

been accomplished in certain aspects. In particular, a critical analysis of the Australian public debt, with reference to its reproductive capacity, both absolute and in relation to the public debts of countries in a similar stage of development, is urgently needed; and until such a survey is made it is difficult to compute the extent to which the burden of overseas debt is being felt by the community as a whole. An attempt will be made in the later chapters of this book to indicate the tendencies shown by national productivity in relation to the increasing interest burden; but the statistical analysis of the effects of loan expenditure, of the relative weight of indebtedness in the different states, of the incidence of that burden upon the factors of production, and of the effects upon distribution of income, comprises a task for the co-operative effort of experts spread over a term of years. Until that task is completed dubious estimates of 'untapped' taxable capacity, and of the rapidity with which the public debt might be extinguished, must remain largely in the realm of conjecture. But it is obviously the bed-rock of any investigation into the effect of borrowing upon productive efficiency, and upon prosperity in general.