

HER MAJESTY'S COLONIAL POSSESSIONS.

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No. 18.

ST. HELENA.

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REPORT ON THE BLUE BOOK  
FOR 1887.

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
*July 1888.*

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The following Reports relating to Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued and may be obtained from the sources indicated on the title page:—

No.	Colony.	Year.	Price.
1	Virgin Islands - -	1886	<i>d.</i> 1
2	Mauritius, Seychelles, and Rodrigues.	"	2
3	Gambia - - -	"	1
4	Victoria - - -	"	2½
5	New Zealand - - -	"	5
6	Tobago - - -	1887	1
7	Gibraltar - - -	"	1
8	Gold Coast (Governor's visit to the Eastern Districts).	1888	1
9	Heligoland - - -	1887	1
10	Natal - - -	"	1
11	Straits Settlements - -	"	1½
12	Gold Coast (Sanitary Reports).	—	1s. 4 <i>d.</i>
13	Jamaica and Turks Islands -	1887	2½
14	Newfoundland - - -	1886	1
15	Grenada - - -	1887	1½
16	Trinidad - - -	"	1½
17	Bermuda - - -	"	1

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[For previous Reports, see 1886 [C.—5239]; 1885 [C.—4842]; 1884 [C.—4583]; 1882 [C.—3794]; 1881 [C.—3218]; 1880 [C.—3094].]

Administrator GREY-WILSON to LORD KNUTSFORD.

The Castle, St. Helena,

May 16, 1888.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith the Blue Book for 1887, and my report upon the same.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. GREY-WILSON,

The Right Hon. Administering the Government.  
Lord Knutsford, G.C.M.G.

BLUE BOOK REPORT, 1887.

*Taxes, Duties.*

No change was made during 1887.

*Revenue and Expenditure*

The revenue was 8,043*l.*, the smallest ever collected in this Colony. To this must be added 3,000*l.* on account of grant in aid, making a total revenue of 11,043*l.* against an expenditure of 11,369*l.*; but as the revenue exceeded the expenditure in 1886 there remained a surplus of 976*l.* on the 1st January 1887 to help the revenue for that year. The decrease of revenue was due entirely to the falling off in the Customs takings; nearly every other item shows a slight increase. The falling off in the Customs was due to the absence of leaky ships, not one of which arrived during 1887, and to the epidemic of measles, which caused widespread distress and a consequent diminution in the consumption of imports. The expenditure shows an increase of 160*l.* as compared with the previous year. This increase was due to damage caused by flood to the Jamestown run.

*Public Debt.*

The debt on the 31st December 1887 was 4,250*l.* in debentures at 7 per cent., 1,000*l.* having been paid off during the year; there is also a sum of 5,158*l.* due to the Imperial Treasury, but paying

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no interest. The assets of the Colony on the 31st December were 8,762*l.*, and the liabilities, including loans, were 17,891*l.* This discloses a fairly healthy financial condition, for while the liabilities exceed those of the previous year by 854*l.*, the assets exceed those of 1886 by 1,581*l.* The pension list stood at the remarkable high sum of 2,230*l.*, being two thirds of the cost of the entire present Civil Establishment.

#### *Military Expenditure.*

The garrison consisted of one company of the Royal Scots and one battery of Artillery, maintained at a cost to the Imperial Government of 16,080*l.*

A sum of 3,786*l.* was expended by the Imperial Government upon the defence of the port as a coaling station; two heavy batteries commenced in 1886 were completed, and considerable progress was made with two more on the heights overlooking Jamestown.

#### *Public Works.*

The maintenance of buildings cost 313*l.*, forests and roads 181*l.*, the water supply, including drainage, 714*l.*, of which some 200*l.* was expended upon the reconstruction and repair of "the run" passing through Jamestown, which was very much damaged by heavy floods in the early part of the year. The water supplied by Government continues to be of first rate quality.

#### *Legislation.*

Eight Ordinances were passed, of which the most important are:—

No. 1. "To regulate inquiries into wrecks." This law enables the Governor to appoint a Receiver, who may take charge of, regulate, and inquire into the circumstances of all ships wrecked or damaged on or near the coast.

No. 2. "Declaratory of the laws in force." By this Ordinance so much of the law of England for the time being as is applicable to local circumstances is in force in this Island.

This law is prospective as well as retrospective.

No. 4. "To amend the law relating to jurors." The Chief Justice may cause any case to be tried by a special instead of a common jury.

No. 7. "For controlling the endowment of the bishopric of St. Helena." This Ordinance has been passed to prevent confusion and difficulty on the occurrence of a vacancy in the see, and to secure the due administration of the bishopric funds during such vacancy.

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#### *Council.*

Major P. W. H. Miles, R.A., commanding the Royal Artillery, and Mr. Thomas Edmund Fowler were sworn of the Executive Council, raising the number of the Council to six.

The second senior officer on the Island has a seat in Council only during such time as the Government of the Island is administered by the officer commanding the troops.

#### *Civil Establishment.*

On the 4th of October, Colonel Grant Blunt, R.E., commanding the troops and ex-officio Acting Governor, was relieved by Lieut.-Colonel Woodward, R.E., and on the same day I assumed the administration of the Government by virtue of Her Majesty's Commission of 15th August 1887.

The Colonial Engineer Department has for many years been supervised and conducted by the Royal Engineer staff, but on October 4th the Civil Engineer Department was resuscitated, Mr. Thomas Broadway being appointed Clerk of Works, Mr. Thomas Woodman, Foreman of Works, and by this change a considerable saving has been effected.

The following appointments were also made:—Mr. R. M. Pritchard to be Emigration Agent and Shipping Master; Mr. S. P. Young to be Acting Postmaster; Mr. C. Bruce to be Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages; Mr. George C. Bruce to the Meteorological Office, and Mr. R. R. Bruce to be clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Office.

#### *Pensions.*

No new pensions were granted and the pension list declined 51*l.* owing to deaths. The pension list stood on December 31st at 2,203*l.*

#### *Consuls.*

Mr. Fred. Ellison was appointed American Consul in May and resigned in December, and no fresh appointment has yet been made.

#### *Population.*

The population is undoubtedly steadily increasing, and may be estimated at 5,200.

#### *Education.*

The educational advantages are adequate. The Government maintains four schools; there are seven supported by charitable bequests and three or four private schools, the whole of which may be styled elementary. The number of scholars (820) is slightly in excess of 1886.

*Savings Bank.*

The Government Savings Bank showed an increase of deposits on 31st December 1887 over the same date in 1886 of 295*l.*, but the number of depositors remained the same, viz., 84. The reason for the small number of depositors is that the bulk of the population subscribe to one or more of the friendly societies, and these societies place their money in the savings bank, counting only as one depositor each.

*Imports and Exports.*

The imports amounted in value to 46,856*l.*, the exports to 13,853*l.*, in both of which totals are included the sum 13,168*l.* whalebone and oil transhipped at this Island. The imports show a decrease of 14,000*l.* the exports a decrease of 8,000*l.* compared with 1886.

*Shipping.*

The number of vessels which called was 318, with a tonnage of 342,589, and there entered 106,249 tons and cleared 19,557 tons. Rear-Admiral Sir Walter Hunt Grubbe visited the Island twice in H.M.S. "Raleigh." Numerous men-of-war came from the west coast of Africa to recruit, and Lord Brassey called in the "Sunbeam" to observe the defences in course of construction. The number of calling vessels is still decreasing annually.

*Goals.*

Only three serious crimes were committed during the year, an attempted rape, for which a negro was sentenced to one year's imprisonment, and two cases of incendiarism (undiscovered), the first of which was accompanied by a serious robbery.

*Hospital.*

The health of the Island (excepting the epidemic of measles) was excellent; 113 cases were treated as in patients during the year, with eight deaths. The cost per head was 3*s.* 0½*d.*, inclusive of attendance. The death rate for the whole Island was 17.1 per 1,000, and this includes invalids who were brought to St. Helena.

*Meteorological.*

The year under review was dry; the rainfall at Longwood where Napoleon lived was 28.74 inches. No lightning has occurred in the Island since 1878, and storms are unknown.

In point of climate St. Helena will compare favourable with any other British Colony, and the soil is remarkably productive. The potatoe harvest was the largest for many years past, and the price came down to 6*s.* per 100 lbs. Nearly all English vegetables grow to perfection.

The taxation, including poor rates, amounted to a fraction more than 1*l.* a head of the population, and although it became necessary during the year to forestall the grant in aid to the extent of 1,000*l.*, I do not anticipate that this will again be necessary, and I am of opinion that in the absence of any unforeseen circumstance the Colony may be regarded as having approached very nearly the lowest point of its depression.

This depression is due to four causes:—(1) the opening of the Suez Canal, which diverted so large a proportion of the trade to the east; (2) the substitution of steam for sailing vessels; (3) the very great economy aimed at by shipowners in the face of low freights. This necessary economy has developed the tinned provision trade to an enormous extent, and rendered ships more or less independent of the ports of call. (4) The elimination of defective ships, due to recent Imperial Legislation, by which excellent measures this Colony has been deprived of much of the harvest cleared from vessels in distress, a harvest which those concerned have not, I fear, reaped with the moderation necessary to retain at this date any but a mere gleanings in cases which will admit of no delay.

The possibility of stimulating to vitality an industry in the Island fibres is engaging my serious attention.

(Signed) W. GREY-WILSON,  
Administering the Government.

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