

Immigration  
and emigration.

Tables Nos. 10  
and 11.

Surprising that  
loss by emigra-  
tion so small  
considering vast  
reduction public  
expenditure in  
New Zealand,  
and continuance  
of large expendi-  
ture in neigh-  
bouring colonies.

Table No. 12.

Large increase  
in number of  
agricultural  
holdings.

Table No. 13.

beginning in 1875, and in some cases in 1876. The importance of the subject cannot be overrated, and the facts that I am about to state ought to be reiterated by every lover of New Zealand until they have taken a real hold upon the public mind and become a part of the faith of the people, in place of the false ideas which are now current as to the non-progressive state of the colony. But I will first say a word about an adverse fact which has been unduly magnified, to our great disadvantage. I refer to the loss to our population two years ago by an excess of emigration over immigration: not that in any year our total population was less at the end than at the beginning; taking births and immigration on one side and deaths and emigration on the other, the former have always largely exceeded the latter. But in the year 1888 there was an excess of emigration over immigration of 9,175. I spoke of this at length in my Statement last year, and showed what, in my opinion, was its real significance, and I should not have again referred to it but for the exaggerated importance which has been attached to it, and the serious misrepresentations to which it has given rise. It has in particular been frequently represented that this loss has been going on indefinitely; but this is quite untrue. Taking the last three quinquennial periods from 1875 to 1889, in one year only—1888—did our loss by emigration from New Zealand exceed our gain by immigration. And if we take the quinquennial period in which that loss occurs—that is, the period from 1885 to 1889—our net loss by emigration amounts to 2,416, this number, curiously enough, being composed of women and children, but children mostly, in the proportion of 18 to 1; while in “bone and sinew,” or adult males—as the term is used in these returns—there was a net gain to us of 432. I have said “curiously enough;” but the anomaly is easily seen to be only apparent. If a married couple and five children leave, and another couple without children come, we say our loss of population has been in children only. It is obvious, then, as I have pointed out, that there is and will be a considerable part of the population of all these colonies which, though highly useful, does not readily root itself in the soil, and for this and other reasons is easily movable, and which therefore will, at any given time, be found in greatest numbers where for the time public money is being most freely spent. And considering the fact that during the last three financial years, 1887–90, our own expenditure on public works was £1,640,300, while during the preceding three years, 1884–87, it was £3,477,500, and that in neighbouring colonies there then was and still is a very large public expenditure going on, the surprise is, not that we should have lost those we did lose, but that we should not have lost more—a fact which, alone, I think, speaks volumes for the inherent attractiveness of this colony to those who really know it. And this remark suggests at once the real difficulty, and its solution. We want the men and women of the Old Country and elsewhere looking for a new home for themselves and their children after them to know truly what this country is: that, I firmly believe, would draw them here; and then we want to put them on the land. We may be certain there will always be a considerable outflow of population from this as from each other colony; and this will be increased under any monetary depression. In the year I have named, 1888, the departures by sea from New South Wales were in round numbers twice as many, and from Victoria nearly three times as many, as from New Zealand; while, of course, the departures by land from those two colonies would also be very numerous. It is on the other side of the account—the arrivals—that the unfavourable difference appears. We could well afford to let as many of our population go as New South Wales or Victoria if we could only attract as many as they do. In other words, we are again facing the great problem which has so often engaged the attention of the Committee and of Parliament, how, as I have said, to get those who would be glad enough to make a home here settled upon our land.

Now, let us see what statistics will show us. I have had a table prepared by the Registrar-General from the agricultural statistics, showing the agricultural holdings of one acre and over in extent for the last fifteen years, beginning with February, 1876. It will be published with this Statement. A study of it will, I am sure, reassure any persons who have doubts as to our very substantial and