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# Possibilities of Rural Settlement in New South Wales.

STATISTICAL NOTES FOR A LECTURE, 14 JUNE, 1906.

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IN 1861, the rural population consisted of 189,116 out of 348,950, equal to 54·2 per cent. Forty years afterwards it numbered 422,447 out of 1,346,720, equal to 31·4 per cent. During that period the area of land actually alienated rose from 7,146,579 acres to 49,623,081 acres; in other words, the amount of alienated land in 1861 was 37·8 acres for each head of the rural population, while to-day it amounts to 117·5 acres.

In 1861, the population of Sydney and suburbs was 27·4 per cent. of the total. During the successive decades, it gradually rose—30·1, 34·3, 35·8, and now stands at 35·5 per cent. The urban population, including Newcastle and 221 towns with a population of over 500, stood at 18·4 per cent. in 1861, and steadily rose through 19·4, 27, 31, 32·8 per cent. during the next four decades, standing at 33 per cent. to-day. On the other hand, the rural population, outside of these cities and towns, which stood at 54·2 per cent. forty years ago, has greatly decreased—53·2, 42·9, 34·7, 31·4 per cent. during the next four decades.

The total number of persons engaged in rural pursuits now stands at 8·7 per cent.

The figures supplied by the Statistician's Department show that in England only 4·6 per cent. of the total population are engaged in rural industries; in Scotland, 6·9 per cent.; in Ireland, 19·6 per cent.; in Italy, 29·6 per cent.; in Germany, 32 per cent.; in Switzerland, 37·9 per cent.; in Denmark, 38·7 per cent.; in France, 44·7 per cent.; in Holland, 45 per cent.; in Sweden, 46·2 per cent.; and in New South Wales, 8·7 per cent.

Of every 1,000 persons added to the population during the last census period, 267 were drawn from other towns and rural districts of this State, and 733 came from abroad, or were attributable to natural increase.

During the past ten years, the number of persons actually employed in pastoral pursuits has decreased by 7,000, and now shows the small total of 27,886 persons, or 1·9 per cent. of the total population, as against 100,244 actually engaged in agriculture and dairying, being 6·8 per cent. of the total population. The pastoral industry is by far the most important item in our national wealth, yielding last year £16,518,000; agriculture and dairying produced £10,000,000; mining, £7,000,000; forestry and fisheries, £900,000.

To show how our national estate has been alienated and is aggregated into a number of areas in comparatively few hands, the following figures may be quoted:—Holdings of 1 to 30 acres number altogether 24,640, and they absorb 190,921 acres, being an average of 7·7 acres each, and amounting to only 4 per cent. of all the land alienated; holdings of from 31 to 400 acres number 35,787, making a total of 5,347,019 acres, making an average of slightly less than 150 acres each, and the whole forming 11 per cent. of the total land alienated from the Crown; holdings of 401 to 1,000 acres number 91,011, and their aggregate area is 5,718,931 acres, giving an average to each holder of 634 acres, and comprising 12 per cent. of the total alienated; holdings of 1,001 to 10,000 acres number 5,512, aggregate 13,994,182, making an average of 2,539 acres each, and amounting to 29 per cent. of the whole; holdings of 10,001 acres and upwards number 722, their aggregate acreage is 22,830,261 acres, making an average of 31,621 acres to each of these persons or financial institutions, and amounting to 47·5 per cent. of the whole. Of these, it should be remarked, 41 are in the Western Division, embracing 1,066,956 acres, an average of over 26,000 acres each; but they are held under conditions where large holdings are absolutely necessary under present circumstances.

Total area of land surface of the State, nearly 196,000,000 acres.

Land alienated, 49,000,000 acres, of which 92 per cent. is in the occupancy of the owners, 8 per cent. leased to tenants; leased with option of purchase, 14,500,000 acres; leased under long tenures, 71,500,000 acres; area still available, in possession of the Crown, though much of it is now leased under short tenures, 61,000,000 acres, of which probably one-half is rocky and sterile. A considerable portion is in reserves, and a great part of the remainder in positions at present inaccessible and undesirable for closer settlement.

Actual area neither alienated nor held under any form of lease—23,228,000 acres, mostly of inferior quality.

Since 1882, 44,000,000 acres have been transferred, either by sale or by mortgage, and only 18,000,000 applied for as

original conditional purchases; 254,649 selections were transferred, and only 108,471 new ones taken up.

Land held under improvement leases, 6,000,000 acres.

Total area under crops, 2,672,973 acres, equal to 1·3 per cent. of the total area, and 5·5 per cent. of the area held under freehold; about 2·2 acres per head of the population.

Area of wheat cultivated, 1,750,000 acres; average yield, 9·9 bushels.

Area of land fitted for wheat cultivation now used for grazing, 20,000,000 acres; 80 per cent. of this cultivation is done by owners, less than 20 per cent. by lessees.

Area in dry Western Division, 80,000,000 acres, of which nearly 59,000,000 acres are held under special leases.

Of the total area held in blocks of 1 to 30 acres, over 26 per cent. is cultivated; of the holdings of 31 to 400 acres, 14·49 per cent. is under cultivation; of the area in blocks of 401 to 1,000 acres, 11·52 per cent. is cultivated; and of the area held in blocks of 1,001 to 10,000 acres, 5·13 per cent. is cropped; while of the enormous area of 23,000,000 acres, held by 722 persons, banks, or syndicates, only 300,159 acres, or 1·3 per cent., are under crops.

During the past twenty-five years, the holdings under 16 acres have grown more than four-fold; those of 16 to 400 acres have grown 45 per cent.; and those of 401 acres and upwards have grown 105 per cent.

Average return from agriculture last year, £2 0s. 6d. per acre; from grazing less than 4s. per acre on all land alienated from the Crown, and including the whole of the land held by pastoralists by lease, as well as by conditional purchase, less than 1s. per acre.

The tendency of total value of produce per acre has been downwards during the past twenty years, owing chiefly to the depreciation in the value of wheat, having been £6 2s. 4d. in 1880, £5 0s. 11d. in 1883, £3 19s. 3d. in 1893, only £1 16s. 10d. after the terrible drought of 1902, and £3 5s. 9d. in 1904.

The total area under cultivation has steadily grown from 710,337 acres in 1881 to 2,672,973 acres at present, and the average area of cultivation per inhabitant has increased from ·9 acres to 2·2 acres.

Output of wool has increased in value from £5,765,761 in 1878 to £9,274,387 for the last year for which statistics are available. It must be noted that there have been great fluctuations in the meanwhile,—£10,643,089 in 1889, over £11,000,000 in 1891, and over £10,000,000 in 1892 and 1899.

In value of total agricultural produce of our State, per head of population, we compare well with other countries. Little Denmark comes first, with £8 6s. per head; United

States, £7 7s.; France, £7 3s.; Canada, £6 9s.; Argentine Republic, £6; New South Wales, £5 9s.; Austria, £5 7s.; Spain, £5 5s.; Germany, £5 1s.; Belgium and Italy, £4 6s.; Holland, £4; United Kingdom, £3 2s.; Switzerland, £3.

In acreage under cultivation, per head of population, we occupy a somewhat similar relative position. United States comes highest with 10·9; Canada, 5·6; Argentine Republic, 4·4; Denmark, 2·9; France, Spain, Switzerland, and New South Wales, 2·2; Russia and Austria, 1·7; Italy, 1·6; Germany, 1·2; United Kingdom, 1·1; Holland, 1; Belgium, '6 acres per head. In Denmark, 73 per cent. of the total area is given over to production; in Italy, 70·6 per cent.; in France, 68·9 per cent.; in England and Wales, 67·6 per cent.; Spain, 59·9 per cent.; Belgium, 59 per cent.; Germany, 48·8 per cent.; mountainous Switzerland, 35·1 per cent.; Scotland, 25·2 per cent.; Canada, 23·6 per cent.; Ireland, 22·9 per cent.; Norway, 3 per cent.; and New South Wales, 1·5 per cent. for crops only, and 64·3 per cent. for grazing.

In average area of agricultural holdings, United States stands highest with 146·2 acres; New South Wales comes second with 70·9 acres (30 per cent. not exceeding 5 acres); England, 65·3 acres; Scotland, 61·5 acres (26 per cent. not exceeding 5 acres); Spain, 61 acres; Denmark, 41·5 acres (where 47 per cent. of the holdings do not exceed 5 acres); Ireland, 25·8 acres (23 per cent. not exceeding 5 acres); Germany, 19·2 acres (with 45 per cent. of the holdings not exceeding 5 acres); Belgium, 5·2 acres (where no fewer than 88 per cent. of the holdings do not exceed 5 acres).

The average area of all the freehold holdings of 1 acre and over, whether horticultural, agricultural, or pastoral—

In the Southern Tableland is 750 acres, of which 1·5 per cent. is cultivated.

In the South Western Slopes is 841 acres, of which 8·2 per cent. is cultivated.

In the Central Tableland is 407 acres, of which 6·7 per cent. is cultivated.

In the Central Western Slopes is 642 acres, of which 14·6 per cent. is cultivated.

In the Northern Tableland is 594 acres, of which 3 per cent. is cultivated.

In the North Western Slopes is 1,137 acres, of which 5·5 per cent. is cultivated.

In the North Western Plains is 2,364 acres, of which '39 per cent. is cultivated.

In the Central Western Plains is 1,865 acres, of which 4·77 per cent. is cultivated.

In the Riverina (12,000,000 acres) is 2,933 acres, of which 5·64 per cent. is cultivated.



In the North Coast District is 267 acres, of which 6·6 per cent. is cultivated.

In the Central Coast District is 54 acres, of which 2·59 per cent. is cultivated.

In the South Coast District is 223 acres, of which 3 per cent. is cultivated.

In the County of Cumberland is 46 acres, of which 8·6 per cent. is cultivated.

Number of selections applied for, 1861 to 1884 ...	191,473
Number of selections applied for, 1885 to 1904 ...	72,482

Total ... ..	263,955
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Total number of conditional purchases granted, 1861 to 1904 ... ..	184,854
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Number of rural freehold holdings of all classes in 1880 ... ..	39,992
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Number of rural freehold holdings of all classes in 1905 ... ..	75,672
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Number of purely agricultural holdings in 1905 ...	46,271
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Number of persons holding land (allotments of any size) in New South Wales in 1905 ... ..	195,740
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Number of persons liable to land tax ... ..	41,574
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Average size of all holdings in 1889 ... ..	795
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Average size of all holdings in 1905 ... ..	635
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Average size of agricultural holdings in 1905 ...	70·9
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About half the total holdings—37,156—are in the Coast District, where the average size is about 200 acres.







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