

remarkably steady progress to February of the present year. In 1876 the estimated number of adult males was 115,883, and the number of agricultural holdings was 17,250 for that number. With, on the whole, a remarkably steady progress, year by year, we find the number of holdings increased in February, 1890, to 38,178, and the estimated number of male adults then amounted to 164,392, so that the proportion of agricultural holdings to every 100 male adults had increased from 14·88 in 1876 to 23·22 in 1890: in other words, out of every 100 men in 1876, when the colony was considered most prosperous, there were only 14·88 men cultivating land, whereas in 1890 there were 23½ so employed. Then, as to the nature of the holdings year by year, or, at any rate, period by period, we see a gradual diminution in the average size of the holdings, and the experience of the last year has shown us that the perpetual-lease tenure, as we now have it, is the tenure which gives most satisfaction to the public, enabling a settler to reserve the whole of any capital he may have for the purpose of establishing himself upon his farm, instead of having to pay it away in buying his land.

Let us see what our industries of all kinds have been doing for the last fifteen years. I have had tables prepared by the Registrar-General, showing the progress of the exports of these in such a way that the fluctuations in the several industries can be traced, and they are very interesting. These tables also bear out my contention of the very substantial advancement of the colony. They will repay the most careful study and consideration. From them also it will be seen that our agricultural productions show a steady advance, with only such fluctuations as can be accounted for by the variation in market price, excepting during the last two years, when the increased value of our exported agricultural produce shows an extraordinary increase from £588,022 in 1887 to £1,424,297 in 1889.

Tables Nos. 14
to 19.

Growth of agri-
cultural products
exported.

Turning to our manufactures for the last five years, we find that in 1885 the total value of our manufactures exported was £104,223, excluding flax, and including flax £120,539. By what may be called steady advances year by year, we find they have risen in 1889 to £208,698, and including flax from £120,539 to £569,880. In other words, our exported manufactures, excluding flax, had more than doubled themselves, and inclusive of flax they had increased four and three-quarters fold.

Growth of
manufactures
exported.

Let us now see what is the total result in exports of the work of our manufacturing population in the several quinquennial periods from 1875 to the present date in proportion to our number of adult males. I have had tables prepared by the Registrar-General upon this subject. These tables, too, will well repay careful study. They show that the total exports of New Zealand produce in 1875 amounted to £5,475,844, and to £669,919 excluding wool and gold. This gives £49 9s. per head of male adults on the whole export, and exclusive of wool and gold £6 1s. In 1889 the total exports were £9,042,008, amounting to £55 11s. 6d. per head of the male adults, and exclusive of wool and gold £4,280,143, or £26 6s. 1d. per head of male adults. This, it will be admitted, shows most satisfactory progress. A large part of this progress is, no doubt, fairly attributable to the public-works policy in facilitating communication and transport, and so enabling us to profitably increase our surplus products for export. I say "surplus," for what we send away is what is left after deducting a substantial and well-earned share for our own needs. It is one of the great blessings of this country that, notwithstanding the large amount which has to be remitted to England for interest on public and private debts, there is no sign, speaking generally, of our people having to stint themselves of any of the necessities of life or even of a fair proportion of its luxuries. There is not, I think, in any country in the world a more hard-working or a more successful population of our race, or one which, upon the whole, is enabled to and does take life more pleasantly.

Attached to this Statement honourable members will find a table showing, from the year 1881 inclusive, the steady growth in number of small flock-owners. It will be seen also that, notwithstanding the ravages of the rabbits, the large flock-owners—that is, those owning over 20,000 sheep—have increased in number from

Increase in
number of flock-
owners.

Table No. 20.