

pelled to draw 69·78 per cent. of their sugar requirements from foreign sources, at a total cost probably not far short of one million and a half sterling.

For such reasons (clearly adduced by statistics) it must appear quite evident that there is ample inducement for increased sugar production in Australia, not only from an individual Victorian standpoint, but also from the intercolonial point of view—or, which is equivalent, from that of Federated Australia. As far as Victoria is concerned, we cannot produce any sugar from the cane; in this we are precluded by our climatic conditions. But, as already indicated, this colony is in the highest degree suited for the growth of sugar-beet. From this aspect, therefore, in the face of the above statistics, the prospects of the sugar-beet industry are most auspicious.

In looking deeper into the question of our sugar-supplies—more especially in view of the approaching intercolonial federation—naturally the question of the competition between cane- and beet-sugar will have to be dealt with, as well as the probable expansion of the cane industry in our sister colonies. Respecting the former point, generally speaking, it cannot possibly be denied that beet sugar has been eminently successful in its competition with the cane. The *British Export Journal* of the 15th November, 1893, says, "It has for years been apparent that beet-sugar is steadily replacing the product of the cane." This verdict of a renowned journal is based upon facts, for, according to Board of Trade returns, in the United Kingdom at the present time, out of a total of something like 1,300,000 tons of sugar consumed annually, no less than about a million tons are beet-sugar, produced on the Continent of Europe, which clearly shows that the beet article has not only held its own, but that it has entirely succeeded in its attempts of gaining the favours of the consuming public, which fact must appear all the more remarkable since beet-sugar has come into prominence only comparatively recently. But so rapidly has it made its progressive strides that at the present time it undisputably rules the world's sugar-market. In this sense Mr. C. Czarnikow, whose weekly "Prices Currents" are universally considered authoritative, says in that issued in London on 24th May, 1894, "The whole course of the market will naturally be guided by that of beet-root, which is now the regulating factor."

A remarkable contrast to this statement is afforded in said gentleman's "Price Current," dated London, 11th October, 1894, wherein he says, "In cane-sugar transactions are quite of a retail character."

It is a well-known fact that universally the consumption of sugar has increased enormously during the last two generations. The people have found out for themselves that sugar is no longer a mere sweetening agent or condiment, and therefore an article of luxury, but that it really is a food-stuff of high value. The cane industry could have never kept pace with the demands of consumers, increasing with a marvellous rapidity; and it was the much-despised beet which, thus receiving a great impetus, had occasion to step in and to establish itself on such a firm footing that it is now impossible to displace it therefrom. True, the prejudices of the people, and particularly of the English race, have managed for a long time to maintain a certain hostility towards this article; and to a great extent such prejudices still exist in theory, although in reality the very fact that by far more beet- than cane-sugar is consumed should have long ago banished them into oblivion. As a matter of fact, cane- and beet-sugar are absolutely the same thing—there is not the slightest difference between the two.

Mr. William Reed, in his "History of Sugar and Sugar-yielding Plants," says, "It may be proper to state that beet-root sugar is not only identical in every respect with cane-sugar, but that much of the Dutch lump sugar is actually the produce of beet-root. The circumstances cannot be too much insisted upon that the seeming distinction between yellow-beet sugar and yellow-cane sugar depends on the extraneous matters present. These, when eliminated by refining, leave white materials in all respects identical. There is practically no difference between these two, whether of colour or of grain." Under such circumstances, the people of Victoria need have no apprehensions that when we do begin to produce our sugar from our own beet-roots they will have an article foisted upon them inferior to that they have been accustomed to consume.

The large increase in the production of beet-sugar just referred to, in comparison with that gained from the cane, may be gathered from the following statistical returns referring to the total sugar production of the world for the years 1880–81 and 1893–94 respectively according to Licht: In 1880–81 the cane-sugar produced amounted to 1,979,900 tons, and in 1880–81 the beet-sugar produced amounted to 1,774,545 tons; total, 3,754,445 tons. In that year the quantities of the two articles were very much alike, but thirteen years later the respective quantities have experienced the following changes: In 1893–94 the production of cane-sugar was 2,960,000 tons, and in 1893–94 the production of beet-sugar was 3,881,945 tons; total, 6,841,945 tons. It is seen herefrom that the increase in the world's sugar production during the last thirteen years has been equal to 82·28 per cent., but the two articles have not increased at the same ratio during the said period, for in cane-sugar this percentage has been only 49·5 per cent., while for beet-sugar it has amounted to 118·75 per cent. The reversed position of the two articles for the indicated two years will be seen still more clearly if put in the following manner: Of every 100 lb. of sugar produced in the world—In 1880–81, 47·2 lb. were made from beet, and 52·8 lb. from cane; while in 1893–94, 56·7 lb. were made from beet, and 43·3 lb. from cane. These figures unrefutably indicate the success which the beet industry has achieved in its competition with the cane.

In regard to the consumption of sugar in these colonies, it may not be generally known that per head of population it by far exceeds that of any other country in the world. In this respect the following extract from the anniversary address delivered to the Royal Society of New South Wales by the president, T. P. Anderson-Stuart, M.D., Professor of Physiology in the University of Sydney, on the 2nd May, 1894, will prove very interesting to honourable members: "An interesting circumstance worthy of mention here has been emphasized by the financial panic in Australia, and the depression following it. In conversation with the manager of a large sugar business he mentioned that the consumption of sugar had not diminished notably—certainly not