

COLONIAL REPORTS—ANNUAL.

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No. 309.

ST. HELENA.

BIBLIOTHÈQUE  
DU PALAIS  
DE LA PAIX  
REPORT FOR 1899.

(For Report for 1898, *see* No. 265.)

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
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The following, among other, reports relating to Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued, and may be obtained from the sources indicated on the title page :—

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No. 309.

## ST. HELENA.

(For Report for 1898, see No. 265.)

GOVERNOR STERNDALE to MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

The Castle,  
St. Helena,

14th August, 1900.

SIR,

I have the honour to forward to you the Blue Book of this Colony for the year 1899, together with my report on the same.

The results are, I think, satisfactory. The Revenues are increasing, and the Expenditure though heavy, on account of urgent public works, has been kept within the receipts.

The potato crop, which influences the small export trade, has been very good. Not only was the home consumption increased by the wants of a larger garrison but the amount available for export was greater than in any of the previous four years.

The imports rose from £34,365 in 1897 to £62,985 in 1898, and to £91,699 in the year under report, and in the current year I anticipate a further increase.

The demand for labour is great; wages are good, and amongst the industrious poor there should be no want, and it is a pleasure to record that, although money has been more plentiful and the temptations of the public houses greater, serious crime has been absent, and petty crimes less than in the previous year.



ST. HELENA, 1899. The cost of living has, however, greatly increased, and during the present year the prices of food have doubled and quadrupled, so that what used to be considered necessities of life, such as milk, butter, eggs and meat, are now luxuries, and the principal food of the poor, *i.e.* fish, is both scarce and expensive.

This is owing to the larger garrison and the number of prisoners of war we now have in the Island, and, as regards fish, to the apathy of the fishermen, who prefer daily wages and fixed hours of work to toiling the greater part of the night in boats.

The aspect of the place has also greatly changed; instead of the quiet monotony of past years, Jamestown is a scene of noisy activity, and the perils of our roads are considerably increased by four-in-hand mule waggons driven by reckless Kaffir boys. In an excellent account of St. Helena in 1715 by Captain Daniel Beeckman he quaintly observes: "The Island is so high, hilly and of such difficult ascent that it is a common saying that a man may chuse whether he will break his heart in going up or his neck in coming down," and now we may add to the perils of old an occasional avalanche of mule wagons. I have strongly advocated the substitution of pack mules for the wagons, and these have been applied for.

It is hoped that several works of public utility and necessity will be carried out during the current year, such as the erection of a new crane and a new road to the west end of the wharf, so as to enable the town refuse to be shot into the sea in the run of the westerly current, instead of into the bend of the harbour, as at present, where it constitutes a grave nuisance.

The new water works have been finished as far as the mains are concerned, but the house connections had to be left under the old system, for a time, as all the lead pipe imported for the purpose had to be used up for the Boer camp. However, the mains came in of great use when we had several large transports requiring water, when a greater volume was sent down from Drummer's Point to the wharf than the old pipes could supply. One very important work in connection with the water supply has been carried out. The original town supply consisted of open brook water, collected at Drummers Point and pure spring water from four sources known as "Chubb's Springs"; these were brought down by separate pipes and mixed in a large tank in the Botanical Gardens. I have had a series of concrete tanks built at intervals all down the main street of the town into which the pure spring water runs, and these are used by almost all the residents for their drinking supply.

Special facilities are allowed to manufacturers of soda water to make use of this supply by branch pipes laid on from the main.

I believe that when the new barracks are finished it would pay ST. HELENA, 1899. a small company to erect plant for lighting Ladder Hill and the town by the electric light, worked by windmills. There is always a steady wind from the South East Trades,—only 9 days were calm during the year under report.

Lighting by kerosine oil is not only faulty but expensive, and Jamestown is almost in the dark, the lamps are so poor.

I have, &c.,

R. A. STERNDALE,  
Governor.

### FINANCIAL.

#### *General Revenue and Expenditure.*

Total Revenue and Expenditure for the last Five Years.

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1895	9,762	8,063
1896	9,160	8,872
1897	8,803	13,004
1898	9,152	12,349
1899	11,593	11,421

This year shews an improvement on the last, inasmuch as the expenditure was within the revenue, in spite of very heavy public works.

The revenue was £2,441 in excess of the previous year and better than in any of the foregoing five years, and it was £1,103 over the estimate. This result was chiefly owing to wharfage dues and duties on increased imports and to Post Office Receipts.

The expenditure was less than the previous year, but still heavy owing to exceptional works of urgency under the heads of water works, sanitary and Government buildings. The most important work being the completion of the culvert called the "Run" which forms the main drain of the town.



ST. HELENA,  
1899.

*Assets and Liabilities.*

The liabilities exceed the assets by £2,634, owing to a sum of £4,068 being overpaid by the Crown Agents on account of the heavy extraordinary expenditure of the past two years. In the current year I expect to liquidate this debt which at present stands at £1,066.

*Public Debt.*

There is no public debt, but a Parliamentary grant made without interest in 1871-72 is being paid off at the rate of £500 a year when funds are available. At the beginning of the year it stood at £4,658.

*Currency.*

The estimated amount of coin in circulation in the Island in the year under report was £15,000 or £3,000 more than in 1898. About £9,000 in specie was imported and £3,594 exported.

The only Bank is the Government Savings Bank, which has a total deposit of £18,399.

The deposits during the year amounted to £4,435, the withdrawals to £3,450.

Local remittances are mostly made by bills granted by the Government on the Crown Agents at 1 per cent. The sum of £22,240 was remitted in this way during the year.

*Comparative Statement of Revenue and Expenditure of Poor Relief Board for the last Five Years.*

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1895	930	919
1896	851	863
1897	826	820
1898	863	850
1899	862	889

ST. HELENA,  
1899.

*Public Market.*

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1895	89	93
1896	83	82
1897	112	110
1898	107	109
1899	191	172

The market returns shew a decided advance on former years probably owing to increased importation of cattle for the troops.

TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

*Imports and Exports.*

The imports during the year under report were greatly in excess of the previous year, which again were nearly double those of preceding years, as will be seen by the following tabular statement:—

*Imports.*

Year.	United Kingdom.	Colonies.	Elsewhere.	Total.
	£	£	£	£
1895 ...	22,263	8,478	3,003	33,744
1896 ...	21,233	9,587	130	30,950
1897 ...	25,262	7,161	1,942	34,365
1898 ...	50,744	12,241	—	62,985
1899 ...	80,232	7,598	3,869	91,699

The above includes £9,000 in specie, and £3,869 value of whale oil transhipped; the increase is in general goods, beer and spirits, live stock for the use of the troops, and building material for the new barracks, &c.



ST. HELENA,  
1899.*Exports.*

Year.	United Kingdom.	Colónies.	Total.
	£	£	£
1895 ...	4,205	109	4,314
1896 ...	4,012	727	4,739
1897 ...	4,314	679	4,993
1898 ...	3,816	575	4,391
1899 ...	3,849	743	4,592

After deducting £3,594 specie the exports of the year show more favourably than in previous years, being nearly a thousand pounds, viz., £998 against £645 in 1898. £743 worth of potatoes were exported, the largest amount since 1894. Hides and wool to a small amount, viz., £145, were also exported.

## MINES, MANUFACTORIES, AND FISHERIES.

No minerals worth working have as yet been discovered. Experiments have been tried successfully to a small extent in making pottery from a dark blue clay, to which I alluded in my last report. Since then I have found a light brown clay which appeared to me suitable for bricks, and I sent samples of both to Messrs. John Whitehead & Co., of the Albert Works, Preston, and I am indebted to them for the following report:—

“Light brown clay is very good for brick making purposes except that it shrinks too much, nearly one-fifth of its bulk—this is fatal to its making sound bricks by itself. This can be remedied by an admixture of *sharp gritty sand*. For this purpose we should recommend river sand if available. Fine grained sand unless *gritty* would not be of much use. We think a mixture of about one part of such sand to six of the clay would keep the bricks sufficiently open to allow the moisture to escape during the drying and burning and prevent excessive shrinkage which is the cause of the cracking. Blue clay—The foregoing remarks apply to this, but we do not think so well of it as the brown.”

I alluded in my report last year to the success with the blue clay after an addition of sand, and was under the impression that the blue was the better clay.

It would be a great saving to us to make our own bricks and tiles here instead of importing them. Most of our building is done with stone, but there are certain things which require brick.

The lace industry is still going on under Mrs. Jackson's care, Mrs. Arthur having left for England, and there are many girls engaged in it. Miss Holmes, the daughter of our Bishop, has started a class for wood carving, in which she excels.

It has been arranged to hold an Industrial Exhibition during the current year, probably in November, to encourage as far as possible the people of the Island in Arts and Manufactures, prizes being given for local productions.

*Fisheries.*

It is hopeless to start an industry in this direction by local agency. With the greatly increased demand for fish it would be reasonable to suppose that more men would engage in the work, but, instead of that, many of the fishermen have been tempted by good wages and fixed hours to engage on the Imperial works. A hard-working fisherman could make three times the Government pay if he kept to his fishing, but I suppose the other is the easier life. When it was found necessary on account of quarantine regulations to stop the trading of licensed boatmen with passing vessels, I concluded that they would take to fishing, but they did not, and the few who have kept to their work are reaping the benefits of greatly increased prices, quite 400 per cent. over those of three years ago.

With the increased garrison and the great number of prisoners of war, a large quantity of fish, which is plentiful enough in the sea, could profitably be disposed of daily were the people energetic enough to catch them. I have always advocated a Fishery Company here worked by English capital and labour, and had such a one been started as projected in 1896–1897 it would have been reaping a golden harvest just now, both in salted and fresh fish.

## AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND BOTANICAL STATIONS.

The year under report has been good on the whole, both as regards crops and stock. The potato crops have been heavy and there has not been much disease. The rats have been, as they generally are in this Island, exceptionally destructive. In a patch of Indian corn I inspected not one cob was saved. Having no enemies, they increase without check save from their own omnivorous propensities, which lead them to devour their own young.



ST. HELENA,  
1899.

The old records of St. Helena are full of complaints of the damage done by these pests, who in 1715 devoured the soldiers' pouches even whilst the men who wore them were asleep. In 1768 rewards were offered for their destruction, a half-penny each rat and a farthing for a mouse; again in 1809 sixpence a dozen was paid for rats' heads, to encourage extirpation. There is also a quaint entry in 1732, after some remarks on the damage done by them to the trees in Plantation grounds:—

"We have also heard that in the year 1700 the rats were grown so exceedingly numerous that after they had destroyed everything else they at last fell upon one another and devoured themselves, and the Island at that time was quite clear of them."

A consummation most devoutly to be desired at this time.

That the rabbits do not increase in the same degree I attribute to the rats killing and devouring the young ones.

A few Indian Mynas let loose a couple of years ago have multiplied to a great extent, and the farmers tell me they are in constant attendance on the cattle, freeing them from ticks. These birds do a little damage in fruit gardens, but they compensate for this by the number of insects they destroy. The importation of other insectivorous birds has not been attended by much success.

In the Maldivia Botanical Gardens and at Plantation about 225 vine grafts (Black Alicante and Raisin Blanc) on American stocks have been planted out, and, if successful, distribution will be made with a view to re-introducing the grape in St. Helena, where at one time it flourished. A few of the grafts have already been distributed.

#### Forestry.

I have been recommended to try the *Eucalyptus rostrata* as a hardy tree suitable for the Island, and have arranged for a supply of seed.

The Blue Gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) grows freely here and attains a very large size, one at Plantation being 16½ feet in circumference at five feet from the ground; but it grows crooked in windy localities.

The Norfolk Island Pine (*Araucaria excelsa*) attains a great height here—over 100 feet in some cases; it seeds freely and seeds and young plants have been distributed. Some of the seeds, with Cape Yews, and Port Jackson Willows (*Acacia longifolia*) have been sent to Ascension.

We saved some seed from the Mahogany trees in the old Botanical Garden and have a few healthy seedlings in hand.

Of the trees planted on Halftree Hollow by the road side the Evergreen Fig is flourishing, also a few of the Cape Yews, Cedars, and Olives planted by me in 1896 and 1898, but the rocky ground is against their growth; still, they look healthy.

#### LAND GRANTS AND GENERAL VALUE OF LAND.

A piece of land measuring 8a. 0r. 31p. adjoining the military property on Ladder Hill has been assigned to the War Office for extension of quarters, the Colonial Government receiving in exchange the land (with the exception of the Battery) held by the Imperial Government in Lemon Valley.

The old Botanical Garden in Jamestown has also been sold to the Imperial Government, as they adjoin the new barracks. There are some fine old trees (which will be preserved as far as possible), but as a botanical garden it was useless, as the soil is thoroughly worn out, and the new gardens at Maldivia are in every way more suitable for the purpose.

The right of removing all trees of value which could be removed was retained, and some have been transplanted.

#### SHIPPING.

During the year 138 ships anchored; 142 lay off and traded with boatmen and 356 were sighted; this is a falling off from last year's figures, but then ships from the east were under quarantine on account of plague.

Total tonnage entered at the Custom House:—

					Tons.
British Steam	...	...	...	...	100,814
" Sailing	...	...	...	...	6,054
Foreign "	...	...	...	...	1,771
Total	...	...	...	...	108,639

Total tonnage of all vessels boarded:—

					Tons.
British	...	...	...	...	215,526
Foreign	...	...	...	...	49,163
Total	...	...	...	...	264,689



ST. HELENA, 1899. Vessels of war and transports :—

						Tons.
British	...	...	...	...	...	38,325
Foreign	...	...	...	...	...	7,150
Total	...	...	...	...	...	45,475

#### LEGISLATION.

The following Ordinances were passed during the year under report, viz :—

No. 1 of 18th January, 1899.—“An Ordinance for protection of Telegraph Cables on the land and in the waters of St. Helena.”

No. 4 of 4th December, 1899.—“An Ordinance to provide for the recognition in St. Helena of Probates and Letters of Administration granted in the United Kingdom and in British Possessions.”

Nos. 2, 3 and 5 were to provide for Service and Supplementary Expenditure.

The following Proclamations were issued :—

24th February, 1899.—Proclamation extending the Game season for the year 1899.

24th February, 1899.—Proclamation regarding the disease known as Oriental or Bubonic Plague.

22nd March, 1899.—Proclamation regarding the importation of horses from South Africa.

23rd September, 1899.—Proclamation regarding the disease known as Oriental or Bubonic Plague.

27th December, 1899.—Proclamation regarding the War with the South African Republic and the Orange Free State.

#### EDUCATION.

The number of schools has remained the same, viz., four Government schools, five charitable, one military, and a Baptist Sunday school.

The number of scholars being 793, an increase of 3 over last year.

When the proposed Education Ordinance providing for compulsory attendance is passed the number will be greatly increased, for many children who ought to be at school are now

kept away working for wages, the demand for labour being great, ST. HELENA, and children of 7 or 8 years of age can get work as donkey drivers. 1899.

#### PUBLIC GARDENS AND MUSEUM.

There is not much progress to report under this head; the Jamestown Public Gardens are still appreciated by the residents and are progressing favourably though slowly, as it takes a long time to recover soil which has been thoroughly impoverished.

A large quantity of valuable manure has been stored from the Commissariat Cattle yard, and used from time to time with advantage. Many seeds and plants have been tried with varying success, the utter failures having been discarded in favour of those plants which have done well. A number of Orchids were introduced, but as yet it is doubtful whether they will succeed. One species from Madagascar has flowered soon after its introduction, two years ago, and has sent out a fresh spike of bloom this year. We experience great difficulty in getting grass to grow and keep green. We cannot do much without a competent gardener, whom we lack at present.

The Museum has been thrown back somewhat by our Honorary Curator, Mr. Henry Thorpe, having volunteered for active service in South Africa, and my own time has been too fully occupied for me to be able to do much; still it is a great thing to have a suitable place in which to preserve articles of interest which have hitherto been scattered about. We have still much material to arrange in the room.

#### JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

The returns shewing the extent of crime in the Island, never very heavy, are less during the year under report than in the previous year, as the following table will show :—

	1898.	1899.
Number of offences reported to police ... ..	143	134
Number of persons apprehended ... ..	136	121
Number of summary convictions ... ..	120	103
1. For offences against the person ... ..	11	20
2. For offences against property other than praedial larceny ... ..	8	4
3. For other offences ... ..	101	79



ST. HELENA, 1899. There were no cases committed for trial to the Supreme Court.

The results are far better than I anticipated, for money has been more plentiful among the lower classes and the consumption of spirituous liquors greater.

#### VITAL STATISTICS.

The population in 1891, according to the census, was 4,116. On the 31st December last it was estimated to be 4,270.

The births were 132, or 30·9 per thousand, the deaths were 74, or 17·3 per thousand, the latter included nine soldiers, one soldier's wife and one child of the West India Regiment.

The mortality is mostly amongst the very young and very old, as the following table shews :—

Age.					No.
10 years and under	...	...	...	...	18
20	"	"	...	...	2
30	"	"	...	...	10
40	"	"	...	...	0
50	"	"	...	...	6
60	"	"	...	...	7
70	"	"	...	...	6
80	"	"	...	...	15
Above 80	...	...	...	...	10
Total					74

#### PUBLIC HEALTH.

The public health was fairly good during the year; there were a few cases of measles imported from the Cape, but, fortunately, the disease did not spread.

#### CLIMATE.

ST. HELENA,  
1899.

There was a good deal of rain during the year, more than in the previous year, viz :—

	1898.	1899.
Mount Pleasant ... ..	36.06	49.39
St. Matthew's Hutts Gate ... ..	33.950	47.315
Longwood ... ..	—	31.37
Woodlands... ..	23.63	30.12
Jamestown... ..	4.82	7.34

The prevailing wind is the trade, blowing from S.S.E. and S.E. with slight variations. Northerly winds blew only for three days. Nine days were calm.

#### POSTAL AND TELEPHONE.

We have not as yet started any inland post offices nor house to house delivery. Residents go down to meet the mails or send to the Post Office for their letters.

Since the old pattern of stamps were returned to the Colony the sale rose from £96 11s. 1d. of the previous year to £450 11s. 11d. during the year under report. The total postal revenue rose from £606 2s. 7d. in 1898 to £1,126 12s. 5d.

#### TELEPHONES.

The telephone lines which connect the east, west, and central points of the Island are constructed and managed by the Royal Engineers, and are kept up solely for military and official purposes. The Colonial Government give an annual subsidy of £45 towards upkeep, and £30 per annum is given by Lloyds.

#### SUBMARINE CABLES.

The Eastern Telegraph Company have now got a station here. The line was first laid from the Cape to St. Helena and connection established on November 24th last; on the 15th



ST. HELENA, December of the year under report, the line was extended to  
 1899. Ascension, and then through communication with England, via  
 — St. Vincent, was established. The charge per word is 4s.

#### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The chief event of the previous year was the increase of the Garrison by the Head Quarters of the 3rd West India Regiment. As there was not sufficient accommodation for them in Jamestown they were removed into camp on Deadwood Plain. It was a question whether so exposed a situation would not be prejudicial to the health of men accustomed to a tropical climate, but though the year was exceptionally wet and windy, the health of the troops remained excellent, better than in Jamestown.

On the 31st October the transport "Avoca" arrived with orders for the Head Quarters with two companies to proceed by the same vessel to Sierra Leone; the news was received at 7 in the morning, and by 5.30 all the troops were on board, which, considering they had not received the slightest warning of the move, was very smart work.

The war between England and the Transvaal and Orange Free State was most keenly felt in St. Helena amongst all classes, for there is hardly a family in the Island that had not some members either in Cape Colony and Natal or in those two States. It is estimated that there are about 2,000 St. Helenians in South Africa. The telegrams were looked for with the greatest anxiety, and there were many volunteers for service among the Sharpshooters, who, however, could not be spared; the Corps were, however, represented by Captain Deason (lately a prisoner in the hands of the Boers), Lieutenant Arthur, and Private H. Thorpe, all of whom have been at the front.

During the current year we have had more intimate acquaintance with the Boers, as General Cronje and a large number of his followers have been interned in the island, and still more are expected shortly.