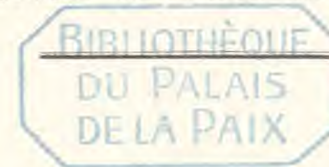


COLONIAL REPORTS—ANNUAL.



No. 896.

ST. HELENA.

REPORT FOR 1915.

(For Report for 1914 see No. 847.)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

September, 1916.



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No. 896.

ST. HELENA.

(For Report for 1914 see No. 847.)

THE GOVERNOR TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.

The Castle,
St. Helena,
14th June, 1916.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the Colony's Blue Book for the year 1915, together with my Report thereon.

I have, &c.,
H. E. S. CORDEAUX,
Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

The Right Honourable
A. Bonar Law, M.P.,
Secretary of State for the Colonies.

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1915.

I.—FINANCIAL.

(A.) REVENUE.

The revenue collected during the year under review amounted to £6,466 9s. 2d., being a decrease of £1,593 8s. 1d. as compared with the figures of the previous year, and the lowest revenue recorded since the year 1909, which marked the period of the Colony's greatest financial depression. Various causes contributed to this set-back, all of which are indirectly due to the continuance of a state of war and which may therefore be regarded as only temporary.

The two principal sources of revenue which showed marked decreases were "Customs" and "Post Office." Customs receipts realised £3,397, or £876 less than in 1914, one reason being the exemption from Customs dues of all goods consigned for the use of the garrison, whilst the Postal revenue was £694 less than the actual receipts in the previous year.

(B.) EXPENDITURE.

The Colony's expenditure, exclusive of extraordinary military expenditure, but including wharf repairs amounting to £2,907 15s. 9d., was £12,253 4s. 11d., or £3,630 15s. 5d. less than in 1914. Savings were effected under eleven heads of the Estimate amounting to £2,470 11s. 2d., whilst under five heads there were small excesses to the total amount of £178 4s. 7d.

(C.) GRANTS-IN-AID.

It will be seen that the Colony's expenditure, including extraordinary expenditure in connection with repairs to the Jamestown Wharf, exceeded its revenue by £5,786 15s. 9d. To meet this deficit the Colony received a grant-in-aid from the Imperial Exchequer of £3,200, of which £500 was for general purposes and £2,700 for wharf repairs. The net deficit of £2,586 15s. 9d. had to be met by overdrafts on the Crown Agents.

(D.) ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

In consequence of the above deficit, the Colony's liabilities on the 31st December, 1915, exceeded its assets by £1,302 0s. 11d., being a set-back of £2,629 as compared with the Colony's financial condition on the same date in 1914.

Under assets is included a sum of £4,494 representing the balance of the amount due to the Government in connection with the repatriation of the immigrant passengers of the wrecked S.S. "Papanui," and a sum of £4,050 which represents the expenditure incurred by the Colony in connection with the upkeep of the local volunteers, general defence arrangements, and internment camp. The Colony's investments on the 31st December, 1915, amounted to £11,698 10s. 5d., with a market value on the same date of £9,914, showing a depreciation of £1,784 10s. 5d.

Liabilities include a sum of £8,752 18s. 9d. due to depositors in the Savings Bank, and an overdraft with the Crown Agents for the Colonies of £14,434 4s. 6d.

(E.) CURRENCY.

Bills on the Crown Agents to the amount of £15,319 were issued during the year, and remittances by money and postal orders amounted to £7,368, making a total of £22,687, as compared with £17,398 in 1914.

There was no direct exportation of specie, but the amount imported was £1,800.

The amount of cash and Bank of England notes in circulation at the end of the year was approximately £8,000.

II.—TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

(A.) TRADE.

Revenue.

The Customs revenue for the year under review amounted to £3,396 16s. 7d., being a decrease of £876 16s. 0d. as compared with the previous year. This decrease is more than accounted for under the following three heads:—

"Wharfage."—£753 0s. 9d. Only 61 tons of coal and coke were imported by the local contractors, as against 1,370 tons in 1914. Moreover, an Admiralty collier landed 2,000 tons of coal in 1915 free of all Customs dues and charges.

"Tonnage Dues."—£255 2s. 0d. This decrease is due to the same causes as noted above. Vessels bringing coal and coke paid £3 1s. 0d. in tonnage, as compared with £68 10s. 0d. in 1914.

"Water."—£223 14s. 0d. In 1914 the amount of water supplied to His Majesty's ships and colliers was 2,686 tuns, as against 963 tuns during the year under review. Again, the cable ship "Britannia" was away for nine months out of the twelve, taking 314 tuns only as against 717 tuns in 1914.

Increases occurred under other heads, including:—

"Import Duties."—£186 4s. 5d. Due to improvement in labour conditions, placing more money in circulation and enabling the working classes to indulge in such luxuries as tobacco and liquor.

“Export Duties.”—£163 5s. 10d. This represents the additional revenue collected under the Customs Amendment Ordinance No. 2 of 1915, which places an export duty of 10s. and 5s. per ton on fibre and tow respectively, and which came into operation on the 1st March, 1915.

Expenditure.

The expenditure for the year amounted to £446 11s. 2d., as compared with £538 3s. 9d. in 1914. A less quantity of coal was taken by His Majesty's ships, the refund of wharfage amounting to only £18, as against £119 8s. 0d. in 1914.

Imports.

The total value of imports in 1915 amounted to £43,459, as against £40,467 in 1914, showing an increase of £2,992. Dutiable articles, such as tobacco, wines, and spirits, show an increase of £672. Similarly, provisions of all kinds were imported in considerably larger quantities, showing a total increase of value amounting to £4,463 over the figures of the previous year. These increases, though partly due to the higher cost price of all commodities, are mainly attributable to the greater purchasing power of the labouring classes, labour having been plentiful, and steady wages being earned. Perhaps the most remarkable increase occurs in the value of tea imported during the year. Tea appears to be the invariable accompaniment to all meals, and it has become a universal habit of late to indulge in eleven o'clock tea, more familiarly known as “elevens.”

The principal decreases in imports occur under cement, coal, hardware, metals, machinery, oilman's stores, and specie. In 1914 the Colonial Government imported a very large quantity of cement, hardware, and machinery in connection with the reconstruction works on the Jamestown Wharf, which were not repeated in 1915. Only 61 tons of coal, valued at £121, were imported, as compared with 1,370 tons, with a value of £2,546, in 1914. The amount of specie imported by the Colonial Government was £1,000 as against £2,000 in the previous year.

Exports.

The total value of exports during 1915 amounted to £13,412, or, excluding specie, an increase of £4,900 over the figures of the preceding year.

The principal exports as compared with 1914 were:—

	1914.	1915.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£.	£.	£.	£.
Fibre and Tow	7,439	11,101	3,662	—
Hides and Skins	116	376	260	—
Metal, old	203	90	—	113
Sheep and Calves	394	513	119	—
Wool	135	856	721	—
Specie	1,187	—	—	1,187

It will be seen that there is again a noteworthy increase in the value of fibre and tow exported, due partly to the enhanced value of these commodities on the London market, and partly to larger shipments; 395 tons having been exported during the year, as compared with 347 in 1914. Of the total exports of fibre and tow, 210 tons were the produce of the Government mill and 185 tons the produce of the private mill owned by Messrs. Solomon & Company.

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

The year under review cannot be regarded as a favourable one from an agricultural point of view. The early part of the year was fairly satisfactory, but the scanty rainfall in the later months of the year seriously affected crops and pasture lands. Root and grain crops were poor, whilst potato crops in the latter half of the year failed altogether, most of the growers losing their entire crops and being unable to save seed. Cattle suffered considerably, as pasture lands were practically bared, and garden grounds were for the most part empty. Five tons of seed potatoes from Messrs Sutton & Sons were imported by the Colonial Government and sold to local growers at cost price. The garden grounds at Plantation which were placed under cultivation in 1914 have proved most successful, and have been the means of effecting considerable economy in the feeding of Government transport animals. It is quite evident from this experiment that much more could be done in the way of growing fodder for animals instead of importing food stuffs at considerable expense. It is hoped next year to clear a further tract of ground at Plantation for the cultivation of cereals. In addition to the above a broad belt of undergrowth and trees infested with white ants has been cleared around the Plantation estate. This clearing, which measures about four acres, has been planted with flax, about 25,000 suckers having been put in. This should bring in a considerable revenue in two or three years, besides preventing further encroachments by white ants.

The usual free issues of young trees to landowners have been made, about 630 trees having been distributed from the Plantation nurseries, and about 370 planted out on Government lands.

The sale of fruit from the Maldivia Garden realised £45 3s. 5d., as compared with £20 14s. 11d. in the previous year. About 100 young fruit trees were imported from South Africa both for local growers and for planting in Government gardens.

The Government pasture lands known as Botley's Lay produced a revenue of £101 14s. 5½d., against which expenditure to the amount of £85 2s. 2d. was incurred.

(C.) INDUSTRIES.

Fibre.—The following figures show the results of the working of the Government mill during the year under review, as compared with 1914 :—

	1914.	1915.
Number of working days	262	265
Leaves milled (tons)	1,257	1,417
Fibre produced „	127	152
Tow „ „	37	37
Receipts from sale of produce ..	£2,812	£5,847
Expenditure	£3,402	£4,589
Average market price of fibre per ton	£24 11s.	£32 5s.
Average market price of tow „	£13 0s.	£18 11s

The Government mill has again established a record, both as regards the quantity of leaves dealt with and also in respect of the value and quantity of the fibre and tow produced. A general speeding up of the mill was effected by placing the stripper hands on piece work and by carefully co-ordinating the various processes of manufacture, with the result that the mill has been able to deal with five tons of green leaf a day instead of only four tons as hitherto. Indeed, the actual amount of green leaves dealt with by the mill during the year averaged 5 tons 7 cwt. per working day.

Receipts.

It will be seen that the mill receipts from sale of produce amounted to £5,847, as compared with £2,812 in the previous year, due to the exceptionally high prices of fibre and tow, which during the year averaged £32 5s. 0d. and £18 11s. 0d. per ton, respectively.

Expenditure.

	1914.	1915.
<i>Local payments.</i>	£	£
Purchase of leaves ..	1,430	1,997
Cartage and lighterage	200	254
Salaries and wages ..	931	1,008
Miscellaneous	169	283
	£2,730	£3,542
<i>London payments.</i>		
Freight	362	758
Oil	229	199
Miscellaneous	81	90
	672	1,047
	£3,402	£4,589

Expenditure was considerably higher than in the previous year, the two main items of increase being purchase of leaves and freight. The former varies with the current price of fibre, purchases of leaves

being made on a five per cent. basis of the London market price, by standing agreement with the growers. Owing to the War, freight charges ruled high throughout the year, the actual freightage paid on shipments of fibre and tow working out at 57s. per ton weight as compared with the normal pre-war rate of 37s.

Private Mills.—There is still only one private mill in the island, but it is hoped that at least one other private mill will be working before another year has passed. The mill owned by Messrs. Solomon & Co., was running continuously throughout the year, and dealt with 1,451 tons of green leaves, producing 152 tons of fibre and 43 tons of tow.

The year under review has been an exceptionally favourable one to the industry generally. The abnormally high prices obtaining on the London market have enabled the Government mill to accumulate substantial reserve funds, and at the same time cultivators have benefited considerably by the proportionately high prices they have received for their leaves. This has naturally encouraged further clearing and planting operations, and the amount of land now under flax cultivation may be estimated at 730 acres, which figure is likely to increase year by year. The industry is now the most valuable asset the Colony possesses. It is capable of still further development and expansion, in the way of both planting and milling; and it only remains for private enterprise and capital to take advantage of what has now been proved to be a paying industry.

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

		<i>Receipts.</i>		
Work sold—		£	s.	d.
League of Empire (London) .. ..	.. ..	10	11	6
South Africa .. .. ..	.. ..	354	19	10
Local .. .. ..	.. ..	75	15	11½
		£441 7 3½		
		<i>Expenditure.</i>		
Pay of workers		£	s.	d.
Purchase of material .. .. ..	.. ..	149	6	2
Rent, rates and taxes .. .. ..	.. ..	14	0	1½
Incidentals .. .. ..	.. ..	22	0	0
		12	7	4
		£197 13 7½		

The year under review was in some respects a critical one in the history of the Government Lace School. As was anticipated, the European War seriously affected the saleability of the school's work, especially so far as London sales were concerned, and by the middle of the year funds began to run short. As an alternative to saddling the school with further debt it was decided to endeavour to realise

a portion of the considerable assets which the school possessed in the shape of accumulated stocks of unsold work. With this object in view the school was temporarily closed, and the Manageress, Miss Girdwood, was deputed on a special mission to South Africa. The success of the tour exceeded all expectations, and resulted in a net profit of £341, of which £100 represented repayment of orders for work. In consequence, by the end of the year, the school was enabled to pay off its outstanding liabilities and to start again with a clean sheet. This satisfactory result is entirely due to the personal efforts of Miss Girdwood, who, with her usual untiring devotion to the interests of the school, spared no personal trouble or expense to make her tour in South Africa a success.

(D.) SHIPPING.

The number of vessels that called at the island during the year was 45, being 35 less than in the previous year, and the lowest on record. The tonnage was 200,393, as compared with 396,956 in 1914. Vessels of three nationalities called during the year, British heading the list with a total of 39, followed by Norwegian five, and Dutch one. There were no visits from whaling vessels. This marked decrease of shipping, under all flags, must be attributed to the dislocation of shipping and the adverse effect on marine trade in general caused by the War.

The mail service was continued by the Union-Castle Company under contract with the Imperial Government. This company provide a four-weekly service to and from England and South Africa, which has, with a few exceptions, been regularly and punctually carried out.

On the 15th November, part of the crew (18 souls, including the captain) of the British steamship "Indian Monarch," of Glasgow, reached the west side of the island in an open row-boat, which was assisted to the shore by the harbour master's boat. The "Indian Monarch" was on a voyage from New York to New Zealand and Australia with general cargo, and was burnt at sea, about 420 miles S.S.E. of St. Helena. The total crew of 35 left the burning vessel in two boats, one of which, containing 17 hands, has not been heard of since.

The total number of vessels sighted was 102, or 31 less than in 1914. Of this number 57 were communicated with by signal and 45 were boarded by the harbour master. No vessels were boarded by licensed traders, as the Ordinance governing "trading with passing vessels" has been suspended for the period of the War.

Twenty-seven vessels entered and cleared at the port of Jamestown during the year. The cargo shipped and discharged by these vessels amounted to 6,650 tons, as compared with 6,155 tons in the previous year.

III.—LEGISLATION.

Six Ordinances were enacted during the year under review, of which two were in connection with public expenditure, and the remainder dealt with Customs dues.

Eleven Proclamations were issued, five of which prescribed the maximum retail price at which articles of food might be sold; four dealt with matters connected with the War, and one exempted the St. Helena Volunteers from payment of the Road Tax.

IV.—EDUCATION.

There are nine elementary schools in the Island. Of these, three are Government schools, four are supported by the Hussey Charity Fund, one by the Benevolent Society, and one by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese. The last two receive annual grants-in-aid from the Colonial Government of £15 and £20 respectively.

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

	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
Government schools	161	197	358
Other schools	178	175	353

The usual elementary subjects have been taught and no changes in the ordinary curriculum have been considered necessary. Lessons on the causes and progress of the War have been given periodically to all standards, and the children have taken a keen and intelligent interest in the work.

It is unfortunate that the financial condition of the Colony does not admit of the introduction of a scheme of secondary or technical education.

The usual pupil teachers' classes have been held regularly throughout the year, under the personal supervision of Mr. Tucker, and have been well attended. Nine candidates sat for examination at the end of the year, of whom four were from the Government schools, four from the Hussey Charity, and one from the Benevolent Society school.

The schools were well attended, although there were 21 prosecutions under the Education Ordinance, an increase of 17 as compared with the previous year. This is largely due to the fact that the schools were not closed owing to sickness as in the past two or three years, but full terms were kept.

V.—GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

(A.) HOSPITAL.

There were 189 admissions to the civil hospital during the year, being an increase of 61 as compared with the previous year.

There were eleven deaths, a percentage of 5·7, as compared with nine deaths and a percentage of 7·3 in 1914.

The building of the new operating theatre, which was begun in the latter part of 1914, was unavoidably delayed owing to the difficulty of importing teak wood, but good progress was made towards the end of the year, and it is hoped that the building will be ready for use early in 1916.

The Hospital Emergency Fund continues to be of the greatest service in assisting the poorer patients to defray hospital expenses. The fund is supported entirely by voluntary subscriptions.

A few changes have taken place in the hospital staff. In August Miss Hart returned from leave and resumed her duties as lady superintendent.

Miss Davies arrived to join the nursing staff in February, replacing Miss Perkins, who had completed her three years' service in the Colony.

The Colonial Surgeon, Dr. Arnold, was absent from the Colony throughout the year, having obtained a temporary commission in the Royal Army Medical Corps for the period of the War. His duties were admirably carried out by Dr. Draper, who acted as Colonial Surgeon during the year.

The nursing and administration of the hospital have been carried out in the most exemplary manner by the lady superintendent, Miss Hart, and nursing staff.

(B.) SAVINGS BANK.

The number of depositors on the books of the Savings Bank on the 31st December was 133, the same number as in the previous year.

The total sum deposited during the year amounted to £2,167 7s. 0d., as compared with £2,006 17s. 0d. in 1914. Withdrawals amounted to £2,715 17s. 9d. Three depositors withdrew sums of £100 and over for investment in the War Loan.

The bank's transactions for the year showed an excess £117 0s. 6d. in revenue over expenditure.

The amount standing to the credit of depositors on the 31st December, 1914, was £8,752 18s. 9d. Against this amount stock to the value (purchase price) of £11,698 10s. 5d. is invested. The market value of this stock on the date named was £9,914.

VI.—JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

(A.) CRIMINAL.

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

Police Court.—In this Court 126 cases were dealt with by the police magistrate, as against 64 in the previous year. This number includes 37 prosecutions under the Education, Road Tax, and Drainage Ordinances.

In addition to the above, 102 trivial cases were dealt with by the police without having recourse to the Police Court.

There were fifteen cases of flogging, five for theft, and eight for mischievous conduct, one for assault, and one for juvenile smoking.

(B.) PRISONS.

The number of prisoners committed to gaol during the year was twenty-four, an increase of thirteen as compared with the previous year. The daily average number in gaol was 1·6, a decrease of ·8.

The cost of maintaining the gaol was £100 17s. 3d.

VII.—VITAL STATISTICS.

(A.) POPULATION.

The estimated civil population on the 31st December, 1915, amounted to 3,594, being an increase of 31 over the estimated population in 1914. This figure does not include the naval and military garrison, or the crew of the cable ship "Britannia."

Civilian emigrants numbered 63 and immigrants 60, as compared with 70 and 64 respectively in 1914.

Births numbered 87 and deaths 53.

The birth-rate was considerably lower than in 1914, being 24·4 as compared with 27·3. The number of illegitimate births registered was 30, as against 23 in 1914.

The death-rate slightly increased, being 14·7 as compared with 14·6 in the previous year.

Of the total number of deaths, eight were over 70 years of age, eight over 80, and one at the age of 96. Thirty-one deaths were in Jamestown, and twenty-two in the country districts.

Marriages solemnised during the year numbered 26, being four more than in 1914.

(B.) PUBLIC HEALTH.

There is nothing special to record as regards the health of the island, which was on the whole good during the year under review. There were two epidemics of influenza, one of which, in March and April, was exceptionally severe and spread very rapidly through the island. Fortunately there were no fatal cases, owing to the fact that the complication of broncho-pneumonia did not manifest itself as in previous epidemics.

There were no cases of enteric or dysentery during the year, but there were several new cases of both early and late tuberculosis to report. This disease, unfortunately, appears to be on the increase, and a sanatorium for the isolation of tuberculous patients is sadly needed.

The infant mortality was very high, due partly to malnutrition and partly to delay in seeking medical advice in cases of infantile diarrhoea, vomiting, and convulsions.

A scheme for improving the water supply in the Half Tree Hollow district has been approved, and will be carried out early in the coming year.

(C.) SANITARY.

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

There have been no prosecutions under the Public Health Ordinance.

The town water supply has been fairly good throughout the year. The erection of a tank on the wharf has so far met the requirements of shipping without causing any shortage in the town.

(D.) CLIMATE.

(a) METEOROLOGICAL STATION, HUTTS GATE.

Barometer.—The mean pressure for the year was 28·082 inches, as against 28·077 inches in the previous year.

Temperature.—The mean temperature was 61·9°, as compared with 61·7° in 1914. 83·0° was the absolute maximum, recorded on the 10th and 23rd April, the absolute maximum in the previous year being 81·6°, on the 9th February. The absolute minimum was 49·1°, on the 19th August, as against 51·0° on the 31st July in 1914.

Rainfall.—The total rainfall was 41·590 inches, being 7·630 inches less than in 1914. The maximum fall, 1·380 inches, was recorded on the 2nd May, as compared with 1·120 inches on the 28th August of the previous year. Eight inches of rain fell in July, on 29 days, which is considered a heavy monthly fall. The total number of rainy days during the year under report was 269, as compared with 288 in 1914.

Wind.—The mean force for the year was 2·9, which is equivalent to a velocity of between 14 and 17 miles per hour, and a slight increase over the velocity in the previous year. Thirteen calm days were recorded, which represents an increase of 10 days over 1914.

The prevailing direction of the wind throughout the year was south east.

VIII.—POSTAL, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

(A.) POST OFFICE.

Revenue.—The total revenue derived from the Post Office during the year under review amounted to £539 9s. 9d., being a decrease of £718 6s. 4d. as compared with the previous year. This large decrease is due to a falling off in the sale of postage stamps to non-resident collectors and dealers, the majority of whom are of enemy nationality. There is also a decrease in taxed mail matter owing to the fact that the troops of the garrison are exempted from this tax during the period of the war.

Expenditure.—The expenditure of the department was £447 19s. 0d., as compared with £399 13s. 4d. in the previous year. The increase is due to the General Post Office, London, having claimed a larger share of sea-carriage of mails from this Colony.

Money and Postal Orders.—Transactions under this head showed a net decrease of £892 as compared with the previous year.

(B.) TELEGRAPHS.

Communication by the Eastern Telegraph Company's submarine cables to Europe and South Africa was maintained without interruption throughout the year. No changes were made in the tariff rates. On the 31st December the company's local staff numbered 27, an increase of three as compared with the previous year.

(C.) TELEPHONES.

No changes have been made in the system, which has worked satisfactorily throughout the year. It is maintained entirely by private subscriptions.

The receipts from rents of instruments and message charges were £82 14s. 3d., and the expenditure on upkeep and salaries of employees was £80 2s. 4d.

IX.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

(A.) ROADS.

A sum of £562 5s. 11d. was expended during the year in maintaining the principal rural roads in a state of repair. The extension of the flax-growing industry causes increasing wear and tear on the

country roads, especially those leading to the mills. A small tax levied on leaves carted to the mills has enabled more money to be expended on road works, with satisfactory results. The purchase by the Colonial Government of additional animals and carts has also expedited the carting of road material, which had always hitherto been a matter of considerable difficulty and expense.

The roads, streets, and bridges in Jamestown were kept in order at an expenditure of £60.

The amount collected under the Road Tax Ordinance during the year was £66 18s. 0d., being £19 16s. 0d. less than in 1914. The tax was paid by 446 persons, as against 578 in the previous year, owing to exemptions being granted, under Article II. of the Ordinance, to members of the St. Helena Volunteers.

There were only two prosecutions for non-payment of the tax.

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

Five grants of Crown waste land were made during the year by the Commissioners of Crown Property, amounting to five acres. The above includes a grant of land to the Lord Bishop of the diocese for the extension of the present burial ground at St. Paul's Cathedral.

The general value of land remains the same, namely, good pasture or arable land at from £5 to £10 per acre.

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

There has been a slight improvement in the rate of wages, the ordinary wage for casual labour having been raised from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a day, whilst unskilled labourers permanently employed by the Public Works and other Government Departments, are paid at the rate of 2s. 6d. a day.

On the other hand, the cost of the actual necessities of life, as sold by retail in the shops, has again increased and is likely in some cases to go still higher.

The following table compares the present and pre-war prices of the staple articles of food:—

	Pre-war prices.	Present prices.	Increase per cent.
Flour per lb.	2d.	3d.	50
Rice „ „	2d.	2½d.	37
Sugar „ „	2½d.	4½d.	80
Bread per loaf	3d.	4d.	33
Salted Beef, per lb. ..	6d.	7d.	16
Salted Pork „ „ ..	8d.	9d.	12
Tinned Milk per tin ..	6d.	8d.	33

(D.) DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS.

Public Works Department.

The total expenditure for the year was £2,088 0s. 8d., of which £252 11s. 8d. was under "Works Extraordinary." Under the latter head a sum of £100 was expended in clearing a wide belt around Plantation Forest and planting with flax. This work should not only remove the immediate danger of invasion by white ants, but should also prove a very remunerative investment as soon as the flax is ready for milling.

Reconstruction of Jamestown Wharf.

Satisfactory progress has been made in this work, which was commenced in March, 1914, under the supervision of Mr. Alexander Thomson and his assistant, Mr. Hogg.

For the first three months of the year the weather was very unfavourable to under-water work and all operations had to be suspended for a period of five weeks. From April to August conditions were more favourable and good progress was made in spite of constant interruptions due to occasional spells of bad weather.

The reconstruction works were originally estimated to cost £11,000, and the total expenditure up to the end of the year under review amounted to £9,025 5s. 7d. It is hoped that the work will be completed in the course of the ensuing year.

(E.) MISCELLANEOUS.

The main feature of interest in an otherwise uneventful year of the Colony's life is the effect which the European War has had on its financial and economical conditions. As regards the former, it has to be noted that the Colony's revenue during the year under review was the lowest recorded since 1909, the year of the Colony's greatest financial depression. This set-back, however, may safely be regarded as only temporary, being due to abnormal conditions arising out of the War. On the other hand the general economic conditions prevailing in the Colony are a decided improvement on those obtaining in the previous year. The increased cost of living has been to a great extent counterbalanced by higher wages and abundance of employment. A considerable amount of money has been expended on the island by the Imperial Government in connection with military defence arrangements, and also on reconstruction of the Jamestown wharf. This latter work has given constant employment throughout the year to a considerable number of labourers from the town population, where the unemployment problem is always acutest. In the country districts, the thriving condition of the flax industry, with two mills running continuously throughout the year and the clearing and planting of new ground, has provided ample means of employment. These, together with service in the Volunteer Corps, have absorbed practically all surplus labour both in the town and country districts.

To a certain extent this improvement in economic conditions can only be regarded as temporary. The completion of the Jamestown wharf, the eventual withdrawal of the temporary garrison, and the disbandment of the local Volunteer Corps, are bound to cause a reaction. Fortunately the island has now a well-established and steadily growing industry to fall back upon, which will avert anything approaching a repetition of the serious unemployment problems which followed on the withdrawal of the permanent garrison in 1906. It may be confidently expected that the reaction, when it does come, will be nothing worse than a return to the moderate but steadily rising standard of prosperity which the Colony had reached during the years immediately preceding the outbreak of war.

H. E. S. CORDEAUX,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

The Castle,
St. Helena,
14th June, 1916.

COLONIAL REPORTS, &c.

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.
862	Straits Settlements 1914
863	Northern Territories of the Gold Coast "
864	Ashanti "
865	Cyprus 1914-1915
866	Swaziland "
867	Somaliland "
868	British Honduras 1914
869	British Solomon Islands 1914-1915
870	Tongan Islands Protectorate "
871	Barbados "
872	Falkland Islands 1914
873	Uganda 1914-1915
874	British Guiana "
875	Mauritius 1914
876	Leeward Islands 1914-1915
877	Trinidad and Tobago "
878	Nigeria 1914
879	Cayman Islands 1914-1915
880	St. Lucia "
881	East Africa Protectorate "
882	Imperial Institute 1914
883	Nyasaland 1914-1915
884	Gilbert and Ellice Islands "
885	Weihaiwei 1915
886	Zanzibar "
887	Fiji "
888	Sierra Leone "
889	Turks and Caicos Islands "
890	Gambia "
891	Trinidad and Tobago "
892	Hong Kong "
893	Ashanti "
894	Gold Coast "
895	Malta 1915-1916

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.