

VICTORIAN YEAR-BOOK,

1908-9,

BY

A. M. LAUGHTON,

FELLOW OF THE INSTITUTE OF ACTUARIES

AND

FELLOW OF THE FACULTY OF ACTUARIES IN SCOTLAND,

GOVERNMENT STATIST.

TWENTY-NINTH ISSUE.



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PREFACE.

THIS is the twenty-ninth issue of the Victorian Year-Book.

The general arrangement of the work is the same as in recent years, but there have been numerous alterations in the text, due to changed conditions. Fresh matter and new tables have been included in each part, while information appearing in previous issues in regard to matters that are now of little public interest has been deleted. The size of the book remains practically unaltered.

An endeavour has been made to present, in a readable and concise form, such information as will give a clear idea of the present condition of the State, and of its activities and potentialities. The first part contains a brief *résumé* of the history of Victoria from the date of its discovery, and includes an account of the system of Government and of the various changes which have taken place in the Constitution. The natural features of the State, its geology, fauna and flora, are also described. Parts II. to V. deal with the wealth and progress of the community, as indicated by the growth in population, in bank deposits, in amounts assured with life offices, &c., and details are given of the revenue and expenditure of the Government and of municipalities. In Parts VI., VII., and IX., attention is given to matters affecting the daily lives of the individuals of whom the community is composed rather than to the collective interests of the community itself. In this portion of the book will be found statistics relating to births, deaths and marriages, education, charitable institutions, crime, and other cognate subjects. Part VIII. deals with the trade of Victoria, and in Part X. a detailed account is given of the agricultural and other production of the State and of its manufactures.

The practice which has prevailed since 1904 of distributing each part as soon as completed has been continued. The information was thus disseminated at the earliest possible date.

Part I. was issued in May. The following eight parts were circulated at intervals during the succeeding four months, and the last part—Production—which contains much more tabular matter than the others, was issued in the early part of November.

The information in all the parts has been brought up to the latest possible date—in many instances to the middle of the year 1909.

Among the new features of the present volume the following may be mentioned :—

In Part I.—An article contributed by Professor Ewart, of Melbourne University, on "The Flora of Victoria."

In Part III.—A table comparing the rate of increase in population in Melbourne and suburbs with the rate for the whole State—1851 to 1908.

- In Part IV.—Particulars of amounts left by deceased persons—male and female—tabulated according to age at death.
- In Part VI.—Tables showing the decline in the birth rate in recent years due to other than normal causes, also a table showing the proportionate number of survivors at each year of age, from 1 to 5, of male and female infants born in Victoria.
- In Part VIII.—A table showing the development in Inter-State trade which has taken place since the inauguration of Federation.
- In Part X.—A special article on experimental field work, and an outline of the Government's intentions in regard to the sugar-beet growing industry.

Two maps are included in the present volume. The first, which has appeared in previous Year-Books, is an ordinary geographical map, the other has been introduced this year as a convenient method of showing the live stock, the production of wheat and wool, and the average rainfall in each district of the State during the last five years.

I have to thank the heads of Government Departments and the various experts who have supplied information and in other ways assisted in the preparation of this work. Many of the tables which appear in the present volume were initiated by my predecessor—Mr. E. T. Drake—during his term of office.

In October, 1908, an Act was passed amalgamating the positions of Government Statist and Actuary for Friendly Societies, and I was shortly thereafter appointed to the new office. I commenced duty towards the close of the year 1908, and the present volume is, therefore, my first Year-Book. I take this opportunity of thanking the members of my staff for their hearty co-operation, and for the valuable assistance received from them.

The figures and other matter contained in each part of the book have been carefully examined and checked. If, however, any error should be detected, I shall be pleased to receive information as to its nature and position.

A. M. LAUGHTON,
Government Statist.

Office of the Government Statist,
Melbourne, 16th November, 1909.