

consumed approximately twice the volume that was consumed per person twenty years ago.

This table brings into clear relief the great advance in the general standard of comfort of the people, an advance, as Dr. McIlraith said, that has been directly connected with the extraordinary rise in the price of exported farm-products. The country has produced in volume very much more from the soil than formerly, and the prices of farm-commodities have increased by about 40 per cent. This has caused an inflow of wealth into New Zealand in exchange for those products, and that wealth has filtered down from the farmers to all classes of the community.

5. Another suggestive table is that comparing the volume of consumption per head with the marriage-rate, birth-rate, average size of the family, and the bankruptcy-rate. Tests of prosperity.

TABLE 33.—TESTS OF PROSPERITY.
(Dr. McIlraith, p. 275, extended.)

Year.	Volume of Consumption per Head.	Marriage-rate.	Birth-rate.	Bankruptcy-rate.	Proportion of Births to every Marriage of the Previous Year.
1880	102	104	..	411	..
1881	123	103	..	396	..
1882	144	109	..	356	..
1883	131	106	..	412	..
1884	123	106	..	205	..
1885	122	103	..	233	..
1886	112	93	..	246	..
1887	104	93	118	230	..
1888	97	93	114	195	..
1889	98	92	111	165	..
1890	95	95	108	142	..
1891	95	94	107	130	4.64
1892	108	96	103	107	4.54
1893	108	96	101	100	4.37
1894	106	95	100	129	4.33
1895	103	92	99	96	4.24
1896	111	106	96	80	4.32
1897	121	106	95	79	3.70
1898	122	107	95	74	3.68
1899	125	113	92	70	3.54
1900	146	119	94	56	3.41
1901	160	121	96	39	3.34
1902	155	124	95	34	3.23
1903	174	127	97	31	3.26
1904	183	128	99	41	3.22
1905	171	128	100	47	3.24
1906	187	131	99	52	3.21
1907	196	138	100	53	3.15
1908	196	137	100	61	3.03
1909	171	129	100	71	3.03
1910	191	129	96	60	3.07
1911	195

With regard to the marriage-rate, the basis is the average marriage-rate per thousand of population during the nineties = 100. Everything else is reduced to the percentage of that 100. Our marriage-rate and the prices of the products of the soil in 1895 were the lowest on record in New Zealand; and in 1896 the prices of commodities were the lowest on record in Europe and America.

The increasing volume of consumption has therefore been attended by a rising marriage-rate, fewer births per marriage, a diminution of the size of the average family, and a falling bankruptcy-rate, all indicative of a rising standard of life. The index number of the volume of liquor consumed in New Zealand (McIlraith, 1890-99 = 100) is instructive as showing that though the consumption has increased it has increased only by about 7 per cent., whilst the consumption of commodities in general has almost doubled.