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No. 371.

S T . H E L E N A .

REPORT FOR 1901.

(For Report for 1900, *see* No. 323.)

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
November, 1902.



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No. 371.

ST. HELENA.

(For Report for 1900, see No. 323.)

GOVERNOR STERDALE to MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

The Castle, St. Helena,
19th July, 1902.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith the Blue Book of this Colony for the year 1901, together with my report thereon.

I have, &c.,

R. A. STERDALE,

Governor.

FINANCIAL.

GENERAL REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

Comparative Statement of Revenue for the Years 1900 and 1901.

	1900.	1901.
	£	£
Customs	10,426	15,866
Licenses, taxes, &c.	885	947
Fines, fees of court, and reimbursements in aid.	842	1,055
Post Office	1,471	2,690
Rents of Government property ...	869	886
Interest	661	704
Miscellaneous receipts	237	3,066
Total	15,391	24,614

The large increase in Miscellaneous Receipts is accounted for by heavier collections under "Commission on Drafts" and contributions from the Admiralty and War Office towards the new crane, extension of wharf, and the West Rocks road.

*Comparative Statement of Expenditure for the Years
1900 and 1901.*

	1900.	1901.
	£	£
Public debt	500	—
Pensions	1,325	1,022
Governor... ..	970	1,050
Colonial Secretary	596	628
Customs	643	939
Legal	332	347
Savings Bank	464	526
Police	599	821
Gaol	143	153
Medical	1,218	1,613
Education	522	542
Post Office	327	451
Miscellaneous	555	1,486
Colonial Engineer	184	191
Public works recurrent... ..	1,950	2,059
Gratuities	—	105
Public works extraordinary	1,708	2,413
Port and marine... ..	474	486
St. Helena Sharpshooters	95	95
Total	12,603	14,927

The great increase in Miscellaneous was due to the purchase of the hulk "Howden" for temporary quarantine purposes, and to special sanitary precautions against the introduction of plague.

Public Works Extraordinary were increased by the reconstruction of the Lemon Valley barracks as a quarantine station and by operations in forestry for which sanction had been received.

Total Revenue and Expenditure for the last Five Years.

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1897	8,803	13,004
1898	9,153	12,349
1899	11,593	11,422
1900	15,392	12,604
1901	24,614	14,928

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

I am glad to report still more favourable results this year. In my Report for 1900 I stated that the Assets exceeded the Liabilities by £2,625. In the year under report now they exceeded the Liabilities by £9,951.

PUBLIC DEBT.

There was a Parliamentary grant of £5,158 made in 1871-2, which we began to pay off in annual instalments of £500 in 1898, and it stood at £4,158 at the end of 1901—still further reduced during the current year to £2,000.

CURRENCY.

English coin only is current. Silver is a legal tender up to 40s. only, and copper (bronze coin) up to 1s. only, in one payment.

The estimated value of coin in circulation during the year was £35,000.

Specie was imported by the Imperial Government to the extent of £16,650. The only bank in the Colony is the Government Savings Bank. The amount deposited during the year came to £13,218. The withdrawals £7,717 1s. 5d.

The total deposits amounted to £28,003.

Remittances to England by bills on the Crown Agents were £64,703. These bills are now granted at three days' sight instead of ten days as before.

The following are comparative statements for five years of the Poor Relief Board and Public Market:—

Public Relief Board.

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1897	826	820
1898	863	850
1899	862	899
1900	857	871
1901	933	855

Public Market.

Year.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1897	112	110
1898	107	109
1899	191	172
1900	238	202
1901	242	173

TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

Year.	Imports.	Exports.
	£	£
1897	34,365	4,993
1898	62,985	4,391
1899	91,699	4,592
1900	168,282*	4,215
1901	105,645†	4,724‡

* Inclusive of Imperial Stores, &c, amounting to £106,572.

† Exclusive of Imperial Stores, value of which not given.

‡ Deduct Specie, £4,035.

The Exports are as usual of small value. Generally, the bulk of them consists of potatoes, which during the year were too much in local demand to allow of exportation, but their place has been taken by skins, the number of oxen imported during the year for the meat rations of the prisoners of war and the troops having amounted to 2,110, the skins of which were purchased by local contractors.

The following table shows the value of the principal articles of import during the last year as compared with the previous one:—

Articles of Import.	1900.	1901.	Increase.	Decrease.
	£	£	£	
Beer, hogsheads ...	3,600	9,402	5,807	—
„ dozens ...	382	506	124	—
Beef and pork ...	1,225	1,003	—	222
Coals	810	4,485	3,675	—
Cigars	1,450	2,029	579	—
Drapery	7,910	10,618	2,708	—
Flour and grain ...	6,321	5,110	—	1,211
Machinery	2,859	4,623	1,264	—
Oilman's stores ...	14,752	16,245	1,306	—
Rice	2,134	1,940	—	194
Spirits, galls. ...	3,619	4,602	983	—
Sugar, bags	1,804	2,214	410	—
Tobacco	1,634	1,745	111	—
Wine, galls.	3,067	3,158	91	—
Total	51,567	67,685	17,745	1,627

The two principal items of increase, viz., beer and coals, are due to the increase in the garrison. The islanders also consume more beer than they used to.

MINES, MANUFACTURES, &C.

I regret nothing had been done during the year under report in the way of manufactures or experiments in that direction. The conditions which have made the Island a prison for the time being have not been favourable for the development of any industry likely to be of permanent benefit to the islanders.

The lace making to which I alluded in my last Report has received what I hope will prove only a temporary check. Unfortunately, as it assumed a promising position it was thrown back by the loss of the market in home-going steamers, which, owing to the plague at the Cape, had to be placed in quarantine.

The amount of money which has been circulating, owing to the war and the high rates of wages which have been given, will

render it difficult for some time to impress upon the people the necessity for starting some industry. There will be no lack of work in the Island for the next two or three years, as the Colonial Government have the drainage of the town in hand and the Imperial Government have yet to build the barracks for the troops which are to be stationed at Deadwood, so labourers will be in demand and prices will keep up. Afterwards the former stagnation may set in and then the need for some local industry will be felt.

However great the advantages of climate and soil, any industry connected with agriculture must be starved for want of sufficient suitable land. The finest soil in the Island is under grass for pasturage, and seldom it is that any comes to the auctioneer's hammer, otherwise a few hundred acres, if put under coffee, ought to bring the owner substantial profit.

The coffee is of a fine quality and the trees bear well, but the cultivation is not carried out on a scale large enough to make it pay.

There are good years and bad years in coffee, and 1901 was a bumper year. Out of a small plantation of about a couple of hundred trees in the Government House grounds we obtained 500 lbs. of dried coffee. In the present year we have had only a very small quantity.

AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES AND BOTANICAL STATIONS.

Market gardening has been most profitable during the time the prisoners of war have been in the Island, for the demand for fresh vegetables has been greater than the supply, and consequently prices have been very high, but, unfortunately, we had a long period of drought which caused much loss in green crops.

My own energies have been devoted to the establishment of nurseries for young trees at Plantation under the charge of a young German gardener, a prisoner of war. Some thousands of young seedlings, chiefly of various species of eucalyptus, were planted out in beds and offered for sale at low prices, but the drought above-mentioned caused the loss of a large number, especially as I had to stop irrigation on account of the failure of the springs, every drop of water being required for the needs of the garrison at Ladder Hill. A good many young trees were, however, sold at prices ranging from 3*d.* per foot in height.

A large number of cuttings of a species of evergreen fig were prepared for planting in rocky places on the road from Jamestown to Plantation, where holes have been dug for them. This tree, which is large and umbrageous, grows readily from stakes about three feet long by three inches in diameter.

LAND GRANTS AND GENERAL VALUE OF LAND.

There were no land grants during the year and only one estate came into the open market, which realised at auction about £12 an acre, including a house.

SHIPPING.

173 ships called, 320 were sighted, and 263 communicated with the Station.

The following is the tonnage of vessels entered and cleared:—

British, steam	...	...	...	248,089
„ sailing	...	...	...	4,654
Foreign	...	...	...	859
Total	...	...	...	253,602

The British steam tonnage of the previous year was 155,542, showing an increase during 1901 of 92,547 tons, owing to the larger number of steamers calling with oxen and stores for the Imperial Government.

LEGISLATION.

The following Ordinances were passed:—

No. 1 of May 4th, 1901. An Ordinance to provide for the formation of a Volunteer Force.

No. 2 of June 25th, 1901. An Ordinance to provide for the service of the year 1901.

No. 3 of July 1st, 1901. An Ordinance to provide for the supplementary expenditure of the year 1900.

No. 4 of September 4th, 1901. An Ordinance to provide for the remission of duty on consignments of tobacco for His Majesty's troops at St. Helena.

The following Proclamations were issued:—

January 26th, 1901. Accession of His Most Gracious Majesty King Edward VII.

January 30th, 1901. Respecting the game season for the year 1901.

February 16th, 1901. Imposing restrictions on vessels from Cape Colony on account of bubonic plague existing there.

March 15th, 1901. Respecting the Census.

April 10th, 1901. Lieutenant-Colonel Evans assuming the government of St. Helena during the absence of the Governor.

April 27th, 1901. Prohibiting the landing of cargo from any port in South Africa.

July 25th, 1901. Quarantine regulations.

August 13th, 1901. Port regulations with reference to boats leaving the Port of Jamestown during night hours.

November 14th, 1901. Quarantine regulations.

EDUCATION.

The number of schools is the same as in the year 1900, viz., four Government, five charitable, one military, and one Baptist Sunday School.

I remarked then that the number of scholars had decreased from 793 to 742 owing to the great demand for labour and the comparatively high wages given to mere children. I much regret a still further falling off from the same cause, the figures for 1901 showing a decline from 742 to 720, and this, I fear, will not be remedied till compulsory education is enforced.

PUBLIC GARDENS AND MUSEUM.

The Public Gardens suffered to some extent by the encampment therein of the prisoners of war engaged on the works on the wharf, but now that they have been removed steps will be taken to repair the damage.

The Museum had to be closed for a time owing to injuries to specimens by some of the prisoners of war from Deadwood Camp, the scales on a fine specimen of the tortoise-shell turtle having been ripped off for the purpose of making fancy articles for sale; also a carved stick from Madagascar was stolen, probably for a pattern; but collections continued to be made for ultimate arrangement.

JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

Petty crime increased considerably, as might have been expected with the increase of the population and the larger consumption of intoxicating liquors. There were, however, only two cases tried and convicted in the Supreme Court, one against the person and the other against property.

The following is a comparative statement:—

	1900.	1901.
Number of cases reported to police	246	342
Number of persons apprehended	196	218
Number of summary convictions	162	218
1. For offences against the person	32	47
2. For offences against property other than prædial larceny	10	11
3. For other offences	120	160

VITAL STATISTICS.

During the year under report there was an improvement in the death rate, which was heavy (33·3 per thousand) the previous year owing to a severe epidemic of influenza. In 1901 the death rate was 23·8 per thousand, including garrison and prisoners of war. The number of the latter was raised during the year from 2,454 to 4,655, and our total death return of 125 included 45 prisoners, 9 soldiers, and 1 sailor.

POSTAL AND TELEPHONE.

The work of the Post Office greatly increased, and the revenue rose in consequence to £2,090 from £1,470 in 1900.

Money orders were issued to the extent of £8,572, and paid to the amount of £5,187.

The telephone lines are under the management of the Royal Engineers, the Colonial Government giving an annual grant of £45 and Lloyd's £30. Several new extensions were made in the year for military purposes.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

The main points of interest during the year 1901 centre in the Boer camps. The total number of prisoners was 4,655, afterwards greatly increased by more recent captures. About 2,000, chiefly Free Staters, were confined in the new camp at Broad Bottom; the rest, including those captured at Paardeberg and a large number of foreigners, remained at Deadwood.

During the year the 4th Battalion of the Gloucestershire Regiment left for England and the 3rd Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment arrived.

Bubonic plague having made its appearance in South Africa this year, a strict quarantine was established, and the landing of all cargo from South African ports prohibited, especially with a view to the prevention of rats being imported from infected places.

The sanitary condition of Jamestown not being satisfactory, the Board of Health was urged to take steps for the examination and cleansing of all houses and neglected areas, whitewash and disinfectants being distributed gratis and a system of house-to-house collection of refuse being established. The hulk "Howden," a large iron vessel lying in the harbour, was purchased and fitted up as a temporary quarantine depot till the station at Lemon Valley could be prepared. At the same time every encouragement was given to the destruction of rats, which swarm in the Island.

During the year I was compelled by ill-health to take four months' leave of absence, and the Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel T. J. P. Evans, the officer commanding the troops, ably administered the government from the 10th of April to the 18th August.

In July Mr. E. A. Brine, C.E., was deputed to examine and report on the drainage scheme for Jamestown, submitting plans and estimates. Mr. Brine gave the Government much valuable advice on other matters also.

We had no Colonial Engineer to assist him, but there was a young Swedish engineer, Baron H. Fagerskiold, a prisoner of war, who had been employed in the Public Works Department during his stay in the Island, who was of great assistance in the drawing of the plans.

Mr. Brine on the completion of his report returned to England to make arrangements for material and effective supervision and to come back in the current year to start the work. He is expected about the middle of August.

R. A. STERNDALÉ.