

Of more important bearings upon the development of the Australian cane industry are considerations of quite a different nature, involving a deep and unrefutable principle. Examining the location of the cane industry throughout the globe, we find that it flourishes nowhere amongst any nation marching in the first ranks of civilisation. It needs no pointing out that in a prosperous civilised country agriculture, amongst many other achievements, necessarily must occupy a foremost position, and that forced labour cannot find room in it. It has been repeatedly asserted that the cane industry cannot exist without forced black labour—and general conditions of this industry throughout the world certainly support such assertion most emphatically—hence it cannot lay a claim to a *locus standi* in a civilised country. In Queensland, as is well known, the labour question is being most unpleasantly felt; so much so that the organ of the cane industry in that colony, the *Mackay Sugar Journal*, in its issue of the 15th May, 1894, is led to say, "The one great danger ahead of the industry in Queensland is the increasing scarcity of labour." The cane is not an agricultural crop—that is to say, it is not a crop which in rational, systematic, and scientific farming in conjunction with other crops will tend to make the land more productive for each other, not even in subtropical farming, which is merely a more or less dormant science. Under such circumstances, cane-growing cannot claim a place under the agriculture of a civilised nation, hence its life in a civilised country must naturally be limited, eventually it will be incapable of existence therein. As the population and settlement of a young country, as vast as it may be in expanse, will increase, so will also the demands for varied productiveness of the land be increasing, to which irresistible force even the cane industry will eventually have to give way. This, in the natural course of events, is as yet in a very distant future, no doubt, and it is not our intention to discount such sure eventualities at the present time. Consideration has merely been given to such opinions of experts in order to facilitate conclusions which are about to be made. That, as matters stand at present, Queensland cane-growing will still for some time experience an expansion there can be no doubt, neither is it intended to at all belittle this fact. That much, however, is quite certain—that such expansion will not reach that extent which some people expect. Taking everything into account that has just been alluded to and implied, as well as the attached statistics of Queensland's cane-sugar production, it seems to be the opinion of experts that during the next generation, even under the great efforts at work, that colony will not produce more than 125,000 tons of cane-sugar, while for New South Wales this figure is set down at an outside maximum of 25,000 tons.

From these considerations it will be evident that, should we not find means to supplement the ever-increasing demands of our ever-increasing population for sugar from some other home sources, we will be compelled to always look to foreign countries for our sugar-supplies.

The statistics in the following table, relating to Queensland's home production of cane-sugar, will be found highly interesting and instructive. These figures, embracing a period of the last twenty-five years, on the whole, show a decidedly increasing tendency, particularly so in the column containing the number of acres from which cane has been crushed. On analysing the three columns conjointly, however, a very erratic disparity will appear, which indicates that from the productive acreage no reliable deductions can be made as regards the quantity of sugar yielded therefrom. Thus, for instance, in 1886–87, 36,104 acres yielded 56,859 tons of sugar, while a few years later, in 1891–92, 36,821 acres gave only 51,209 tons, &c. :—

Year.	Acreage of Cane crushed.	Tons of Sugar produced therefrom.	Yield of Sugar in Tons per Acre.	Year.	Acreage of Cane crushed.	Tons of Sugar produced therefrom.	Yield of Sugar in Tons per Acre.
1869–70 ...	1,238	1,490	1·20	1882–83 ...	16,874	15,702	0·93
1870–71 ...	2,188	2,854	1·31	1883–84 ...	25,792	36,148	1·40
1871–72 ...	3,078	3,762	1·22	1884–85 ...	29,951	32,010	1·07
1872–73 ...	5,018	6,266	1·25	1885–86 ...	40,756	59,225	1·45
1873–74 ...	5,380	7,978	1·48	1886–87 ...	36,104	56,859	1·57
1874–75 ...	6,978	12,108	1·74	1887–88 ...	34,821	57,960	1·66
1875–76 ...	7,668	6,322	0·83	1888–89 ...	30,821	34,022	1·10
1876–77 ...	7,245	8,214	1·15	1889–90 ...	31,239	44,411	1·42
1877–78 ...	8,043	12,243	1·52	1890–91 ...	39,435	69,983	1·77
1878–79 ...	10,702	13,525	1·26	1891–92 ...	36,821	51,209	1·39
1879–80 ...	11,409	18,714	1·64	1892–93 ...	40,572	61,386	1·51
1880–81 ...	12,306	15,564	1·26	1893–94 ...	45,440	77,082*	1·69
1881–82 ...	15,550	19,051	1·22				

The third column of the above tabular statement—viz., that giving the yield of sugar per acre—is especially instructive, for it shows that, except in quantities produced, the Queensland cane industry has made very little or practically no progress at all during the last twenty-five years as regards both cane-culture and sugar manufacture. Indeed, it cannot be denied that, in the face of the reputed richness of the cane, the above official figures demonstrate, technically speaking, a rather deplorable state of affairs. Thus, it appears, that the average sugar yielded per acre during the last thirteen seasons has been 1·39 tons, while for the preceding twelve years it has been 1·32 tons, therefore practically the same. The highest yield recorded has been 1·77 tons per acre—viz., during the 1890–91 season; but sixteen years previous to that—viz., in 1874–75—this figure has very

* The apparent discrepancy of this figure with that previously quoted is explained by the fact that the two refer to different periods. In the above table the respective industrial seasons are taken, while in the former case the calendar year has been referred to.