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ST. HELENA.

REPORT FOR 1924.

(For Report for 1923 see No. 1224.)



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No. 1251.

ST. HELENA.

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1924.

I.—Financial.*(a) REVENUE.*

The revenue for the year amounted to £12,699 4s. 1d., exclusive of any grant-in-aid, thus showing an increase, as compared with the previous year's revenue, of £1,189 14s. 9d.

With the exception of two, all heads of revenue were in excess of the estimate.

The increase in revenue was mainly due to larger imports, sale of postage stamps to non-resident dealers, and to a general improvement in the economic conditions of the Island.

There was a grant-in-aid of £4,000 to general revenue and a grant of £3,000 was authorised for ant-resisting timber for repairs to Government House. The latter grant was not, however, received, as it was not possible to arrange for the purchase of the timber within the financial year.

(b) EXPENDITURE.

The year's expenditure amounted to £14,182 3s. There were savings under all heads with the exception of one.

A gratifying feature of the year's finances was the reduction of the Colony's overdraft with the Crown Agents from £7,500 on 1st January to £1,500 on 31st December.

(c) ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

There was a marked improvement in the statement of assets and liabilities, the balance of assets over liabilities on the 31st December being £2,777 8s. 3d., as compared with £260 7s. 2d. on 31st December of the preceding year.

(d) CURRENCY.

Bills of exchange on the Crown Agents issued during the year amounted to £13,599 6s. 8d. There was no importation or exportation of specie.

II.—Trade, Agriculture and Industries.*(a) TRADE.**Revenue.*

The Customs revenue for the year under review amounted to £3,985 6s., being an increase of £469 18s. 2d. as compared with the revenue of the previous year.

The principal excesses of revenue appear under wharfage dues, £32 12s. 6d.; import duties, £257 13s. 1d.; tonnage dues, £198 17s. 9d.; and export wharfage, £53 17s. 7d.

The increase under import duties is due to a larger consumption of spirits, owing to the introduction of a cheaper brand, and to improved conditions generally. The increase under tonnage dues is due to two Admiralty colliers arriving within the year, and paying 1s. per ton on 3,559 tons of coal landed.

Expenditure.

The expenditure for the year on Customs services amounted to £438 6s. 6d., as against £376 5s. 9d. in 1923, showing an increase of £62 0s. 9d. This increase is due to the salary, £10, of the Registrar of Deeds, etc., being embodied in the Customs expenditure; increase of salary for crane overseer, £12; extra refund of duty on beer supplied to the troops, £10 7s. 8d.; and petty refunds of £14 17s. 4d.

Imports.

The value of imports in 1924 amounted to £51,421, as compared with £47,948 in 1923, thus showing an increase of £3,473. The principal increases occurred under animals, £376; butter and margarine, £537; coal, £727; rice, £342; wine, £322; foodstuffs (other than enumerated), £1,183; and machinery, £1,289.

Advantage having been taken of the arrival of Admiralty colliers, a large consignment of anthracite coal was imported for use in two of the flax mills. This accounts for the increase under coal. Rope machinery to the value of £1,600 is accountable for the increase under machinery.

Principal decreases appear under boats, £300; drapery and dry goods, £320; flour, £768; oilman stores, £478.

Exports.

The value of exports for the year under review amounted to £36,160, an increase of £9,794 when compared with the previous year. This increase is wholly due to the export of larger quantities of fibre and tow, which commanded a higher market price than in 1923. Fibre and tow exported during the year amounted to 694 and 284 tons respectively, valued at £27,078 and £7,113, as compared with the previous year's shipments of 634 and 216 tons, valued at £18,196 and £4,968. Decreases occurred under

rope, £488, the ropery having closed down during the year; potatoes, £490, none being exported; and sheep, £411, Ascension having imported the last-named direct from South Africa.

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

Owing to the absence of rain, the year under review, like its predecessor, cannot be considered favourable from an agricultural view-point. The potato crops were poor; in fact, this commodity had to be imported. June, July and August were very dry months, and pasture lands were getting bare and herbage short by September, when fortunately rain fell, which improved the position.

Maldivia Garden.—The amount derived from the sale of fruit from "Maldivia" was £83 15s. 5d., as against an expenditure of £67 16s. The balance standing to the credit of this fund at the end of the year was £33 9s. 1d.

Botley's Lay.—The revenue derived from the Government pasture lands at Botley's Lay amounted to £104 16s. 7d., the expenditure being £85 7s. 8d. A credit balance of £61 15s. 9d. remained on the 31st December.

Certain necessary improvements were undertaken during the year, the principal being the construction of drinking troughs for cattle.

Owing to the dry weather causing a scarcity of food some of the poorer people lost their cattle.

(c) INDUSTRIES.

Fibre.—The Government flax mill ran on 178 days, up to the 10th September of the year under review. On the 16th October the working of the mill was handed over to a private London company called The St. Helena Corporation, Ltd.

Particulars of output, etc., up to the 10th September, under Government control, are as follows:—946 tons of green leaf were milled, producing 102 tons of fibre and 32½ tons of tow. The average price obtained in the London market up to the above date was £33 per ton.

Under the control of the St. Helena Corporation, Ltd., from the 16th October to the 31st December, 345 tons green leaf were handled, producing 26 tons fibre and 17 tons tow.

Private Mills.—Messrs. Solomon & Co.'s mills at Sandy Bay and Broadbottom worked throughout the year. The following figures show the output of the mills named:—

Sandy Bay	..	..	..	142	tons fibre.
				28	tons tow.
Broadbottom	..	..	..	121½	tons fibre.
				33	tons tow.

Forty-six persons were employed at the mill at Sandy Bay and 40 at Broadbottom.

Messrs. Deason Brother's mill at Hutts Gate produced 245 tons fibre and 147 tons tow, employing 154 people.

Messrs. W. A. Thorpe & Son's mill at "Francis Plain" produced 90 tons fibre and 60 tons tow, and gave employment to 39 people.

(d) SHIPPING.

The number of vessels calling at the Port during the year under review was 34, being 3 less than in 1923. All of these were of British nationality, except one Norwegian whaler, one American yacht, and one American merchant ship. One British cruiser, H.M.S. "Weymouth," also visited the Colony.

The total number of vessels sighted at the station was 40, as compared with 51 in 1923.

Thirty vessels entered and cleared at the port of Jamestown, their net total tonnage being 131,592, as compared with 122,261 in the preceding year.

III.—Education.

The work of the schools went on efficiently during the year, and the general standard was well maintained. In one of the Government schools, in addition to the ordinary curriculum, a start has been made in freehand drawing and elementary algebra. It is hoped to extend these additions to the senior standards in the other schools.

The number of children attending school was:—

Government schools	..	..	..	..	236
Other schools	..	..	..	..	364

The attendance at school throughout the year was good. There were no prosecutions under the Education Ordinance.

The Superintendent of Education personally examined the schools at the end of each quarter, and he has expressed satisfaction at the good work each school is doing.

A technical class is sadly needed where instruction in carpentry and other crafts could be given, with advantage, to the bigger boys.

The pupil teachers have regularly received instructions from the Superintendent in English, arithmetic, elementary algebra, geography, physiography, and as an optional subject, shorthand. At the end of the year, of the seven receiving instruction, four passed out, having completed their four years' course, and are now graded as ex-pupil teachers preliminary to becoming second-class assistant teachers.

The needlework at the country school and girls' school in Jamestown has progressed with very satisfactory results.

IV.—Government Institutions.*(a) HOSPITAL.*

One hundred and sixty-nine persons were admitted to the hospital during the year, there being eight admissions less than in the previous year. There were three deaths, equivalent to 2 per cent., against 4·5 per cent. in the previous year.

The average number of indoor patients per day was 10.

(b) SAVINGS BANK.

On the 31st December of the year under review there were 206 depositors having accounts with the Government Savings Bank, as against 178 on the same date in 1923.

Cash deposits amounted to £3,452 12s. 9d., the deposits during the previous year having been £4,751 19s. 6d., a falling off of £1,299 6s. 9d. This is, however, due to the several local benefit societies re-depositing their funds during 1923 after the closing of the local branch of the National Bank of South Africa, in which bank their money was deposited.

Repayment to depositors amounted to £2,475 6s. 1d., compared with £2,349 13s. 9d. in the previous year.

Stock to the value of £12,082 0s. 10d., cost price, was invested on account of the Savings Bank on the 31st December.

V.—Judicial Statistics.*(a) CRIMINAL.**Supreme Court.*

Seven cases came before the Supreme Court during the year under review. Of these, five cases were heard, resulting in one acquittal and four convictions in which sentences were passed ranging from six to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour. The remaining two cases were referred to the Hilary Sessions.

The various charges involved included the following offences:—

- (a)* Causing actual bodily harm with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.
- (b)* Rape.
- (c)* Indecent assault with intent to commit a felony.
- (d)* Obtaining goods and money by false pretences.
- (e)* Forgery and uttering forged documents.
- (f)* Perjury.
- (g)* Larceny.

On the Civil side there has been very little court work.

Police Court.

Thirty-two cases were dealt with in this court, as against 57 in the preceding year. There were 18 convictions, 4 sent up for trial in the Supreme Court, 10 withdrawn or discharged.

Small Debts Court.

Only one case came before this court during the year.

(b) PRISONS.

Sixteen persons were sent to gaol during the year, as compared with 21 in 1923.

The daily average number in gaol was 2·9 as against 0·9 in 1923.

The cost of maintaining the gaol was £135 6s. 7d., an increase of £27 1s. 5d. over the previous year.

VI.—Legislation.

Four Ordinances were promulgated during the year namely:—

- No. 1. The Harbour (Amendment) Ordinance.
- No. 2. The Elementary Education (Amendment) Ordinance.
- No. 3. The Appropriation Ordinance.
- No. 4. The Supplementary Expenditure (1923) Ordinance.

Ordinance No. 1 makes provision for the harbour master to receive a boarding fee.

Ordinance No. 2 repeals Section IV of Ordinance No. 2 of 1903, entitled the Elementary Education Ordinance, 1903, which provided for the number of attendances at school in each year.

Ordinances Nos. 3 and 4. Both of these were in connection with public expenditure.

VII.—Vital Statistics.*(a) POPULATION.*

The civil population on the 31st December, 1924, was estimated at 3,703, an increase of 49 over that of the previous year.

Civil emigrants numbered 149 and immigrants 130, as compared with 191 and 101 respectively of the year previous.

There were 38 deaths during the year, as against 28 in 1923. Out of the 38 deaths, 11 were under the age of one year. The death-rate was 10·23 per 1,000, compared with 7·66 in 1923.

The number of births was 106 (not including 4 still-born), as against 114 (and 2 still-born) in the preceding year.

Illegitimates registered in 1924 were 36, being 8 less than in 1923.

Marriages solemnized during the year were 21, being 1 more than in the previous year.

(b) PUBLIC HEALTH.

It will be observed above that the infant mortality was large, but no specific reason can be assigned. The deaths were all from what might be termed natural causes in very young children.

A mild epidemic of influenza was prevalent in the months of February and March, but there was no appreciable rise in the death-rate on this account. On the whole the general health of the Colony during the year can be considered as good.

(c) SANITARY.

The Board of Health met regularly during the year and various matters were discussed and dealt with by the Board.

The drainage system worked very satisfactorily and the water supply proved ample and good.

There were no prosecutions under the Board of Health Ordinance during the year.

(d) CLIMATE.

Meteorological Statistics, Hutts Gate.

Barometer.—The mean pressure for the year was 28·100, as against 28·101 in the previous year.

Temperature.—The mean temperature was 60·3°, as compared with 62·0° in 1923.

The absolute maximum, 81·5°, was registered on the 1st March, as compared with 80·1° on the 25th July of the previous year.

The absolute minimum temperature was 51·1°, recorded on the 9th August, the corresponding record in 1923 having been 50·0° on the 8th July.

Wind.—The mean force for the year was 1·6, as against 1·8 in 1923.

There were 60 calm days, as compared with 23 in the previous year.

The direction for the year was as follows:—

S.E.	..	..	..	..	..	248 days.
S.S.E.	..	..	..	..	..	14 days.
E.S.E.	..	..	..	..	..	44 days.
Calm	..	..	..	..	..	60 days.

Rainfall.—The total rainfall recorded at Hutts Gate for the year was 33·160 in., as against 45·740 in 1923. The maximum fall, 1·11 in., was recorded on the 7th February. It will be observed that the year was a particularly dry one, just over 12½ fewer inches of rain falling than in the previous year. August, which is generally a wet month, was very dry, 1·73 in. only having been recorded on 13 days. Rain fell on 174 days, as compared with 193 in 1923.

The total rainfall recorded in Jamestown for the year under review was 3·87.

VIII.—Postal, Telegraph and Telephone Services.

(a) POST OFFICE.

Revenue.

The total revenue from all sources for the year under review amounted to £3,514 2s. 6d., being an increase over the previous year's revenue of £81 19s. 3d. This increase is principally accounted for by the sale of postage stamps to non-resident dealers.

Expenditure.

Postal expenditure amounted to £885 9s. 9d., an increase of £112 13s. 5d. over that of 1923. This is mainly due to the printing of new stamps for the Dependency of Ascension, and carriage of mails.

The net income of the Colony for the year from all postal transactions was £2,628 12s. 9d.

Mail Matter.

The mail matter dealt with at the Post Office during the year will be gathered from the following summary:—

From the United Kingdom and elsewhere—	1923.	1924.
Bags of mail	225	241
Parcels	2,267	2,160
Registered articles	1,475	2,341
To the United Kingdom and elsewhere—		
Bags of mail	100	103
Parcels	573	476
Registered articles	2,238	2,073

Money and Postal Orders.

Under this head the transactions were as follows:—

	1923.	1924.
	£	£
To the United Kingdom and South Africa	11,836	11,188
From the United Kingdom and South Africa	2,375	2,518

The amount of commission received on the above transactions for the year was £127 4s. 5d., a decrease of £33 14s. 8d. as compared with the previous year.

(b) TELEGRAPHS.

There are no inland telegraphs. There is an important cable station maintained by The Eastern Telegraph Company with a staff of 16.

(c) TELEPHONES.

The telephone system, which is supported by private subscribers, works satisfactorily. The receipts from messages during the year amounted to £112 10s. 2d., with an expenditure of £101 1s. 10d. The corresponding figures for the previous year were £84 9s. 3d. and £94 8s. 8d. respectively.

IX.—General Observations.

(a) ROADS.

The rural roads were maintained during the year at a cost of £910 1s., a saving under the estimated cost of £39 19s. The amount spent during the previous year on this service was £976 8s. 6d.

The year was exceptionally dry and there was an absence of floods in March, consequently the roads did not suffer to the same extent as in previous years. The work on the roads was more in the nature of patching. The greatest difficulty in road-making in St. Helena is transport, as material has very often to be carried over considerable distances and, owing to the hilly nature of the Island, this is both laborious and slow. From the savings effected under the vote, two mules were imported from South Africa. These have proved to be of immense help in transport of road-mending material. On the whole the roads were maintained in good order, which reflects very creditably on those responsible for this service.

(b) REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS.

Of the vote of £550 for this service a sum of £494 11s. 5d. was expended during the year. This covered the wages of the artisans and labourers employed, and importation of stores. Several very necessary repairs were carried out, which included renovating "Maldivia House" and stables, painting "Plantation House," painting the Post Office, repairs to Longwood New House and stables, rebuilding a wall at the Court House, repairs to the Country School, and many other minor works.

It was not possible to import the cypress timber, for which a special grant had been voted, during the year, for renovating Government House. It is hoped that this consignment of timber will arrive early in 1925.

(c) LAND GRANTS.

Thirty grants of land for flax-growing and the building of cottages were made during the year, covering a total of 31½ acres.

(d) RATE OF WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

The cost of living was slightly higher than in 1923, made so by a rise in price of certain essentials as will be observed from the following summary:—

	1923.	1924.
Flour	3d. per lb.	3½d.
Bread	4d. per 1½ lb.	5d.
Sugar	6d. per lb.	5d.
Dripping	1s. per lb.	1s. 4d.
Tea	2s. 3d. per lb.	2s. 3d.
Salt	2d. per lb.	2d.
Rice	3d. per lb.	3½d.

Rates of wages remained the same as in the previous year, viz., 2s. to 2s. 6d. daily. There was very little unemployment during the year, the several local flax mills, the Eastern Telegraph Company, and the Phosphate Company at Ascension having absorbed nearly all the available labourers.

(e) DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS.

An expenditure of £2,414 10s. 10d. was incurred under "Works Recurrent" during the year under review, out of which £910 was expended in repair of roads and £494 in repair of buildings.

Poor Board.

The revenue of the Poor Board amounted to £1,024 16s. 6d., and the expenditure to £885 13s. 2d., as against £1,072 16s. 5d. and £930 8s. 5d. respectively in 1923.

Public Market.

The revenue of the market for the year was £37 6s. 3d. and expenditure £46 19s. 11d.

Dog Tax.

£110 10s. was collected under Dog Tax as compared with £102 in 1923.

(f) MISCELLANEOUS.

It is with regret that I have to record the death, in August of the year under review, of Colonel R. F. Peel, C.M.G., after a very short illness.

It is many years since a Governor has died at his post in this Colony, the last having been the late Mr. H. R. Janish, C.M.G., in 1884.

The death of Colonel Peel came as a great shock to all classes of the community, and his loss was universally mourned. His sound administration, his great interest in agriculture, and his striking personality, soon won for him the confidence and esteem of the Island people.

The Honourable W. J. J. Arnold acted as Governor from the death of Colonel Peel until the end of the year.

Dr. F. de C. Keogh, Acting Colonial Surgeon, left the Colony on the 31st December, having completed his three years' engagement.

ASCENSION.

The administration of Ascension for the time being is undertaken by the Eastern Telegraph Company, who worthily maintain the tradition of the Admiralty administration.

The Superintendent of the Company acts as Resident Magistrate, and certain other members of the staff perform harbour and postal duties.

The revenue for Ascension for the year 1924 was £4,581 7s. 8d. and the expenditure £2,267 1s. 8d. The accounts of the Dependency are controlled at St. Helena and merged with the general accounts of the Colony.

C. H. HARPER,
Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

THE CASTLE,
ST. HELENA,
21st May, 1925.

COLONIAL REPORTS, Etc.

The following recent reports, etc., 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, etc.	Year.
1225	Barbados	1923-1924
1226	Somaliland	1923
1227	Kenya Colony and Protectorate	"
1228	Hongkong	"
1229	Northern Territories of the Gold Coast	1923-1924
1230	Colonial Survey Committee Report	1914-1923
1231	Cayman Islands	1923
1232	Leeward Islands	1923-1924
1233	Federated Malay States	1923
1234	Mauritius	"
1235	Straits Settlements	"
1336	Seychelles	"
1237	Tongan Islands Protectorate	1923-1924
1238	Brunei	1923
1239	Unfederated Malay States	"
1240	St. Lucia	"
1241	Bahamas	1924
1242	Falkland Islands.. .. .	1923
1243	Ceylon	"
1244	Basutoland.. .. .	1924
1245	Nigeria	"
1246	Gilbert and Ellice Islands	1923-1924
1247	Bermuda	1923
1248	Weihaiwei	1924
1249	Gambia	"
1250	Brunei	"

MISCELLANEOUS.

No.	Colony, etc.	Subject.
83	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1910.
84	West Indies	Preservation of Ancient Monuments, etc.
85	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1911.
86	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1912.
87	Ceylon	Mineral Survey.
88	Imperial Institute.. .. .	Oilseeds, Oils, etc.
89	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1913.
90	St. Vincent.. .. .	Roads and Land Settlement.
91	East Africa Protectorate	Geology and Geography of the northern part of the Protectorate.
92	Colonies—General	Fishes of the Colonies.
93	Pitcairn Island	Report on a visit to the Island by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.