

The following recent reports, etc., relating to His Majesty's Colonial Possessions have been issued, and may be obtained from the sources indicated on the title page :—

ANNUAL.

No.	Colony, etc.	Year.
1189	British Solomon Islands Protectorate	1922-1923
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MISCELLANEOUS.

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86	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1912.
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88	Imperial Institute.. .. .	Oilseeds, Oils, etc.
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90	St. Vincent.. .. .	Roads and Land Settlement.
91	East Africa Protectorate	Geology and Geography of the northern part of the Protectorate.
92	Colonies—General	Fishes of the Colonies.
93	Pitcairn Island	Report on a visit to the Island by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

COLONIAL REPORTS—ANNUAL.

No. 1224.

ST. HELENA.

REPORT FOR 1923.

(For Report for 1922 see No. 1164.)



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ST. HELENA.

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1923.

I.—FINANCIAL.

(A) REVENUE.

The revenue for the year amounted to £11,509 9s. 4d., exclusive of any grant-in-aid; this shows a decrease of £1,772 18s. 4d. as compared with the results for 1922, when the revenue received amounted to £13,282 7s. 8d., exclusive of a grant-in-aid of £3,000.

This decrease, however, is more than accounted for by a shortfall of £2,005 in the estimate for Ascension stamps, the estimate having been made on the assumption that a new permanent issue of stamps would be made for Ascension in 1923.

Further, a sum of £400 due from the Government Flax Mill towards revenue in 1923 was not credited by the Crown Agents during the financial year; had this been done the revenue would have amounted to just under £12,000.

(B) EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure amounted to £13,959 15s. 11d., showing increases of expenditure under 12 heads amounting to £3,751 1s., while decreases occurred under 14 heads amounting to £727 3s. 11d., the principal increase being the payment of mail subsidy on account of Ascension Island.

(C) ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

The annual statement of assets and liabilities shows a balance of assets over liabilities of £260 7s. 2d., in spite of the fact that there was no grant-in-aid.

(D) CURRENCY.

Bills on the Crown Agents amounted to £11,815 7s. 8d. during the year. No import or export of specie took place.

II.—TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

(A) TRADE.

Revenue.

The Customs revenue for the year under report amounted to £3,515 7s. 10d., as against £3,096 7s. 11d. in 1922, giving a satisfactory increase of £418 19s. 11d.

Increases appear under wharfage dues, £167 9s. 5d.; import duties £82 19s. 2d.; warehouse rent, £9 9s. 5d.; water, £76 9s.; special war dues, £23 7s. 4d.; and export dues, £66 3s. 10d.

Unemployment was considerably relieved owing to work having been found for many men at Ascension; this improved trade generally and caused a steady increase in revenue.

Expenditure.

The Customs expenditure in 1923 amounted to £376 5s. 9d., as against £370 14s. 5d. in 1922, showing a small increase of £5 11s. 9d.; this, in view of the increase in revenue, is not unsatisfactory, having regard to the fact that the expenditure in 1921 was £390 5s. 4d.

Imports.

The value of imports in 1923 amounted to £47,948, as against £44,636 in 1922, giving an increase of £3,312.

The principal increases occur under drapery and dry goods, £1,120; flour, £377; foodstuffs (other than enumerated), £790; hardware, metals, etc., £146; oilman stores, £119; paraffin oil, £226; machinery, £1,409 (principally for a new flax mill); spirits, £128; and wine, £112.

Principal decreases appear under salt beef and pork, £128; chemicals and drugs, £264; rice, £489; stationery, £659; sugar, £838. These decreases appear to indicate that the people are beginning to depend more on home-grown goods.

Exports.

The value of exports in 1923 amounted to £26,366, as against £24,418 in 1922 and £14,344 in 1921, showing an appreciation of £1,948.

Principal increases are shown under fibre, £3,876; and tow, £655 (the market price of tow gradually rose in 1923); calves, £264; sheep, £506; hay and forage, £285.

Decreases are shown under rope, £340; wool, £624; specie, £2,255; and furniture, £305.

The specie exported in 1922 was due to the closing of the branch of the National Bank of South Africa in Jamestown, and was chiefly in silver coin, of which there is usually rather an overplus in St. Helena.

(B) AGRICULTURE, STOCK, FORESTS, AND GARDENS.

The year cannot be considered to have been a good one for agriculture; the seasons were very uneven; up to September there was a particularly heavy rainfall amounting to some 40 inches; from September to the end of the year there was practically a drought, only 4 inches of rain being recorded. This resulted in a failure in the potato and maize crops in the latter months. The price of potatoes rose at one time to 3s. 6d. a gallon.

Herbage was also very short.

Maldivia Garden.—The sale of fruit from "Maldivia" produced £65 15s. 9½d., as against an expenditure of £54 ls. The balance of this fund now stands at £15 8s. 0½d.

The chief items of expenditure besides the gardener's wages were £11 11s. for guano for manure and £3 for seed potatoes.

Botley's Lay.—The Government pasture lands at Botley's Lay produced a revenue of £94 0s. 3d., as against an expenditure of £84 4s. 6d., the balance standing to the credit of the account at the end of the year amounting to £42 6s. 10d. A portion of this balance will, however, have to be expended in 1924 in repairing the shepherd's cottage and improving the water supply, which has never been satisfactory.

(C) INDUSTRIES.

Fibre.—The Government Flax Mill worked for 263 days during the year, as compared with 254 days in 1922, producing 141 tons of fibre and 46 tons of tow, as compared with 130 tons of fibre and 48½ tons of tow in the previous year.

The average price obtained in the London market was £28 14s. per ton for fibre and £22 19s. for tow, as compared with £29 7s. for fibre and £20 11s. for tow in 1922.

The price of fibre remains fairly constant, while that of tow shows a tendency to rise.

Private Mills.—Messrs. Solomon & Co.'s mills at Sandy Bay and Broad Bottom worked practically throughout the year and produced the following output:—

	Fibre.		Tow.	
	Tons.	Cwt.	Tons.	Cwt.
Sandy Bay ...	121	11	21	15
Broad Bottom ...	110	9	29	6
Totals ...	232	0	51	1

Messrs. Solomon had 44 employees at Sandy Bay and 37 at Broad Bottom.

Messrs. Deason produced 268 tons of fibre and 107 tons of tow at Hutts Gate and Woody Ridge, giving employment to 160 hands.

A new flax mill was erected near Francis Plain by Messrs. Thorpe & Sons in the latter part of the year. The results for four and a half months' work showing 22 tons of fibre and 20 tons of tow. Twenty-two hands were employed.

It will be observed from the above that the flax industry in St. Helena gave direct employment to some 300 people in 1923, being an average of approximately one in ten of the population.

Rope.—The rope industry appears to have been at a low ebb in 1923, only about £480 worth of rope having been manufactured. Captain Mainwaring is, however, proceeding to England in 1924, so that he may possibly obtain information there which may be helpful to his venture.

(D) SHIPPING.

Thirty-seven vessels called during the year. All of these were British with the exception of one Danish vessel, one American steamer, one American light cruiser, one Swedish sailing ship, and one Norwegian whaler.

The total number of vessels sighted at the station was 51, as compared with 47 in 1922.

Twenty-six vessels entered and cleared at the Port of Jamestown, their total net tonnage being 122,261, as compared with 128,604 in 1922.

III.—EDUCATION.

Education proceeded normally and without any important change.

The numbers of children attending may be taken as:—

Government schools	...	...	...	254
Other schools	...	...	...	379
				633

as compared with 573 in 1922.

The school attendance officer reports the attendance at all schools good.

There was one prosecution under the Education Ordinance.

The superintendent visited the schools regularly and examined the children at the end of each quarter. He reports that in every case he found the teachers enthusiastic in their work, anxious for good results, and the children for the most part quick to respond. As forecasted last year, the teaching of needlework has been resumed with highly satisfactory results. The teachers, by making suitable garments, are able to find a sale for a certain percentage, and are able with the money thus obtained to buy fresh material. The giving of school prizes, which had lapsed during the war, was resumed, and the prizes were distributed at the end of the year by the Acting Governor, who expressed himself as highly satisfied with the evidence of good work done.

Games have been encouraged, and school football and cricket leagues are now in existence.

The pupil teachers' class continues every week, and the results as shown by the examination at the end of the year are distinctly encouraging.

IV.—GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

(A) HOSPITAL.

There were 157 admissions to hospital during the year, as compared with 174 in 1923.

Seven deaths occurred, equal to a death-rate of 4·5 per cent., as compared with 2·2 per cent. in 1923.

New and convenient quarters were provided for the nursing staff at St. John's Villa, which had been taken over by the Colonial Government from the Admiralty, and which, after complete renovation, was occupied by the nurses in April.

(B) SAVINGS BANK.

On the 31st December, 1923, there were 173 depositors having accounts with the Government Savings Bank, as against 148 on the same date in 1922 and 107 in 1921.

Cash deposits amounted to £4,751 19s. 6d., as against £4,190 14s. 11d. in 1922 and £602 13s. 3d. in 1921.

Repayments to depositors amounted to £2,349 13s. 9d., as compared with £1,179 5s. 1d. in 1922.

Stock to the amount of £9,231 actual value was invested on savings bank account on 31st December, 1923, as compared with £9,205 in 1922.

V.—JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

(A) CRIMINAL.

Supreme Court.—No cases were brought before the Supreme Court during the year under review.

Police Court.—Fifty-seven cases were dealt with in the police court, as compared with 88 in the previous year. There were 30 convictions, as compared with 52, a decrease of 22.

(B) PRISONS.

Twenty-one persons were committed to gaol or placed on remand during the year, as compared with 28 in 1922.

The daily average number in gaol was 9, as compared with 1·3 in 1922 and 1·4 in 1921.

There was no sickness among the prisoners during the year.

The cost of maintaining the gaol was £96 7s. 4d., as compared with £108 5s. 2d. in the previous year, £126 16s. 5d. in 1921, and £240 15s. 3d. in 1920.

Dog Tax.—£102 was collected under dog tax, as compared with £82 10s. in 1922.

VI.—VITAL STATISTICS.

(A) POPULATION.

The estimated civil population on the 31st December, 1923, amounted to 3,654, showing a decrease of 4 below that of 1922.

Civil emigrants numbered 191 and immigrants 101, as against 174 and 102 respectively in the previous year.

Deaths registered in 1923 numbered 28, as compared with 37 in 1922; of these 9 were under the age of one year.

Births in 1923 amounted to 114 (not including two stillborn), as against 97 in 1922. Forty-four illegitimate births took place.

The death-rate in 1923 appears as 7·66 per 1,000, as compared with 9·87 in 1922 and 6·5 in 1921, thus getting back to an average of about 8 per 1,000, which shows that the climate of St. Helena must be good.

The birth-rate was 31·19 per 1,000, as against 25·88 in the previous year.

Marriages solemnised in 1923 numbered 20, the same figure as that for the two previous years.

(B) PUBLIC HEALTH.

The general health of the community continued to be satisfactory.

A mild but widespread epidemic of influenza prevailed in the months of January and February, repeating the experience of the previous year.

During these two months the trade wind frequently fails, and this occurrence certainly favours the spread of air-borne infection.

Heavy floods were experienced in the month of April, and the main reservoir of the Jamestown water supply was contaminated by flood water from the neighbouring streams gaining access to the reservoir through the roof. Fortunately no illness was traceable to the temporary mixing of stream and spring water, and the damage has now been made good.

(C) SANITARY.

Seven meetings of the Board of Health were held during the year, and various matters of minor importance were discussed and adjusted.

(D) CLIMATE.

Meteorological Station, Hutts Gate.

Barometer.—The mean pressure for the year was 28·101, as compared with 28·107 for 1922.

Temperature.—The mean temperature was 62·0, as compared with 61·1 in the previous year. The absolute maximum was recorded on 25th July as 80·1 (81·6 being the maximum in 1922 on 18th February). The absolute minimum temperature was 50·0, recorded on 8th July.

Rainfall.—The maximum fall was recorded on 16th August and read 2·96 in. March to August inclusive were wet months, but the last four months of the year were very dry. The number of rainy days at Hutts Gate totalled 193, and at Plantation 247.

The total rainfall recorded at Hutts Gate was 45·74 in., at Plantation 45 in., and in Jamestown 10·14 in.

Wind.—The mean force for the year was 1·8.

There were 23 calm days, as compared with 11 in 1922. The direction for the year was as follows:—

E.	...	...	...	...	1
E.S.E.	...	...	...	...	64
S.E.	...	...	...	...	235
S.S.E.	...	...	...	...	42
Calm	...	...	...	...	23

VII.—POSTAL, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

(A) POST OFFICE.

Revenue.—The gross revenue from all sources amounted to £3,432 3s. 3d., as against £7,286 8s. 7d. collected in 1922, thus showing a drop of £3,854 5s. 4d. This cannot, however, be considered as altogether unsatisfactory, as the abnormal receipts in 1922 were due almost entirely to large sales of the new issue of stamps for St. Helena and Ascension.

In 1923 there was no new issue of stamps, and, though demands from dealers were below what had been hoped for, the receipts compare very favourably with those for 1921, which amounted to £741 15s. 2d.

Expenditure.—The expenditure of the Department amounted to £732 16s. 4d., a decrease of £334 13s. 9d. as compared with the previous year.

Money and Postal Orders.—Transactions under this head were as follows:—

	1921.	1922.	1923.
	£	£	£
To the United Kingdom and South Africa	1,587	6,378	11,836
From the United Kingdom and South Africa	1,357	1,788	2,375

Commission received on the above transactions during the year amounted to £160 19s. 1d., as compared with £71 7s. 5d. in 1922 and £20 9s. 9d. in 1921.

No insured or registered articles despatched were lost during the year under review.

(B) TELEGRAPHS.

There was no change in the telegraph tariff during the year except the introduction of cable letter telegrams normally delivered after 48 hours at a quarter the ordinary rate.

The Eastern Telegraph Company maintained their normal staff.

(C) TELEPHONES.

The receipts for the year under review amounted to £84 9s. 3d., and expenditure to £94 8s. 8d., as compared with £124 2s. 9d. and £95 8s. 7d. respectively in 1922.

VIII.—GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

(A) ROADS.

The amount spent on the repair and maintenance of rural roads came to £976 8s. 6d., out of which the tax on fibre and tow contributed £371 1s. 11d. and the road tax £71, as against an expenditure of £832 0s. 9d. in the previous year, with an offset of £298 3s. 6d. from the flax tax and £69 3s. from the road tax.

The roads to-day are in an infinitely better condition than they have been for many years, in spite of a most trying year, during the earlier part of which, owing to excessive rain and floods, large portions of the surface were swept away and the supporting walls demolished in many places. On one occasion sixteen breaks occurred in the walls in two days.

This satisfactory state of affairs is entirely due to the energy, hard work and good example set to the roadmen by the new Clerk of Works, who arrived here early in the year. Constant supervision and forethought are necessary if, with the small amount of money annually available and the heavy flax traffic, the roads are to be maintained in proper condition.

The following principal roads received special attention:—

- Casons to Peak Farm.
- White Gate to Half Tree Hollow.
- New Ground Road to St. Paul's.
- Ladder Hill Road.
- Two Gun Saddle to Gordon's Post (stoned the whole way).
- Gordon's Post to Hutts Gate (stoned the whole way).
- Red Hill Road to Messrs. Thorpe's Flax Mill (a new road necessitated by a new mill).

Peak Hill to Francis Plain (road washed away by heavy rains).
 High Peak to Thompson's Wood.
 Hutts Gate to Longwood.
 Longwood Avenue Road.
 Rock Rose Road to Sandy Bay Ridge (widened, repaired, walls built up at side).

Repairs to Buildings.—The annual vote of £400 for repairs to buildings is inadequate, but this figure is determined by the financial position of the Colony. A large portion of this sum is normally spent in wages and imported material.

The total expenditure in 1923 came to £578 4s. 3d., but repairs on a larger scale than usual were carried out, including extensive repairs to the post office, hospital and New Ground House, in addition to the constant renovation of the damage caused by white ants at Plantation House. Special expenditure has now been sanctioned to save Plantation House.

The amount collected under road tax was £71. There were six prosecutions under the "Road Tax" ordinance.

(B) LAND GRANTS.

Twenty-three grants of Crown waste land were made in 1923 for flax and garden ground amounting to 17 acres.

(C) RATE OF WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

The cost of living for 1923 remained practically the same as in the previous year, though some very necessary articles of diet such as rice and sugar cost more. Fish was plentiful.

	1922.	1923.
Flour	3½d. per lb.	3d. per lb.
Bread	4d. per 1½ lb.	4d. per 1½ lb.
Sugar	5d. per lb.	6d. per lb.
Dripping... ..	1s. per lb.	1s. per lb.
Tea	2s. 3s. per lb.	2s. 3s. per lb.
Salt	3d. per lb.	2d. per lb.
Rice	2d. per lb.	3d. per lb.

Rate of Wages.—The same as in 1922, viz., 2s. to 2s. 6d. daily. Unemployment has been considerably relieved by a greater output of fibre than formerly and also by the need for additional workmen in Ascension owing to the starting of the guano industry.

The Red Gate Depot continued its good work of helping the very aged poor by the provision of a weekly ration.

(D) DEPARTMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS.

During the year under review an expenditure of £2,366 11s. 4d. was incurred under "Works Recurrent," of which sum £976 8s. 6d. was expended on the repair and renovation of rural roads.

Poor Board.—The revenue of the Poor Board amounted to £1,072 16s. 5¼d. and the expenditure to £930 8s. 5¼d., which compares satisfactorily with £1,189 16s. 10d. and £1,055 7s. 9d. respectively in 1922.

Public Market.—The revenue received was £33 12s. 8½d. and expenditure £22 14s. 2d., the previous year's accounts showing £46 3s. 8d. and £26 10s. 5d. respectively.

(E) MISCELLANEOUS.

Miss Thompson was appointed Matron at the Civil Hospital, to succeed Miss Bennett, in April.

Mr. F. Lane was appointed Clerk of Works in succession to Mr. Thomas Broadway, who had held this office for 35 years.

Mr. Lea, the new Crown Prosecutor and Law Officer, arrived in October. With his arrival every office authorised is filled, a condition which has not been present here for many years.

(F) ASCENSION.

The Colonial Government have in Ascension a Magistrate, who is superintendent of the Eastern Telegraph Company's branch there, a Harbour Master and Postmaster, and a Registrar, who are also members of the staff of the telegraph company.

The post office is a sub-office of the office in Jamestown, to which it renders monthly reports. The finances of Ascension are controlled from St. Helena.

A concession to collect phosphates and guano in Ascension is now being worked by the Ascension Island Phosphate and Guano Company (Sales Concession), Limited. It is hoped that the results will be favourable.

About 75 St. Helena men are employed by the company.

ROBERT F. PEEL,

Governor and Commander-in-Chief.

THE CASTLE,

ST. HELENA,

10th May, 1924.