

## VICTORIA.

THE first authentic identification of what is now the State of Victoria dates from the 19th April, 1770, when Captain Cook, in the barque "Endeavour," sighted the eastern coast of Australia at a spot which he named Point Hicks—probably the Cape Everard of to-day. Twenty-seven years afterwards a store ship was wrecked on one of the islands beyond Cape Howe, and some of the crew, reaching the mainland, walked along the coast a distance of 240 miles to Sydney. Surgeon George Bass, who had already made a voyage along the coast in an open boat, having heard from the shipwrecked sailors an account of their adventures, induced the Governor to provide him with a whale-boat, with a crew of six and provisions for six weeks, in order to carry on explorations. Having sailed along the coast as far as Wilson's Promontory without adventure, Bass was driven by a storm to seek shelter in Western Port, where he remained nearly a fortnight, making careful explorations. His provisions being almost exhausted, he returned to Sydney without making any further discoveries on the southern coast, though he had established the fact that the Continent was separated from Van Diemen's Land by a strait, which the Governor named after its discoverer. In the year 1800, Lieutenant Grant, in H.M.S. "Lady Nelson," sighted the south-western coast at Cape Northumberland, and left it at Cape Schank. He was, therefore, the first European to sail through Bass Strait from the westward. In the following year he sailed from Sydney and explored the southern coast as far as Western Port, and cleared land and planted a garden on Churchill Island. In the month of December, 1802, Lieutenant John Murray, who had succeeded Grant in the command of the "Lady Nelson," reaped the first harvest from Victorian soil, and then sailed on to the mouth of a large inlet, into which he sent his first mate, Lieutenant Bowen, in a launch. Some days later, the brig herself entered the Heads, and, after three weeks of exploration along the shores of the harbour, the territory was taken possession of in the name of the King, with the usual ceremonies, at Point Paterson.

On the 26th April, 1802, about three months after Lieutenant Murray's departure, Flinders, who was voyaging from England to Sydney, in the "Investigator," entered Port Phillip, but did not make any extended survey of the inlet. Acting on the favourable recommendation of Flinders, Governor King urged the Home authorities to make a settlement on the shores of Port Phillip, and, in the meantime, despatched a surveyor and an officer to make a tour of the Bay, and

report upon its suitability for occupation. Their report, however, was wholly condemnatory of the country as a place of settlement; but before this adverse verdict could reach England, Lieutenant-Governor Collins had been sent out, bringing with him, in the "Calcutta" and the "Ocean," the nucleus of a small colony to form the station which Governor King had so earnestly recommended. When Collins arrived in Port Phillip Bay in 1803, he effected a landing at what is now known as Sorrento; but being impressed with all its defects and none of its advantages for purposes of settlement, he stayed only about four months. Then he weighed anchor and conveyed his little colony to the newly-formed station at Risdon, in Van Diemen's Land. During his stay, however, the first white child born on Victorian soil saw the light, the first death occurred, and the first marriage was solemnised. Then for some twenty years the interior of the colony remained untrodden by the foot of a white man.

On the 16th December, 1824, Hume and Hovell, who had led an expedition overland from Lake George, in New South Wales, encamped on the site of the present city of Geelong. Two years later, in order to forestall French designs on the southern territory, a party was sent by sea from Sydney to form a station at Western Port; but this shared the fate of Collins' abortive settlement and was abandoned in consequence of the unfavourable reports of the leaders. The first serious attempt at settlement on Victorian soil was that of the brothers Henty, who established themselves at Portland Bay in 1834, with flocks, farm-servants, and agricultural implements, and were there found by Major Mitchell, in the course of his famous expedition through *Australia Felix*, as the explorer named the territory now known as Western Victoria.

The genuine colonisation of the Port Phillip district was effected in 1835 by two parties operating from Van Diemen's Land, the one being led by John Batman, a native of Parramatta, in New South Wales, and the other by John Pascoe Fawcner, a native of Launceston. Batman treated with some native chiefs for the transfer of 600,000 acres of land, and secured that area for trifling payments of flour, blankets, tomahawks, handkerchiefs, trinkets, etc.; but the claims of his company were disallowed by the Government at Sydney, and by the Home authorities; although the Batman Association was subsequently granted, by the Governor of New South Wales, the sum of £7,000 as compensation, in recognition of its assistance in the colonisation of the new territory. Batman was materially assisted in his transactions with the aborigines by a wild white man named William Buckley living among them. He had escaped from the expedition of Collins in 1803, during that leader's stay at Sorrento. At the time when Batman found him, Buckley was about 50 years of age. He had been a soldier, and was convicted for his share in a mutiny at Gibraltar. Batman arrived at the site of Melbourne towards the end of May, and Fawcner's party at the end of August, 1835; and they were speedily followed by other settlers from Van Diemen's Land. Stockmen came overland from

Sydney and the squattages near Lake George, and, before long, the downs and the valleys around Geelong and Melbourne were covered with the flocks and the herds of the new settlers.

In the month of September, 1836, the Port Phillip district was proclaimed open to settlement, and on the 29th of that month Captain Lonsdale arrived to assume later the position of Chief Magistrate. In the month of March of the succeeding year, the settlement was visited by Sir Richard Bourke, the Governor of New South Wales, and received from him its name of Melbourne; while the designations—Flinders, Collins, Bourke and Lonsdale—bestowed upon some of the principal streets, commemorate the early years of Australia's colonial history.

The first years of settlement were marked by steady progress. In 1839, the Secretary of State for the Colonies appointed Mr. Charles Joseph La Trobe Superintendent of the District of Port Phillip, an office carrying with it the authority and functions of a Lieutenant-Governor. Captain Lonsdale was appointed his secretary, and a Court of Justice was established, Mr. Justice Willis being the first resident Judge. In the beginning of the following year, Angus McMillan discovered, and partially explored, the large and fertile province of Gippsland, named in honour of Sir George Gipps, the Governor of New South Wales. On his return journey, McMillan met Count Strzelecki setting forth on a similar expedition. The latter gentleman explored the Murray to its sources in the Australian Alps, discovered and named Mount Kosciusko, travelled thence in a south-westerly direction to Mount Tambo and the Omeo District, crossed the Great Dividing Range, and, heading for Western Port, crossed and named eight large rivers, and succeeded in opening up a magnificent country covering an area of 5,600 miles, with 2,000 square miles of coast ranges and 250 miles of seaboard. In the wake of the explorations of McMillan and Strzelecki settlement rapidly followed; in fact, almost as soon as the travellers returned with accounts of their discoveries, adventurous spirits pushed forward to establish squattages in the wilds of Gippsland.

In 1842, Melbourne was incorporated, Henry Condell being its first mayor, and savings-banks were established in the new city. By an Act of the Imperial Parliament, passed in the same year, the inhabitants of the Port Phillip District were empowered to send six representatives to the Legislative Council of New South Wales. The first representative of Melbourne was also its first mayor, while of the five members elected to represent the voters outside the capital of the district, two—Mr. C. H. Ebdon and Dr. Alexander Thomson—were settlers in Port Phillip; and three—the Rev. Dr. Lang, Dr. (afterwards Sir) Charles Nicholson, and Mr. Thomas Walker—belonged to Sydney. Some time previously, an agitation had been started among the people of the Colony for separation from New South Wales, and expression was given to this feeling by Dr. Lang, who moved a resolution affirming its necessity in the Legislative Council of New South Wales on the 20th August, 1844. Dr. Lang's

resolution was negatived by more than three to one. A petition from the residents of the Port Phillip District, praying for separation, was, in the same year, sent to England; and on the 11th February, 1846, a favourable answer was received in Melbourne, and the occasion was marked by a public banquet to Dr. Lang. Events now moved rapidly. On the 5th August, 1850, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania were granted representative institutions by Imperial Statute; and when, on the 11th November news arrived in Melbourne of the granting of separation from New South Wales, the rejoicing thereat continued for five days. On the 1st July, 1851, Victoria was proclaimed a separate colony. On the 16th of the month Mr. La Trobe was appointed Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Charles Augustus Fitzroy, of New South Wales, being named about the same time as Governor-General of Australia; and on the 11th November the first Victorian Legislature—of which two-thirds were elected members—met at Melbourne. In 1850, the year preceding separation, the year also prior to that in which gold was discovered, and only forty-eight years since its discovery by Lieutenant Murray, Port Phillip had a revenue of £230,000, its exports amounted to £760,000, and its population was over 76,000.

The beginning of the year 1851 brought ruin and desolation to many a home, and in the gruesome designation of "Black Thursday" there has been preserved the bitter memory of the 6th of February, when the hot blasts from the north swept with fury over the earth, carrying with them flame and death. We are told by an eye-witness that the conflagration was terrible in its completeness; men, women, and children, sheep and cattle, birds and snakes, fled commingled before the fire in one common panic. For hundreds of miles the country was wrapped in flames; the most fertile districts were swept clean, flocks and herds were abandoned, and the entire population rushed in terrified hordes for their lives. The ashes from the forests on fire at Macedon, 46 miles distant, littered the streets of Melbourne.

Four months afterwards it was announced in the *Port Phillip Gazette* that gold had been discovered in the Henty Ranges. On the 9th June, 1851, the Gold Discovery Committee was formed in Melbourne; on the following day Mr. William Campbell, a settler on the Loddon, found some specks of the precious metal in quartz upon the station of Mr. Donald Cameron, at Clunes. Then the excitement spread and grew. On the 5th July a discovery of gold was reported at Anderson's Creek; on the 8th August gold was found at Buninyong; on the 8th September, at Ballarat; and on the 10th December at Bendigo. The simultaneousness and magnitude of these discoveries were perfectly startling. The simplest appliances and the labour of only a few hours appeared quite sufficient, to the overwrought imagination of the early gold-hunters, to secure a fabulous fortune, transcending the visions of romance. All classes and all distinctions were levelled, the thirst for gold seizing upon the entire community. The shops were empty, the streets deserted, the doors of the counting-houses

barred, the plough left rusting in the furrow, sheep and cattle wandered untended, while the port of Melbourne was filled with unmanned vessels, dropping to pieces for lack of attention or repair. But in the valleys, and all along the creek courses of Clunes, Buninyong, and the Loddon River, and in many other auriferous places around, thousands of men swarmed, and the roads from the port to the fields were crowded with the eager gold-seekers. Trade soon, however, began to revive, and brisk business was done by the gold-buyers and lodging-housekeepers in the city; by the carriers, who found freightage at £80 per ton from Melbourne to Bendigo to pay as well as gold-digging on the fields; by saloon proprietors and the shanty and dancing-hall keepers, who became the veritable "first robbers" of fortunate diggers. The public service was, however, reduced to abject inefficiency; the police decamped, like their superiors, in search of fortune; and even domestic servants, male and female, joined in the general stampede. The Governor was reduced to a condition of absolute powerlessness, and ruled in Melbourne with hardly any to obey his behests—like a monarch without a realm. Society was, in truth, utterly disorganised, and it was not long before the position became even more embarrassing. The news reached China, America, Europe, besides the neighbouring colonies, and at the port of debarkation up sprang "Canvas Town," formed by the myriad tents of the new arrivals. From South Australia and Van Diemen's Land, without reckoning the other colonies, something like 11,000 people poured into Melbourne, bound for the fields, in the latter half of the year 1851. Moreover, the supply of gold appeared inexhaustible. Before the end of the month of December in the year of its discovery (1851), upwards of 10 tons of the metal had been obtained from the Victorian fields; and it is interesting to note here that nearly one-third of the world's annual production of gold is raised in the Australasian Colonies. Of these Victoria, down to 1897, retained the first position; while the colony's total yield since the first discovery up to the end of the year 1901 was 65,136,000 oz., valued at about 260½ millions sterling.

The arrivals from Europe in the early days included, not only what has been picturesquely described by an Australian writer as the "brain and brawn of the Old World," but also many that could have been easily spared, viz, fugitives from justice, adventurers from California and the South Pacific, escaped convicts and disguised bushrangers, sharpers and professional gamblers from every city on the "Continent" or in the "States," and hordes of Asiatics from Canton and the Straits Settlements, there being not less than 25,000 Chinese whom the gold fever allured to the various fields. Week after week, and month after month, vessels sailed into Hobson's Bay, landing passengers and discharging cargoes in the most primitive fashion, for their crews deserted as soon as the ships dropped anchor or came to their moorings. The nobly-born and the gently-nurtured, professional men and navvies, artisans, farm-labourers, deserting soldiers and runaway sailors, "forty-

miners" from the fields of California, political refugees from France and Germany and Russia—representatives, in short, of every civilised and almost every uncivilised people beneath the sun—poured, in never-ending stream, into Port Phillip, *en route* for the gold-fields. Upwards of 15,000 immigrants arrived by sea during the latter half of 1851, 94,000 during the year following, and in 1853-4-5, nearly a quarter of a million. The gold yield from the Victorian fields reached its maximum only two years after its discovery, when the return of production during twelve months represented a value of £12,600,000. The value of the gold raised from 1852 to 1860 inclusive was upwards of £95,000,000; while the population of the colony in the latter year was little over half a million. The palmy days of gold-hunting represented a period of about a decade, and most of the great prizes were won in the early days of the history of the industry. The first large nugget (weighing 1,620 oz.) was found in Canadian Gully, Ballarat, in February, 1853. Another, found on Bakery Hill, in the same district, in June, 1853, weighed 2,217 oz. Men mining at Golden Point, Ballarat, each made from £300 to £400 sterling per day. The Governor, who visited this part of the field in 1851, says that he saw 8 lb. weight of gold washed from two dishes of dirt. He heard also of a party which had raised, at an early hour of the day, gold weighing 16 lb.; and the same party had succeeded in obtaining 31 lb. in weight before nightfall. But though the prizes were great, the failures were many; and numbers of the disappointed and disillusioned were glad to return to their former callings, or turn their hands to the employments that the conditions of the diggers' life called into being. Wages rose phenomenally, and carpenters and blacksmiths found constant work, and fierce competition among employers for their labour, at £1 and £1 5s. a day. Cartage from the seaport was excessive, amounting in the case of some fields to as much as £100 sterling per ton; and it is said that a publican, who controlled no less than 120 drinking shanties, disbursed as much as £1,500 a week in the conveyance of goods from Melbourne, for seven consecutive months, in the year 1853.

A noteworthy incident of the period was the robbery of the ship "*Nelson*," lying in Hobson's Bay, by a gang of desperadoes (probably escaped convicts from across the straits), who boarded the vessel and carried off gold-dust, valued at some £24,000 or £25,000 sterling. The criminal element in the community found exercise for their talents also in "sticking-up" and robbing the gold escorts on their way to the capital, sometimes killing the armed officials who formed the guard, though such bushranging exploits were much more common in the early gold-fever days of the neighbouring Colony of New South Wales.

Governor La Trobe was succeeded by Sir Charles Hotham, R.N., who arrived in Melbourne in the month of June, 1854. This official has been described as one who attempted to govern a free colony as he would the quarter-deck, and who, though possessed of many fine qualities, was totally lacking in the great essential of tact. He came

to Victoria in a time of administrative trouble and embarrassment. The separation of the Port Phillip district from the Colony of New South Wales had been attended by the creation of a Legislative Council, composed of ten nominees and twenty elected members. Among the latter there were, however, no representatives of the great bulk of the people who had been attracted to the gold-fields. One of the first acts of the Council was the imposition of a license-fee of £1 10s. per month—which had for a time been raised to £3—exacted from every person searching for gold, the license not being transferable, and available only within a half-a-mile of the police head-quarters whence it had been issued. Moreover, whenever it was demanded from a digger by a police officer, the license had instantly to be produced; and this proved an excessively galling condition. Digger-hunting by the young cadets in the Government service was frequently indulged in with unnecessary harshness, and the spectacle of some fifty or sixty handcuffed together was no uncommon thing. Everyone engaged in searching for gold who had neglected to procure or to renew, or who had lost or mislaid his license, was a subject for legal treatment; and the action of the authorities occasioned tremendous heart-burning. This culminated in an agitation for the suppression of the license-fee, which began at Bendigo, in 1853, and quickly spread to the other gold-fields. The Government met this manifestation of popular indignation, in 1854, by the issue of an order directing the police to devote two whole days a week to the hunting down of unlicensed diggers; and then the smouldering embers of rebellion broke into flame.

A digger named Scobie had been killed in a scuffle at an hotel in Ballarat kept by a man named Bentley, and the man's comrades believed the latter to be concerned in what they considered to be murder. The Police Magistrate, before whom Bentley was brought, acquitted him, and indignation meetings were immediately held. At one of these the hotel which had figured in the trouble was burnt to the ground, its owner only escaping by flight on horseback. For this act of incendiarism three men were arrested, not one of whom, it was alleged, was concerned in the affair; and a public meeting was held, at which resolutions were carried demanding their immediate release, affirming at the same time the right of the people to the exercise of political power. However, the three prisoners were taken to Melbourne, and each was sentenced to a short term of imprisonment. Again did the diggers demand their release, and again were they refused. Their attitude, however, was ominous, and two detachments of infantry were sent up to Ballarat from Melbourne. They arrived on the 29th of November, 1854, and were attacked by the diggers, who followed them to their bivouac. This brought about a sortie by the police, who drove the assailants of the military back. Two days afterwards there followed another digger-hunt, and the soldiers were called from quarters to support the constabulary. The diggers resisted

and organised themselves for an armed defence, electing the late Hon. Peter Lalor as their leader, and entrenching themselves behind a stockade in Eureka-street—since known as the Eureka Stockade. On the 3rd December the soldiers and police, consisting of 276 men, and including cavalry, advanced on the entrenchment to attack the recalcitrant diggers. The insurgents made a gallant defence, but, after several volleys had been fired on both sides, the Stockade was carried at the point of the bayonet, and the diggers were dispersed. During the engagement, which lasted about a quarter-of-an-hour, Captain Wise, of the 40th Regiment, was mortally wounded; about thirty of the diggers were killed, and 125 were taken prisoners; while of the soldiers, four were killed, and many were wounded. All the tents within the Stockade were burnt down; the district was placed under martial law, and the prisoners were conveyed to Melbourne. On the 1st April, 1855, they were arraigned on a charge of high treason in the Supreme Court, though three of the leaders in the outbreak—Messrs. Lalor, Vern, and Black—succeeded in evading capture. Public sympathy with the insurgents ran, however, so high, that no jury could be empanelled to convict them. Their defence was voluntarily undertaken by several leading barristers, and their acquittal was secured. An amnesty was then proclaimed; and the causes which led to the outbreak were removed. A commission of inquiry subsequently recommended the introduction of constitutional government on a representative system, based on a liberal franchise. On the 23rd November, 1855, the new Constitution, which had been prepared by the existing Legislature, and had received the sanction of the Imperial Parliament, was proclaimed. It established Responsible Government, with popular representation and two Chambers, both elective; and when the first Cabinet, with Mr. Haines as Premier, took office, the district of Ballarat was represented in Parliament by Messrs. Lalor and Humffray, both of whom were concerned in the armed resistance to authority at the storming of the Eureka Stockade. The former became, in course of time, and remained for years, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

The colonists proved themselves worthy of the trust reposed in them by the Home Government; though for one man at least the anxieties of the position were not outweighed by its compensations. The mental worry and distress attending the administration of the colony, proved too much for Sir Charles Hotham, and he succumbed to a severe illness at the close of the year 1855, the administration of the Government devolving upon Major-General Macarthur until the arrival of the next Governor.

Sir Henry Barkly, who had been appointed to succeed Sir Charles Hotham, did not arrive in the Colony until the 23rd December, 1856. Some few months after he assumed office, his wife, who had become very popular, died of injuries received in a carriage accident, the peculiarly sad circumstances surrounding the unfortunate event exciting the deepest sympathy from all classes of the community.



At the end of the year 1857, the Philosophical Institution took up the question of the exploration of the interior of the Continent, and appointed a committee to inquire into and report upon the subject. In September, 1858, and as soon as it had become known in Victoria that John McDouall Stuart had succeeded in penetrating as far as the centre of Australia, the sum of £1,000 was anonymously offered for the prosecution of exploration, on condition that a further sum of £2,000 was subscribed within a twelvemonth. The amount having been raised within the time specified, the Victorian Parliament supplemented it by a vote of £6,000, and an expedition was organised, under the leadership of Robert O'Hara Burke, with W. J. Wills as surveyor. The promotion of this exploratory scheme was merely a matter of emulation between Victoria and South Australia as to which colony should be first to cross the Continent from sea to sea. The undertaking was planned upon a large scale, and no pains were spared to secure success. The expedition, however, ended in disaster; its leaders—Robert O'Hara Burke, W. J. Wills, and an assistant named Gray—lost their lives. No one can deny the heroism of the men whose lives were sacrificed in this ill-starred undertaking; but it is admitted that the leaders were not bushmen, and had no experience in exploration. Disunion and disobedience to orders, from the highest to the lowest, brought about the worst results, and all that now remains to tell the story of the failure of the undertaking is a monument to the memory of the explorers, from the chisel of the late Charles Summers, erected on a prominent site in Melbourne. The anxiety of the Exploration Committee of the Royal Society, and of the Australian public, regarding the fate of Burke and Wills, led to the despatch of several relief expeditions by Victoria, Queensland, and South Australia. That sent out by Victoria was led by Alfred W. Howitt, a son of William and Mary Howitt, and resulted in the finding of John King, camel-driver to the Burke and Wills expedition, and sole survivor of the four who had crossed the Continent. Howitt was again sent out, shortly after his return with King to Melbourne, to disinter and bring back the bodies of Burke and Wills, which received a public funeral on the 28th December, 1862—one of the most impressive spectacles ever witnessed in the capital of Victoria.

During the seven years in which Sir Henry Barkly held office, some radical changes were made by the Legislature, not only in its own constitution, but also in the laws of the Colony. Manhood suffrage and vote by ballot were instituted, and the property qualification for Members of the Assembly was abolished. Large areas of land were thrown open for selection, the maximum area for each selector being fixed at 640 acres, and State aid to religion was abolished.

In March, 1863, an Intercolonial Conference was held in Melbourne to discuss the existing tariffs and various other matters of intercolonial concern. The suggestion which led to the meeting was

made by Sir Dominic Daly, Governor of South Australia, and delegates from all the colonies, with the exception of Western Australia and Queensland, were present. The reasons urged by those colonies for not sending delegates were, that the former was precluded by its geographical position from entering into any arrangement that the colony would be likely to agree to, and that in the latter no Parliamentary authority had been given for the holding of such a conference.

The Conference discussed the tariff, and questions of a kindred character, including drawbacks and *ad valorem* duties; inland inter-colonial Customs duties and their distribution; transportation from the United Kingdom to the Australian possessions; a permanent immigration fund, to be provided by Act by each Colony, upon an equitable basis; improvement of internal rivers in Australia for purposes of navigation and irrigation; coastal lighthouses, and other maritime questions affecting the shipping interest; fortnightly ocean-postal communication; Anglo-Australian and China telegraph; legal questions, including the law of bankruptcy, of patents, of joint-stock companies, of probates and letters of administration; a Court of Appeal for the Australian Colonies; and a uniform system of weights and measures. Concerning the tariff and kindred subjects, the following resolutions were passed:—"That the basis of a uniform tariff should be determined for the Australian Colonies, and also for Tasmania; that the *ad valorem* mode of levying duties upon goods was open to many objections, and that it ought not to be continued; and that the following tariff be adopted by the Conference:—Spirits (imported), 10s. per gallon; wine, in wood, 2s. per gallon; in bottle, reputed quarts, 8s. per dozen; reputed pints, 4s. per dozen; ale, porter, and beer, in wood, 6d. per gallon; in bottle, reputed quarts, 1s. per dozen; in bottle, reputed pints, 6d. per dozen; malt, 6d. per bushel; hops, 3d. per lb.; tobacco, manufactured, 2s. per lb.; unmanufactured, 1s. per lb.; sheepwash, 3d. per lb.; cigars and snuff, 4s. per lb.; tea, 6d. per lb.; sugar, refined and candy, 7s. per cwt.; unrefined, 5s. 6d. per cwt.; molasses and treacle, 3s. 6d. per cwt.; coffee, chicory, cocoa, and chocolate, 3d. per lb.; opium, manufactured, 20s. per lb.; unmanufactured, 10s. per lb.; rice, 4s. per cwt.; dried fruit, nuts, and almonds, 10s. per cwt.; candles, 1d. per lb.; oils, whether of natural or artificial origin, and fluids used for burning or lighting purposes, 6d. per gallon; and salt, 40s. per ton." It was further resolved that the members of the Conference should undertake to urge upon their respective Parliaments the adoption of such tariff; that the tariff which had been agreed upon, after the fullest deliberation, ought not to be altered by any one colony, nor until after the proposed alteration should have been considered in a future Conference; and that drawbacks should be allowed on the following articles, viz.: wines, hops, tea, sugar, rice, coffee, chicory, cocoa, and chocolate.

On intercolonial Customs duties and their distribution, it was resolved that Customs duties ought to be paid to the revenues of those colonies by whose population the dutiable articles were consumed; and that the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia ought to co-operate with each other to secure to each colony the revenue to which it was legally entitled, either by the distribution of the Customs revenues collected by all at stated periods ratably, according to their population, or by some other mode which might be considered equitable and practical.

As to transportation, it was resolved that a committee, consisting of Messrs. Cowper, O'Shannassy, Meredith, and Blyth, should prepare an address to Her Majesty, which address was afterwards adopted. It set forth that the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the subject of transportation had caused apprehensions in the minds of the inhabitants of the Australian Colonies lest some portion of their territory might be selected as a site for a new penal settlement. The address, after reviewing the experience of the colonies, protested against the system, and implored Her Majesty to refuse her sanction to any proposal for reviving transportation to any part of her Australian possessions. It was further resolved that four copies of the address should be engrossed, for transmission to Her Majesty severally by the Governors of the colonies represented.

As to immigration, it was resolved that it was of the highest importance to the prosperity and future greatness of Australia that a healthy flow of immigration should be encouraged and promoted, chiefly from the United Kingdom; and that, in pursuance of a common interest, the Legislatures should severally make provision (as had been done by some) for permanent legal appropriation, so that they might accomplish this object. Further, that the decision arrived at with regard to any alteration in the tariff should apply with equal force to that affecting the immigration policy.

As to improvements to the rivers in the interior, it was resolved that the obligation of carrying into effect the necessary works for rendering navigable the great rivers of the interior should primarily devolve upon the respective Governments having jurisdiction over those rivers.

As to lighthouses and maritime objects, it was resolved that legislative action should be taken by the colonies represented, to prohibit vessels proceeding to sea from any port in the colonies unless under the command of masters holding certificates of competency. It was also resolved to make provision for granting certificates by competent authority, to ensure necessary qualifications; and to make uniform provision upon the subjects of salvage, buoyage, and the management of lifeboats. Further, that the system of maintaining coast lighthouses should be reconsidered, and that a joint commission should be appointed to consider and report generally upon the entire subject.

As to fortnightly postal communication with England, it was resolved that it was inexpedient, in the present state of the question, to consider the proposal for the adoption of a fortnightly postal service with the United Kingdom *via* Suez.

As to electric telegraph communication with England, it was resolved that it was not then expedient to discuss the proposals brought under consideration with reference to the projected Anglo-Australian, Indian, and China Electric Telegraph.

As to legal questions, it was resolved, *inter alia*, that it was desirable that the bankruptcy laws should be assimilated; and that a uniform system of weights and measures should prevail throughout the Australian Colonies.

Sir Henry Barkly's successor was Sir Charles H. Darling, who governed Victoria during an exceedingly troubled and contentious administration—from 1863 to 1866. The interval between these years represents a period of angry and protracted conflict between the partisans of the opposed fiscal policies of Protection and Free-trade. The cause of the former was espoused by a large majority of the people and of the Legislative Assembly, while that of the latter found vehement adherents in a large, influential, and wealthy minority of the inhabitants of the Colony and in the Legislative Council. A Bill imposing numerous Customs duties of a protective character passed the Lower House, and was rejected by the Upper. The measure was then tacked on to the Appropriation Bill, and the Council again threw it out. The Government then proceeded to collect the duties on the authority of the Lower Chamber alone; and, as funds were not available for the payment of the Public Service, the Governor gave his approval, and the Executive Council borrowed money from one of the banks, confessing judgment as soon as the loan reached £40,000. The Supreme Court of the Colony pronounced the collection of Customs duties on a mere resolution of the Legislative Assembly to be illegal; and, in another session, the Tariff Bill, severed from the Appropriation Bill, was again passed by the Lower House, and again the Council threw it out. This was followed by a dissolution, and the new Legislative Assembly contained fifty-eight Protectionists to twenty Free-traders; and a third time the measure was passed, and a third time rejected by the Council. The Ministry had no option but to resign, upon which the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Fellows, formed an Administration, but Sir Charles Darling would neither see the Chief Secretary nor grant him a dissolution. Meanwhile the salaries and wages of every person in Government service had fallen into ten weeks arrears. Then Sir James McCulloch, the late Chief Secretary, returned to office, and a third session of Parliament was held in which the Tariff Bill was passed in all its stages, and sent up to the Council with a preamble asserting the absolute and exclusive right of the Legislative Assembly to grant supplies. The Upper House objected to this, as being inconsistent

with the letter, as well as the spirit of the Constitution Act, and a conference was agreed upon ; and the obnoxious portions of the preamble having been withdrawn, the measure passed through all its stages, as did also the Supply Bill, and the deadlock was removed. The conclusion of the crisis was precipitated by the recall of the Governor, on the ground that he had not maintained that strict neutrality during the political crisis which, as a constitutional administrator, it was incumbent on him to observe. His departure was made the occasion, on the part of his political friends, of a great public demonstration. Subsequently, also, the Legislative Assembly voted £20,000 of the public money to Lady Darling, as a *solatium* for her husband's recall. The Bill for the appropriation of what is historically known as the "Lady Darling Grant" did not, however, meet with the approval of the Upper House. A futile attempt was made by the Assembly to force the measure through the Upper House by means of a "tack," and this brought about another deadlock. At this juncture, news arrived from England of the death of the late Governor ; and on the motion of Mr. Fellows, an annuity was voted to Lady Darling, all parties generously concurring, and thus averting a second crisis in the political conflict, the course of which was coeval with Sir Charles Darling's sojourn in the colony.

The Right Hon. J. H. T. Manners-Sutton (afterwards, by the death of his father, Viscount Canterbury) assumed the reins of Government on the 13th August, 1866, and held office until the 2nd March, 1873. During his term of administration there were no less than six changes of Ministry in less than seven years ; but these do not seem to have affected the general prosperity of the colony. The fiscal policy of the country had been settled ; there was a subsidence in the fury of party warfare ; the revenue was on the ascendant grade ; manufacturing enterprise experienced great expansion ; the railway system of the province was being steadily developed, and things trended on the whole towards progress. In the months of June and July, 1870, an Intercolonial Conference met in Melbourne, at which representatives from the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia were present. The most important questions considered by the Conference, as set forth in the Report, were :—A free interchange of the natural products and manufactures of the respective Colonies, a uniform tariff, a Custom's Union, and a distribution of the revenue derived therefrom upon the basis of population. The delegates from the different colonies were, however, unable to fix a basis of agreement with regard to a list of articles involving freetrade on the one hand, and discriminating duties on the other ; though they were in perfect accord upon several other questions of considerable importance. Despatches from the Imperial Government having intimated the intended withdrawal of the troops stationed in Australia, the Conference took into consideration the course to be pursued under the altered circumstances in which the colonies were about to be placed, and it

was decided to press upon the attention of Her Majesty's Government the necessity of making adequate naval provision for the protection of British and Australian commerce in Australian waters, especially in time of war. Resolutions were also agreed to on the following subjects :—

- The adoption of the necessary steps for securing the withdrawal of the large amount of worn and deteriorated silver coinage circulating in the Australian Colonies.
- The establishment of a British Protectorate over the Fiji Islands.
- The calling of the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamers at the port of Kangaroo Island, in South Australia.
- Telegraphic communication with Port Darwin, and with the Gulf of Carpentaria.
- The proposed new schemes of ocean, postal, and passenger service.
- The relief of distressed colonists and seamen in foreign ports.
- The compilation of the statistical records of the several Colonies upon a uniform method.

The Conference also expressed an opinion that the respective Governments should exert their influence with a view to the introduction of the decimal system of weights.

Perhaps the most noteworthy measure of the period was the Education Act drafted by Mr. Wilberforce Stephen, which came into force on the 1st January, 1873, and which provided free, compulsory, and secular education up to a fixed standard. During the first twelve years of its operation, there was an increase of 72 per cent. on the number of schools opened, of 74 per cent. in the number of instructors, of 63 per cent. in that of the scholars on the rolls, of 76 per cent. in their average attendance and in the estimated number of distinct children in attendance.

During Viscount Canterbury's administration the Duke of Edinburgh visited Victoria, and received an enthusiastic welcome. His public acts during his sojourn in the Colony were the laying of the first stone of the Town Hall, in Swanson-street, and of the fine hospital on St. Kilda-road that bears his name.

Viscount Canterbury was succeeded by Sir George Ferguson Bowen, who had served as Queensland's first Governor, and whose tenure of office in Victoria was marked by a renewal of the political turmoil which had characterised the administration of Governor Darling. The old antagonism between the two Chambers broke out with redoubled vehemence; and they joined vigorous issue on the subject of payment of members. On two occasions the Upper House had passed a specific measure, authorising payment of members, to be operative for three years; but at the beginning of the third session of Parliament, in 1877, a new Ministry, at the head of which was Mr. Graham Berry, backed by a powerful

majority in the Assembly, declared that the item should in future be tacked on to the Appropriation Bill. This course was adopted, and the Council set the Bill aside. The consequence was that there were no funds to pay the servants of the Government, and on the 8th of January, 1878, a date henceforth known in the history of the colony as "Black Wednesday," a notice appeared in the *Government Gazette* dismissing all heads of Departments, the Judges of Country Courts, Courts of Mines and Insolvency, Police Magistrates, Crown Prosecutors, and members of other public offices. The proceeding was universally denounced as "revolutionary," and the effect on public confidence was disastrous in the extreme. There was an immediate shrinkage in property values, commerce was suddenly paralysed, and a considerable exodus to New South Wales, both of capital and labour, set in. The Upper House thereupon passed two Bills—one a separate measure dealing with the payment of Members; the other an Appropriation Bill with the obnoxious "tack" omitted. Shortly afterwards, the Lower Chamber introduced a Bill adopting the principle of the referendum, and thus depriving the Upper House of most of its power as a co ordinate branch of the Legislature. Of course, this was thrown out by the Council; and the Assembly then voted a sum of £5,000 to enable the Premier and a colleague, Professor C. H. Pearson, to proceed to England in order to lay the case before the Secretary of State for the Colonies. This precipitated matters. On the 4th December, 1878, Sir George Ferguson Bowen received a despatch recalling him to England.

On the 27th February, 1879, the Marquis of Normanby arrived. He was regarded by the Home Authorities as a safer administrator in time of political crisis than his predecessor. Meanwhile, Messrs. Berry and Pearson had arrived in England to seek Imperial aid in Victoria's constitutional difficulties. They were kindly received by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, then at the head of the Colonial Office, and were given a great deal of excellent counsel. The Secretary of State for the Colonies signified that, in his opinion, no sufficient case for the intervention of the British Parliament had been made out. The right of self-government had been given to the Colony of Victoria, and it was incumbent on her to work out her own constitutional problems. He counselled the Legislative Assembly not to introduce elements foreign to the tenor of Bills of Supply, and he considered that the Council would not then be likely to reject them. The despatch (which was shown to Messrs. Berry and Pearson before its transmission to the Governor) concluded by stating that the Imperial Parliament would never alter the Constitution of the Colony at the instance of only one House. This wise course of action on the part of the Colonial Office mitigated a political conflict which has never since been revived to the same extent.

Almost contemporaneously with the assumption by the Marquis of Normanby of the Government of the Colony occurred the capture,

after a protracted siege in an hotel at Glenrowan, of the notorious band of armed highwaymen, known in the annals of crime as the "Kelly Gang." The career of these outlaws is one of the most marvellous in the history of modern times, and certainly transcends that of any other association of a like nature in the history of bushranging in Australia. The "Gang" originally consisted of Edward and Daniel Kelly, Isaiah (or Wild) Wright, the brothers Quinn, and the brothers Lloyd. They established themselves in the ranges lying between Greta and the King River, from which they issued forth to prey upon the settlers in the surrounding country, receiving assistance and being aided in their concealment by numerous friends and neighbours who were, like themselves, horse-thieves and cattle-lifters. A fairly large reward having been offered for their capture, four mounted troopers of the Victorian Police Force, namely, Sergeant Michael Kennedy, Thomas Lonigan, Michael Scanlan, and Thomas McIntyre, set forth in pursuit, and encamped on the Stringybark Creek, about 20 miles from the town of Mansfield. Here one of them incautiously betrayed his presence by firing at some parrots. In the evening of the 26th October, 1878, as McIntyre and Lonigan were engaged in making tea, Kennedy and Scanlon being at the time absent, four armed men, two of whom were recognised as the brothers Kelly, suddenly made their appearance, and commanded the police to throw up their hands. McIntyre having no weapons with him, complied; but Lonigan drew his revolver, and was immediately shot dead by Edward Kelly. Presently the outlaw and his associates, hearing Scanlan and Kennedy approaching, concealed themselves behind some logs, and, covering McIntyre with a rifle, gave him the option of silence or instant death. Kennedy was commanded to throw up his hands. He did not do so, and was immediately fired at. He dismounted at this, and sought cover behind a tree; but before he could unsling his rifle he was shot dead, and Scanlan shortly afterwards met a similar fate. In the meantime McIntyre had mounted his horse, and dashed down the creek, followed by several bullets, which did not, however, touch him, though his horse must have been hit, for it soon gave in and had to be abandoned. As soon as darkness set in, McIntyre took off his boots, in order to make no noise, and on the afternoon of the second day succeeded in reaching a place of refuge, from which he was conveyed to Mansfield. The bodies of the three murdered policemen were afterwards discovered and interred with honour; and a marble monument, erected to their memory by public subscription, stands at the intersection of two of the principal streets of the town of Mansfield. After the outrage just detailed, the assassins betook themselves to the recesses in the ranges, where Superintendent Nicholson, who had already distinguished himself by his gallant capture of the bushranger Power, drew a cordon round the outlaws, by which they were cut off from all supplies, and were forced a few weeks afterwards to make a break for the open. In doing so they captured the homestead of a squatting station and locked up the inmates; and then,



two hours afterwards, they made a descent upon Euroa. Before entering the town, and at a distance of 4 miles from it, they cut the telegraph wires, and stationed a guard to keep watch. Arrived at Euroa, "Ned" Kelly and an accomplice named Stephen Hart, entered the National Bank, and the leader of the "Gang," presenting a revolver at the head of the accountant, entered the manager's room, threatened to shoot him if he as much as stirred, made prisoners of the latter, his wife, his mother, his seven children, two servants, the accountant, and the clerk, and then calmly proceeded to ransack the bank, which contained about £2,000 in notes and cash. They then conveyed the plunder and the whole of the prisoners in a buggy, a spring cart, and a baker's light waggon, to the squatting station previously referred to, where no less than twenty-two persons, who had been placed under restraint, were being guarded by a man named Byrne, a fourth member of the marauding band. Finally, at about half-past 7 in the evening, the whole of the prisoners were placed in a hut, and warned not to stir from it at the peril of their lives, until 11 o'clock. The four outlaws, all of whom were well-mounted, then rode off with the money they had obtained, and disappeared again for weeks. Meanwhile the Victorian Legislature passed a special Act of Parliament, by which the bushrangers and their numerous confederates and helpers were declared outlaws. Under the provisions of this measure, twenty-one accomplices were arrested, while £8,000 were offered for the apprehension of the "Gang," and black-trackers were imported from Queensland to discover and follow their trail. Suddenly, and without warning, they appeared at Jerilderie, in New South Wales, and plundered the bank there, on the 8th of February, 1879. In the month of June, in the year following, a free selector named Skerritt was shot in his hut at Sebastopol, near Beechworth, by "Joe" Byrne. On the 28th of the same month, a detachment of police was sent from Melbourne by special train to Glenrowan, a railway station 40 miles north of Euroa, and reinforcements from Benalla, Beechworth, and Wangaratta brought the force up to thirty. Kelly's party had torn up the rails about a mile and a half beyond Glenrowan, and had taken up a defensive position in a public-house upon which the police opened fire. Suddenly, and to their great surprise, they were attacked from the rear by a man clad in a suit of armour. This was "Ned" Kelly, the outlaw leader. Shots were exchanged between him and the police, and wounded in his arms and legs, which were not armoured, he was seized and disarmed. The siege was maintained throughout the night, and Byrne was shot at about 5 in the morning. At 10, while "Dan" Kelly and "Steve" Hart were defending the back of the premises, thirty men, all of whom had been made prisoners by the bushrangers, rushed out of the front door of the public-house and threw themselves flat upon the ground. A little after 3 in the afternoon, the police set fire to the house, and the two surviving outlaws perished in the flames. An old man named Cherry, who had been dangerously wounded by one

of the "Gang," was rescued from an out-house in an insensible condition, and expired shortly afterwards. "Ned" Kelly was in due course tried, convicted, and hanged. It transpired in the evidence that during his career he had stolen upwards of 200 horses, and that an expenditure of no less than £50,000 sterling had to be incurred before he could be brought to justice.

On the 1st October, 1880, the first Melbourne International Exhibition was opened by the Marquis of Normanby. It closed in May, 1881, and during the seven months it remained open the admission of all classes numbered 1,900,496, and the receipts amounted to £50,000. There had previously been five industrial exhibitions in Melbourne. The first two (those of 1854 and 1861) had been of a purely local character: the others, held in 1866, 1872, and 1875 respectively, were intercolonial.

During the administration of the Marquis of Normanby a measure was passed which effected an important reform in the Constitution of the Legislative Council. It increased the number of Members from thirty to forty-two, lowered the property qualification required from them, shortened the tenure of their seats, and widened the electoral basis upon which that House rests; any person rated on a freehold of the annual value of £10, or a leasehold of the annual value of £25, being entitled to exercise the franchise for the Legislative Council. In July of the same year the third Berry Ministry was overthrown, and this led to the advent to power of Sir Bryan O'Loughlen.

The O'Loughlen Ministry lost their position in March, 1883, but they held office long enough to enable the embittered feelings engendered by the political warfare of previous years to subside, and an entirely different tone began to pervade political life. A renewed feeling of confidence arose in the public mind, when, on the fall of the O'Loughlen Cabinet, a coalition Ministry was formed under Mr. James Service, comprising the leading men of both sides of the Assembly. The two great Acts of the Service Administration were the abolition of the political control of the Government railways and the abolition of patronage in the Public Service. The railways were placed under the management of three independent Commissioners, and the Act doing away with patronage in the Public Service in regard to appointments and promotions, substituted what the Act itself termed "a great 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 aspired to."

On the 9th December, 1885, the Victorian Parliament adopted the Imperial Act constituting a Federal Council of Australasia, and Victorian representatives attended the first meeting of the Council, which opened in Hobart on the 25th January, 1886.

The year 1886 and the following years were somewhat uneventful. The colony was busily engaged expanding its railway system, and

pursuing what is known in Australia as a vigorous policy of public works. The Service Ministry was followed in February, 1886, by that of Mr. Duncan Gillies, which lasted 1,722 days, and was, next to that of the McCulloch Ministry (1863-68), the most long-lived of Victorian Administrations, although both the McCulloch and the Gillies Ministries have been since surpassed by the administration of Sir George Turner. The second Victorian International Exhibition was opened in Melbourne in 1888, and was highly successful. During the same year the number of members of the Legislative Council was increased to forty-eight, and of the Assembly to ninety-five. The boundaries of the electoral districts of the Assembly were altered, and the number of districts increased to eighty-four, so that, with a few exceptions, only one Member should be returned by each constituency. During 1888 Victoria touched its highest point of prosperity, and, judged by the inflow of population, was more attractive to the immigrant from Europe than any other province of Australasia. Population still flowed to the colony during the three following years, but in greatly diminished numbers.

In 1890 there met in Melbourne a conference of delegates from all the provinces to consider the question of Australasian union; it was unanimously agreed that the best interests of the colonies would be promoted by their early union, and the Legislatures of the respective colonies were invited to appoint delegates to a National Convention to report upon a scheme for a Federal Constitution. Agreeably with the resolutions of the Conference, all the provinces appointed delegates to a Convention held in Sydney. The history of this and subsequent Conferences belongs more properly to the history of Australia as a whole than to Victoria, and will be found elsewhere in these pages.

On the 5th November, 1890, Mr. Duncan Gillies ceased to be Premier, and was succeeded by Mr. James Munro, who in turn gave place, in February, 1892, to Mr. Shiels. One of the earliest acts of the new Government was to suspend the Railway Commissioners. The Commissioners were appointed under the Act passed in 1884 to administer the service on business lines, and whatever may have been the contributing causes, their administration was not successful, and the Government considered that the best way to meet the case was to relieve the Commissioners of their functions. The Commissioners' suspension lasted from the 17th March till the 7th June, when these officers resigned. An interim arrangement was made by the Government appointing temporary Commissioners, and subsequently the law was altered to allow of the railway management being vested in one Commissioner.

As in the rest of Australia, the year 1893 was marked by widespread financial disaster in Victoria. The years of inflation, fondly believed to be a permanent condition of prosperity by investors and speculators, had their natural reaction, and when the final crash came, the result

was a condition of panic. The position of Victoria was in most respects worse than that of any other state, the unnatural rise in the value of landed property, the mushroom-like growth of numerous building societies, and the excessive speculation of the land boom period being there more pronounced. The storm, however, had not burst without some premonitory signals. Between the years 1889 and 1892 there had been failures of several smaller banks and building societies, although the limited sphere of operation did not allow their suspension to be very widely felt. Early in 1893, however, one of the foremost institutions closed, and from this onward the stream of failures went on with monotonous regularity. Strenuous efforts were made by the associated banks to save the situation, and the Government also declared a "moratorium" of five days from the 1st to the 5th May, to give the banks time to collect their resources. But the heavy withdrawals, not only by colonial depositors but also by people in England and Wales, depleted the reserve funds, and the failure of the larger institutions involved the downfall of the smaller building and investment societies. Between April 5th and May 17th, no fewer than twelve banks closed their doors, and of these seven were practically Victorian institutions, two had their head-offices in New South Wales, and three in Queensland. The crisis was the worst ever experienced in Victoria, but it was met by the people of that State with unexampled fortitude. One good effect of this financial dislocation was the sweeping away of many bogus institutions, and the establishment, on a firmer basis, of the banks and societies which had weathered the storm. The rapidity with which many institutions resumed operations was a striking example of the energy and ability with which the situation was met.

In January, 1893, the Shields Ministry, after being in power for less than a year, was displaced by that of Mr. J. P. Patterson. Attention was given during 1894 to a continuation of the scheme of co-operative village settlements introduced during the previous year for the purpose of coping with the unemployed difficulty, but these settlements met with little more success than those of the parent State. Amongst the few that succeeded in overcoming initial obstacles was one founded by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. In August Mr. (now Sir George) Turner carried a vote of non-confidence against the Ministry, but the Premier secured a dissolution, and a general election took place. The result left Mr. Patterson in a minority, and Sir George Turner became leader of the new Ministry on the 27th September, 1894. Sir George Turner found the finances of the state in a condition of disorganisation, and the chief care of the Ministry was to overtake the deficiency left by its predecessors and to keep the expenditure within the income; and in this it was successful. In 1893, the year preceding the accession to office of the Turner Ministry, the expenditure exceeded the revenue by £1,030,521; in 1894 the deficiency fell to £593,432, and in 1895 to £45,787; in 1896 it amounted to £81,500; but in 1897 and 1898 the revenue exceeded the expenditure by £61,285 and £205,796

respectively. The question of finance is, however, dealt with at greater length in its proper place in succeeding pages. Although the effects of the financial crisis were still felt severely, the state exhibited vigorous progress in the domain of agriculture and kindred industries, and the exports of domestic produce in 1895, were the highest since 1891. There was also a revival in the mining industry, and the output of gold, returned at 740,000 oz., was higher than in any of the preceding ten years.

The Earl of Hopetoun left Victoria at the conclusion of his term of office as governor on the 12th July, 1895, Sir John Madden taking up the duties of administration pending the arrival of Lord Brassey, who assumed office on the 25th October. During the year an important advance was made towards the Federal Union of Australia by an agreement of the Premiers to commit the duty of framing a Federal Constitution to a convention of delegates elected by the various provinces. One of the first acts of the Victorian Legislature in 1896 was the passing of an Enabling Bill to give effect to this decision.

The year 1896 was generally one of increasing prosperity, and signs were not wanting everywhere, that the depression of 1893 was fast lifting. The manufacturing industry was making fair progress, and agriculture and dairying were also expanding. The Government, while adhering to its policy of retrenchment, was nevertheless able, by utilising portion of the Savings Banks funds, to institute a sort of "Crédit Foncier" system on a limited scale. During the year the control of the railways was removed from political interference by being placed in the hands of an independent Commissioner. Among the more important legislation carried into effect in 1896, were an Income Tax Act, a Local Government Act, and an Amendment to the Shops and Factories Act, in the direction of establishing a minimum wage rate—the last-mentioned being adopted on the recommendation of a Commission of Inquiry, with the object of putting an end to the practice of "sweating."

In the early part of 1897, considerable havoc was wrought in Gippsland by floods and storms, but other portions of the state suffered from a lack of sufficient rainfall, and there was a falling off in pastoral production. Agriculture and dairying still made good progress, but in consequence of the best land for these pursuits having been taken up, there was an exodus of settlers to the other states, and especially to Queensland. This exodus has kept up more or less from year to year. The operation of the minimum wage rate, alluded to above, was at first attended by a certain amount of friction, but in the end the scheme proved advantageous both to employers and employed. In mining, several abandoned gold-fields were taken in hand and worked at a profit, and the Legislature passed two measures with a view to the betterment of mining conditions. A conference of railway experts during the year recommended the adoption of a uniform gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches, for Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia, but nothing further was done in this direction. It may be mentioned that an

attempt is now being made to meet the difficulty occasioned by the break of gauge from 5 feet 3 inches in Victoria to 4 feet 8½ inches in New South Wales by erection of machinery which will lift freight cars from one set of wheels and rails to another without necessitating the removal of their contents.

In Parliament the chief work of the session was the discussion of the Commonwealth Draft Bill and its amendments, which were subsequently forwarded to the Federal Convention. A general election took place in October, and Sir George Turner was returned to power with a substantial majority. The close of the year was marked by the most destructive fire in Australian history, an entire block in the heart of Melbourne being almost completely burnt out. The loss to property was estimated at over a million and a half sterling, the insurances aggregating upwards of £750,000.

In January and February, 1898, Gippsland suffered from another destructive visitation, the district on this occasion being swept by bush-fires. The fires of the latter month are described as having been almost equal in their devastating effects to those of "Black Thursday," in 1851, mention of which was made in preceding pages. Towards the close of the year portions of the state again suffered from forest-fires, but between the two outbreaks serviceable rains fell and added materially to the wheat yield. In politics the chief interest centred in the question of Federation. At the beginning of the year the Federal Convention held its final sittings in Melbourne and the bill, as drafted, was submitted to the people of the various provinces. The measure was accepted by a large majority in Victoria, the voting being 100,520 in the affirmative and 22,099 in the negative, and considerable disappointment was caused by its rejection in New South Wales. In his budget speech for 1898 the Treasurer showed an excess of revenue over expenditure amounting to £205,796, the most substantial increase since 1892. During the year Lord Brassey visited England on leave, and while there delivered several lectures on various aspects of Australian and Victorian progress, which had the effect of awakening renewed interest in Australia.

Early in 1899, a Conference of Premiers met in Melbourne to discuss the amendments to the Commonwealth Bill proposed by Mr. Reid on behalf of New South Wales. A mutual agreement having been arrived at, another referendum was necessary in all the states, and Victoria again declared in favour of Federation by an overwhelming majority. In December Sir George Turner's ministry was displaced on a no-confidence motion, and was succeeded by one under the leadership of Mr. Allan McLean. The Turner Ministry had held office for the long period of 5 years 70 days, and had ably watched over the interests of Victoria during some of the most troublous times experienced since the granting of responsible government. In April, the death of the Hon. James Service deprived Victoria of one of her ablest and most popular public

men, though at the time of his decease he had long retired from active politics. During the year, Victoria made great progress in the agricultural and pastoral industries, and immense strides were also made in dairying, the export of butter amounting to nearly 1,405,000 lb., or nearly twice the quantity for the preceding year. In common with the other states, Victoria provided contingents to assist the British Army in South Africa, the first detachment of troops being sent away in 1899. The closing days of the year were marked by destructive bush-fires, the conflagrations being most extensive in the Beechworth district where immense damage was done to property and live stock. It was not until heavy rains fell that the fires ceased and the settlers were able to set about the restoration of their homesteads. The ministry of Mr. McLean, after holding office for a little over eleven months, was overthrown by a vote of censure, and Sir George Turner again became Premier on the 15th November, 1900. The session was not an extended one, but the Old-age Pensions Act became law, and the preliminary arrangements were made for the establishment of the Commonwealth, in so far as Victoria was concerned. Sir George Turner shortly afterwards accepted office as Treasurer of the first Federal Cabinet. He continued to act as Premier, however, until the 12th February, 1901, when he finally handed over his charge to Mr. (now Sir) A. J. Peacock, who had been Chief Secretary in both the Turner ministries. The despatch of volunteers to the seat of war in South Africa was continued in 1901, and a naval contingent was sent to assist the British forces in the suppression of the Boxer outbreak in China. Lord Brassey's term of office as governor expired in January, and the duties of administration were thereupon assumed by the Lieutenant Governor, Sir John Madden. It was decided that no fresh vice-regal appointment should be made until after the establishment of federation. Both at the beginning and end of the year serious losses were occasioned in the country districts by outbreaks of bush-fires.

On the 5th May, 1901, Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales landed in Melbourne, and were accorded a most enthusiastic reception. An account of the proceedings in connection with the opening of the first Federal Parliament will be found in another chapter. Destructive bush-fires again occurred during the year. Several persons lost their lives, and a vast amount of damage to property was occasioned in the country districts, the devastating effects of the outbreaks in some localities being described as equalling those of "Black Thursday." The ceremony of swearing-in the present Governor, Sir George Sydenham Clarke, took place on the 11th December, 1901.

With 1902 a movement towards state reform was commenced. It was recognised that in consequence of the increased expenditure cast on the state the necessity existed for rigid economy in administration. As a first step towards this end it was considered that the number of parliamentary representatives should be diminished. In order to assist the Premier in this regard the whole of the Ministers, with one

exception placed their resignation in his hands. Sir A. J. Peacock, however, announced that the resignations would not be accepted inasmuch as he intended to make Parliamentary Reform part of the government programme for 1902. On the 3rd June, 1902, the Peacock Ministry was displaced on a no-confidence motion, the voting being 45 to 42. Mr. Irvine, the Opposition leader, in his speech on the occasion declared that the Government had deceived the country with regard to the reconstruction policy, while the Ministers' joint letter of resignation being post-dated five months made reconstruction in the recess impossible. A virtually defunct Government was thereby in charge of departments, and all active duty was shirked. The Premier in reply professed ignorance of the date of the resignations, and stated that he had not wilfully deceived the House, but had been himself deceived by his colleagues. The new Ministry under the leadership of Mr. Irvine was sworn in on the 10th June, 1902.

The following is the succession of Ministries, with their term of office in each case, from the inception of Responsible Government to the date of the publication of the present volume :—

No. of Ministry.	Name.	From—	To—	Duration of Office.	
				months.	days.
1	Haines .....	28 Nov., 1855	11 March, 1857	15	11
2	O'Shanassy .....	11 March, 1857	29 April, 1857	1	18
3	Haines .....	29 April, 1857	10 March, 1858	10	12
4	O'Shanassy .....	10 March, 1858	27 Oct., 1859	19	17
5	Nicholson .....	27 Oct., 1859	26 Nov., 1860	12	30
6	Heales .....	26 Nov., 1860	14 Nov., 1861	11	19
7	O'Shanassy .....	14 Nov., 1861	27 June, 1863	19	13
8	McCulloch .....	27 June, 1863	6 May, 1868	58	9
9	Sladen .....	6 May, 1868	11 July, 1868	2	5
10	McCulloch .....	11 July, 1868	20 Sept., 1869	14	9
11	MacPherson .....	20 Sept., 1869	9 April, 1870	6	19
12	McCulloch .....	9 April, 1870	19 June, 1871	14	10
13	Duffy .....	19 June, 1871	10 June, 1872	11	21
14	Francis .....	10 June, 1872	31 July, 1874	25	21
15	Kerferd .....	31 July, 1874	7 August, 1875	12	7
16	Berry .....	7 August, 1875	20 Oct., 1875	2	13
17	McCulloch .....	20 Oct., 1875	21 May, 1877	19	1
18	Berry .....	21 May, 1877	5 March, 1880	33	12
19	Service .....	5 March, 1880	3 August, 1880	4	29
20	Berry .....	3 August, 1880	9 July, 1881	11	6
21	O'Loughlen .....	9 July, 1881	8 March, 1883	19	27
22	Service .....	8 March, 1883	18 Feb., 1886	35	10
23	Gillies .....	18 Feb., 1886	5 Nov., 1890	56	18
24	Munro .....	5 Nov., 1890	16 Feb., 1892	15	11
25	Shiels .....	16 Feb., 1892	23 Jan., 1893	11	7
26	Patterson .....	23 Jan., 1893	27 Sept., 1894	20	4
27	Turner .....	27 Sept., 1894	5 Dec., 1899	62	8
28	McLean .....	5 Dec., 1899	15 Nov., 1900	11	10
29	Turner .....	15 Nov., 1900	12 Feb., 1901	2	28
30	Peacock .....	12 Feb., 1901	10 June, 1902	15	7
31	Irvine .....	10 June, 1902	.....	.....	.....