

No. 58.

S T. H E L E N A.

REPORT ON THE BLUE BOOK
FOR 1888.

(In continuation of Colonial Possessions Report No. 18.)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
July 1889.



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1889.

The following, among other, Reports relating to Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued and may be obtained for a few pence from the sources indicated on the title page:--

No.	Colony.	Year.
9	Heligoland - - - - -	1887
10	Natal - - - - -	"
11	Straits Settlements - - - - -	"
12	Gold Coast (Sanitary Reports, 1886 and 1887)	"
13	Jamaica and Turks Islands - - - - -	1887
14	Newfoundland - - - - -	1886
15	Grenada - - - - -	1887
16	Trinidad - - - - -	"
17	Bermuda - - - - -	"
18	St. Helena - - - - -	"
19	Barbados - - - - -	"
20	Lagos (Sanitary Report for 1887)	"
21	Bahamas - - - - -	"
22	Labuan - - - - -	"
23	Malta - - - - -	"
24	Straits (Penang and Malacca)	"
25	St. Vincent - - - - -	"
26	Sierra Leone (Report on Medical Department)	"
27	Leeward Islands - - - - -	"
28	British Guiana - - - - -	"
29	Western Australia - - - - -	"
30	Falkland Islands - - - - -	"
31	Basutoland - - - - -	"
32	St. Lucia - - - - -	"
33	Hong Kong - - - - -	"
34	Fiji - - - - -	"
35	British Honduras - - - - -	"
36	Mauritius, Seychelles, and Rodrigues	"
37	Ceylon - - - - -	"
38	British New Guinea - - - - -	"
39	British Guiana - - - - -	1884 and 1885
40	Lagos (Western District) - - - - -	1888
41	Gambia - - - - -	1887
42	Sierra Leone - - - - -	"
43	Victoria - - - - -	"
44	British Bechuanaland - - - - -	"
45	New Guinea - - - - -	"
46	Newfoundland - - - - -	"
47	New Zealand - - - - -	"
48	Heligoland - - - - -	1888
49	Gibraltar - - - - -	"
50	Bermuda - - - - -	"
51	Trinidad - - - - -	"
52	Turks Islands - - - - -	"
53	Jamaica (Coolie Immigration)	"
54	Falklands - - - - -	"
55	Bahamas - - - - -	"
56	Jamaica - - - - -	"
57	Malta - - - - -	"

No. 58.

ST. HELENA.

ST. HELENA.

Administrator GREY-WILSON to LORD KNUTSFORD.

The Castle, St. Helena,
May 1, 1889.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith the St. Helena Blue Book for 1888, and my report thereon.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. GREY-WILSON,

The Right Hon. Administering the Government.
Lord Knutsford, G.C.M.G.

BLUE BOOK REPORT, 1888.

Taxes, Duties.

The taxes, duties, and fees have undergone no change since 1882,

Revenue and Expenditure.

The revenue was 9,265*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.*, exclusive of 2,275*l.* Grant-in-aid, making a total revenue of 11,540*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.*, and the expenditure was 10,448*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.* leaving a surplus of 1,092*l.* 11*s.* 10*d.* The revenue exceeded the estimate by 354*l.*, and the expenditure fell below the estimate by 818*l.* This saving was partly owing to a re-construction of the civil establishment, whereby the Officer administering the government performed the duties of Chief Justice, Colonial Secretary, Receiver-General, and engineer without salary, partly to a stringent suppression of incidental expenses and to the employment of the marine and sanitary staff upon general service and partly to the importation by the government of all stores and materials required for the public service. The expenditure, moreover, includes a sum of 166*l.* 8*s.* 5*d.* stolen from the savings bank in April and 45*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* expenses incurred in the capture and extradition from the Cape of the fugitive offender.

The revenue was 497*l.* more, and the expenditure 934*l.* less, than in 1887.

ST. HELENA.

The customs revenue was 1,251*l.* in excess of 1887, and the other items show little variation, but the grant-in-aid was 725*l.* below the previous year, due to the variation in the colonial and Imperial financial years.

On the 1st of January 1886 the land revenue and taxes were in arrears 361*l.* and at the close of this year 13*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* only was outstanding.

Public Debt.

The debt at the end of the year was 3,250*l.* in debentures at 7 per cent. 1,000*l.* having been paid off during the year a sum of 5,158*l.* is also due to the Imperial treasury, but bears no interest.

The assets of the Colony on the 31st of December were 10,117*l.* and the liabilities, including the loans, were 17,371*l.*; in other words, the financial position as compared with the previous year showed an improvement of 1,875*l.*

The pension list still stands at the very large sum of 2,053*l.*

Military Expenditure.

The garrison consisted of one company of infantry and one battery of artillery, maintained at a cost to the Imperial Government of 21,429*l.* exclusive of meal for bread, grain from Cape, tinned meats, candles and other stores, clothing and accoutrements; the cost of which cannot be locally ascertained. The company of the Royal Scots embarked for the Cape in November and were replaced by a company of the East Yorkshire Regiment from Barbados. Two additional heavy batteries commenced in 1887 were almost completed, and there are now four heavy batteries on the heights overlooking Jamestown and the harbour. The cost of these works, which has been borne entirely by the Imperial Government, is 9,500*l.*, exclusive of the guns and their freight from England.

Public Works.

The repair and restoration of buildings cost 554*l.*, forests and roads 183*l.*, the water supply, including several new dams in the "run," 242*l.* A large amount of work was executed during the year, and nearly all the far too extensive public buildings are now in a satisfactory condition. The local price of teak in the log is 10*s.* per cubic foot, and this prohibitive price rendered it only possible to undertake absolutely indispensable and pressing repairs. I have entirely dispensed with teak and have imported into St. Helena for the first time American cypress, which can be landed on the wharf cut to any size and planed for a trifle under 3*s.* a cubic foot, or less than one fifth the cost of teak similarly worked up. I believe cypress to be a white ant resisting wood, and all the reports I have of it and the very severe tests to which I have caused it to be subjected confirm this view. The Public Works

ST. HELENA.

Department now imports all stores from England through the Crown Agents, with the result of a saving of over 200 per cent. upon the prices charged locally for very many articles in constant and considerable demand, and the enormous saving resulting from these departures has enabled the Government to carry out work very far in excess of that in previous years, and has rendered it possible to renew instead of the costly practice of merely patching. It is needless to state that my action in this matter has not given satisfaction to the local traders affected thereby. The Public Works Department was up to the close of the year 1887 conducted by the Royal Engineer Department, and the creation of the Colonial Establishment has necessitated the expenditure of a very considerable sum upon tools, machinery, and appliances for the various work of the department, but these heavy calls have been much more than neutralized by the reformatations above described.

Legislation.

Nine Ordinances were passed.

No. 1. To amend the law of trespass. This measure consolidated and amended the laws in regard to trespass from the year 1838. Most of the early Ordinances were quite inapplicable to the present times and had reference to an entirely different state of the Island and depended very largely upon the existence of inspectors and shepherds, which neither the means at the disposal of the Government nor the wants of the community rendered it expedient to retain. The marking of cattle and swine was a cruel and unnecessary provision while the remedies for damage or trespass upon private grounds were inadequate and difficult of enforcement.

The principle of private grounds under necessary restrictions, the safe custody of bulls, the marking of goats and sheep, and the security of public roads are provided for in this Ordinance.

No. 2. To prevent espionage of military works. In this Ordinance "military works includes any fort, fortification, battery, field work, or any other work of naval or military defence or offence, and any naval or military premises"; and no person may sketch, photograph, paint or make any note of any military work, or be in the neighbourhood thereof without permission in writing from the Governor or officer commanding the troops, under a penalty of a fine of 100*l.* or imprisonment for six months.

No. 3. To amend the mode of publication of official documents. This Ordinance declares that the printing by the Government or any authorised printer of any duly attested document shall be a sufficient publication and promulgation thereof, and has secured a considerable saving in the expense of printing.

No. 4. Supplementary expenditure.

No. 5. "An Ordinance to provide for the discharge of duties attached by Ordinances to officers which have ceased to exist," rendered necessary by the large reduction of the establishment.

ST. HELENA.

No. 6. To levy a rate for lighting the streets of Jamestown; the surplus of the money raised in commemoration of Her Majesty's Jubilee was expended in erecting lamps throughout the town, and the ratepayers asked that a rate for lighting might be legalized.

No. 7. Provides for the service of the year 1889.

No. 8. Health never came into force but will be slightly amended and re-enacted in 1889.

No. 9. Extends the hours within which marriages may be solemnized or contracted from between 8 a.m. and noon to between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Council.

Colonel L. F. Perry, R.A., arrived in the island on the 28th September, and took command of the troops, consequently replacing Lieut. Col. C. Woodward, R.E., upon the Council.

Civil Establishment.

No changes occurred during the year. The Colonial Engineer Department, re-created at the close of 1887, worked smoothly and satisfactorily and did good work.

Pensions.

No one was pensioned during the year and the pension list declined 150*l.* owing to deaths. The pension list stood on December 31st at 2,053*l.*

Consuls.

Captain James B. Coffin was appointed Consul for the United States of America on the 2nd of July and assumed office on the 27th of August.

Mr. Saul Solomon was appointed Consul for Sweden and Norway on the 1st of November 1888. These were the only changes during the year. Fifteen countries have consular representatives upon the Island.

Population.

The population must still be assumed to be increasing, and may be estimated at 5,300 souls.

Education, Newspapers, &c.

Four Government schools were maintained, and, with the exception of the Infant school did excellent work, as disclosed by the annual Christmas examinations. The progress made was most

ST. HELENA.

marked in the town girl's school, which had fallen to a low ebb during the control of Miss Welch (now pensioned), and to a still lower ebb during the interregnum which occurred before the arrival of Miss Warren from England. The present educational standards would not compare unfavourably with English elementary schools. Besides the Government schools there were seven supported by charitable bequests and local subscriptions and three or four private schools. Excluding these last the number of children on the rolls was 817, or three below the previous year, and the average attendance was good.

Three additional newspapers were started during the year:—the "Church News," for promoting the interests of the Church of England; the "Mosquito," a comic paper; and the "Bug," started to impeach the Government.

Savings Bank.

The amount deposited in the Government Savings Bank on the 31st December was 7,550*l.*, or an increase over the previous year of 1,614*l.*, and the depositors have increased from 84 to 91. The smallness in the number of depositors is accounted for by the very numerous friendly societies, to one or more of which nearly every adult belongs. These societies deposit a portion of their funds in the Savings Bank but appear only as single depositors.

In April the Savings Bank was broken into, and the chest containing 166*l.* 8*s.* 5*d.* was carried off. The offender was subsequently extradited from the Cape and sentenced to seven years penal servitude, but only 9*l.* of the amount stolen was recovered.

Imports and Exports.

The imports amounted to 58,564*l.*, the exports to 25,119*l.*, in both of which totals the sum of 20,958*l.* representing whalebone and oil transhipped at this port is included. The imports show an increase of 11,708*l.*, the exports an increase of 11,266*l.* compared with 1887. The chief imports may be valued as follows: Oilman's stores, 3,822*l.*; drapery, 3,693*l.*; rice, 1,776*l.*; sugar, 1,335*l.*; spirits, 1,114*l.*; butter, 1,016*l.*; wine, 1,002*l.*

Shipping.

The number of calling vessels, including 166 boarded by Island boats, "when passing," was 496; and there entered 112,412 tons and cleared 14,751 tons.

Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Hunt Grubbe visited the Island in January in H.M.S. "Raleigh" and the West African Squadron was frequently represented by men-of-war who came to recruit.

ST. HELENA.

Numerous other British and foreign war vessels called at the Island from the East and from South America. The number of calling vessels continues to decrease, as the following table shows:—

Vessels calling during the last Ten Years.

1879.	1880.	1881.	1882.	1883.	1884.	1885.	*1886.	*1887.	*1888.
602	564	525	497	521	414	450	396	427	496

Criminal Statistics.

Three serious crimes were committed during the year, two stabbing cases, for which a sailor was sentenced to hard labour for 18 and six months respectively, and the Savings Bank robbery, for which an islander was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. 184 cases were reported to the police and 138 persons summarily convicted. By Ordinance No. 4 of 1887 the Chief Justice has power in any case to allow a special in lieu of a common jury, and I think this power has done much to elevate, in matters connected with the assizes, the class from which the latter are taken.

Hospital.

The health of the Island was very good. In the hospital 123 cases were treated as in-patients, of whom 11 died. The cost per head was 2s. 11½d., including attendance, but exclusive of medical advice or the upkeep of the building. The death-rate for the whole Island was 14·8 per 1,000, and this includes sailors and invalids landed for hospital treatment or visiting the Island for health purposes. When it is considered that large numbers of invalids leave England to swell the death rate of southern Europe and other temperate regions, such as this Island, the salubrity of this climate when compared with England must be admitted to be beyond the region of question or dispute.

St. Helena is so situated as to be able to perform most excellent work as an ocean hospital. The sailors of all nations are received on payment of 3s. a day, a sum considerably below the actual cost per head, and when it is remembered that the port of this Colony is absolutely free to all calling vessels not landing cargo, it will, I think, be admitted that the Island deserves the gratitude of the mercantile marine of the world.

Meteorological.

The year under review was very dry; the rainfall at Longwood on the east side, 1,780 feet above sea level was 21·43 and at

* The last three years include respectively 19, 109, and 166 vessels "passing" the Island, but trading with licensed traders, under the Passing Ships Ordinance of 1886.

ST. HELENA.

Woodlands on the west side 23·22; a severe thunderstorm passed close to and a little to the westward of the Island on the 2nd of October. This is the first storm which has approached the Island since the 22nd November 1874, when a very heavy storm lasting several hours passed over the Island.

General Remarks.

The year 1888 was generally a tolerably prosperous one, the potato crop though very inferior in quantity to the previous year, commanded considerably higher prices, and work, including that on the defences, was fairly procurable during the first three quarters of the year. The health of the community was good and there was a general, though slow, recovery from the troubles and poverty arising from the measles epidemic of the previous year.

The announcement by the Imperial Government of the abandonment of Ascension gave the Island a general impetus, which was, however, more than counterbalanced later on by the reversal of that policy and by a rumour, which reached the Island and received general credit, of the withdrawal of the garrison. So large a portion of the inhabitants receive indirect benefit from the Imperial military expenditure that the removal of the troops must be attended with much suffering if not distress unless adequate measures of a comprehensive and far-reaching nature be devised to remedy the evil.

Jamestown was lighted for the first time on 26th May, the cost of the lamps having been defrayed by the Jubilee Committee out of the funds raised by them, and at the request of the inhabitants a rate was legalized for the necessary upkeep and to light the town.

Taking the population at 5,200 souls, the taxation, including poor rates, amounted to 1l. 5s. 3d. per head, and of this amount 10s. 10d. per head represents the duty on tobacco and intoxicating liquids.

The rate of passage, third class, from here to the Cape for a five days' journey was the extraordinary large sum of 10l., which prevented any of our surplus population from emigrating, but Sir Donald Currie when visiting the Island promised to inquire into the whole question of passages to the Cape.

The economic difficulties attending the condition of the Island render the position of the Officer administering the Government very far removed from a bed of roses.

The many strong claims for a lightening of taxation can only be met by an increased contribution from the fairly well-to-do, a disagreeable expedient certain to meet with loud opposition.

(Signed) W. GREY-WILSON,
Administering the Government.