March 2nd.—Fourth census. Population enumerated, 77,345, viz., 46,202 males and 31,143 females.
- „ July 1st.—Port Phillip separated from New South Wales and erected into an independent colony under the name of Victoria.
- „ July and Aug.—Discovery of gold in Victoria.

1853. February 8th.—Road districts (the origin of the present shires) established by Act 16 Vict. No. 40.
1854. April 26th.—Fifth census. Population enumerated 236,798, viz., 155,887 males and 80,911 females.
- „ Nov. and Dec.—Riots on Ballarat gold-field. (Eureka Stockade taken on the 3rd December.)
- „ Dec. 29th.—Municipal institutions (the origin of the present cities, towns, and boroughs) established by Act 18 Vict. No. 15.
1855. Nov. 23rd.—Constitution proclaimed in Victoria.
1856. March 19th.—The ballot as a means of electing members of both Houses of Parliament prescribed by Act 19 Vict. No. 12.
1857. March 29th.—Sixth census. Population enumerated, 410,766, viz., 264,334 males and 146,432 females.
- „ August 27th.—Property qualification of members of the Legislative Assembly abolished by Act 21 Vict. No. 12.
- „ Nov. 24th.—Universal manhood suffrage for electors of the Legislative Assembly made law by Act 21 Vict. No. 33.
1858. Dec. 17th.—Number of members of the Legislative Assembly increased to 78, to be returned for 49 Electoral Districts.
1861. April 7th.—Seventh census. Population enumerated, 540,322, viz., 328,651 males and 211,671 females.
- „ October ... Conference, attended by representatives of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and South Australia, met in Melbourne for the purpose of endeavouring to secure uniformity in the collection and compilation of their annual statistics.
1867. February 6th.—Customs tariff imposing import duties on a number of articles with the view of affording protection to native industry came into operation under Act 31 Vict. No. 306.
1869. January 1st.—Property qualification of members and electors of the Legislative Council reduced by Act 32 Vict. No. 334.
1871. April 2nd.—Eighth census. Population enumerated, 731,528, viz., 401,050 males and 330,478 females.
- „ May 17th.—Import duties on many articles increased under Act 35 Vict. No. 400, with the view of affording further protection to native industry.
1875. January 15th.—Conference in Hobart Town, convened for the purpose of endeavouring to secure uniformity in statistical collection and compilation, held its first meeting. Representatives of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, and Tasmania attended. Conference closed 26th January.
1876. Nov. 2nd.—Number of members of the Legislative Assembly increased to 86, and boundaries of Electoral Districts altered so as to increase the number to 55, by Act 40 Vict. No. 548.
1878. Dec. 28th.—The Hon. Graham Berry, Premier, and Professor C. H. Pearson, member of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, with Mr. H. H. Hayter as secretary, started for England on a mission from the Victorian to the Imperial Government, the object being to endeavour to induce the latter to amend the *Victorian Constitution Act* in regard to certain matters (affecting chiefly the relations between the two Houses of the Legislature) in which the Constitution had been found to be unworkable. The mission, which was only partially successful, returned to Victoria about the middle of 1879.
1880. February 6th.—Fortnightly mail contract service between Victoria and England commenced.
- „ October 1st.—First Victorian International Exhibition opened in Melbourne. It was closed 30th April, 1881.

1881. April 3rd.—Ninth census of Victoria, and first simultaneous census of all the Australasian Colonies. Population enumerated— in Victoria, 862,346, viz., 452,083 males and 410,263 females ; in all the Australasian Colonies, 2,815,924, viz., 1,526,121 males and 1,289,803 females.
- „ Nov. 28th.—Property qualification of members and electors of the Legislative Council further reduced, number of provinces increased to 14, number of members increased to 42, and tenure of seats shortened by Act 45 Vict. No. 702.
1884. February 1st.—Victorian Railways placed under the control and management of three Commissioners, under Act 47 Vict. No. 767.
- „ Dec. 31st.—Patronage in the public service abolished with respect to appointments and promotions, and “a just and equitable system in lieu thereof, which will enable all persons who have qualified themselves in that behalf to enter the public service without favour or recommendation other than their own merits and fitness for the position,” established under Act 47 Vict. No. 773, which Statute also provided for the appointment of a Public Service Board, consisting of three members, to administer its provisions.
1885. December 9th.—Imperial Act constituting a Federal Council of Australasia brought into operation in respect to Victoria by Act 49 Vict. No. 843. First meeting of Federal Council opened in Tasmania, 25th January, 1886.
1887. April 4th.—Conference between representatives of the principal colonies of the Empire and the Imperial Government, summoned chiefly for the purpose of considering questions of defence and postal and telegraphic communication, held its first meeting in London, Victoria sending four representatives. Conference closed 9th May.
1888. January 18th.—Hundredth anniversary of the first settlement in Australia. Governors, Ministers, Members of Parliament, and corporation officials of all the Australasian Colonies, together with a large number of citizens, proceeded to Sydney to join in celebrating the occasion.
- „ February 1st.—Weekly mail contract-service between Australia and England commenced, by means of vessels of the Peninsular and Oriental, and Orient services running alternately.
- „ August 1st.—Second Victorian International Exhibition opened in Melbourne. It was closed 31st January, 1889.
- „ August 28th.—First meeting of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. Held in Sydney.
- „ Dec. 22nd.—Number of members of the Legislative Council increased to 48 by Act 52 Vict. No. 995. Number of members of the Legislative Assembly increased to 95, and boundaries of Electoral Districts altered so that their number should be 84, and so that—with a few exceptions—only one member should represent each constituency, by Act 52 Vict. No. 1008.
1890. February 6th.—Australasian Federation Conference, at which representatives from the seven principal Australasian Colonies were present, held its first meeting. It was unanimously agreed that the best interests of the Australian Colonies would be promoted by their early union under one Legislative and Executive Government ; and that the Legislatures of the respective colonies should be invited to appoint, during the present year, delegates to a National Australasian Convention, consisting of delegates empowered to report upon a scheme for a Federal Constitution. Conference closed 14th February.

1890. March 3rd.—Conference convened for the purpose of arranging for the collection and compilation of the returns of the census of 1891 upon a uniform principle, held its first meeting in Hobart, under the presidency of the Government Statist of Victoria. Representatives of Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand attended. Conference closed 18th March.
1891. March 2nd.—National Australasian Convention held in Sydney, at which a Draft Bill "To constitute the Commonwealth of Australia" was framed and adopted. The Convention also recommended that provision be made by the Parliaments of the several colonies for submitting for the approval of the people of the colonies respectively the constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia as framed by the Convention. Delegates from the seven principal Australasian Colonies were present at the meetings of the Convention, which closed on the 9th April.
- „ April 5th.—Tenth census of Victoria, and second simultaneous census of all the Australasian Colonies. Population enumerated—in Victoria, 1,140,405, viz., 598,414 males and 541,991 females; in all the Australasian Colonies 3,881,347, viz., 2,082,394 males and 1,798,953 females.
- „ October 1st.—The Australasian Colonies entered the Universal Postal Union.
1892. March 17th.—Railway Commissioners suspended by the Government. They resigned, with a promise of compensation, on the 7th June. Resignations accepted, 13th June.
1893. April and May.—Financial panic in Melbourne. After four banks, and a number of other financial institutions had stopped payment, the Government proclaimed five bank holidays, viz., from the 1st to the 5th May, both inclusive, in order to afford time for the position to be considered, but this did not prevent the suspension of five more of the associated banks. Most of the banks, and a few of the other financial institutions, were afterwards reconstructed. The panic extended to New South Wales and Queensland, and several banks in those colonies suspended operations.
1894. March 3rd.—Number of representatives at Federal Council of colonies having responsible government increased from two to five, by Her Majesty's Order in Council.
1895. January ... Conference at Hobart of the Premiers of Australia and Tasmania, at the instance of the Premier of New South Wales, to further consider the subject of Federation; at which it was agreed to commit the duty of framing a Federal Constitution to a Convention strictly chosen by the electors, and a draft Enabling Bill was adopted to give effect to this object.
1896. March ... Federal Enabling Act passed in Victoria, and similar measure likewise passed by New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania.
1897. March 4th.—Election of Delegates—ten for each colony—to the Australasian Federal Convention, held in Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania; and in South Australia on the 6th.
1897. March 22nd.—Australasian Federal Convention opened in Adelaide, at which the following colonies were represented:—Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania. The first session closed on 23rd April. The second session opened in Sydney on the 2nd and closed on 24th September. The third session opened

in Melbourne on the 20th January, and closed on the 16th March, 1898. At this Convention a Draft Bill to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia was framed and adopted for submission to a popular referendum of the various States represented.

1898. June 3rd.—Referendum submitted to the electors in Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania, and in South Australia on the following day, for the acceptance or rejection of the Draft Bill drawn up by the Convention. The Bill was accepted by large majorities in three of the colonies, and by a majority of 5,000 in New South Wales; but as the statutory number of 80,000 affirmative votes required in New South Wales (*viz.*, 80,000) was not reached (71,600 being recorded) the Bill was considered as rejected by that colony.

1899. January 28th.—Conference of the Premiers of all the Australian Colonies and Tasmania held in Melbourne, to consider the amendments suggested in the Draft Commonwealth Bill by the Parliament of New South Wales, at which a compromise was arrived at, subject, of course, to the approval of the various Parliaments.
