

The average rainfall of Malta and Gozo during the year was 26 inches against 14·11 in 1876.

The mean temperature of the year was 68°, the maximum being 93° (23rd and 24th August) and the minimum 45° (3rd March).

General Remarks.

The health of the Island was good throughout the year, and there was no epidemic disease.

The Customs receipts, which bring in nearly four-fifths of the revenue, notwithstanding the unprecedented amount obtained in 1876 when they amounted to 115,553*l.*, yielded in 1877 1,504*l.* 15*s.* 0*d.* above the estimate calculated on the average receipts of the last three years, and only 330*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.* below the average of the last 10 years. Taking into consideration, therefore, the special circumstances of the war, which caused a general depression of trade in Malta, as also the abandonment of the smallest enterprise, there was no alarming symptom at the end of 1877 of any prolonged falling off in the revenue, or of any permanent undesirable condition of the population.

In the shipping there was a considerable decrease, by which a loss of 1,139*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.* was sustained. The trade with the East, owing to the war, was virtually extinct, and the harbour statistics between 26th December 1876 and 25th December 1877 showed the following falling off in arrivals:—In 1876, arrivals of steamers, 2,521; sailing vessels, 2,136. In 1877, steamers, 2,164; sailing vessels, 1,725; decrease in steamers, 357; in sailing vessels, 411. No doubt the above decrease and the absence of the fleet must have considerably depressed the prosperity of that part of the population, which (wives and families included) have been calculated at 60,000 persons, or about half the entire population of Malta, and who may be said to be entirely dependent upon the movement in the harbour for their existence.

Other depressions in the revenue of 1877 were,—under wheat 4,392*l.*, and under inferior wine 3,403*l.* 4*s.* 4*d.* This latter had been anticipated; the vintage of 1876 had been full up to its average yield in Sicily, but not so on continental wine giving countries, and Italy had entered the Sicilian market as a purchaser. This circumstance naturally raised the price, for the demand for wine in 1877 had risen to a third more than the entire yield of the vintage; hence the falling off in the imports and the above quoted loss to the revenue.

Much progress was made in the drainage and sewage works, to the cost of the execution of which the Imperial Government have agreed to pay three-sevenths against four-sevenths local; and it is calculated that in a year's date from the present time the drainage works on the Three City side of the harbour will have been completed, leaving only the Valetta side for completion. This work is one of vital importance, not only to the local com-

munity, but to the health of the Imperial forces, and the works are being very ably and vigorously carried out under the superintendence of Colonel Wray, the Commanding Royal Engineer.

The reconstruction of the Theatre Royal was completed, and this beautiful building re-opened to the public on the 15th of October.

The Island has been perfectly quiet during the year 1877.

I have, &c.

(Signed) VICTOR HOULTON,
Chief Secretary to Government.

To his Excellency
General Sir Arthur Borton, K.C.B.,
&c. &c. &c.

ST. HELENA.

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No. 15.

Governor JANISCH, C.M.G., to the Right Hon. Sir MICHAEL
HICKS BEACH, Bart., M.P.

SIR, St. Helena, March 12, 1878.

I HAVE the honour to forward the Blue Book returns for the year 1877.

The revenue for the year, which was estimated at 12,780*l.*, amounted to 12,781*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* Under the head of customs the estimate was 10,000*l.*, the receipts 9,807*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.* The estimate was made in anticipation of an increase in the tariff as reported in my despatch No. 48 of 31st October 1876 which did not take effect, and the collections were made under the old tariff. This tariff had yielded only 9,554*l.* 11*s.* 1*d.* in 1876, and of this amount 1,447*l.* 9*s.* 2*d.* was derived from 13 vessels discharging for repairs. In 1877, notwithstanding there were only six of such vessels paying 438*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.*, the total for customs in that year exceeded that of 1876 by the amount before stated, owing to an increase in the general trade and imports.

The receipts for postage amount to 529*l.* 18*s.* 1*d.* In 1876 the postage was 1,102*l.* 0*s.* 1*d.*, but this included 779*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.* collected as a subsidy to the mail steamers. In 1877 under the new mail contract the share of subsidy to the mail steamers is settled for through the London office, and only the net revenue is received at the Colonial Treasury.

The other heads of revenue call for no remark.

The expenditure for 1877 (excluding 750*l.* for debentures) amounted to 12,256*l.* 16*s.* 0½*d.*, as against 12,579*l.* 9*s.* 11½*d.* in

1876. The reduction would have been much more considerable if the expenditure for 1877 had not included payments at the Cape of Good Hope on account of pensions, and also a mail subsidy, which belong rather to the service of the preceding year. A number of the pensioners reside at the Cape of Good Hope, and are paid in that Colony. No claim was made for such advances in 1876, but in the present year the account has been brought up to the latter part of 1877, including two years' payments, and causing an apparent increase in the charge for pensioners of 438*l.* 10*s.* 7*d.* over the estimate. The amount also of 387*l.* 0*s.* 1*d.* paid to the mail company in January 1877 was for services rendered in the preceding year. All future payments on this account will be made by the London office, which under the new contract retains the share of postage appropriated for this service.

In addition to the above expenditure the outstanding debt has been lessened by the annual payment of 750*l.* off the debentures, which are now reduced to 13,000*l.*, and a sum also of 5,000*l.* due to the Bank of England for advances made in former years, has been paid off by a Parliamentary grant.

The under-mentioned reductions in the establishment have been effected during the course of the year.

	£	s.	d.
In the salary of Colonial Surgeon - - -	220	0	0
" " Wardmaster, Civil Hospital - - -	134	10	0
" " Treasury officer - - -	200	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£554	10	0

These savings will take full effect in the current year (1878), when the whole of the expenditure (exclusive of 750*l.* for reduction of debt) will not exceed 11,000*l.*

In October last I reported the criminal misconduct of Mr. —, the Treasury officer, who had embezzled the sum of 2,167*l.* 0*s.* 8*d.* out of balances retained in the chest for the savings bank. He was tried and convicted at the last January sessions, and is now undergoing his sentence in the gaol at James' Town.

Under the decree of the Acting Chief Justice a sale was made of his property real and personal, which amounted to 757*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*, of which 525*l.* with interest was due to Government on account of his bond to the Widows Fund, and the balance has been paid into the Colonial Treasury. A saving has been effected of 200*l.* per annum by the transfer of his duty to Mr. Knipe, the Assistant Colonial Secretary, and the pension to which he was otherwise entitled has been forfeited and will be saved to the Colony.

The trade of the Island has shown some improvement as compared with the year 1876. The imports in 1877 amount to 71,125*l.*, exclusive of 82,600*l.* for oil transhipped at the port from the Southern Whale Fishery; the amounts in 1876 being respectively 49,504*l.* and 38,040*l.*, and the total number of ships 664 in 1877 against 582 in 1876.

The exports amount to 2,143*l.* It has already been pointed out that the Island possessed no export trade of its own until recently, when efforts have been made both to establish the growth of fibre for exportation and also a whale fishery; 243 bales of fibre were prepared and exported in 1877 against 110 bales in 1876, and there will be a further extension of these works in the present year. The whale fishery, which afforded 5,600*l.* in 1876, returned 5,800*l.* in 1877, but as the shipment of the oil taken in 1877 has been delayed, the latter sum does not appear in the customs returns of exports for 1877.

The school returns show 1,147 pupils, or nearly the same as former years, and the management of the several public schools continues to be satisfactory.

The criminal returns show five convictions for indictable offences in the Supreme Court and 271 cases of summary convictions before the magistrates, or nearly 100 less than last year, in which the number of convictions against seamen from the passing shipping was larger than usual.

The returns of deaths, although favourable enough as compared with most other places, are unfavourable as compared with the last two years. The deaths in 1875 and 1876 were 50 and 69, whilst in 1877 98 deaths occurred, but of these 55 were infants, and the increase was caused chiefly by inflammatory catarrhs, the only epidemic from which the Island occasionally suffers.

The cases treated in hospital were 184 or 43 more than in 1876; 57 of these were severe cases of intermittent fever landed from vessels homeward bound from Mauritius and Java, where the fever had been contracted. There were also several cases of serious fracture of limbs caused to seamen by falls from aloft. Many of the seamen landed from the passing ships from these two causes were in such a condition that death must have soon ensued without speedy medical aid, but the relief afforded to them in the hospital at this Island was happily the means of preserving life in every one of these cases.

I have, &c.
(Signed) HUDN. R. JANISCH.

The Right Hon.
Sir M. E. Hicks Beach, Bart.,
&c. &c. &c.