

No. 125.

ST. HELENA.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1893.

(For Report for 1892, see Colonial Report [Annual] No. 99.)

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



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1895.

The following, among other, Reports relating to Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued, and may be obtained for a few pence from the sources indicated on the title page:—

ANNUAL.

No.	Colony.	Year.
90	Ceylon - - - - -	1892
91	Zululand - - - - -	"
92	Mauritius - - - - -	"
93	Labuan - - - - -	"
94	British Honduras - - - - -	"
95	Lagos - - - - -	"
96	Sierra Leone - - - - -	"
97	Fiji - - - - -	"
98	Rodrigues - - - - -	"
99	St. Helena - - - - -	"
100	British Bechuanaland - - - - -	1892-93
101	British Guiana - - - - -	"
102	Newfoundland - - - - -	1892
103	Jamaica - - - - -	1892-93
104	Victoria - - - - -	1892
105	Bermuda - - - - -	1893
106	Gambia - - - - -	"
107	Hong Kong - - - - -	"
108	St. Vincent - - - - -	"
109	Gibraltar - - - - -	"
110	Bahamas - - - - -	"
111	Turks and Caicos Islands - - - - -	"
112	Leeward Islands - - - - -	"
113	Barbados - - - - -	"
114	Malta - - - - -	"
115	Zululand - - - - -	"
116	British Honduras - - - - -	"
117	Trinidad and Tobago - - - - -	"
118	Falkland Islands - - - - -	"
119	Rodrigues - - - - -	"
120	Mauritius - - - - -	"
121	Straits Settlements - - - - -	"
122	Labuan - - - - -	1893
123	Basutoland - - - - -	"
124	St. Lucia - - - - -	"

MISCELLANEOUS.

No.	Colony.	Subject.
1	Gold Coast - - - - -	Economic Agriculture.
2	Zululand - - - - -	Forests.
3	Sierra Leone - - - - -	Geology and Botany.

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Governor GREY WILSON to the MARQUESS OF RIPON.

The Castle, St. Helena,

September 20, 1894.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit the Blue Book of this Island for the year 1893.

2. It is with feelings of no little pleasure that I invite your Lordship's attention to the very substantial financial improvement of the year, an improvement which, even if (as there is much reason to fear) it is only evanescent, yet, following upon the very much smaller one of 1892, is not without encouragement, and has given me substantial relief from the more pressing anxieties and perplexities which have continuously diminished the efforts that should have been directed to the solution of many pressing social and economic questions. It is a hopeful feature of the present time that there are men of position who are eager to discover means to help the Island by the introduction of some sound industry. I have always strongly discouraged the belief that the Government would originate and finance any undertaking with that object; but at the same time I have endeavoured to stimulate enterprise with the assurance that I would do everything in my power to secure the co-operation of the Government in any well digested scheme adequately supported by a fair proportion of the inhabitants.

Revenue and Expenditure.

3. The Revenue was 8,546*l.* (855*l.* more than in 1892, and 102*l.* less than the average of the past five years) and the expenditure 7,637*l.* (1,201*l.* less than the average of the last five years). After providing for the expenditure of the year, there remained, therefore, the substantial surplus of 909*l.*, which has more than extinguished the deficits of previous years.

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4. To elucidate the cause of this improvement is by no means easy. It is universally contended that trade has not improved; the number of ships calling has continued to decline; no industry has been started; and the visits paid by men of war have been few and of short duration. The Supervisor of Customs accounts for the improvement in the revenue from Customs (the only appreciable one) by greatly increased importations from America, due to the competition of rival schooners bringing produce on speculation, and to the over importation of British goods by local merchants. Both these causes will, in his opinion, seriously affect the Customs revenue in 1894, the market being glutted in respect of several staple imports; but, as will be seen under the head of Imports and Exports, a very great part of the increased Customs revenue is derived from spirits and wines, and, as these are only cleared from bond as required, the importations of 1893 cannot affect the revenue of 1894 under those heads.

5. I confess that I could wish to offer to your Lordship some explanation more satisfying to my mind than is that of the Supervisor of Customs, which, while doubtless accounting in a measure for the result, leaves the main cause of the increase involved in great obscurity. I cannot avoid reaching the conclusion that there has been a real improvement in the condition of the masses, resulting from the emigration of the last few years, which was unusually heavy in 1893. The result of this has been the hardening of wages and the transference, at least for the time being, of a considerable number of persons from the non-wage earning, and consequently non-revenue-producing, class, to that of contributors to the revenue by means of the remittances made by absentees to their families on the Island.

6. The bulk of the revenue is derived from "Customs," which includes not only the specific and only genuine Customs duties upon wine, spirits, and tobacco, but also the receipts from the sale of water and from a wharfage charge upon all goods for the use of the Government crane and wharf.

7. The increase in the Customs was nearly 700*l.* (4,352*l.* to 5,046*l.*), and to this must be added an increase of 60*l.* under Licences and Taxes and a substantial increase of 50*l.* on the then highest recorded Post Office revenue of 1892 (912*l.* to 962*l.*)

Taxation.

8. No fiscal alterations having taken place, the taxation per head of population, inclusive of Poor and other rates, rose from 1*l.* 3*s.* 0*d.* in 1891 to 1*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.* in 1892, and 1*l.* 10*s.* 0*d.* in 1893. The nominal rise of 1892 was due to the increase of the garrison in that year, and to the presence of a greater number of war vessels; but neither of these causes will suffice to account for the rise in

1893, and I think it must, in conjunction with the improved revenue from licences, be taken to indicate in a measure greater prosperity.

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Local Bodies.

9. As the ratepayers did not exercise their power of electing a Health Board, I appointed instead, as I am empowered to do, a Sanitary Inspector to carry out all the duties, and exercise all the powers, of such Board.

Debt.

10. The loan of 5,158*l.*, granted by the Imperial Parliament to the Island in 1872, remains unchanged.

Assets and Liabilities.

11. Excluding that debt, the assets of the Colony at the close of the year were 11,600*l.*, and the liabilities, 11,268*l.*, showing a favourable balance of 332*l.*, in place of the deficit of 604*l.* at the end of 1892.

Military.

12. The garrison consisted of 197 officers and men, as against 210 in the previous year.

Legislation.

13. Four Ordinances were passed during the year. Numbers 2 and 4 are Supply Ordinances. Number 1, "An Ordinance to Simplify Conveyancing and Titles to Land," affords simple, inexpensive, and easily understood, procedure for the sale, purchase, and mortgage of real estate, the obtaining of sound titles in substitution for valueless or lost ones, and the registration of the very short deeds prescribed. No. 3, "An Ordinance to provide greater Security against fire," provides for the payment, by a rate, of any loss or damage sustained by the Imperial Government or Troops in combating a fire. As the Colony does not possess a fire engine, the arrangement is a very satisfactory one for the inhabitants, who obtain the services of the Imperial Troops, engines, and appliances, for a purely nominal payment.

Civil Establishment.

14. The office of Harbour Master, which had been vacant during 1892, was filled by the appointment of Commander W. Hewetson, R.N. (who landed on the 15th April) who is also Naval Agent

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for the Admiralty and Treasurer of the Island. Miss Rose Aimée Blennerhassett was appointed as Lady Nurse Superintendent of the Colonial Hospital, and arrived in the Colony on the 19th December.

Population.

15. The population at the close of the year was 3,814, approximately, a decrease of about 300.

Education.

16. There are nine elementary schools, four of which give free education, while five charge a fee of one penny a week. The four free education schools, with four teachers, have only 194 scholars upon the rolls; while the five schools charging a fee of one penny a week, with seven teachers, have 463 scholars upon the rolls, or a total of 657 day scholars. In previous years, the rolls of the night schools, Sunday schools, and the Military adult school, have been counted in the general total; and, if this be done, there is a slight increase as compared with 1892 (829 to 838).

17. Three fee-paying and one free school are maintained by the Government; three free schools are supported from the proceeds of a fund provided by the late Miss Rebecca Hussey; and only two schools, belonging to the Benevolent Society, are in any way assisted by local contributors. The total amount of the subscriptions to these two last in 1893 was only 15*l.* 4*s.* 0*d.* Fortunately, they possess invested funds and property, the result of bygone liberality, to the value of 1,945*l.*; but their maintenance is a matter of serious anxiety to the committee of management. I trust it may not become necessary to close either of these schools, as the committee fear.

Imports and Exports.

18. The value of the Imports was 39,193*l.*, nearly 9,000*l.* more than in the previous year, and larger than in any year since 1886; but in this total is included 2,000*l.* in specie imported by the Imperial Government. The imports would seem to justify the expectation of an even greater increase in the customs revenue than took place.

19. The value of the exports, including 4,055*l.* in specie, was 4,976*l.* In addition to this, whalebone and oil to the value of 32,256*l.* were transhipped in the harbour.

20. The importation of beer showed an extraordinary increase. The figures are:—

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—	In Hogsheads.	Dozen Quart Bottles.
1891	164	212
1892	301	273
1893	366	1,603

Duty-paid wine and spirits show an almost equally surprising increase. The figures are:—

—	Gallons, Spirits.	Gallons, Wine.
1891	1,489	6,088
1892	1,682	6,387
1893	2,068	7,318

Shipping.

21. Five hundred and sixteen vessels were sighted during the year, of which 199 (including 11 British and three foreign men-of-war) called, and 193 traded with licensed boatmen.

The number of vessels calling and trading (392) was 20 less than in 1892: the number of calling vessels declined 24, and the number of vessels trading rose 4.

Hospital.

22. The health of the Island was not so satisfactory as during the last few years. The number of deaths was 72, as compared with 56 in 1892, equal to 18 per 1,000; or, excluding soldiers and invalid sailors landed for treatment, 16.2 per 1,000.

There was a very unusual number of deaths of persons under the age of ten (31 in 1893, and only eight in 1892). This very great increase was due to teething, croup, and diphtheria, and apart from these cases the health of the Island was remarkably good.

The total number of cases treated in the Hospital was 135, and the daily average 6.59; 37 of the patients treated during the year were sailors.

METEOROLOGY.

Rainfall.

23. The year 1893, in comparison with the previous year, may be regarded as a fairly wet one.

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A comparison of the registers kept at St. Matthew's Vicarage (central), Longwood (east), and Woodlands (west), shows that the greatest amount of rain fell at the first station.

The record stands as follow:—

St. Matthew's Vicarage, 1,900 feet above the sea, 40·344 inches.

Longwood, 1,780 feet above the sea, 28·07 inches.

Woodlands, 2,050 feet above the sea, 31·77 inches.

It is singular to note that, although the first two stations are situated only a mile distant from each other, $12\frac{1}{4}$ inches of rain were recorded at the former in excess of the latter station.

The greatest daily record was 2·38 inches at Woodlands on the 27th of April, and then the true rainfall was not registered, as the bottle, which was not, unfortunately, enclosed in the usual can, ran over.

Barometer.

24. The barometric pressure shows a minimum in the beginning of January, and a maximum towards the middle of July, and between those periods the instrument remained almost quiescent.

Temperature.

25. The temperature in the country ranged from $56\cdot2^{\circ}$ in September to $64\cdot6^{\circ}$ in March, and in the town from 69° to 77° during the same period, showing, on the average, a difference of only 8° between the hottest and coldest months.

The absolute maximum temperature recorded was 87° in May at Woodlands, and the absolute minimum 49° in the months of August and September at the same station.

Wind.

26. The two most windy months in the year were August and September, during which the greatest daily force of 40 miles an hour, corresponding to a pressure of 8·0 lbs. on the square foot, was registered. The force of 8 miles an hour, or a pressure of 5 ounces on the square foot was the least recorded, the average number of calm days being 1·4 per cent.

Post Office.

27. The gross revenue from the Post Office was 962*l.*, the largest ever recorded. The amount received from non-resident stamp dealers fell from 199*l.* to 163*l.*

13,434 letters were sent from here to the United Kingdom, and 7,026 to other places.

975 parcels were received and 233 despatched, an increase of nearly 20 per cent.

The Money Order business amounted to 4,080*l.*

Conclusion.

28. At the close of the year, Mr. R. A. Sterndale called attention in England to the assistance which might be afforded to the Island by the development of the fisheries and the encouragement of bee-keeping, and I trust that this year some substantial progress may be made with one or both of these industries. Nothing, however, should be attempted until the subject has been thoroughly and exhaustively digested, and the necessary capital is available. Failure would supply the pessimists with further ground for maintaining that relief is impossible, and that their apathy and hopelessness are the effect, and in no measure the cause, of the many failures that darken our past.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. GREY WILSON,
Governor.

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