

No. 756.

ST. HELENA.

REPORT FOR 1912.

(For Report for 1911, *see* No. 714.)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
June, 1913.



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THE GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Castle,

St. Helena,

15th May, 1913.

SIR,

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Colony's Blue Book for the year 1912, together with my Report thereon.

I have, &c.,

H. E. S. CORDEAUX,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

The Right Honourable

Lewis Harcourt, M.P.,

Secretary of State for the Colonies.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1912.

I.—FINANCIAL.

(A.) REVENUE.

1. The revenue for the year under review, exclusive of a grant-in-aid of £2,000, amounted to £8,042, which, though £989 more than the estimated figure, was less by £580 than the revenue collected during the previous year. This falling off is almost entirely accounted for by a decrease of £520 in Post Office receipts, due to smaller sales of stamps to dealers outside the Colony. There was, also, a decrease of £71 under Interest, caused partly by the sale of stock necessary to meet withdrawals by Savings Bank depositors, and partly by the inability of householders to pay interest on the claims outstanding against them on account of Drainage and Water Services. Other slight decreases under Customs, Fines, and Miscellaneous Receipts amounted in all to £60.

Against these shortfalls there were increases under Licences and Rents, amounting to £45.

2. On the whole the figures of revenue do not compare unfavourably with those of the previous year, and may be taken to indicate that the slight improvement in the Colony's condition which was noticed in last year's Report has been well maintained.

(B.) EXPENDITURE.

3. The expenditure during the year amounted to £9,449, being an increase of £320 on the expenditure of the previous year. Decreases amounted to £439 under various heads, against which have to be put increases amounting to £759, the principal of which were Post Office, £168; and Miscellaneous Services, £502. The former amount includes the cost of printing the new issue of George V. postage stamps, whilst the latter comprises special expenditure in connection with an outbreak of scarlet fever, and additional interest charges on a debt of £6,988 incurred by the Colony with the Crown Agents in connection with the wreck of the s.s. "Papanui" in 1911. The amount, both principal and interest, is properly recoverable from the owners.

(C.) ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

4. On the 31st December, 1912, the Colony's assets exceeded the liabilities by £772, which is an improvement of £665 on the figures of the previous year.

5. The Colony's investments on the 31st December, 1912, amounted to £13,235 13s. 1d., with a market value on the same date of £11,748 11s. 2d. Stock to the value of £600 was realised during the year in order to meet withdrawals from the Savings Bank.

Liabilities include a sum of £12,233 8s. 9d. due to depositors in the Savings Bank, and an overdraft with the Crown Agents for the Colonies of £11,121 15s. 10d.

(D.) CURRENCY.

6. Bills on the Crown Agents to the amount of £2,100 were issued during the year, as against £3,277 in 1911.

There was no importation of specie, but the amount exported was £1,550, as compared with a net export of specie to the amount of £2,490 in 1911.

The amount of specie introduced and placed in circulation by mail steamers and other vessels is estimated at £1,500.

The amount of cash and Bank of England notes in circulation at the end of the year was approximately £5,000.

II.—TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

(A.) TRADE.

Revenue.

7. The Customs revenue for the year under report amounted to £3,757 15s. 1d., being a slight decrease of £21 as compared with the previous year, but exceeding the estimated revenue by £307 15s. 1d.

8. With the exception of an inconsiderable decrease of less than £1 under "Warehouse Rent," the only decrease was under "Import Duties" on beer, wines, spirits, and tobacco. The value of bonded goods cleared showed a net decrease of £219, and, consequently, import duties diminished by £166 7s. 8d.

9. Increases occurred under all other heads, as follows:—
"Wharfage," £42 1s. 8d., owing to considerably larger imports of coal and general merchandise.

"Tonnage Dues," £55 15s., due to the same causes as above, and also to large consignment of stores for the marine detachment.

"Water," £48 7s. Out of 1,751 tuns supplied to shipping, the two cable ships, "Sherard Osborn" and "Britannia," took 1,107 tuns as against 767 in 1911, and H.M. ships 350 tuns as compared with 221 tuns.

Expenditure.

10. The expenditure for the year amounted to £546 17s., being £38 3s. 9d. less than in the previous year. A less quantity of coal was taken by H.M. ships, the refund of wharfage amounting to £163 as against £215 in 1911.

Imports.

11. The total value of imports in 1912 amounted to £41,749, being £633 less than in 1911. This figure does not, however, include stores, &c., imported for the marine detachment, the value of which is unknown. If the value of specie is excluded the above decrease of £633 on last year's figures is converted into an increase of £4,647.

12. Comparative statement of the principal imports during the years 1911 and 1912:—

Dutiable articles.	1911.	1912.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£	£
Beer... ..	566	607	41	—
Cigars, Cigarettes and Tobacco...	641	549	—	92
Spirits	804	736	—	68
Wines	579	479	—	100
<i>Provisions—</i>				
Beef and Pork	642	886	244	—
Butter	1,456	1,767	311	—
Flour	3,370	2,781	—	589
Oilman's stores	7,213	7,105	—	108
Rice	1,630	2,272	642	—
Sugar	2,662	2,329	—	333
Tea	376	410	34	—
<i>Miscellaneous—</i>				
Cement and Lime	232	153	—	79
Chemicals, Drugs, &c.	447	607	160	—
Coal and Patent Fuel	7,150	8,000	850	—
Drapery and Dry Goods	3,448	5,652	2,204	—
Earthen and Glass Ware	186	216	30	—
Grain, Seed and Oilcake	1,875	1,803	—	72
Hardware, Metals, &c.	953	948	—	5
Leather, Boots, &c.	569	512	—	57
Machinery	142	164	22	—
Marine stores	149	238	89	—
Paraffin Oil	701	1,023	322	—
Stationery	394	695	301	—
Sundries	446	620	174	—
Specie	5,310	—	—	5,310

13. The above figures show a net decrease of £219 in the value of dutiable articles imported, such as beer, wines, spirits, and tobacco. The import of these commodities has naturally declined since the departure of the garrison, who were the principal consumers. Fewer and shorter visits by ships, especially men-of-war, during the past year, also probably lessened the demand. On the other hand, imports of "provisions" show a net increase of £200, whilst the increase in value of various imports cleared under "miscellaneous," especially "drapery and dry goods," seems to show that the purchasing power of the community has at any rate not diminished, if it has not increased to a certain extent. The increase under "paraffin oil" is due to the demands of the Government flax mill, which, for the first time since its initiation, has been working continuously throughout the year.

14. The following table shows the comparative value of imports and exports, exclusive of specie, for the six years subsequent to the withdrawal of the garrison:—

	Imports.	Exports.
	£	£
1907	34,364	1,787
1908	35,716	4,585
1909	29,303	5,192
1910	33,915	3,934
1911	37,102	2,159
1912	41,749	4,600

Exports.

15. The total value of exports during 1912 amounted to £6,150, being an apparent decrease of £3,809 as compared with the figures of the previous year, but an actual increase of £2,441 if exports of specie in both years are excluded.

16. The principal exports, as compared with 1911, were:—

	1911.	1912.
	£	£
Fibre and tow	386	3,393
Hides and skins	127	99
Metal, old	—	92
Sheep, oxen, and calves... ..	1,251	502
Specie	7,800	1,550

17. It will be seen from the above figures that the increase in the value of exports is more than accounted for by the increased value of fibre and tow exported by the Government flax mill, which, owing to good average prices obtaining on the London market, was able to keep running throughout the year, and to export the largest quantity of fibre and tow since the mill was started in 1908.

18. The deficiency in the value of live-stock exported is accounted for by the fact that owing to a steadily decreasing stock of sheep in the island, which was further depleted by drought, the local contractors for the supply of sheep to Ascension have had to obtain sheep from the Cape in order to fulfil their contract.

(B.) AGRICULTURE, STOCK, FORESTS, AND GARDENS.

19. The year under report may generally be regarded as a good one from an agricultural point of view, as compared with the previous year. A return to more normal climatic conditions resulted in better crops all round. Root and grain crops were good, though the potato crop, which is so dependent on timely rainfall, did not come up to expectations, owing to lack of moisture at the right moment. Green vegetables did well, though the supply was not equal to the demand. It is a pity that more attention is not given to this form of industry by small landowners and cottagers, who might, with a minimum of outlay, grow sufficient vegetables both for home consumption and to meet local demands. The crop of hay was both plentiful and good. Pasture was better than it has been for years, and cattle and live-stock generally have done very well, though still suffering, as regards quantity, from the losses incurred in the previous year's drought.

20. The usual free issues of young trees to landowners, free of cost, have been made, though not to the same extent as in the previous year, owing to the nurseries having been adversely affected by untimely droughts. In certain localities the Government forests are suffering from the rapid spread of the white ant, many living trees, especially the fir, being freely infected. Measures are being taken to clear away the infected trees and to substitute young eucalyptus trees, which are generally immune from the ravages of this pest.

21. The sale of fruit from the Maldivia Garden amounted to £20 14s. 11½d., whilst the sale of trees from Government lands realised £34 6s.

The Government pasture lands at "Botley's Lay" produced a revenue of £98 13s. 6d., against an expenditure of £93 17s. 4d. Under expenditure a sum of £19 2s. 6d. was spent in the erection of watering troughs and the clearing away of gorse.

(C.) INDUSTRIES.

22. *Fibre.*—The year under review did not open too well for the Government flax mill, and with the price of fibre on the London market down to £20 a ton prospects for the ensuing year were not encouraging. Indeed, for the first seven months of the year the mill was only kept running at a loss owing to a continuance of low prices and increased cost of production, due to the rather inferior quality of the present crop of flax leaves as compared with the original plants. Fortunately, however, a sharp and unexpected rise in the fibre market enabled the mill to recoup its previous losses and to continue running until the end of the year, with the following satisfactory results:—

Leaves milled	...	...	...	...	1,202 tons.
Fibre produced	...	...	...	...	114½ "
Tow	..	..	..	..	35 "
Receipts from sale of produce	...	...	...	...	£3,400
Expenditure...	...	...	...	...	£3,118

23. From these figures, which are the highest reached since the mill commenced work in 1908, it will be seen that the year's working resulted in a profit of £282, or of £462 if the value of produce unsold on the 31st December, amounting approximately to £180, is added. This result must be regarded as highly satisfactory, and clearly shows that with fair prices for fibre and tow on the London market the mill can be run at a considerable profit. During the year under review the average price of fibre was £25 17s., and of tow £16 3s. a ton, the maximum prices reached being £32 10s. and £18 10s. respectively, the highest prices realised since the mill started work.

24. With regard to expenditure, the total amount of £3,118 is made up of the following items:—

		£	£
Purchase of leaves	...	1,256	
Cartage and local shipping charges	...	223	
Salaries and wages	...	848	
Miscellaneous	...	53	
			2,380
Freight	...	399	
Oil	...	297	
Miscellaneous	...	42	
			738
Total	...	£3,118	

25. Of the above items the first four, amounting to £2,380, represent expenditure within the Colony, thus increasing the cash circulation by nearly 48 per cent. Under the item of £1,256 for "purchase of leaves," it has to be noted that during the last five months of the year, when the price of fibre was up, leaves were not purchased at the usual rate of 5 per cent. on the current price of fibre on the London market. Owing to the necessity of recouping losses incurred in milling during the first seven months of the year and of accumulating a reserve of capital against a possible relapse in the fibre market, a temporary arrangement was made whereby growers were paid a fixed price of 23s. a ton for their leaves until the mill's financial position should have sufficiently recovered. Had the 5 per cent. system of payment been adhered to throughout the year, expenditure on account of purchase of leaves would have been increased by £200, thus reducing the year's profits to £262. The latter figure should therefore be adopted for purposes of comparison with the profits of previous years.

26. The following table summarizes the transactions of the Government flax mill for the last five years since its institution in 1908:—

	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
Period of working months	12	10	6	2	12
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
Leaves milled	1,056	905	411	172	1,202
Fibre produced	119	126	46½	21	114½
Tow produced	36	39½	13	5½	35
	£	£	£	£	£
Receipts from sale of produce...	3,090	3,304	1,327	—	3,400
Expenditure	2,845	3,072	1,380	550	3,118
Average prices on the London Market.					
(a) Fibre	26	23½	24	—	25½
(b) Tow	9½	9½	11	14½	16½

27. It will be observed that the only two years during which the mill has been able to run continuously—with the exception of casual stoppages for repairs and adjustments—are 1908, the first year of the mill's working, and 1912 the year under review. In these two years, when the price of fibre averaged £26 and £25 17s., revenue exceeded expenditure by £245 and £262, respectively; thus showing a profit in each year of approximately 6 per cent. on the initial outlay of £4,070. With regard to the remaining three years, in 1909, although two months' work were lost owing to the breakdown of the engine, a profit of £232 was made on the ten months' working, whilst in 1910 and 1911 scarcity of leaves, together with low prices in the fibre market, reduced the mill's working period to six and two months, respectively, and resulted in losses amounting to £53 and £550. The conclusion to be derived from these figures is that the two main obstacles to the continuous running of the mill at a considerable profit are failure of the supply of flax leaves and

depression of the fibre market. With regard to the former, it should be recollected that for the first two years of its existence the mill was dependent for its supply of leaves on the flax plants which had been already in existence on the island for the previous 20 or 30 years. Though excellent in quality these plants were necessarily limited in quantity. The new plants which had been put down in 1907 and 1908 could not be ready for milling for 3 or 4 years at the least. Consequently whilst the old plants were exhausted early in 1910 the new crop of leaves was not fit for milling until the beginning of the year under review. This new crop, as regards quality, was somewhat inferior to the original crop. From the figures given in the preceding table it will be seen that whereas 10 tons of leaves of the older growth produced $1\frac{9}{10}$ tons of fibre and tow, the same quantity of the new crop produced only $1\frac{4}{10}$ tons. This difference in quality of course increases the cost of production. As regards quantity, the new crop has been proved to be highly satisfactory. Much useful experience has been gained in the course of the last five years as to the methods of planting and cutting most suitable to local conditions. For instance, it has been found that the old plan of planting in continuous trenches ensures quicker and more luxuriant growth than the New Zealand method of planting in separate holes six feet apart. On the other hand, the old wasteful method of wholesale reaping has been abandoned, only the outer and longer leaves of each plant now being cut, thus leaving the younger leaves, which would otherwise be wasted, to mature. As a result, though some 1,200 tons of leaves, varying from 4 to 6 feet in length were treated by the mill during the year, it is estimated that at the end of year under review there were still some 3,500 tons of leaves ready, or nearly ready, for cutting. This figure is exclusive of some 2,000 tons, owned by a private firm, which may be required to feed a private mill to be erected and which is not therefore taken into calculation.

28. Taking the average annual requirements of the mill at 1,200 tons, this means that the new crop is sufficient to last for another three years. As suckers have been regularly planted every year, and assuming the period of mature growth to be four years at the most, a fresh crop of leaves will be ready for cutting as soon as the present crop is exhausted. Thus, with a proper rotation of crops now established, thereby assuring a sufficient and continuous supply of leaves, one of the two principal obstacles in the way of continuous and profitable working has now disappeared.

29. With regard to the other adverse factor, namely, depression of the fibre market, although it cannot be altogether eliminated its effect can at any rate be minimised. Past experience has established the fact that with the present cost of production the Government flax mill cannot work at a profit when the price of fibre on the London market falls much below £23 a ton. Consequently if the profitable working of the mill is to be ensured against a fall in price below this figure the prime cost of production must be reduced, either by introducing a cheaper form of power or by paying less for leaves. As regards the latter alternative, I doubt whether the majority of growers, who have

to transport their leaves to the mill from long distances, could afford for any length of time to accept a lower rate than the present 5 per cent. on the market price of fibre. As it is, profits are very small, and without regular profits growers will have neither the means nor the inclination to extend their plantings, and development of the industry will be checked. On the other hand, the introduction of a cheaper form of power would appear to offer a more certain and generally profitable means of reducing cost of production. With the present 32 B.H.P. oil-engine the cost of oil alone works out at 30s. for every ton of fibre produced. As compared with this, it is estimated that the cost of fuel for a 40 B.H.P. suction gas-engine would be 45 per cent. less, even if anthracite coal at 60s. a ton were used. If wood or the waste vegetable by-products of the mill could be utilized the cost of production would be still further reduced. Besides this advantage, a second mill with a more economical form of power in the western part of the island would, if erected, not only be able to deal with a large quantity of leaves, which at present it barely pays to transport to the distant mill at Longwood, but would also be the means of opening up considerable tracts of land suitable for fibre cultivation. In short, the introduction of a cheaper form of power has such an important bearing on the future of the industry that the employment of a suction gas plant is under consideration, and a consignment of the waste vegetable products of the mill has been sent to England in order that its suitability as a subsidiary fuel may be tested.

30. In conclusion, it may be safely asserted that the fibre industry has now successfully passed through the experimental stage, the cost of which has been rightly borne by Government. The time has now arrived when, under ordinary conditions, the development of the industry should properly be left to private enterprise and capital. But, unfortunately, in this Colony conditions are not ordinary, and if sufficient enterprise be forthcoming the means of gratifying it are wanting, except in the case of one or two local firms. One of these, it is satisfactory to note, is likely to take advantage of the experience gained to start a private mill, but, though the erection of a second mill must be of undoubted benefit to the industry and to the Colony generally, it will not, from its situation, affect the western portion of the island, where, as already pointed out, the need and possibility of development is greatest.

31. *Lace-making.*—The following figures give the transactions of the Government lace school during the year under review:—

					<i>Receipts.</i>		
					£	s.	d.
Work sold	...	...	...	...	588	1	0
Donations	...	...	...	...	2	0	0
Colonial Government Grant	...	...	...	...	120	0	0
					<hr/>		
					£710	1	0
					<hr/>		

<i>Expenditure.</i>					
			£	s.	d.
Salaries	...	...	193	15	0
Pay of workers	...	...	381	16	3
Material	...	...	65	4	3
Incidentals	...	...	58	15	9
			£699 11 3		

32. The above figures show a small profit of £10 9s. 9d. on the year's working, or, without the Government grant, a deficit of £109 10s. 3d. Against this must be put the value of goods unsold on the 31st December, 1912, amounting to £140.

33. It will be seen from the above statement that the Government lace school is not yet a self-supporting institution. Indeed, for the greater part of the year under review it has been a hard struggle to make both ends meet, and it has only been by the exercise of the strictest economy in receiving and paying for work that the necessity of another loan from the Colonial Government has been avoided. The industry has still been suffering from the want of a sound and permanent trade connection, which alone can give it the stability it needs. Both Miss Girdwood and Mrs. Ord Marshall have been as usual indefatigable in endeavouring to secure this object, the former in South Africa and the latter in the United Kingdom; and I am glad to say that as a result of their efforts a most promising start has been made in both directions. In England a special committee of influential ladies has been formed through the instrumentality of Mrs. Ord Marshall and the "League of the Empire" with the special object of furthering the interests of the St. Helena lace industry. The members of this committee have kindly undertaken to hold a sale of St. Helena lace and embroideries once a year, or oftener if necessary, in a suitable house in London. At the same time they very generously presented the school with a costly gift of lace and embroidery to serve as patterns of articles likely to be most readily saleable. These sales, if successful, should greatly benefit the school, which will get the full price for its work, instead of having to pay a commission as in the case of trade orders. As a result of this movement it is hoped in course of time to evolve a distinctive type of St. Helena lace and embroidery work of a more advanced style, such as will command a ready sale and good price in the English market, without fear of being undersold by foreign competition, as has hitherto been the case. It will take a little time before a sufficient degree of proficiency in the new style of lace is reached, and in the meantime the school will have to depend for support on the continued output and sale of its present style of lace and embroideries. Fortunately, a promising market for these has been found in South Africa, thanks to the efforts of the manageress, Miss Girdwood, who, with her usual single-hearted devotion to the interests of the lace industry, employed a large portion of her well-earned leave in South Africa in exhibiting the work of the

school. As a result, in addition to a number of private orders, there appear to be good prospects of obtaining a profitable trade connection in South Africa, where the St. Helena lace is apparently much appreciated. If our hopes in this direction are realised, South Africa will prove a valuable market, which will serve to keep the school going until we are ready to supply the rather advanced styles of lace and embroideries required by the League of the Empire Lace Committee in London. With regard to the general work of the school Miss Girdwood writes: "A large number of the best workers have severed their connection with the lace school, some for the purpose of taking service with the families of the island, others have gone to the Cape, and others have married, so that the school shows a rather less number of workers than last year—the school children not leaving school in sufficient numbers to make up the leakage—but all are working steadily. On the whole the outlook for 1913 is a most hopeful one, and everything points to steady progress. There are 50 regular workers on the roll, of which 30 are lace-workers and 20 embroideresses. There are in addition the school children and occasional adult workers, who bring the number up to about 100, but these two groups have not much spare time on account of school and domestic duties, though what work they do is good."

34. During the year Miss Girdwood was obliged to take a well-earned holiday, her health having suffered severely from long and assiduous work in the somewhat trying climate of Jamestown, where the headquarters of the lace school are situated. During her absence the honorary secretary, Mr. Tucker, kindly undertook the general supervision of the school as well as the duties of the honorary treasurer during the absence on leave of Mr. Liddy. My thanks are due to both these gentlemen for their services as honorary secretary and honorary treasurer, which they continue to give gratuitously to the school.

35. *Whaling.*—The long expected revival of the whaling industry appears to be no nearer accomplishment, the present concessionaire having met with unforeseen difficulties in forming a company for the proposed establishment of a whaling station and factory in Rupert's Valley. Apart from the keen disappointment caused to numbers of men who for the last two years have been patiently awaiting employment in the new industry, any failure of the enterprise could only be regarded as a calamity in view of the important bearing which it must have on the future prosperity of the island. There can be little doubt as to the suitability of St. Helena as a whaling centre, and it is difficult to account for the apparent diffidence now shown in reviving what was at one time a profitable industry.

(D.) SHIPPING.

36. The number of vessels that called at the island during the year under review was 60, being four less than in the previous year. The tonnage was 157,707, as against a tonnage of 186,420 in 1911. Only two British men-of-war visited the island, namely, H.M. ships "Hermes" and "Pandora." Nineteen sailing vessels, of which only four were British, touched at the port.

This figure includes nine whalers, who put in for bunker coal and provisions and for giving their men liberty ashore. Their "catch" amounted to 2,115 barrels of oil.

37. In addition to the above figures, 13 vessels called off the port to signal and to trade with the licensed boatmen. By this means masters of passing vessels are enabled to obtain fresh vegetables and to post letters without anchoring. Some 190 letters were posted through this channel during the year under review.

38. Thirty-one vessels entered and cleared at the port of Jamestown during the year. The cargo shipped and discharged by these vessels amounted to 7,008 tons, as compared with 5,893 tons in the previous year.

III.—LEGISLATION.

39. Seven Ordinances were enacted during the year under review, two of which were in connection with public expenditure. Of the remainder, Nos. 2 and 5 regulated the sale of bread by weight, No. 4 was enacted with a view to regulating the prospective whale fishery in St. Helena, whilst No. 7 authorises the Governor in Council to make regulations governing the use of wireless telegraphy in the territorial waters of the Colony.

Three Proclamations were issued during the year.

IV.—EDUCATION.

40. The number of children attending the schools during the year was:—

	Boys.	Girls.	Totals.
Government schools	137	178	315
Church schools	196	153	349

41. Despite the interruption caused by the scarlet fever epidemic, which necessitated the closing of all schools for some three months in the year, the general standard of work has been well maintained. The quarterly examinations have revealed weak points, which have been remedied during succeeding quarters. There are practically no children who do not show sound progress in the three R's. Those promoted to higher standards during the year have done good work, whilst the few failures retained in their classes at the beginning of the year have shown much improvement.

42. The system of oral instruction, which was introduced some few years ago, continues to make good headway, and is respon-

some form of manual instruction combined with the object lesson would be a useful addition to the present curriculum, and it is hoped to make a beginning in this direction next year.

43. Mr. Tucker's classes for pupil teachers continued to be well attended by teachers both from Government and from Church schools, and satisfactory progress was made, although the classes had to be temporarily suspended during the prevalence of the scarlet fever epidemic. I attach much importance to the success of these classes, on which depends the gradual evolution of a thoroughly competent teaching staff, capable of ensuring continuity and uniformity in the present system of education. That system is an excellent one so far as it goes, but, being purely elementary, it fails in so far as it is at present without its natural complement, namely, either secondary education or technical instruction. Of the two alternatives there can be no doubt that the latter is the preferable, as being more suitable to the needs of this Colony, both immediate and prospective. I have already alluded elsewhere in this Report to the yearly increasing scarcity of skilled labour of every description and the consequent difficulty and delay experienced in the execution of public works of the most ordinary description. If means were forthcoming for providing instruction in handicrafts to the boys, whose education is at present considered complete when they leave the elementary schools at the age of 14, not only would the public service of the Colony benefit but the rising generation would be equipped with the means of making their way in the world in the event of home employment failing. In the case of the girls of the island the need of instruction in practical household economy is hardly less pressing, though the lace school is a valuable complement to the instruction in needlework which they now receive in all the elementary schools, and provides employment and interest to many after leaving school. The fact that the needlework classes are personally supervised by the manageress of the lace school ensures continuity of interest between the two.

V.—GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

(A.) HOSPITALS.

44. There were 167 admissions to the hospital during the year, of which 87 were treated in the male ward. The number of admissions shows an increase of 10 over the figure of the previous year.

There were nine deaths, a percentage of 5.3, as compared with four deaths and a percentage of 2.5 in 1911.

45. The Hospital Emergency Fund continues to be of the greatest service in assisting the poorer patients to defray hospital charges. The Fund, which is formed entirely of voluntary contributions, is thoroughly deserving of support; the benefits which it confers on the poorer classes cannot be overestimated.

46. There has been no change in the nursing staff during the year under review; Miss Hart has continued to show her usual zeal and devotion to her duties as lady superintendent—a position of exceptional difficulty and responsibility in this Colony.

47. The Colonial Surgeon was granted six months' leave of absence during the year, and his duties were admirably performed by Doctor Attlee.

(B.) SAVINGS BANK.

48. There were 135 depositors on the bank's books at the end of the year under review, as compared with 126 in the preceding year.

49. The total deposits for the year amounted to £1,880 1s., an increase of £212 13s. over 1911, though about £500 represented insurance moneys received in trust by executors and therefore liable to be withdrawn at any moment.

Withdrawals amounted to £2,548 10s. 9d., being less by £736 5s. 7d. than in the previous year.

50. The bank's revenue for the year was £449 9s., or £60 16s. 2d. less than in 1911; invested capital in the hands of the Crown Agents having been £782 less than in the preceding year.

Expenditure amounted to £365 11s. 3d., showing a profit on the year of £83 17s. 9d.

51. The amount to the credit of depositors on the 31st December, 1912, was £12,233 8s. 9d. Against this sum stock to the value (purchase price) of £13,235 13s. 1d. is invested.

VI.—JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

(A.) CRIMINAL.

52. *Supreme Court.*—No cases were committed for trial before the Supreme Court during the year under review.

Police Court.—The Police Magistrate dealt with 130 cases as compared with 135 in the previous year; of this number 3 were prosecutions under the Road Tax Ordinance, and 18 under the Education Ordinance. In addition to the above there were 117 cases of a trivial nature which were disposed of by the police without going into court.

There were six cases of flogging during the year, two of these being convictions under the Juvenile Smoking Ordinance.

(B.) PRISONS.

53. Thirty-one prisoners were committed to the gaol during the year, being 13 less than in the previous year. The daily average number in gaol decreased from 4.71 in 1911 to 2.6 during the year under review. The cost of maintaining the gaol was £118 0s. 4d.

One prisoner received 24 hours' solitary confinement for misconduct.

(C.) POLICE FORCE.

54. The force performed its duties satisfactorily during the year; one case of misconduct on the part of a member of the force was reported and dealt with during the year.

VII.—VITAL STATISTICS.

(A.) POPULATION.

55. The estimated civil population on the 31st December, 1912, amounted to 3,519. To this figure must be added the Royal Marine Detachment and crews of shipping in port, numbering 49 and 154 respectively; thus bringing the population on the last day of the year to 3,722. The civil population shows an increase of 37—the number of emigrants, 90, exceeding the number of immigrants, 71, by 19 (the excess in 1911 was 64), whilst on the other hand there were 100 births (civil) as against 44 deaths registered in 1912, thus giving a net increase of 37. There were also four births registered amongst the Royal Marine Establishment, thus making the total number of births 104, as compared with 93 in 1911.

56. The birth-rate in civil population works out at 28.4 per 1,000. Illegitimate births registered amounted to 23, being six less than in the previous year.

57. The death-rate amongst the civil population was somewhat high, being 12.5 per 1,000, as against 10.9 per 1,000 in 1911. There were 44 deaths in all, two of which were due to accidents. Twenty deaths were of persons over the age of 70, one of whom had reached the advanced age of 98.

58. Marriages solemnised during the year numbered 26, as against 20 in 1911.

(B.) PUBLIC HEALTH.

59. The general health of the island during the year has been good, although the death-rate was 12.5 per 1,000, which is 1.6 per 1,000 higher than in 1911. This increase cannot be ascribed to any particular cause, being mainly due to deaths from old age. On the other hand, the infant mortality rate was only 9.61 per 1,000, calculated on the number of registered births. These figures show a marked decrease on the previous year, the rate for which was 53.7 per 1,000 births.

There were no deaths from zymotic disease.

60. An outbreak of scarlet fever occurred in the latter part of the year. The disease first appeared in August, and, owing to the prompt and stringent measures taken to prevent dissemination, was for a long time confined to Jamestown. All cases were isolated in the Military Hospital, which was specially set apart for the purpose, and all infected material and buildings were thoroughly disinfected. Latterly, however, one or two cases appeared in the western country districts. Up to the end of the

year the total number of cases amounted to 31. Most of these were of a mild type and no deaths occurred. It has been impossible to trace the origin of the outbreak, the last instance having occurred in 1903.

(C.) SANITARY.

61. Various matters of minor importance have been considered and dealt with by the Board of Health. Effectual supervision is exercised over slaughter-houses and mineral water factories.

There has been one prosecution under the Public Health Ordinance during the year.

62. The drainage system is generally satisfactory, though the water supply, on which its full efficiency depends, has on more than one occasion proved deficient when shipping has to be supplied in any large quantity. As the result of exhaustive tests which have been carried out it seems probably that the erection of storage tanks on the wharf would be the best solution of the difficulty, but in view of the cost that would be involved it has been considered desirable to await expert advice, which will shortly be available.

(D.) CLIMATE.

Meteorological Station, Hutt's Gate.

63. *Barometer.*—The mean pressure for the year was 28·093 inches, as compared with 28·103 inches in 1911.

64. *Temperature.*—The mean temperature was 61·6° as against 60·7° in the previous year. The absolute maximum recorded was 78·5° on the 1st, 9th, and 12th of February. In 1911 79·0° was the maximum and was observed on the 30th March of that year. The lowest maximum, 65·5°, occurred on the 20th August.

The absolute minimum registered was 50·1° on the 9th September, as against 50·0° on the 20th August in 1911.

65. *Rainfall.*—The total rainfall was 44·340 inches, being an increase of 12·59 inches over 1911, which was an exceptionally dry year. The maximum fall occurred on the 10th May and measured 1·28 inches. The maximum for the previous year was ·85 inches on the 20th June. The number of days on which rain fell totalled 275, being 46 more than in the previous year. Generally speaking, climatic conditions throughout the year were normal, with the exception of August, which, though usually a wet, windy month, was particularly dry and calm, having the distinction of holding the lowest record of rainfall for the year, namely, ·96 inches. On the 10th of the same month a "clear sky" was recorded, a most unusual observation at the Meteorological Station on any day of the year at 9 a.m., and more particularly so in August, which month is always very cloudy at the hour of observation.

66. *Wind.*—The mean force for the year was 2·2, which represents a velocity of 14 miles per hour—this being the normal figure. The windiest month was November. Ten calm days were recorded, four of which were in August—an experience which is quite unique.

The direction of the wind is given in the following table:—

	Days.
S.E.	195
S.S.E.	139
E.S.E.	19
S.	3
Calm	10

Jamestown.

Temperature.	1911.	1912.
Mean	72·5°	72·4°
Absolute maximum ...	80·0° on 22nd Feb.	80·0° on 27th Feb.
Absolute minimum ...	65·0° on 11th Aug. and 3rd Oct.	66·0° on 15th Aug. and 1st Sept.
Rainfall.	1911.	1912.
Total	8·10 ins.	9·21 ins.
Number of rainy days	100	97
Maximum fall	0·35 ins. on 18th May.	0·55 ins. on 10th May

Private Stations.

67. The following statistics have been compiled from records kept by residents in different parts of the island:—

	Total Rainfall.	Number of rainy days.	Maximum fall.	Date.
	inches.			
Plantation	35·08	202	2·04	5th June.
Farm Lodge	37·92	213	2·41	"
Oak Bank	45·27	213	2·12	"
Willowdene	35·24	208	1·55	"
The Briars	25·10	216	1·38	"

VIII.—POSTAL, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

(A.) POST OFFICE.

68. *Revenue.*—The postal revenue for the year amounted to £1,952 11s. 11d., being £521 5s. 8d. less than the receipts of the previous year. Nearly the whole of this decrease is due to a falling off in the sale of stamps to non-resident stamp collectors. In October the whole remaining stock of stamps of the King Edward VII. issue, amounting to £37,170, for which there had been a large demand by dealers, was destroyed, and the new King George V. issue was brought into use.

69. *Expenditure.*—The expenditure for the year amounted to £640 15s. 11d., being £223 9s. 1d. in excess of the previous year's expenditure. This excess was chiefly due to the cost of printing

the new issue of stamps above referred to. There was a decrease of £12 15s. 4d. on the amount paid in commission (2½ per cent.) to the Postmaster and Chief Clerk on stamps sold to non-residents.

70. *Mail matter*.—The following figures give the mail matter dealt with during the year under review as compared with 1911:—

From the United Kingdom and elsewhere:—

	1912.	1911.	Increase.	Decrease.
Bags of mails	247	240	7	—
Parcels	2,769	2,687	82	—
Registered articles	1,469	1,297	172	—
Insured letters	7	27	—	20

To the United Kingdom and elsewhere:—

	1912.	1911.	Increase.	Decrease.
Bags of mails	121	135	—	14
Parcels	413	484	—	71
Registered articles	2,898	2,854	44	—
Insured letters	15	16	—	1

Money and Postal Orders.—Transactions under this head were as follows:—

	1912.		1911.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Money orders received	1,002	2 6	1,144	0 0
Postal ,, ,,	4,352	10 0	3,327	1 8
Money orders issued	2,558	8 7	1,832	6 6
Postal ,, ,,	2,772	0 1½	1,745	4 10

Commission received on the above transactions amounted to £53 3s. 1d., as compared with £43 7s. 5d. in the previous year.

(B.) TELEGRAPHS.

71. There were no changes in tariff during the year under review.

(C.) TELEPHONES.

72. The telephone system, which is entirely maintained by private subscribers, continues to work satisfactorily, and affords an almost indispensable means of communication.

IX.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

(A.) ROADS.

73. A sum of £400 was expended during the year in maintaining the principal rural roads in repair. Owing to the lack of suitable covering material rather less progress than usual was made with the work of gradually replacing surface drains by culverts, and work had to be confined to general repairs, and

especially to stone breaking. At the latter a large number of women were employed.

In addition to the above a sum of £60 was expended in keeping the streets of Jamestown in order.

74. The amount collected under the "Road Tax Ordinance" during the year was £86 6s. 6d., or £4 19s. less than in the previous year. The tax was paid by 575 males as compared with 608 in the previous year; the decrease of 33 being due to emigration, deaths, and exemptions. There were 39 prosecutions for non-payment, as compared with 24 in the previous year.

(B.) LAND GRANTS AND GENERAL VALUE OF LAND.

75. There were no grants of land during the year and no transfers of ownership. The value of land has remained the same, though rents for Government properties amounted to £813, as compared with £764 in 1911.

(C.) RATES OF WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

76. There was no improvement in the rate of wages, which remained at the low figure which has obtained since the withdrawal of the garrison in 1906. The ordinary wage for casual labour is 1s. 6d. a day. Unskilled labourers permanently employed by the Public Works Department and other Government institutions are paid at the rate of 2s. a day. Labour on the Government roads and on relief works is paid for at the lower rate of 1s. 6d. a day, thus ensuring that as large a number of persons as possible may receive an opportunity of obtaining employment. The 1s. 6d. wage is admittedly a very low one, but if a higher wage were given it would mean that a less number of men would receive employment. The whole question of wages is one of supply and demand, and until regular work can be found for the large number of unemployed in the town districts no material improvement in the rate of wages can be expected.

77. The cost of the actual necessities of life, as sold by retail in the shops, was higher than in the preceding year. The reason for this is not far to seek. Competition is practically non-existent, there being only two importers of such necessities as rice, sugar, and salted meat, and the prices are the same; the quality not being the best. The price of fresh meat was higher by at least 20 per cent., and is likely to go higher still. Only a few years ago beef was selling at 5d. or 6d. a pound; it is now 10d. a pound. Fish was scarce, mainly owing to deliberate indolence on the part of the fishermen, who purposely keep supplies low in order to keep the price up.

78. With wages at a low figure and the price of staple foods increased the year was a hard one for the poorer classes.

(D.) DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS.

Public Works Department.

79. The expenditure for the year amounted to £1,977 2s. 9d., of which £400 was under "Works Extraordinary." No special works were undertaken, efforts being confined to preserve ordinary efficiency. The Department's work in all branches is greatly

handicapped by the absence of skilled labour, such as carpenters, plumbers, and masons. This causes much difficulty and delay in carrying out ordinary repairs and works of the simplest description. Lack of supervision is also seriously felt, especially in connection with road works and repairs. Owing to the difficult nature of the country it is practically impossible to exercise constant supervision over the scattered gangs of labourers working on the roads in different parts of the island. A system of selecting the best workman from each gang to act as foreman has been tried, but the results have not been encouraging, owing to the difficulty of inculcating a sense of responsibility as between social equals.

80. Of the £400 expended under "Works Extraordinary" £150 was expended in relief works, a large number of men and women having in this way been provided with employment on petty works of general utility. In addition, a sum of £136 was expended on the renewal of house services in Jamestown, though this work was much retarded by the want of skilled labour in plumbing.

Poor Board.

81. The revenue of the Poor Board for the year amounted to £837 14s. 1d., and the expenditure to £796 11s. 3d., as compared with £851 and £846 respectively in the previous year.

Public Market.

82. The revenue for the year amounted to £78 15s. 8d., or £13 4s. 4d. less than in the previous year. On the other hand, expenditure amounted to £86 13s. 3d., or a reduction of £3 6s. 9d. At the close of the year the market accounts showed a balance credit of £38 18s. 2d.

(E.) MISCELLANEOUS.

83. The most noteworthy feature of an uneventful year was the satisfactory progress made by the fibre industry, which may now be said to be firmly established. For the first time since its commencement in 1908 the Government flax mill has been kept running continuously throughout the year, and during that period paid out locally no less than £2,380; thus increasing the cash circulation in the Colony by 48 per cent. The benefit to the community as a whole must have been considerable, and is evidenced by such facts as increased imports, a larger number of depositors in the Savings Bank, and smaller exports of specie. All these may be taken as hopeful indications of improved economic conditions, which, with a profitable industry, now established and capable of considerable development, should still further improve in future years.

84. Unfortunately the benefits accruing from the fibre industry to the community in general and to the rural population in particular do not affect the town population as far as the labouring classes are concerned. In Jamestown and the adjoining districts the unemployment problem remains still unsolved, and the resulting distress among the poorer classes has been as acutely felt as ever. Without regular employment or occupation the


SKETCH MAP

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THREE ZONE

Col. Office No
Vegetation are
of Colonial R
No 38 [Cd. 32

 Coast

 Middle

 Centre

Old Joan Point 

town labourer has to depend on casual jobs of work in connection with shipping as the only means of eking out a living. Under the most favourable conditions this is but a precarious source of livelihood, and when a bad year occurs and shipping is scarce, as was the case in 1912, it can hardly be described as a livelihood at all. It is, of course, quite possible that next year will provide better opportunities for obtaining this kind of casual employment, but even so the improvement can only be regarded as temporary, and will merely serve to foster the present system of hand-to-mouth existence, which, though inevitable under existing conditions, is none the less demoralising. Until regular work, such as would be provided by a local industry, corresponding to the fibre industry in the country, is found for the town labourer no permanent improvement in his material and moral condition can well be looked for. For the last two years hopes in this direction have been centred on a proposal to revive the whaling industry, and though, for reasons given elsewhere in this Report, the scheme has not yet materialised, there are good grounds for believing that the coming year will see a start made. If these expectations are realised and the undertaking proves a success the problem of unemployment in Jamestown, where it has always been most acute, will be in a fair way towards solution. With two industries in operation and providing employment in both town and country there should be no fear of a recurrence of that economic depression under which the Colony has been labouring since the withdrawal of the garrison in 1906.

H. E. S. CORDEAUX,
Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

The Castle,
St. Helena,
15th May, 1913.
