

No. 847.

ST. HELENA.

REPORT FOR 1914.

(For Report for 1913 see No. 799.)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
July, 1915.



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No. 847.

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(For Report of 1913 see No. 799.)

THE GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Castle,

St. Helena,

22nd May, 1915.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the Colony's Blue Book for the year 1914, 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 1914.

I.—FINANCIAL.

(A.) REVENUE.

The Colony's revenue for the year, exclusive of grants-in-aid amounting to £8,300, was £8,059 17s. 3d., being £471 less than the estimated revenue and £1,352 less than the revenue of the previous year. This decrease is mainly due to a large falling off of receipts under the head "Post Office," amounting to £1,560, owing to smaller sales of stamps to non-resident dealers and collectors, most of whom are of German and Austrian nationality. On the other hand receipts under "Customs" showed an increase of £162, owing to larger sales of water to shipping and also to tonnage dues on coal transhipped to vessels in port.

Of the total grant-in-aid received by the Colony, £1,800 was for general purposes and £6,500 for defraying the first year's expenditure on the reconstruction of the Jamestown Wharf.

(B.) EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure during the year amounted to £15,884 0s. 4d., being an increase of £5,251 9s. 0d. on the expenditure of the previous year. This is principally accounted for by the special expenditure of £6,118 during the year on the reconstruction of the Jamestown Wharf. The only other important increase of expenditure was in connexion with the upkeep of rural roads. On the other hand decreases occurred under "Customs," £367, due to less refunds of wharfage on coal supplied to His Majesty's ships; "Medical," £162, owing to the office of Assistant Colonial Surgeon not being filled; and "Post Office," £388, representing a saving on the cost of printing new postage stamps.

(C.) ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

The Colony's assets on the 31st December, 1914, exceeded its liabilities by £1,327 7s. 4d., as compared with an excess of £1,342 13s. 7d. in the previous year.

The Colony's investments on the 31st December, 1914, amounted to £11,762 (cost price), of which £9,032 represents the amount due to depositors in the Government Savings Bank.

(D.) CURRENCY.

Specie to the amount of £2,000 was imported and £1,188 exported, giving a balance of £812 imported.

The amount of cash and Bank of England notes in circulation at the end of the year was approximately £7,000.

Bills on the Crown Agents to the amount of £10,409 were issued during the year, as compared with £3,512 in 1913.

Remittances by money and postal orders amounted to £6,988, as compared with £6,022 in 1913.

II.—TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

(A.) TRADE.

Revenue.

The Customs revenue for the year under review amounted to £4,273 12s. 7d., being an increase of £162 16s. 4d. over the revenue of 1913, and exceeding the estimated revenue by £173 12s. 7d. This increase, however, is only shown under two heads, "Tonnage dues" and "Water"—all other heads showing slight decreases as follows:—

"Wharfage."—Decrease £1 4s. 9d. But for the heavy wharfage dues, amounting to £472, which were paid by the German collier, "Eriphia," on 3,150 tons of coal and stores transhipped in Jamestown harbour to the German squadron, there would have been a much larger decrease under this head. This can be accounted for by the fact that only one shipment of coal was imported by the local contractor, owing to the arrival of Admiralty colliers during the latter four months of the year.

"Duty."—Decrease £93 19s. 5d., due to less consumption of dutiable goods, the local price of which rose in some cases as much as 25 per cent. in consequence of the outbreak of war.

The increase of £80 17s. 6d. under "Tonnage dues" is due to the charges collected from the German collier above mentioned—otherwise this head would have shown a decided decrease.

Under "Water" the increase of £183 15s. 0d. is due entirely to the unusual quantity of water taken by British warships and Admiralty colliers—the total amount of water supplied to ships being 3,715 tuns, as against 1,877 tuns in 1913.

Expenditure.

The expenditure for the year amounted to £538 3s. 9d., being £365 10s. 2d. less than in 1913. This decrease is principally due to the amount of refunds on coal supplied to His Majesty's ships, being only £119 8s. 0d., as against £458 in the previous year.

Imports.

The total value of imports in 1914 amounted to £40,467, being £2,927 less than in 1913. This is principally due to a large decrease, amounting to £5,910, in the value of coals and patent fuel imported.

"Dutiable articles," comprising wines, spirits, beer, and tobacco, show a decrease of £301. Other decreases occurred under "Drapery and dry goods," rice, butter, beef and pork, and stationery—whilst there were substantial increases in imports of flour, grain, sugar, oilman's stores; also in hardware, metals, and cement, the latter being due to increased importations of material in connexion with the repair of the Jamestown Wharf.

Exports.

The total value of exports during 1914 amounted to £9,700 10s. 0d., as compared with £7,568 in 1913, giving an increase of £2,132. The principal exports for the two years were as follows:—

	1913.	1914.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£.	£.	£.	£.
Fibre and Tow	5,372	7,439	2,067	—
Hides and Skins	321	116	—	205
Metal, old	130	203	73	—
Sheep, Oxen, and Calves..	478	394	—	84
Wool	357	135	—	222
Potatoes	176	220	44	—
Specie	720	1,188	468	—

Again it has to be recorded that the very considerable increase in exports is due to the satisfactory progress made by the flax industry. The two mills, one the Government mill and the other owned by Messrs. Solomon & Co., exported respectively 125 tons and 222 tons of fibre and tow.

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

The year under report was the most favourable one experienced for many years past from an agricultural point of view, owing to the steady fall of rain throughout the entire year. Crops in general were

very satisfactory. Potatoes, hay, forage, and green vegetables were exceptionally good in quantity and yielded bountiful crops throughout the Island. Pasture lands benefited especially from the plenteous rainfall, and cattle and livestock generally have done exceedingly well.

A large number of trees were reared from seed in the Plantation Nursery. About 250 were distributed free of cost to the public, whilst about 100, principally eucalyptus, were planted out on Government lands.

The sale of fruit from the Maldivia Garden amounted to £35 10s. 0d., whilst the sale of timber from the Government forests realised £59 15s. 3d., as compared with £20 14s. 11d. and £34 6s. 0d. respectively in the previous year.

The revenue derived from the Government pasture lands known as Botley's Lay, was £104 15s. 8½d., and the expenditure £85 18s. 10d. This, too, is an improvement on the figures of the previous year.

(C.) INDUSTRIES.

Fibre.—The following figures give the results of the working of the Government mill during the year under review:—

	1913.	1914.
Number of working days	269	262
Leaves milled (tons)	1,296	1,257
Fibre produced „	128	127
Tow „ „	39	37
Receipts from sale of produce	£4,143	£2,812
Expenditure	£4,006	£3,402
Average market price of fibre per ton	£28 10s.	£24 11s.
Average market price of tow „	£14 10s.	£13 0s.

It is satisfactory to be able to record that the mill has again been run continuously throughout the year, with the exception of a few days' interruption when a severe epidemic of influenza produced a temporary shortage of labour. Hence the quantity of green leaves dealt with was slightly less than in the previous year, though the amount of fibre and tow produced was practically the same.

The falling off in receipts from sale of produce is partly due to lower prices in the London market, but chiefly to the fact that in consequence of the outbreak of war in August, no shipments of fibre and tow took place during the last four months of the year. Consequently only 98 tons of fibre and 30 tons of tow were sold, the remainder of the year's produce being held back until prices should improve. Fortunately the mill had been able to accumulate sufficient funds to enable it to continue working, and no loss or inconvenience was occasioned to cultivators by the temporary closing of the fibre market.

The expenditure, on the other hand, was somewhat less, as compared with the previous year, being made up as follows :—

	1913.	1914.
<i>Local charges.</i>	£	£
Purchase of leaves ..	1,764	1,430
Cartage and local strip- ping	249	200
Salaries and wages ..	950	931
Miscellaneous	135	169
	£3,098	£2,730
<i>London charges.</i>		
Freight	522	362
Oil	304	229
Miscellaneous	82	81
	908	672
	£4,006	£3,402

The decrease is due to a lower purchase price for green leaves, such price varying with the price of fibre on the London market, and also to the saving in freight on nine shipments as compared with 13 shipments in the previous year. It has also to be noted that under expenditure is included a sum of £100 which the mill contributed towards the upkeep of the Colony's roads. The maintenance and improvement of communications between the flax-producing districts and the mill is essential to a successful development of the industry. Much wear and tear to the roads is caused by the transport of leaves to the mill, and it is only equitable that the additional cost of upkeep thereby entailed should be borne by the industry. It is questionable, however, whether this additional cost should not be contributed by the growers rather than by the mill, which is run entirely for their benefit.

A small tax of, say, 1s. per ton on all green leaves delivered at the mill would not be seriously felt by individual growers, whilst it would represent a proportionate contribution towards the upkeep of the roads used by them for the transport of their produce to the mill.

Besides the Government mill, there is one private mill in the Island, the property of the local firm of Messrs. Solomon and Company. This mill was opened in July, 1913, and has been running continuously ever since. The amount of green leaf dealt with by this mill during the year under review was 1,571 tons, resulting in the production of 177 tons of fibre and 45 tons of tow.

Generally speaking, the flax-growing industry is in a very flourishing condition. Its value as a paying concern is now generally recognised, with the result that it is attracting the attention of the smallest landowners. The amount of land placed under flax cultivation is

steadily growing year by year, and may now be estimated at about 700 acres. There is plenty of room for still further expansion. Even now the quantity of mature plants fit for milling is more than can be well dealt with by the one Government mill. As has been pointed out in previous reports, now that the experimental stage has been successfully passed at Government expense, the development of the industry should properly be left to private enterprise and capital. If two or more of the largest growers were to combine to erect a mill to deal with their own leaves, there would still be a sufficient number of small growers to keep the Government mill supplied. The flax industry would then be in an ideal position. There would be two private mills dealing with leaves grown by the owners, and a Government mill, situated in a more central position than the present mill, ready to purchase the produce of the smaller cultivators who could not afford to mill their own leaves, or who could not dispose of them profitably to the private mills. It is hoped that before long it will be possible to realise this condition.

Lace-making.—The following figures give the transactions of the Government Lace School during the year under review :—

		<i>Receipts.</i>	
Work sold—		£	s. d.
League of Empire (London) sales ..		176	5 4
South African sales		129	13 5
Local sales		191	9 9
		£497	8 6
		<i>Expenditure.</i>	
		£	s. d.
Pay of workers		410	10 2
Purchase of material		47	3 4
Rent, rates and taxes		33	18 9
Incidentals—			
		£	s. d.
Carriage hire		6	1 6
Postage and insurance		5	17 9
Miscellaneous		11	7 5
		23	6 8
		£514	18 11

These figures show a net loss of £17 10s. 5d. on the year's working.

The cost of the European staff, consisting of the manageress and an assistant manageress who was recently engaged, is defrayed from an annual grant by the Imperial Government, and for the year under review amounted to £158 8s.

The year under review has seen steady progress and development in the new lines of work which were started two years ago and to which reference was made in the Colony's Annual Report for 1912.* But for the war, which has naturally exercised a depressing influence on all sales, and particularly on those in London, the school would have been able to show a substantial profit on the year's working instead of a slight loss. The fact that the school is not yet self-supporting cannot be taken as a criterion of its value, both moral and material, to the Island as a whole and especially to the female portion of the population. From the figures given above it will be seen that during the past year an outlay of £158, representing the Imperial Government's grant for the year, has resulted in the production and sale of some £500 worth of lace and embroidery. The whole of this sum has been expended in the Colony, the greater portion in wages for some 170 workers and the remainder in payments to local traders or in direct contributions to the Colony's revenues. So that apart from the educational value of the industry, as providing a wholesome and remunerative form of employment for a large number of Island girls, it is of material benefit to the Colony as a whole. The fact that nearly 40 per cent. of the school's revenue during the past year was derived from local sales not only shows that its work is appreciated as such, but encourages the hope that the school will receive a full measure of that local support and encouragement which it so well deserves and which is so necessary to its present existence and future progress. I append an interesting report by the manageress, Miss Girdwood, to whose untiring and often unaided efforts for the last six years the school is so largely indebted for its continued progress in the face of many difficulties and discouragements.

“REPORT ON THE ST. HELENA GOVERNMENT LACE SCHOOL, 1914.

“The progress this year has been a most satisfactory development of that of 1913. The new lines of work started two years ago have now become firmly established, to the great benefit of the island women and girls, many of whom are quite dependent on this as a means of living for themselves and their children.

“The increasing demand for filet necessitated our taking a dozen of the best lace workers to become netters as well. By this, not only is their wage-earning power increased with the ability to do either kind of work, but their excellent work has set a standard not only to the purchasing public, but to the beginners who contentedly take this standard as their aim in reproduction; and, as nothing but perfect work ought to have marketable value, we thus try to go the right way to secure demand.

“The lace workers have been kept fully employed, for not only does the demand for white embroidery work and handkerchiefs require a large amount of lace for trimming, but the filet work also has to be mounted and finished with lace. Orders for lace make additional demand on the workers, so that now we are fortunately very far from having an unsaleable stock of laces in hand, as formerly, from which unlimited choice could be made by an occasional purchaser.

“All lace is disposed of as fast as it can be made, and, at present, in addition to the above needs being supplied, we have in hand over 240 yards of lace on order. During the year nearly 2,000 yards have been made and disposed of. The laces are of excellent quality and workmanship, and are now chiefly of Florentine and old Italian designs secured by Mrs. Cordeaux during her visit to Italy in the beginning of the year. The old cluny and torchon patterns, so much deprecated by London

* Colonial Reports (Annual) No. 756.

experts and others interested in the welfare of this island industry, are now almost confined to those who have neither ability nor inclination to rise to the standard of work required by the only clientele who can keep up a steady demand for the best.

“It is satisfactory, in a way, that the second-rate and casual workers—offshoots from the Lace School—can find independent market for any lace work they care to put out. Numbers of them have relations in South Africa and America who dispose of, and supply them with small orders for, such lace as they can make, and these, with local sales to residents and passengers, allow this class of worker to stand on her own merits—while, at the least desire to rise to better and steadier work, the Lace School is at hand to help them on.

“The handkerchief class of workers, whose ages vary from six to ten years, maintains its interest and forms a valuable and economical training in preparation for embroidery. Fully one hundred dozen handkerchiefs have been turned out during the year by these little ones, and all these handkerchiefs require lace edging.

“Although the war will necessarily have a serious effect upon our work—as it will upon everything the world over—still, up to the present, we have been able to hold our own and to begin the new year under more favourable conditions than might have been expected.

“An important advance in the interests of the industry has been the arrival in October last of an assistant manageress well qualified to take temporary control or to succeed as necessity may arise.

“A very successful sale was held in London by the Honourable Mrs. Cordeaux last July, with the assistance of the St. Helena Lace School Committee, in connection with the League of Empire. Mrs. Ord Marshall was incapacitated by indisposition from taking her usual prominent part in the work she has done so much to establish.

“Lady Bathurst kindly lent her house, and the sale realised over £100 with orders for filet which have helped to keep the workers employed ever since.

“The 170 workers on the roll may be divided approximately thus:—

Netters	..	..	..	..	..	10
Filet	..	..	..	..	..	11
Handkerchiefs	..	..	..	..	..	30
Lace	..	..	..	..	..	54
Embroidery	..	..	..	..	..	65

“Invaluable help has been received from the lovely specimens of work from Italy and England which Mrs. Cordeaux kindly sent out while there, and to Lady Bathurst also we are indebted for the loan of a valuable old piece of Italian work.

“By the death of Mr. Liddy, who has been honorary treasurer from the beginning, the Lace School has lost a staunch and faithful adherent, who was always ready to devote time and trouble to the interests of the island workers. His duties have been kindly undertaken by Mr. Leslie Tucker, in combination with those of honorary secretary.

“(Sd.) H. G. GIRDWOOD,
“Manageress.”

(D.) SHIPPING.

The number of vessels that called at the Island during the year under review was 80, with a tonnage of 396,956, as compared with 60 and tonnage of 210,609 in the previous year. This increase is due to the larger number of calls made by British men-of-war and merchant steamers in consequence of the state of war.

Early in the year the Island received a visit from a German squadron, consisting of the “Kaiser,” flying the flag of Rear-Admiral Von Rebeur Pashvitz, the “König Albert” and the “Strassburg.” Seventeen sailing vessels, of which only one was British, touched at the port. Of these, five were whalers which put in for bunker coal and provisions.

In addition to the above, 13 vessels called off the port to signal and to trade with licensed boatmen.

Thirty-seven vessels entered and cleared at the port of Jamestown during the year. The cargo shipped and discharged by these vessels amounted to 6,165 tons, as compared with 7,383 in the previous year.

III.—LEGISLATION.

Six Ordinances were enacted during the year under review, the most important being :—

No. 1.—“The Game and Wild Bird Amendment Ordinance,” prohibiting the export of the plumage or skins of non-edible birds.

No. 2.—“The Pensions Amendment Ordinance,” providing that no person in receipt of a pension who becomes a director of or is employed by any company whose business is directly and principally concerned with the Colony shall retain such pension without having first obtained the permission of the Governor.

No. 3.—“The Poor Relief Ordinance,” amending and consolidating the laws relating to the relief of the poor. The principal effect of this Ordinance was to establish the principle that properties belonging to the Crown, to the Colonial or Imperial Government are not rateable, except when actually occupied by a tenant on payment of rent. The question as to the rateability of such properties had for long been the subject of much contention and consequent litigation between the Colonial Government and the parish authorities. The Ordinance also provides for the payment by the Colonial Government of an annual contribution of £15 towards the relief of the poor, this sum being calculated on the average annual amount hitherto paid by the Colonial Government in rates assessed on its properties.

No. 4.—“The Tax Amendment Ordinance,” providing that a fixed annual sum of £67 should be paid to the overseer of the poor for the benefit of the poor of the parish, in lieu of the dog tax, which under the principal Ordinance was payable yearly to the parish.

Fifteen proclamations were issued during the year, all of which, with the exception of two, dealt with matters connected with the outbreak of war and the defence of the Island.

IV.—EDUCATION.

There are nine elementary schools in the Island, of which three are Government schools. Of the remainder four are supported by the Hussey Charity Fund, one by the Benevolent Society, and one by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese assisted by an annual grant from the Colonial Government.

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

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Government schools	138	184	322
Other schools	199	157	356

Owing to epidemics of whooping cough and influenza all schools in the Island had to be closed for five months from July to December. In spite of this interruption the general standard of work has been well maintained. During December the work of the first six months was revised, and it was found that the children had not gone back as much as might have been expected.

The usual pupil-teachers' classes, under the personal supervision of Mr. Tucker, were held without interruption throughout the year. Nine candidates sat for examination at the end of the year, the results being entirely satisfactory.

Miss Girdwood continued to supervise the needlework classes of the several schools, and is able to report satisfactory progress in this important branch of education.

The total expenditure during the year on the Government schools, exclusive of grants-in-aid to other schools, amounted to £709 13s. 1d., or £2 4s. a head per child. Until the Colony's revenue is in a position to allocate a larger sum to education any idea of supplementing the existing elementary schools by secondary or technical instruction will have to be abandoned.

The schools were on the whole well attended, there being only four prosecutions for non-attendance under the Education Ordinance during the year, as compared with 15 the previous year.

V.—GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

(A.) HOSPITAL.

There were 128 admissions to the hospital during the year, of which 64 were treated in the male ward and 64 in the female ward. The number of admissions shows a decrease of 28 as compared with the previous year.

There were nine deaths, a percentage of 7.3, as compared with 5.7 in the previous year. Three of these cases were, however, over seventy years of age.

During the latter part of the year the building of a new operating room, the need for which has been long felt, was taken in hand and should be completed early in the coming year.

Several changes have occurred in the hospital staff. Miss Oxley replaced Miss Henderson, who had completed her three years' service in the Colony. Miss Wagstaff replaced Miss Sherlock, who retired

from the service in October. In November the Lady Superintendent, Miss Hart, left the Island on leave of absence necessitated by ill-health, and in the same month Doctor Arnold, the Colonial Surgeon, having contracted influenza during a severe epidemic, was obliged to go on sick leave. His place was taken by Major Foulds, R.A.M.C., who acted as Colonial Surgeon until Doctor Draper arrived in December to take up his duties as Assistant to the Colonial Surgeon, when he was appointed to act as Colonial Surgeon.

(B.) SAVINGS BANK.

There was a slight decrease in the number of depositors remaining at the end of the year, the number being 133 as compared with 140 in the preceding year. Four withdrew their deposits, amounting to nearly £2,000, for local investment in real estate.

The total deposits for the year amounted to £2,006 17s. 0d., being £737 3s. 0d. less than in 1913. Withdrawals totalled £5,131 6s. 8d., thus exceeding deposits by £3,124 9s. 8d.

The Bank's revenue from investments in 1914 was £403 0s. 11d., and its expenditure £305 8s. 11d., thus showing a profit of £97 12s. 0d. on the year's transactions.

The amount standing to the credit of depositors on the 31st December, 1914, was £9,032 0s. 7d. Against this amount stock to the amount of £11,915 13s. 5d. is held by the Colony.

VI.—JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

(A.) CRIMINAL.

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

Police Court.—The Police Magistrate dealt with 64 cases, as compared with 123 in the previous year; of this number four were prosecutions under the Education Ordinance, and two for breaches of the Harbour Ordinance. In addition to the above there were 127 cases of a trivial nature which were disposed of by the Police without taking them into Court.

There were eight cases of flogging during the year, two for theft and six for mischievous conduct.

There were two convictions under the Juvenile Smoking Ordinance.

(B.) PRISONS.

Only eleven prisoners were committed to the gaol during the year, being ten less than in the previous year and the lowest number recorded

for many years past. The daily average in gaol decreased from 3·7 in 1913 to 2·4 during the year under review, and at the end of the year the gaol was empty for the first time for six years. The cost of maintaining the gaol was £106 13s. 7d.

(C.) THE POLICE FORCE.

No changes have been made in the number and constitution of the force, which performed its duties satisfactorily during the year.

VII.—VITAL STATISTICS.

(A.) POPULATION.

The estimated civil population on the 31st December, 1914, was 3,553, as compared with 3,514 on the same date a year previous.

There were 70 emigrants and 64 immigrants during the year, as compared with 95 and 40 respectively in 1913.

Deaths amounted to 54 and births to 100, as compared with 51 deaths and 101 births in 1913.

The death-rate in civil population during 1914 works out at 14·6 per 1,000—exceeding the rate of the previous year by 1 and being the highest for many years past. Ten infants died under one year of age and nineteen adults over the age of seventy, one of whom was over ninety. No accidental deaths were recorded.

The birth-rate in 1914 was 27·3 per 1,000, being 1·4 lower than in 1913. The number of illegitimate births registered was 23, or one more than in 1913.

Marriages solemnised during the year amounted to 22, being the same number as in 1913.

(B.) PUBLIC HEALTH.

The general health of the Island during the year has been good, although the death-rate reached 14·6 per 1,000, being slightly higher than in the previous year. The gradual rise in the death-rate which has been taking place during the past few years is mainly attributable to deaths from old age. The year under review was marked by two severe epidemics, one of whooping cough and one of influenza, which was in numerous cases complicated by broncho-pneumonia, resulting in seven deaths. In addition, two deaths occurred from pulmonary tuberculosis, and four from dysentery. As has been noted in previous reports the water supply in many of the country districts is still very

unsatisfactory, especially in the Half Tree Hollow district, where dysentery and acute diarrhoea have been particularly prevalent. Steps are being taken to improve the existing system of supplying water to this district.

(C.) SANITARY.

The Board of Health have considered and dealt with various matters of minor importance. The slaughter houses and mineral water factories have been effectually supervised.

The drainage system is satisfactory, and the water supply available for flushing purposes has proved generally sufficient, though occasional shortages have occurred when large quantities have to be supplied to shipping. This defect will, however, disappear when the storage tank which is now being erected on the wharf is taken into use.

(D.) CLIMATE.

METEOROLOGICAL STATION, HUTT'S GATE.

Barometer.—The mean pressure for the year was 28·097, as compared with 28.003 inches in 1913.

Temperature.—The mean temperature was 61·7°, as against 62.4° in the previous year. The absolute maximum recorded was 82·0° on the 22nd March. In the previous year 81·6° was the maximum temperature, recorded on the 9th February. The absolute minimum was 51·0° on the 31st July, the same reading having been recorded on the 19th August in the previous year.

Rainfall.—The total rainfall was 49·220 inches, being an increase of 5·590 inches over that of the previous year, and the heaviest experienced since 1906, when the fall was 49·770 inches. The maximum fall occurred on the 21st January and measured 1·120 inches, this being the same as the maximum fall on the 28th August, in 1913. The number of days on which rain fell totalled 288, as against 273 in the previous year. The wettest months were March, April, May and August, when rain fell on 26, 29, 24 and 24 days respectively. In March no less than 6·070 inches were registered.

Wind.—The mean force for the year was 2·1, which represents a velocity of a little over 14 miles per hour and which is the normal figure. Only three calm days were recorded, as compared with thirteen in the previous year.

The following table shows the direction of the wind throughout the year :—

S.E.	..	..	..	183	days.
S.S.E.	..	..	..	156	„
E.S.E.	..	..	..	4	„
S.	..	..	..	19	„
Calm	..	..	..	3	„

JAMESTOWN.

Temperature.

	1913.	1914.
Mean	70·4°	70·7°
Absolute maximum	80·0° on 15th Feb. and 16th April.	81·0° on 7th Feb.
Absolute minimum	65·0° on 1st Oct.	65·0° on 12th Aug. and 10th Oct.

Rainfall.

Total	13·75 ins.	9·58 ins.
Rainy days ..	126	113
Maximum fall ..	1·35 ins. on 27th Feb.	1·03 ins. on 7th Apr.

PRIVATE STATIONS.

	Total Rainfall. Inches.	Number of rainy days.	Maximum fall. Inches.	Date.
Plantation	47·98	239	2·05	6th Apr.
Oakbank	55·15	244	—	—

VIII.—POSTAL, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

(A.) POST OFFICE.

Revenue.—The postal revenue for the year amounted to £1,233 2s. 1d., being £1,559 3s. 11d. less than the receipts of the previous year. Almost the whole of this large decrease is due to a falling off in the sale of stamps to non-resident stamp collectors in Germany and Austria, and these sales have now ceased in consequence of the war. There is also a decrease in the postal charges recovered from the Postmaster-General, owing to a falling off in the amount of parcel post matter received from the United Kingdom.

Expenditure.—The total expenditure of the department amounted to £399 13s. 4d., or £388 16s. 9d. less than in the previous year, principally due to saving in the cost of printing postage stamps. The net profit on the year's transactions was £833 8s. 9d., as compared with £2,003 15s. 11d. in 1913.

Money and Postal Orders.—Transactions under this head show a total increase of £2,242 on those of the previous year, and were as follows:—

	1914			1913		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Money orders received	610	18	8	813	10	10
Postal orders received	3,040	12	6	1,022	1	8
Money orders issued	4,491	9	0	3,213	18	1
Postal orders issued	2,497	7	6	2,809	1	0

Commission received on the above amounted to £73 13s. 4d., as compared with £61 16s. 3½d. in 1913.

(B.) TELEGRAPHS.

The Eastern Telegraph Company's tariff remained the same for ordinary messages as in the previous year.

From the 1st of May the Company extended to this Colony the system of "week-end telegrams," the charge being at the rate of 7½d. a word, subject to a minimum charge of 12s. 6d. or twenty words for one telegram. The system of "deferred" telegrams was suspended on the outbreak of war, but was resumed on the 1st of October.

On the 31st December the Company's staff at this station numbered twenty-four.

(C.) TELEPHONES.

There were 40 miles of wire under the administrative system open for traffic during the year. The cost of upkeep for the year amounted to £76 7s. 6d., whilst the income from rents of instruments, subscriptions and message charges amounted to £88 18s. 11d. The administrative system is controlled by the Colonial Government, though the cost of upkeep is provided entirely by private subscriptions without any assistance from the Colonial Government.

The number of messages dealt with was 574, being 43 more than in the previous year.

There were 17 telephone instruments in use, including three in public offices. The staff consists of three operators and one linesman.

Though necessarily limited in extent, the administrative system of telephones has proved invaluable and is indeed indispensable to the official and social life of an island of such difficult communications as St. Helena. The system has been admirably worked throughout the year, though the exigencies of defence arrangements on the outbreak of war necessarily caused some dislocation.

IX.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

(A.) ROADS.

The total expenditure during the year under review on works connected with the improvement of the rural roads amounted to £1,076 12s. 8d. Of this amount the Government flax mill contributed £100 in consideration of the wear and tear caused to the roads by the transport of leaves to the mill, and £500 was granted as a special vote as a means of bringing the general condition of the roads up to a better standard. The result of this expenditure has been a decided improvement in the general condition of the principal roads, whilst at the same time the purchase of two additional carts and draught animals should greatly facilitate this improvement being maintained in future years without any increase of the normal annual expenditure. A considerable tract of land in the Plantation grounds has been cleared and ploughed for the cultivation of oats and other kinds of fodder, so that no additional expense should be incurred in feeding the new transport animals.

The amount collected under the Road Tax Ordinance during the year was £86 14s. 0d., being slightly less than in the previous year. During the second half of the year exemptions were granted under the provisions of the Ordinance to all men in the St. Helena Volunteers who had been embodied for active service. Fifty-two persons were thus excused payment of the tax, which was paid by 578 males, or three less than in the previous year.

There were no prosecutions for non-payment.

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

There were three transfers of property and twenty-five grants of land made during the year. These grants, consisting of 26 acres in all, were of small plots of Crown waste land suitable for flax planting by the poorer classes.

The value of land generally remains the same. It naturally varies considerably according to quality. The plots above referred to could not be valued at more than £3 per acre, whereas the better quality pasture or arable land may be valued at from £5 to £10 per acre.

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

As was anticipated in last year's report, there was a slight increase in the rate of wages during the year under review. In the country districts the daily wage rose from 1s. 9d. to 2s. 0d. and in some cases to 2s. 6d. The 1s. 9d. rate was little in evidence, and was principally applied to casual labour. In Jamestown, owing to the greater demand for labour in connection with the wharf reconstruction works, 2s. 0d. a day became the minimum wage. The formation of a paid Volunteer

Corps on the outbreak of war in August further relieved the economic depression in the town districts by absorbing such unemployed labour as remained after supplying the demand created by the wharf works.

The cost of the necessities of life was higher, and, towards the end of the year, showed a rise of at least 40 per cent. as compared with the previous year. This was mainly due to the outbreak of war, which caused a sharp rise in the price of all articles, especially of such staple commodities as flour, sugar, and rice. As the Island is largely dependent on regular monthly importations of food supplies, some anxiety was at first felt as to the sufficiency of the stocks held by local merchants, and the general public showed a tendency to buy in larger quantities than usual with a view to hoarding. This had the natural result of raising prices. To prevent any further undue inflation the maximum retail price of the more staple foodstuffs was regulated by Proclamation.

The problem of fish supply is no nearer solution. What used to form the staple food of the St. Helenian has now become an absolute luxury—the price has increased 100 per cent. Opinions vary as to whether this state of affairs is due to the fish or the fishermen, or both. There is no doubt that the former are both scarcer and more difficult to take; at the same time it is no less certain that the fisherman class has deteriorated, both in numbers and in energy and resource.

(D.) DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS.

Public Works Department.

The total expenditure for the year was £2,734 15s. 9d., of which £1,006 15s. 11d. was under "Works Extraordinary." Under "Works Recurrent" the ordinary repairs to roads, buildings, and water supply were carried out, together with the usual clearing and re-planting of Government lands and forests. Under "Works Extraordinary," beside the special expenditure on road works, which has already been referred to under "Roads," the only work calling for special note was the erection of a new tank on the wharf, in order to ensure a more certain supply of water to shipping without causing a simultaneous scarcity of water in the town, a defect which has been felt for many years past.

Reconstruction of the Jamestown Wharf.

Work on this important undertaking was commenced in March of the year under review, under the supervision of Mr. Alexander Thomson, as inspector of works, assisted by Mr. Hogg, on special plans prepared by Mr. F. P. Lane during his visit to the Colony in the previous year.

It was calculated that the work would take two years to complete, but as progress is dependent on weather conditions, which are extremely variable, this estimate is only approximate. Conditions so far have been fairly favourable, though frequent interruptions have been inevitable, partly due to heavy seas making under-water work difficult and sometimes impossible, and partly owing to the frequent arrival of warships and mail steamers, on which occasions work has often to

be suspended to admit of the landing and shipping of cargo. In spite of these difficulties, satisfactory progress has been made.

The estimated cost of reconstruction is £11,000, of which £6,117 9s. 10d. had been expended up to the end of the year under review.

Poor Relief Board.

The revenue and expenditure of the Poor Relief Board for the last five years, including the year under review, are given below :—

Year.	Revenue.		Expenditure.	
	£	s.	£	s.
1910	822		783	
1911	851		846	
1912	837		796	
1913	753		728	
1914	717		704	

Under the new Poor Relief Ordinance, which, as already noted under "Legislation," came into force on the 1st April of the year under review, the Colonial Government paid a fixed contribution, amounting to £77 17s. 6d., towards the relief of the poor, instead of the usual poor rates and dog tax. Under the old Ordinance the Colonial Government contribution for the year would have amounted to £60 15s. 4d., so that, in spite of much adverse criticism of the new Ordinance, it has actually benefited the parish to the extent of £17 during its first year's working.

Public Market.

The revenue for the year amounted to £113 16s. 8d. and the expenditure to £86 8s. 3d., as compared with £78 and £86 respectively in the previous year. At the close of the year the market accounts showed a credit balance of £27 8s. 5d.

(E.) MISCELLANEOUS.

The principal event of the year was the outbreak of war with Germany and Austria, which was announced in the Colony early in the morning of the 5th August. The news was received with calmness, and at the same time with a due sense of the gravity of the interests at stake. The Imperial Order in Council of the 26th October, 1896, establishing martial law throughout the Colony, was proclaimed on the same day. Offers of personal service in the defence of the Colony were made by all sections of the community, and before many days had passed a strong volunteer force had been raised, part of which was at once embodied and placed on active service under the orders of the officer commanding the troops. I cannot speak too highly of the loyal and patriotic spirit shown by the whole population in all matters relating to the safety and welfare of the Colony.

As regards the general economic situation, particularly as it has been affected by the war, the increased cost of living has been to some extent counterbalanced by improved economic conditions generally. Local industries have not been seriously affected by the war. The labour market has been less depressed and wages generally have been higher, whilst service in the embodied portion of the Volunteer Corps has provided regular and well-paid employment for many who in ordinary times are dependent on casual work for a living.

The full significance of the war is thoroughly appreciated in this distant outpost of Empire, and its progress is followed with the keenest interest. Though debarred by distance and the limited resources of their small Island from taking a more active part in the struggle, the inhabitants of this Colony have given ample proof that they are imbued with the same spirit of loyalty and devotion to His Majesty and the Empire to which other Colonies have been in a position to give more practical and material expression.

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

The Castle,
St. Helena,
20th May, 1915.

The following recent reports, &c., relating to His Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued, and may be obtained from the sources indicated on the title page :

ANNUAL.	
No.	Colony, &c. Year.
814	Hong Kong 1913
815	Bechuanaland Protectorate 1913-1914
816	Imperial Institute 1913
817	Falkland Islands "
818	Malta 1913-1914
819	Trinidad and Tobago "
820	Jamaica "
821	Northern Nigeria 1913
822	Grenada "
823	Zanzibar "
824	Barbados 1913-1914
825	Southern Nigeria 1913
826	Mauritius "
827	British Honduras "
828	Colonial Survey Committee 1913-1914
829	Tongan Islands Protectorate "
830	Swaziland "
831	Uganda "
832	Nyasaland "
833	British Guiana "
834	Imperial Bureau of Entomology 1914
835	St. Vincent 1913-1914
836	St. Lucia "
837	Somaliland "
838	Straits Settlements 1913
839	Cayman Islands 1913-1914
840	East Africa Protectorate "
841	Leeward Islands "
842	Gilbert and Ellice Islands "
843	Zanzibar 1914
844	Turks and Caicos Islands "
845	Wei-hai-wei "
846	Seychelles "

MISCELLANEOUS.

No.	Colony, &c.	Subject.
79	Northern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1907-8 and 1908-9.
80	Nyasaland	Mineral Survey, 1908-9.
81	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1908-9.
82	Imperial Institute	Rubber and Gutta-Percha.
83	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1910.
84	West Indies	Preservation of Ancient Monuments, &c.
85	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1911.
86	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1912.
87	Ceylon	Mineral Survey.
88	Imperial Institute	Oilseeds, Oils, &c.
89	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1913.
90	St. Vincent	Roads and Land Settlement.