

ST. HELENA.

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GOVERNOR VICE-ADMIRAL PATEY to the EARL OF KIMBERLEY.

MY LORD, St. Helena, March 17, 1873.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith the Blue Book for the year 1872.

2. In my Dispatch, dated 12th July last, I reported to your Lordship the falling-off of the revenue below the amount which had been estimated, caused mainly by diminished receipts from the Customs.

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The estimates for 1872 were - - -	16,125
The actual receipts - - -	13,927
	2,198

The receipts in aid were 4,208*l.* from a Parliamentary loan, and 8,250*l.* loan raised by the Crown Agents, making the total receipts 26,385*l.*

3. The expenditure in the year amounted to 27,375*l.* This amount, however, includes the payment of 4,208*l.*, part of the Parliamentary loan of 5,158*l.* specially voted in 1871 for payment of outstanding debts, but brought to account in 1872. It also includes the amount of arrears due to the Crown Agents on 31st December, 1871, 5,141*l.*, and arrears of salary, 640*l.*, due to the Governor for 1871, paid in 1872. After deducting these amounts the sum of 17,386*l.* would remain as the expenditure for the service of the year 1872.

4. The amount of public debt at the end of 1872 was 16,750*l.*, of which 8,250*l.* was raised during the year.

5. I have already in my former reports fully laid before your Lordship the depressed condition of the Island, and I regret to say that there is nothing in these figures, nor in any other circumstance which I am aware of, that points to any return to prosperity.

6. From the falling-off of trade, and the diminished means of employment, a large number of the best labourers and artificers have left the Island in search of a more remunerative field,—280 have emigrated to the Cape of Good Hope, the greater portion of whom have been engaged for service in the copper mines in Namaqualand. A party of thirty or forty were first engaged for this employment, and passages were provided by the Copper-mine Company, from this to Port Nolloth. In consequence of the satisfaction which these emigrants gave to their employers, several shipments, in parties of 30 or 40 each, have since been despatched to Port Nolloth, and others are likely to follow: 261 liberated Africans were also on 11th October, 1872, forwarded to Lagos and Sierra Leone, passages to these places being provided for them by Government in Her Majesty's ship 'Himalaya.'

7. From the absence of capital and want of means of employment of labour, and from the reduction of the establishments, civil and military, all landed property has become greatly depreciated in value. Rents on an average have fallen about 33 per cent. below their former amount. The Government lands at Longwood which have yielded a rental of 313*l.* per annum during the last twenty-one years, could not on the expiration of the lease be relet for a higher rent than 195*l.*, although repeatedly advertised. The lands at Deadwood, formerly let at 135*l.*, are now let at 60*l.* per annum. Sales of land cannot be effected at all except at a ruinous sacrifice. A property which had twice within the last eight years realized 400*l.* could not be sold a few days ago for a higher sum than 80*l.* Another property costing over 800*l.* sold for 185*l.*

8. Attention has been turned to the cultivation of fibre plants, chiefly the aloe and the New Zealand flax. I am not able to say what the prospects of success may be, as the experiment has hardly yet commenced.

9. I have obtained from Mr. Chalmers, the Superintendent of Government Forests, a Report upon the experiments of the last year, herewith enclosed, in which he expresses the opinion that, in order to succeed with the fibre plantation in this Island, cultivation should be carefully attended to, and that the plants cannot be left (as some have supposed they might be) to the operation of nature alone, and from my own experience and means of information I entirely concur in this opinion. His Report also shows that the experiments in the growth of coffee at the grounds at Plantation have been most encouraging.

10. From these various causes of depression it is evident that the Island cannot in future, as hitherto, depend for its support upon the expenditure of the naval, military and civil establishments and passing shipping; and as no article of export can be produced without capital, which must lie dormant for some years, and then doubtful of any return, I am led to think that the future prospects of this Island are very far from encouraging.

11. The situation of St. Helena in mid-ocean (sighted by all ships from India, and a very large number from Australia) renders it a most important position for Imperial purposes as a coaling station and depôt for vessels of war, and it would be highly desirable that it should not be allowed to fall into insignificance, more particularly as in the event of hostilities the sinking of one ship in the Suez Canal (either by accident or design) might effectually close that passage—consequently the situation of this Island, in my opinion, is of the highest importance, and not inferior to that of Malta or Gibraltar. Two or three steamers stationed here would intercept the whole of the returning trade from the East.

12. During the year the number of vessels arriving at St. Helena was 667, being 91 less than the year 1871—375 vessels also passed through the harbour and communicated by signal. In addition to these a very large number of vessels pass during the night.

13. It will be observed from the return of deaths that the year has been remarkably healthy, the total number of deaths not exceeding 67. or about 1 per cent. of the population, more than

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Mr. Chalmers's Report.

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14. The gaol returns show 125 as the total number of commitments during the year, chiefly summary convictions by the magistrates of seamen from the passing shipping for refusal of duty, or persons convicted of drunkenness or disorderly conduct. There were no cases of serious crime, and indeed only two cases in the whole year of commitments by the Supreme Court, both for larceny.

15. The schools are fourteen in number, with 995 scholars. I attended the annual examinations in December, and found the schools in a satisfactory state.

16. The other returns in the Blue Book call for no particular observation.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) CHAS. G. E. PATEY, Vice-Admiral,
Governor.

The Earl of Kimberley,
&c. &c. &c.

REPORT on the CINCHONA PLANTATION, &c., in the ISLAND of ST. HELENA, from December 12, 1871, to March 7, 1873.

In consequence of the unsatisfactory condition of the Cinchona plants at the date of my last year's Report, no further planting has been proceeded with during the past year. All necessary care has, however, been taken of the plantation, so that nothing might be wanting to give it a fair chance; nevertheless, it is still found that the number of plants continues to decrease, and no change for the better is as yet at all perceptible in their condition. Since about this time last year the total number of all kinds has gradually diminished to 358 plants, while only 262 of this number can be said to be in a healthy or thriving state at the present time; the remaining 96 are in a state of decay. About 100 plants are now over six feet in height, and some of them have increased considerably in size since last year. The tallest plant shows for the year an increase of 16 inches in height and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, and is now 11 feet high with a stem of $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches round. A few others have made equally as much progress in the same period of time, and vary from 8 to 10 feet in height with stems of 8 to 10 inches in circumference. It is found as a rule, however, that the plants are at their greatest vigour at the height of 7 or 8 feet; over this height their leaves become smaller, and altogether they become stunted, sickly, and finally die. As I have previously stated, the Cinchonas grow here only in the layer of black vegetable soil that is found on the most elevated parts of the Island, and which is formed by the decomposition of the leaves and other matter that falls from the indigenous forest trees. Unlike the hardier native trees, their roots refuse to penetrate the hard rocky ground beneath, and so they invariably die shortly after they reach it.

2. With respect to the fruit trees at Plantation, their progress since last year has been in most cases very satisfactory. Many of the Cherimover trees have arrived at a bearing state, and promise to do

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3. Regarding the cultivation of fibre-producing plants, it does not appear to me that much can be said from actual experience already had in the Island. The cost of planting, the length of time (from five to six years) required for the plants to come to maturity, and the quality of produce to a given space, would all, no doubt, vary greatly according to circumstances; but it is, however, very evident that nothing like a satisfactory result would ever be obtained unless a thorough system of cultivation were adopted. The ground would have to be well broken up, manured and kept free from weeds; otherwise a greater length of time than five or six years would be required for the crop to arrive at maturity, and the quantity of produce would not be near so large.

4. Experience has already shown that planting aloes, and especially New Zealand flax, in pits in grass lands does not answer, and that it is necessary to thoroughly prepare the land. The greater expense of proper cultivation would, I feel sure, be more than compensated by the much sooner return and greater quantity of produce.

5. Several very great improvements have been effected in the grounds about "Plantation House" within the last two or three years. The carriage roads from Red Hill Gate and White Gate have each been well macadamized, and a large number of valuable and ornamental trees planted alongside of them and about the grounds. The most conspicuous of these are the Norfolk Island pines, Bermuda cedars, and several species of cypress, all of which succeed remarkably well here, and give great effect to the place. It may fairly be presumed that Plantation was never before in so creditable a state as it is in at present.

6. The two gardens in town have also been very much improved lately. The one at the lower end of the town, or, as it is commonly called, the Castle Garden, has had some very fine trees and shrubs planted in it, and with the stone-edging to the walks it now presents a neat and agreeable appearance. The Norfolk Island pines introduced there have made most rapid progress in the short space of time since they were planted, and a few of them in front of the Civil Hospital in particular have made most astonishing growth. In the country it is very necessary to shelter young trees of this, and, in fact, of almost any kind: the prevailing trade-wind, blowing continually in one direction, has a very retarding effect upon their growth.

(Signed) J. H. CHALMERS,
Supt. of Cinchona Plantations, &c.