

Total  
public  
debt of the  
British  
Empire.

176. The total public debts of Great Britain and her possessions amount to \$5,502,552,002, of which Great Britain owes 62 per cent., India 16 per cent., the Australasian Colonies 14 per cent., and Canada 4 per cent. The debt of Great Britain was reduced by \$149,424,000 during the year. With the exception of the Australasian Colonies, the amount per head in the United Kingdom was higher than in any of her colonies, and with the exception of New Zealand and South Australia, the multiple of revenue was also the highest. At the time of Confederation five years and six months of the revenue would have been required to pay off the net debt of Canada; in 1888 it would have taken six years and six months.

Expendi-  
ture on  
railways  
in Australia  
and  
Cape  
Colony.

177. The proportions of debt to population in the Australasian Colonies and also in Cape Colony are very large, but while, as in Canada, the whole amounts have been incurred in the construction of public works, by far the largest portion has been expended on railways, which in those colonies are almost altogether the property of the State, and there is consequently a very much larger revenue available for the payment of interest derived directly from the expenditure of loans, than there is in this country, where the money has been spent on works directly productive, to the country, but only indirectly so to the State revenue. In proportion, moreover, to the wealth and general trade, more particularly of the Australasian Colonies, their populations are very scanty.

Proportion  
of  
colonial  
debts to  
assets.

178. It is doubtful whether the calculations as to the amount of debt per head of population really possess as