Notes on the Progress of New South Wales during the ten years 1872 to 1881.

By Christopher Rolleston, C.M.G., Auditor-General, President.

[Read before the Royal Society of N.S.W., 6 September, 1882.]

Ten years ago the privilege was accorded to me of addressing the Royal Society of N.S.W. on the subject of the progress of the Colony during the preceding decennial period. I purpose, after the lapse of ten years, to review the progress we have made, and to compare it with that of the previous decennary. I do not propose to use very elaborate statistics, merely sufficient to show the results of our advancement under the heads of (1) Population, (2) Production, (3) Trade and Commerce, (4) Accumulation.

1. Population.

The Census taken on the 2nd April, 1871, resulted in a total population of 503,981 souls, of whom 275,551 were males and 228,430 were females, the increase over the population of 1861 being 153,121, or 43.64 per cent. The Census taken on the 7th April, 1881, revealed a population of 751,468 souls, of whom 411,149 were males and 340,319 were females, the increase in the ten years being 247,487 souls, or 49.10 per cent. Of this number 171,315, or 34 per cent., was the result of natural increase by the excess of births over deaths, and 76,172, or 15 per cent., was due to the excess of immigration over emigration. If the Colony were parcelled out amongst its present inhabitants, it would yield over 260 acres to every man, woman, and child in it; and it may be further remarked that, without exceeding the density of the population in the county of Cumberland, exclusive of Sydney, the Colony would carry a population approaching something like thirty times the number of its present inhabitants. Almost every branch of industry is retarded in its progress by the want of labour, and the experience of the last ten years amply justifies the assertion which I hazarded in 1872, that of all causes which create national wealth the power of population is the most influential.

2. Production.

The statistics still show the pre-eminence of our pastoral wealth over every other industry. We commenced the decennial period to which this paper refers with the undermentioned live stock:
Horses, 304,100; cattle, 2,014,888; sheep, 16,278,697. We close the decennary with — Horses, 346,931; cattle, 2,180,896; sheep, 33,062,854. It is a noticeable feature in the returns of live stock that whilst the cattle increased by over a million head during the first five years of the period under review, they have decreased by nearly the same number in the last five years, and we have now to record an increase of only 166,006 head in the ten years. In our sheep-farming operations, the very opposite result is exhibited, as the numbers are more than doubled. We commenced the decade with rather over 161½ millions, and we close the decade with over 33 millions. These figures are taken from the returns of the Registrar-General, but if we take the sworn returns under the Sheep Act for our guide, they give us at the close of 1881 no less than 37,279,205. In the face of the exceptionally dry seasons experienced during the last three or four years, it is a very remarkable feature in her history of progress that the main pastoral industry of the Colony should exhibit such expansion. In connection with this increase in the number of our sheep, the question that forces itself upon our attention is this: to what extent our pasture lands will enable us to increase our production of live stock, so as to supplement the deficiencies of the supply in Europe. It has been estimated that the production of meat in the United Kingdom is equal to 1,090,000 tons, whilst the consumption reaches 1,740,000 tons, showing a deficiency of 650,000 tons in the home supply. It is, moreover, known that the continent of Europe is not able to feed its own population, the estimated consumption being in excess of its production no less than 143,000 tons. The statistics also reveal the fact that the cattle of France and the sheep of Great Britain are declining in numbers, whilst the average increase of the population of Europe is advancing at the rate of three millions annually. The difficulties of conveyance have now been overcome, since a 70-horse power engine is able to maintain a temperature 6° below zero in a chamber capable of holding 10,000 frozen sheep or 250 tons of dead meat. Some idea of the magnitude of the question of meat supply for Europe may be formed by the importation of meat into the United Kingdom has risen from 144,225 tons, of the value of £7,708,000, in the year 1870, to no less than 650,300 tons, of the value of £26,612,000, in the year 1880. The increased consumption of meat in Europe, it may be observed, is not only attributable to the increase of population but in a greater degree to the higher wages that manufacturing industry has introduced amongst the masses.

It is not within the scope of this paper to follow this question further. My object is to point out facts revealed to us by statistics, leaving to others the investigation of their bearing upon the
progress and well-being of this country. There is just one point
more that I wish to draw attention to, and that is the diminution
in the number of our cattle. The returns on March 31, 1881,
showed 2,580,040, whilst those of March 31, 1882, showed
2,180,896, a deficiency of close upon 400,000 head in the twelve
months. This is partly owing to losses through drought, but I
believe may be attributed in a greater degree to the substitution
of sheep for cattle on the pastures of New South Wales, and the
demand for cattle to stock the vast plains in the Colony of Queens-
land, lately brought into occupation. And there is yet a further
consideration which presents itself to my mind in connection with
our pastoral industry, and that is whether without artificial aid
we can maintain the rate of increase in our flocks which the last
ten years has developed. I am disposed to think that we have
arrived at the maximum which our native grasses will in ordinary
seasons enable us to depasture. We are apt to regard moist
seasons as the criterion of the capabilities of our pastures, for-
getting that moist seasons are the exception and not the rule; and
we are not readily disposed to make allowance for the deterio-
ration of them by persistent overstocking, by the ravages of marsu-
pials, and by the injurious effect of long continued droughts.
There is no chance given to the best grasses and herbage to seed,
and they are said to be dying out in many districts of the Colony.
It behoves us to look seriously to the injurious effect which this
want of rest to the ground must inevitably produce not only upon
our capability of supplying meat to the mother country but upon
the growth and quality of our wool.

Wool.—In the year 1871 we exported the produce of our own
Colony as follows: quantity, 65,611,953 lbs.; value, £4,748,160,
estimated at a little over 1s. 5d. per lb. The clip of 1871 was esti-
mated to have produced an average of 4 lbs. per sheep shorn; and it
was further estimated upon its realization in the London market there
would be a surplus returnable to the Colony of a million and a half
sterling, or thereabouts. There are no means, however, of testing
this estimate, and it must be regarded as an assumption only. In
the year 1881 we exported: quantity, 139,601,506 lbs.; value,
£7,149,787. The estimated value in this case is very little over
1s. per lb., as compared with 1s. 5d. in 1871, and this may be set
down to the much larger proportion of wool going home in the
grease, whilst the average weight of the fleece did not much exceed
4 lbs. over the entire clip. In the ten years since 1871 we have
exported wool to the value of 55 millions sterling, or at the rate of
five and a half millions per annum, calculated at the average
rate of 1s. 14d. per lb.

Live Stock, Preserved Meats, &c.—In order to arrive at the
result of our pastoral industry, it behoves us to trace to what
further profit our flocks and herds have been converted. In 1871
it seems that we exported seaward and overland live stock to the value of £956,223; preserved meats, £133,266; tallow, hides, &c., £317,604; total, £1,407,093. To these figures was added the value of wool exported, £4,748,160, bringing up the value of the total pastoral industry to £6,155,253. Now, we will see what we did last year. It seems that we have no record of the live stock driven overland to Queensland. The figures are therefore confined to the numbers exported seaward or across the border to Victoria. It appears, then, that the live stock exported was valued at £777,674; preserved meats, &c., £211,564; tallow, hides, leather, &c., £677,064; total, £1,666,302. If we add to these figures the value of the wool, as previously shown, £7,149,787, we arrive at a total of £8,816,089 as the produce of our pastoral industry in 1881—that is to say, an increase of over 2½ millions upon the returns of 1871. It is more than probable that the surplus over the advances on the clip of 1881 would bring up the value of our pastoral produce to considerably over ten millions sterling.

Agriculture.—In my review of the progress of our agricultural industry during the ten years 1862 to 1871, I find that I divided the period into two equal parts, as offering a better illustration of the advancement that had been made in this important branch of industry. I struck the average acreage under crop of each quinquennial period, in order to reduce the figures to a more reasonable compass, without impairing their usefulness or accuracy. What did we find then? We found that from 1862 to 1866 the average acreage of our principal crops under cultivation was as follows, viz.: wheat, 124,666 acres; maize, 101,225 acres; other crops, 125,614 acres—making a total of 351,505 acres; whilst the acreage of the second five years (1867 to 1871) was: wheat, 160,965 acres; maize, 118,361 acres; other crops, 155,738 acres. The average acreage under wheat had thus increased by 36,299 acres, or 30 per cent.; under maize, 17,076 acres, or 17 per cent.; and under all other crops by 30,124 acres, or 24 per cent. The average yield of the wheat crop over the whole decennial period was calculated at not more than 11 bushels per acre, which, at 7s. per bushel, was calculated to have given to the cultivator, in return for his expenditure and labour, somewhat under £4 per acre.

Well, now, let us see how we stand by the statistics of 1881, after ten years, as we would hope, of well directed industry. For the first five years, 1872 to 1876, we find an average acreage under wheat, 159,086 acres; maize, 117,872 acres; other crops, 173,109 acres; and for the second five years, 1877 to 1881, wheat, 208,293; maize, 122,634; other crops, 272,349. Now, we notice here that the figures indicating the acreage under crop for the five years '72 to '76, differ very little from those given in the years '67 to '71, showing a stagnation of agricultural industry during the
earlier five years of the period under inquiry; whilst the average of the second quinquennial period shows an increase of, in round numbers, 50,000 acres under wheat, 5,000 acres under maize, and 100,000 acres under other crops. The number of occupiers of land, excluding pastoral tenants, it should be stated, increased in the ten years from 28,174 to 39,992, or about 37 per cent.; whilst the total extent of land under cultivation was 706,498 acres, or about 18 acres to each occupier. If we analyze the figures which denote the produce of the wheat culture, dividing them into quinquennial periods, we shall find the average result of close upon 14 bushels per acre for the first period, and close upon 15 bushels for the second. I really hardly know how to arrive at a satisfactory estimate of the value of the wheat crop per acre, taking the average of the ten years; but if I assume that it equalled the value per bushel set down as the average of the previous ten years, its fairness may not be questioned. Well, then, the average value per bushel for the ten years—1862 to 1871—is given at 7s. in Sydney, yielding at that rate to the growers about £3.16s. per acre; whilst the results of the last decade—1872 to 1881—show a return of over £5 per acre. This is satisfactory, as indicating either better husbandry or a more suitable soil or climate for wheat culture, brought into occupation by the extension of our railways. And we must not overlook the fact that the rainfall of the last ten years has been under the average. It may, therefore, be assumed that dryness of climate is less unfavourable to wheat-growing than it is found to be to other descriptions of grain crops.

Here again, as with her meat supply, Europe is no longer able to feed her population. If we sum up the total of grain crops in the various countries, and compare them with consumption, we find a deficit of $\frac{1}{4}$ million tons of grain, which must be imported from other countries. Statistics show us that the breadth of land under wheat is diminishing, not in England only, but in Germany and some other wheat-producing countries of Europe. America has hitherto supplied the deficiency; but the increased demand for grain ought to stimulate its production in Australia. We are told that South Australia raises a ton of wheat for each head of her population, and that Victoria and New Zealand are becoming wheat-exporting countries. When shall we follow their example? America has an enormous population of its own to feed. Whence, therefore, must Europe look for food to supply her increasing wants but to the Australian Colonies? It is manifest that the demands of the mother country must stimulate the growth of our agricultural and pastoral industries to a degree far beyond our present conceptions. Europe paid for grain last year no less than eighty-five millions sterling, and for meat 35 millions, all from beyond the seas. It should here be noticed that we imported last year into New South Wales—flour, 33,047 tons, valued at
£388,451, and wheat 260,118 bushels, valued at £58,642—£447,093; whilst in 1871 we imported—of flour, 18,161 tons, valued at £255,484, and wheat, 1,041,496 bushels, valued at £286,164—£541,648. I think it will be found that the importations of bread food have averaged half-a-million sterling annually, which represents five millions of hard cash gone out of the Colony during the ten years.

Sugar.—The expansion of our sugar industry has been very marked. On the 31st March, 1872, we had 4,393 acres under cultivation, of which nearly one-half was productive and yielded 1,241 tons of sugar. On the 31st March, 1881, we had under cultivation 10,971 acres, of which 4,465 were productive, and yielded 7,300 tons of sugar, at the rate of nearly 1½ ton per acre, and of the aggregate value of over £200,000. Whether this is destined to become a permanent industry amongst us we cannot yet tell. It must of necessity be confined to the narrow limits of our northern seaboard. As yet there is no indication of anything prejudicial to the profitable cultivation of sugar in the way of disease or insects, such as the white ant in Northern Australia; but the cane is very susceptible to injury from the severe frosts which visit the higher lands removed from the coast.

Vineyards.—We commenced the decennary with 4,152 acres under vine culture, with a production of 413,321 gallons of wine and 1,765 gallons of brandy—value, for the reasons given, not estimated. We end the decennary with 4,800 acres, producing 602,007 gallons of wine and 6,628 gallons of brandy. There is noticeable a gradual but not a rapid development of this industry, whilst the quality of the wine produced has been very greatly improved. Our vigneron have received much encouragement from the praise bestowed upon their wines at the various Exhibitions where they have competed, and if we are rightly informed, we are made to understand that the samples sent to the Bordeaux Exhibition are receiving high encomiums from the most celebrated connoisseurs of Europe.

Gold.—The gold-mining industry has languished. In 1871 the mining population produced 321,468 ounces, of the value of £1,232,011, whilst in 1881 the produce was only 190,445 ozs., of the value of £396,954. The number of persons engaged in the search for gold during the decade 1862 to 1871 varied from 15,000 to 20,000, whilst by the late Census the number of persons engaged in gold-mining did not much exceed 10,000. There have been produced during the ten years under review 2,095,651 ozs., of the aggregate value of £7,643,635, as compared with 3,520,515 ozs., of the aggregate value of £13,113,205, during the decade which preceded it. I am not sure whether the decadence of the gold-mining industry should be regarded as injurious to the permanent progress of the country. I am disposed to think that the diversion
of labour into other less uncertain and less fluctuating channels
will be attended with greater benefit, not only to the best interests
of the country but to the character and habits of the people.

Coal.—In the ten years 1862 to 1871 our coal mines produced
7,230,552 tons of coal, of the value of £3,149,776, or at the rate
of a little over 9s. per ton. In the ten years 1872 to 1881 they
produced 13,927,800 tons, of the value of £7,364,293, or at the rate
of rather over 10s. 6d. per ton, estimated, I believe, as at the pit's
mouth. The progress of this industry has been seriously retarded
by the frequency of the unfortunate disputes between masters and
men. Our export of coal has not kept pace with that of industries
of much less promise. In 1871 it amounted to 565,429 tons, of the
value of £256,690, whilst in 1881 it amounted to only 1,029,844
tons, of the value of £416,530. The home demand is with difficulty
supplied, whilst the foreign trade is driven to other countries
where the labour difficulty is less precarious; and this trade, which
should hold the place as second only to that of wool, makes but a
very poor figure in the general exports of the country.

I should not be doing justice to our mining industry were I to
omit any mention of our tin, copper, and kerosene shale. Tin did
not find a place in my review of the Colony's progress ten years
ago, and the product of copper was set down at £47,275, and of
kerosene shale at £34,050, making up the modest total of £81,325.
For the following information I am indebted to the courtesy of
the Department of Mines, and I give it to you as it is given to
me:—"Previous to the year 1851 coal was the only mineral
raised, and even up to the year 1871 the only minerals which had
been worked were coal, shale, gold, copper, and antimony;
but during the ten years ending December 31, 1881, tin, silver,
iron, lead, asbestos, and bismuth have been added to our mineral
products. Notwithstanding the decrease in the average value of the
annual production of gold, from £1,259,864 in 1871 to £1,107,560
in 1881, there has been an increase in the annual production of
all the minerals taken together of from £1,475,372, in 1871, to
£1,755,635 in 1881. The development of tin-mining, which
commenced in the year 1872, has mainly contributed to this result;
but there has also been a considerable increase in the value of the
output of coal and copper.

The important progress that the mining industry of New South
Wales has made is apparent when we compare the value of the
mineral production of the past ten years with that of the production
of each of the four preceding decades: Value of minerals raised
during the ten years ending 1841, £81,275; 1851, £634,937;
1861, £14,276,637; 1871, £16,638,574; 1881, £23,441,890.
The value of the coal raised prior to 1832 is £4,194. Such
returns cannot fail to show the increasing and national importance
of the mining interests of New South Wales."
3. Trade and Commerce.

It was shown in my review of the progress of New South Wales during the ten years 1862 to 1871, that the total value of our imports seaward reached £84,832,363—not to embarrass you with the precise figures, nearly eighty-five million sterling, or at the average annual rate of eight and a half millions; whilst the exports for the same period were valued at £74,148,876, or at the average annual rate of nearly seven and a half millions. The rate per head of the population was—for imports, £19 17s.; and for exports, £17 7s.; whilst during the past ten years (1872 to 1881) the imports amounted to £133,070,409, or at the average annual rate of £13,300,000; and the exports amounted to £129,609,204, or at an average annual rate very nearly approaching the imports, namely, £12,960,000. The imports were at the rate of rather over £21 per head of population, and the exports at rather over £20. But there is a noticeable feature in these returns, as indicating the growth of our trade during the latter half of the decennial period, viz., that whereas the imports from 1872 to 1876 reached £58,136,694, and the exports £58,856,046—together, £116,992,740,—the imports from 1877 to 1881 reached £74,933,715, and the exports £70,753,158—together £145,686,873. These figures evidence a commercial expansion of £28,894,133, or not far short of 25 per cent., in the last five years; whilst comparing the decade ending 1871 with the decade ending 1881, we find that our trade expanded from £158,981,239 to £262,679,613, being an increase of over one hundred and three millions sterling, or 65 per cent., on the last ten years. The question as to what extent this trade is carried on with borrowed capital is not one coming within the compass of this inquiry. The prestige which these Colonies have acquired as a field for the employment of money has doubtless very largely influenced its introduction and profitable investment, and the refinement of our banking system enables us to do a business that would be quite impossible if we had to depend upon our own resources, and were deprived of the powerful aid which the extraordinary banking development of the age affords to commercial and well directed enterprise of every description.

Shipping.—In order to carry on the trade just referred to, it would be interesting to notice the expansion of the shipping employed for that purpose. In 1871 there were entered inwards 1,891 vessels, equal to 706,019 tons; and outwards, 2,123 vessels, equal to 794,480 tons; together, 4,014 vessels, of the aggregate tonnage of 1,500,479 tons. In 1881 there were entered inwards 2,254 vessels, equal to 1,456,239 tons; and outwards, 2,103 vessels, equal to 1,330,261 tons; together, 4,357 vessels, of the aggregate tonnage of 2,786,500 tons. A comparison of the figures comprised in these two periods
shows that whilst in the number of vessels employed in the trade there is no extraordinary expansion, yet in the tonnage of those vessels there is an increase of 1,286,021 tons, equal to 85 per cent. Fifteen or twenty years ago the larger sailing-vessels which frequented this port, of from 1,000 to 1,500 tons burthen, made not much more than one voyage in the year, whilst at the present time the trade is carried on by a fleet of powerful steamers averaging 3,000 tons, and making three trips in the year. The statistics of the mother country show us that the number and tonnage of vessels built last year in Great Britain exceeded anything before known, reaching in round numbers a million tons. Indeed, the carrying trade of her shipping seems to be rapidly monopolizing the commerce of the world, which in some degree at least may explain how it is that simultaneously with agricultural decline the wealth of the country seems to increase. The Australian Colonies must largely participate in the advantages which this extension of her commerce brings to the mother country; and New South Wales in particular, with her great maritime advantages, her unlimited supply of coal, her unrivalled harbour, and her free-trade sympathies, should of all others take the lead in the race of commercial progress which the facts I have stated present for our competition.

4. ACCUMULATION.

At the close of the year 1871 there was, in coin and bullion, in the Royal Mint, in the Colonial Treasury, and in the several Banks of the Colony, £2,522,387; on deposit in the Banks, £7,043,885; and in the Savings Banks, £945,914— together, £10,512,186; that is to say, over ten millions and a half sterling, or about £16 per head of the population. The discount, mortgages, and liens on wool and crops amounted in round numbers to eight and three-quarter millions. Let us see how we stood at the close of 1881.

We had coin and bullion in the Mint, Treasury, and several Banks, £3,538,313; deposits in the Banks, £20,318,016; deposits in Savings Banks, £2,698,703— making a total of £26,555,032, or at the rate of over £35 per head of the total population (£35 5s.), considerably more than double what it was ten years ago. These figures bear ample testimony to the great advancement in wealth which characterises the history of the last decade. There is no better test of the prosperity of a nation than the amount of deposits in the Savings Banks; and judged by this test, although far from being a thrifty people, we have evidence in the figures before us of a vast accession of wealth amongst the industrial classes. We see that whilst the average deposits ten years ago did not exceed £1 17s. 6d. per head, the average on the 31st of December last was within a fraction of £3 12s. per head. The savings represented by the two millions and a-half in the Savings Banks
are not perhaps one-fourth of what they ought to be if our people were taught to exercise a little more self-restraint, and at the sacrifice of a little present enjoyment to make provision for the probable exigencies of the future. It is no exaggeration to say that there is no country in the world where the hours of labour are so short, the remuneration so liberal, the necessaries of life, on the whole, so moderate in price, and the means and opportunities of enjoyment so largely availed of; but we are a thriftless community, as is amply evidenced by the large amounts of eleemosynary aid contributed by the State and by voluntary contributions in support of charitable institutions, exceeding, as it does, £200,000 a year, or at the rate of 5s. 6d. per head for every man, woman, and child in the Colony.

The discounts at the several Banks at the close of 1871, and the mortgages on land and live stock, and the liens on wool and crops, amounted to nine and a-half millions sterling; whilst at the close of the year 1881 they amounted to:—discounts, £20,935,595; mortgages on land, £5,268,449; ditto on live stock, £4,623,914; liens on wool, £904,011; ditto on crops, £42,255; total, £31,774,224. The discharges during the course of the year amounted to £4,800,156,—leaving the sum of £26,574,068 as the net liability on the trade and industries of the Colony at the close of the last year. The net liability at the close of the year 1881 was £6,906,066; at the close of 1871 it was £8,733,847, and at the close of 1881, £26,974,068.

No greater evidence could be adduced in support of the conclusions to which this inquiry has brought us as to the marvellous development of the trade and resources of the Colony. I don't think that we have any occasion to be alarmed at the magnitude of our credit system. If managed with discretion there is nothing to fear. But money won't manage itself, and we have seen that we have more than three times the money to look after that we had ten years ago. It behoves us, then, to study and examine the system on which this large credit is worked, and assure ourselves of its soundness and rectitude. Our large monetary institutions are, perhaps, watched over by men of business habits as keen and able as are to be found in any part of the world, and they very readily recognize where capital can be safely advanced to persons capable of understanding the opportunities constantly presenting themselves in a new country like this, and making a good use of it.

At the conclusion of my review of the progress of the Colony from 1862 to 1871 I find these words:—"We appear now to be on the threshold of another epoch of excitement and prosperity, and whoever may live to see the decade out may have a marvellous story to tell of the country's progress, far outstripping that which I have been able to show you to-night." By the merciful providence of God, I see around me several of those members of the
Royal Society who listened to that paper, and they will be able to judge in how far the picture brought forward to-night transcends that presented in 1872. In 1871 the population of New South Wales was 519,182 souls, her revenue was £2,727,404, and her trade amounted to £20,854,540. In 1881 we have seen that her population had increased to 751,468 souls, her revenue to £7,377,786, and her trade to £33,458,829. The trade inwards and outwards, per head of the population, was—in 1871, at the rate of £40 3s. 4d.; and in 1881, at the rate of £44 10s. 6d.; whilst the revenue increased from £5 5s. per head in 1871 to £9 16s. 4d., or nearly double, in 1881. Figures like these betoken a development which few countries can equal; but whether or no we can boast of a corresponding advancement in all those qualities which go to form a high national character it is beyond the province of this paper to discuss. The question admits of very serious doubt, and will be viewed differently, as it may happen to be regarded in its social, moral, or religious aspect. I would only express a hope that, with the increase of our wealth, we may not be unmindful of those measures which are necessary to promote the true happiness of the people, and to develop in the rising generation a love for all that is good and pure and lovable in our human nature, as well as conducive to their happiness hereafter.

**DISCUSSION.**

Mr. G. A. Lloyd hoped this paper would appear in print in extenso, so that it would give the members some opportunity of weighing it well over and discussing it at a future meeting. It disclosed some very remarkable statistics, which were well worth consideration; and one very extraordinary feature, as it appeared to him, and of which he was not aware until it was stated to-night, was the comparative condition of our population. The President has shown that the increase in the population of New South Wales in 1881 was hardly more in proportion than it was in 1871; and it was surprising that people had not come to New South Wales in a larger proportion during the past ten years. It would be well, therefore, to think over this subject, and see whether some means could not be adopted to induce people to come out and settle in larger numbers than hitherto. It was gratifying to find from statistics quoted that there had been such an enormous increase in our sheep, and it was evidently more profitable to grow sheep than cattle, and that would account for the increase in the quantity of sheep and the decrease in the quantity of cattle; but it was to be deplored that any such decrease in cattle should be found at this particular moment, when they had arrived so successfully at a solution of the question which had been studied so long, the first consideration of which was entertained by
the late Mr. Mort, who spent a large amount of money in endeavouring to develop these shipments of meat to England. Now the means had been discovered for sending it they had not the article to transmit, and it was evident from figures quoted by the President that an enormous market was to be found in England for any quantity of meat sent there. It was true that there had been a falling off in the production of gold, but a similar declension was noticeable in California, another auriferous country. But then other branches of mining equally remunerative and important had been followed up by the people of San Francisco, and many persons had become immensely rich by following up silver-mining. There were large deposits of silver in this country, but unfortunately we were deficient in the necessary skill for developing this particular branch of mining business, and it was surprising that there were not before now men coming here from San Francisco accustomed to the working of this business. The remarkable increase in the tonnage of shipping was a gratifying circumstance, and it was a puzzle to business men how it could be possible for this country to employ the enormous amount of tonnage thrown into it during the last two or three years. He could well remember the time when a vessel came here once in six weeks, and when people went away in crowds to the Flagstaff to see it come up the harbour. But now, in lieu of the small vessels of former days, we had enormous floating palaces coming in, showing a development in trade at a rapidity unequalled in any other country. It would be pleasing to find in the future that these enormous vessels left a handsome profit to the shareholders of the respective Companies in return for their enterprise. All present must have felt highly indebted to the President for his very excellent paper, the discussion upon which might well be extended over to the next meeting of the Society.

Mr. Wilkinson, Government Geologist, quoted facts which dissipated all notions as to any falling off in the mining industries of the Colony, although the production of gold may have decreased; Mr. Chas. Moore, Director of the Botanic Gardens, briefly referred to the question of water conservation; whilst Mr. Alex. Dean commented upon the want of population, attributing the deficiency to a want of proper advertising at home.

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