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**ST. HELENA**

**REPORT FOR 1929.**

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## ST. HELENA.

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1929.

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## SITUATION AND AREA.

The Colony of St. Helena consists of the Island of St. Helena with the Island of Ascension as a Dependency.

*St. Helena.*

St. Helena lies in latitude 15.55 South and longitude 5.42 West. It is about 950 miles due south of the Equator, 4,000 miles from England, and 1,700 miles from Cape Town. The voyage from England occupies from 14 to 17 days, and from Cape Town from five to six days.

The area of the island is 47 square miles. The population is about 3,800, of whom about 1,500 live in Jamestown, the port and only town in the island.

St. Helena is of volcanic origin. The latest account of its geology is a report by Professor Daly of Harvard University, who visited the island at the end of 1921. This report appears in the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* Vol. 62 No. 2, March, 1927. Professor Daly is of the opinion that St. Helena dates from pre-Glacial time, and is probably pre-Pliocene.

The aspect of St. Helena from the sea is forbidding. It rises abruptly in bare cliffs, which vary in height from 400 to 2,000 ft. The face of this wall of rock is cut by deep narrow gorges.

Above the cliffs the ground rises in a fairly regular slope, but with numerous valleys, to a ridge lying across the middle of the island. This ridge is serrated in form; its general altitude is about 2,000 feet, but two of its peaks, easily accessible and affording magnificent views, rise to 2,700 feet.

The island has been divided into three zones, "Coast," "Middle," and "Central."

The "Coast" zone extends from about a mile to a mile and a-half round the island. Except in some of the valleys, where fruit and vegetables may be grown, the only vegetation is prickly pear.

The "Middle" zone, at an altitude of 400 to 1,800 feet, succeeds the "Coast" zone. The hills and valleys and pleasing scenery in the higher levels of this area are suggestive of parts of Wales and Devon. Oaks, Scotch pines, gorse, and blackberries flourish there, and in 1926 at Plantation during a prolonged winter some primroses made their appearance.

The "Central" zone, about three miles long by two miles wide, is ground each side of the central ridge, the highest ground in the island. In some parts the ground is precipitous, in others undulating with grassy slopes.

*Ascension.*

Ascension Island lies in latitude 7.53 South and longitude 14.18 West, about 700 miles north-west of St. Helena. It has an area of 34 square miles. The population consists of European and St. Helenian employees of the Eastern Cable Company and of the St. Helena Development Company. On the 31st of December, 1929, the population numbered 220, of whom 145 were St. Helenians.

The island is of volcanic origin, and, as in the case of St. Helena, the most recent account of its geology is a report by Professor Daly which appeared in the *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, Vol. 60, No. 1, June, 1925. Professor Daly observes that from the time of its discovery no sign of volcanic activity, not even a hot spring, has been reported though geologically the island is extremely young. He thinks it possible that the whole mass above sea-level has been erupted during post-Glacial time.

From the sea Ascension appears bleak and desolate. Green Mountain, however, 2,800 feet high, relieves with its vegetation the barren and depressing effect of the larger part of the island and affords pasture for about 600 sheep and cattle.

## HISTORY.

*St. Helena.*

There is an abundance of interesting historical and descriptive records concerning St. Helena. The archives of the Administration from 1678 are preserved at the Castle; among them is the original of the instrument "The Laws and Constitution of the Island of St. Helena" issued by Charles II in 1681.

The island was discovered on 21st May, 1502, St. Helena's day, by Juan de Nova Castella, Commodore of a Portuguese squadron returning from India. The Portuguese made no attempt to make a colony of the island but were content to maintain it as a place of "refreshment" for their ships by planting fruit trees and vegetables and introducing goats, pigs, and wildfowl, including pheasants and partridges. It was the practice of the Portuguese to land on the island sick persons of a ship's company, "whom they suspect will not live till they get home; these they leave to refresh themselves, and take away the year following, with the other fleet, if they live so long."

The discovery of the island is said to have been kept a secret until the Englishman, Captain Cavendish, returning from a voyage round the world, anchored there on 8th June, 1588. He found on the island a great abundance of fruit and vegetables, thousands of goats, a great store of swine and wild fowl (the pheasants "big and fat surpassing those which are in our country in bigness and numbers in a company"). He found also "divers handsome buildings and houses, one, particularly, was a church tiled, and whitened on the outside very fair." The only human inhabitants were three slaves and from them Captain Cavendish learnt the news that "the East Indian fleet all laden with spices and Callicut cloth, with store of treasure, and very rich stones and pearls, were gone but twenty days before we came hither."

St. Helena now became a place for "the English, Portugals, Spaniards, and Hollanders to refresh themselves in going, but, for the most part, in returning from the Indies, it being sufficient to furnish ships with provisions for their voyage, here being salt to preserve the meat from stinking; and besides the air is so healthful that they often left their sick people there, who, in a short time, are restored to perfect health." "The greatest convenience of this island for ships" reported an English seaman "is the plenty and goodness of the water."

Eventually in 1645 the Dutch assumed possession of the island, but a few years later abandoned it to establish themselves at the Cape of Good Hope. Their place in St. Helena was taken by the English and in 1661 the Crown granted to the East India Company a charter for its administration.

According to some accounts the island was recaptured in 1665 by the Dutch, who were expelled the same year. They seized it again in 1672. The English Governor and his followers made their

escape in English and French ships to Brazil. There they met an English squadron under the command of Captain (afterwards Sir Richard) Munden, who determined to recover possession of the island. He arrived off St. Helena on the evening of 14th May, 1673, and was fortunate in finding that no lock-out was being kept. He landed a shore party at Prosperous Bay, as it came to be called in commemoration of the exploit. There the most active man of the party climbed up a precipice, taking with him a ball of twine to which was attached a rope by means of which the rest of the party were hauled up. The cliff thereafter became known as "Holdfast Tom," the urgent admonition of his comrades to the intrepid climber. As the ships appeared off Jamestown the landing party reached the heights above the town and the Dutch surrendered without striking a blow.

St. Helena reverted by conquest to the possession of the Crown. In December of 1673 a new charter was granted to the East India Company and, with the exception of the term of Napoleon's exile, the island continued under the Company's administration until 22nd April, 1834, when it was brought under the direct control of the Crown.

The Colony is now administered by a Governor aided by an Executive Council. The Governor alone makes ordinances, there being no legislative council, but power is reserved to legislate by Order of His Majesty in Council.

The East India Company, in the terms of their Charter of 1673, attached importance to the island as "very necessary and commodious for refreshing their servants and people in their retournes homewards, being often then weak and decayed in their health by reason of their long voyages under their hott clymes." This service the island continued to render during the period of the Company's administration. It had no possibilities as a trading station, and it remained purely a rendezvous for the protection and refreshment of shipping. The Governorship was often a reward for good service in India, and other offices were filled from time to time by the Company's servants whose health had suffered in the East.

With the disappearance of the Company's administration went its lavish expenditure and its high scale of salaries. The economy of Crown administration and consideration for the British taxpayer ushered in more difficult and less prosperous times for the inhabitants. The substitution of steam for sail and the opening of the Suez Canal meant the ruin of St. Helena as a shipping port. A century ago the number of ships calling each year was five hundred; to-day the number is forty, and in this era of cold storage supplies are rarely needed. More recently the removal of the garrison, in 1906-07, appeared at the time a crushing blow to the island. But the departure of the troops was not an unmixed evil, for it threw the island for the first time on its own resources and led to the creation of the fibre industry on which to-day the welfare of the inhabitants

has come greatly to depend. The future of St. Helena lies in its agriculture and in the character and technical training of its people; it is probable, also, that before long the scenery and the climatic advantages of the island may gain it a reputation as a resort for those who favour quietude and simple living.

St. Helena has become famous in history as the scene of the Emperor Napoleon's exile and death. The house occupied by him at Longwood and the site of the tomb in Sane Valley where his remains lay for twenty years till their removal in 1840 are now in the charge of the French Government, who were granted the freehold in 1858.

From its earliest days St. Helena appears to have been regarded as a place eminently suitable for exile or for the confinement of political prisoners.

The first exile to land on the island was Fernando Lopez in 1513. He was a Portuguese nobleman who had deserted his countrymen in India and turned apostate. Following on a Portuguese success near Goa he was surrendered to Albuquerque on condition that his life should be spared. His nose, his ears, his right hand, and the little finger of his left hand were cut off and he was thus placed on ship for Portugal. Rather than arrive in his country mutilated and disgraced he was at his own request left on shore at St. Helena with a few slaves. He remained on the island for four years, when on instructions from home he was removed to Portugal.

During the administration of the East India Company, St. Helena was selected for the confinement of an offending rajah who, however, did not survive the voyage. On two occasions Zulu rebels, amongst their number Dinizulu, Cetewayo's son, have been received on the island as political prisoners. During the South African War full advantage was taken of St. Helena's natural advantages as a place of internment. About 4,500 prisoners of war, among them General Kronje, were sent to the island. Their presence brought a wave of prosperity to the island, but apart from that happy circumstance the Boers soon gained and have retained the good will and respect of the inhabitants.

St. Helena had intimate associations with the suppression of the slave trade between West Africa and the Americas.

Slave ships captured by British warships were brought to the island for condemnation, and a settlement for freed slaves was founded at Rupert's Bay. A few found employment locally, but about 10,000 were conveyed to the West Indies and British Guiana.

From time to time St. Helena has had the good fortune to attract interesting and eminent visitors. In 1676 Halley, the astronomer, then a student at Oxford, arrived in the island to determine the positions of the fixed stars of the Southern Hemisphere, and left his name behind him in "Halley's Mount." His observations were to some extent, it is said, hampered by mist and cloud. The same fate about one hundred years later, in 1761, awaited the observations

of Dr. Maskelyne and Mr. Waddington, who visited the island to watch the transit of Venus on 6th June.

Captain Cook landed in the island in 1771 and again in 1774. He wrote that "the children and descendants of the English in St. Helena are remarkable for their ruddy complexion and robust constitution." "As for the genius and temper of these people," he observed, "they seemed to be the most hospitable ever met with of English extraction, having scarce any tincture of avarice and ambition."

Darwin arrived in St. Helena on 8th July, 1836. St. Helena, he was of opinion, had existed as an island from a very remote epoch. He remarked on "the English, or rather Welsh, character of the scenery": "When we consider that the number of plants now found on the island is 746, and out of these 52 alone are indigenous species, the rest having been imported, we see the reason of the British character of the vegetation."

In August, 1910, H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught called at the island, while on his way to open the first Parliament of the Union of South Africa, and in August, 1925, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales spent two days at St. Helena on his way from South Africa to South America.

There still remains on the island one survivor of the Napoleonic period, the giant tortoise at Plantation, said by some authorities to be the known oldest living inhabitant of the world. One report states that this tortoise and a companion who died in 1918 were brought to St. Helena during the Governorship of General Beatson, 1808-13, and that they originally belonged to the French Artillery at Port Louis, being handed over to the British with the ordnance and stores at the capitulation of Mauritius in 1810. Mellis, writing in 1875, mentions a report that the tortoises had lived at Plantation for a century or more. When he wrote they appeared to be fully grown, easily carrying a man.

#### *Ascension.*

Ascension Island was discovered by the Portuguese on 20th May, 1501. It was given its name by Albuquerque who came there two years later.

Vessels called at the island for the turtles. "The sailors never weary of eating them," wrote Roggewein in 1773, "believing that they make a perfect change of their juices, freeing them entirely from the scurvy and other diseases of the blood."

But there was a less savoury reputation attaching to the place. "As the island is a very miserable place to live in, it is common to leave malefactors here when they do not incline to put them to death."

Ascension remained unoccupied until the British took possession in 1815, at the time Napoleon was brought to St. Helena. A garrison was established on the island; "their tents," wrote La

'Trobe the following year, "are placed among heaps of volcanic matter resembling cinder heaps in the neighbourhood of London."

In 1821, marines formed the garrison. The spirit they brought with them appears in a private letter written from the island five years later. "We have everything in abundance and live like aldermen. The gardens which are about six miles off on the Green Mountain produce abundantly. The appearance of the island is certainly deplorable, a mass of black and brown lava; but it has its comforts which are every day increasing."

Ascension remained under Admiralty control until 12th September, 1922, when its administration was taken over by the Colonial Office and it was made a Dependency of St. Helena.

At the present time Ascension is an important cable station, and it is also the scene of the operations of the St. Helena Colony Development Company, who are interested in the phosphates and minerals on the island. The Mess of the Cable Company have imported a spirit of cheerfulness into the surroundings. Various forms of recreation—cricket, football, golf, tennis, hockey, and bathing—are available. Sea fishing is a popular pastime and there are possibilities of big game fishing.

An interesting feature of the island is Wide-awake Fair, described by Captain Simmonds in the July number of the *National Geographica Magazine*, 1927. "Here is a wonderful city of birds at Wide-awake Fair, on the western corner of the clinker plains. We of the 'Blossom' went to the Fair on numerous occasions during the breeding season and found the birds assembled by the millions on flattened areas between the ragged cones. The eggs were in such close formation on the ground that it was difficult to step without treading on one or more. Upon our approach the birds rose in deafening chorus and hung over our heads in a threatening blanket of wings and sharp bills that darkened the sun. As a curtain of birds swung down with terrible chattering and screeching, we also ducked and huddled in anticipation of an attack." When the young are fledged the birds vanish from the island till the next breeding season. The eggs are considered a delicacy and taste not unlike plovers' eggs.

The constitution of Ascension is the same as that of St. Helena. The Governor and Council of St. Helena have the same powers in relation to Ascension that they possess in relation to St. Helena.

The Superintendent of the Cable Company acts as Resident Magistrate and has a seat on the Council. Officials of the Company perform such administrative duties as may be necessary.

#### PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE.

With the exception of the English residents and the descendants of English families, settled in the island, the inhabitants are of varied descent. Their ancestors generations ago came from different

parts of the world, but principally from Europe and Asia, and there is difficulty now in tracing any distinctive or prevailing racial element. They are of slight build and of pleasing appearance, they are very law-abiding and are generally praised for their civility and courtesy. In their ideas and sentiments they are essentially and intensely English—as English as is a great deal of the Island scenery.

The language spoken in St. Helena has always been English, and to-day it is remarkable for its purity.

#### CURRENCY.

By the St. Helena Coinage Order, 1925, all coins which under the Coinage Acts of 1870 and 1891 are legal tender in the United Kingdom, and all silver coins which under the Coinage Act, 1922, are legal tender in the Union of South Africa are legal tender in the island of St. Helena.

#### WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

By the Weights and Measures Ordinance, 1905, the weights and measures for the time being lawfully in use in the United Kingdom and no others are to be used in St. Helena.

#### CLIMATE.

Situated far from any land mass, in the heart of the South-East Trades, and surrounded by the cool waters of the South Atlantic current, St. Helena possesses a mild and equable climate.

There are four seasons in the year, which, however, are not so sharply differentiated as they are in England. Spring is from October to December, summer from January to March, autumn from April to June, winter from July to September.

The length of day varies from 13 hours on 21st December to 11 hours on 21st June.

The sun is vertical on 5th February and on 6th November.

The temperature in the "Coast" zone ranges in summer between 68 degrees and 84 degrees and in winter between 57 degrees and 70 degrees. In the country at about 2,000 feet it is 10 degrees cooler.

In Jamestown, during summer, the heat is sometimes apt to be oppressive. In the country, during winter, fires are often appreciated.

The atmosphere is humid; the monthly mean at 9 a.m. in the country varies from 89 degrees in January to 92 degrees in September.

The average annual rainfall in Jamestown is about 9 inches and the average number of raindays in the year is about 90. In the country at Plantation, 1,650 feet, the annual average of rainfall over 17 years is 30.78 inches, and the average number of raindays 194. On

two occasions during the last 15 years the greatest fall in 24 hours amounted to 2 inches; apart from those two occasions the greatest fall did not exceed  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

At Plantation the driest months are October to January inclusive, when the average rainfall is under 2 inches each month; The wettest months are March, May, June, and July, when the average is 4 inches; the lowest record being 1.26 in March and the highest being 8.92 in July.

The average force of the wind, which blows almost every day in the year, is 14 miles per hour. On only one occasion in the last 30 years has the wind attained the velocity of 50 miles per hour.

Thunderstorms are of very rare occurrence, the last two recorded being in 1874 and 1888.

Earthquakes in the formidable sense are unknown. Only four "tremors" have been put on record in 400 years.

In the words of Mr. (now Sir Daniel) Morris, who in 1883 reported on the agricultural resources of the island, "St. Helena stands pre-eminent in possessing a remarkably fine and healthy climate. In respect to its climate I regard St. Helena as a most valuable station for recruiting health."

The island is completely free from any of the ills associated with tropical or sub-tropical countries. In particular the climate seems an excellent one for young children or elderly persons. It is also considered beneficial for tubercular or lung trouble.

It is generally held that after three or four years a change of environment is desirable.

No particular precautions are needed. The sun very rarely causes any inconvenience, though on occasions during the summer in rare and exceptional seasons of prolonged drought the direct solar heat may be intense. In the last 25 years there has been only one case of fatal result from the effect of sun.

### 1.—GENERAL.

In the past St. Helena was famous for its fruit, its coffee, and its vegetables. In the days of the East India Company the apples, mulberries, quinces, were said "to have come to perfection." Some St. Helena coffee shipped to England in 1845 fetched 1d. per lb. more than any other description, and a sample sent to the London Exhibition in 1851 obtained the first prize for quality. In more recent years consignments of potatoes were shipped to the Cape and a report on them in 1906 stated "there is no doubt the quality is excellent and they will command the best figure in the market." It was the opinion, moreover, of Sir Daniel Morris in

1884 that by that date if Mr. Chalmers, who had been sent from Kew in 1869, had not soon after been retrenched, the cultivation of tobacco would have become an established industry.

The departure of Mr. Chalmers left the St. Helenians, in horticultural matters, pathetically helpless, and horticulture became derelict.

The appointment last year of an officer from Kew has raised some hope of revival of interest in horticulture and of increasing the number and establishing the position of small holders. The limited area of land, however, available for cultivation makes it unlikely that any export trade on a considerable scale is possible. The market for the local produce will be in the island itself, in Ascension, and in occasional supplies to ships.

It may be possible in the near future to arrange for a short visit to the Colony of a Forestry Officer. No systematic forestry has ever been attempted in St. Helena and no report has yet been made by a Forestry Officer. Apart from their influence on climate and soil, trees are needed in St. Helena for fuel and to provide timber for building, fencing, etc., and there is little doubt that a reforestation scheme launched under expert advice can provide St. Helena with all the timber, including ant-resistant varieties, it will ordinarily require.

The possibility of obtaining a teacher in Domestic Science will be considered when funds become available. St. Helena girls when trained make good cooks and domestic servants. Opportunities for their employment offer in Ascension, in South Africa, and occasionally in England. There is little fear that if well trained there will be difficulty in finding them employment.

### II.—FINANCE.

The revenue for the year, including grant-in-aid of £2,000, amounted to £20,456, being £2,382 over the estimate and, £5,291 in excess of the revenue for the previous year.

The grant-in-aid of £2,000 for 1928 was not credited till 1929, and the annual minimum royalty of £1,000 for both 1928 and 1929 was received during the year from the St. Helena Development Company.

There were also, as compared with the previous year's revenue, increases of £390 under Customs, of £400 under Lands, due to the collection of arrears; and there were decreases of £144 under Royalties, (but arrears of £250 are being collected), of £165 under Fines and Fees, of £550 under Post Office, and of £340 under Miscellaneous. It appears that the demands of philatelists are being reduced to normal proportions and that no further extraordinary revenue can be anticipated from this source.

On the whole the revenue returns show more satisfactory results than at one time during the year was thought probable.

The principal items of revenue were :—

	£
Customs... ..	5,253
Taxes ... ..	579
Fines, Fees, etc. ... ..	1,366
Post Office ... ..	2,100
Lands ... ..	1,400
Agriculture and Forests ... ..	307
Investments ... ..	434
Ascension ... ..	4,657

The expenditure amounted to £22,385, being £3 in excess of the estimate and £2,714 in excess of the previous year's expenditure.

As compared with 1928, the reorganization of the Secretariat, Treasury, Customs, and Law Office resulted in an economy of £225. There is an increase of £580 under Agriculture and Forestry arising from the appointment of an Horticultural Officer and from increased provision for labour and stores. Under Public Works Department there is an increase of £300 occasioned by the appointment of an Assistant Superintendent of Works, and under Public Works Extraordinary there is an increase of £1,693, the Department having got into its full stride with its programme of Extraordinary Works and provision of £250 being included for the expenses in connection with the visit of Mr. Bathgate, late Assistant Director of Works in Nigeria.

The principal items of expenditure were :—

	£
Pensions... ..	781
Governor ... ..	1,144
Secretariat ... ..	1,065
Treasury and Customs ... ..	750
Police ... ..	622
Medical and Sanitary ... ..	3,156
Education ... ..	810
Post Office ... ..	403
Agriculture and Forestry ... ..	1,224
Miscellaneous ... ..	723
Public Works Department ... ..	1,204
Public Works Recurrent ... ..	3,065
Public Works Extraordinary ... ..	4,103
Ascension ... ..	2,165

The revenue (including grant-in-aid) and expenditure for the past five years are :—

	Revenue.	including Grant-in-Aid of	Expenditure.
	£	£	£
1925 ... ..	21,731	7,000	19,566
1926 ... ..	23,945	2,500	23,154
1927 ... ..	20,486	2,500	16,740
1928 ... ..	15,549	—	19,671
1929 ... ..	20,456	4,000	22,385

The ordinary recurrent revenue and expenditure for the same period are approximately as follows :—

	Revenue.	Expenditure.
	£	£
1925 ... ..	12,537	14,758
1926 ... ..	13,522	15,224
1927 ... ..	16,600	15,940
1928 ... ..	14,162	15,794
1929 ... ..	15,256	17,434

The Colony stands in need, therefore, of a grant-in-aid of approximately £2,000 to balance the ordinary recurrent budget.

*Assets and Liabilities* :—The statement of assets and liabilities shows an excess of assets over liabilities amounting to £2,666.

*Public Debt* :—The Colony is free from public debt.

*Banking* :—The Government Savings Bank is the only banking institution in the island.

The total number of depositors on the 31st December, 1929, was 228 as compared with 234 in 1928. The total deposits amounted to £5,569, an increase of £1,928 over that of 1928.

Stock to the value of £11,698 (cost price) is held by the Government on behalf of the depositors.

The amount due to depositors on 31st December, 1929, was £17,370, as against £16,099 on the same date in 1928.

### III.—PRODUCTION.

#### *Agriculture and Industries.*

The welfare of St. Helena is bound up with the cultivation of the land. This was the opinion of Sir Daniel Morris in 1884, "I look entirely to the soil," he wrote, "for the elements to bring prosperity to St. Helena." The same opinion was expressed nearly 40 years later in a lecture given in Jamestown by Professor Daly of Havard,

who had visited St. Helena to study its geology. Mr. Mason, who came from South Africa in 1922 to report on the island's agriculture, came to the conclusion that St. Helena "was a country for the smallholder."

The only industry of importance at the present time is the cultivation of *phormium tenax* (New Zealand flax) and the manufacture of fibre and tow from its leaves.

This plant does not appear in Dr. Roxburgh's list of plants seen by him on the island in 1813-1814. His list, however, does not profess to be complete as his bad state of health during his residence prevented him from compiling a full catalogue.

The first reference so far discoverable is in Mellis' *St. Helena*, 1875, " . . . New Zealand flax with other fibre producing plants all now grow wild, and bear evidence to the very small attention that has been paid by the inhabitants to the soil and its productions, in the fact that none are made use of "; and again, "New Zealand flax grows wild and is common about the highlands. Hitherto the only use made of this plant has been by the market gardeners for tying up bunches of vegetables, etc ; and, although the value of the plant for the fibre it yields has long attracted attention, it is only recently that its cultivation has been undertaken with this object in view. During the last year or so a very considerable extent of land has been planted with it."

Flax first appears in the agricultural returns for 1873, when 100 acres were said to be given over to its cultivation. In the following year machinery was set up for the extraction of fibre from aloe and from *phormium tenax*, and from 1875 to 1881 there were exports of fibre from both plants, the highest returns being 100 tons and 83 tons in 1879 and 1880 respectively. Prices then fell, and after 1881 the export ceased.

Sir Daniel Morris in his report of 1883 wrote : "I commend the subject of the extraction of fibre from the New Zealand flax to the careful attention of proprietors in the island . . . obtaining some return from the hundreds of tons of the material now growing uselessly on such extensive tracts in the island." He obtained a report on a sample of New Zealand flax treated by a machine erected by Mr. Deason, "this fibre," the report said, "would be fairly saleable in large quantities."

In the Colonial Report for 1889 in referring to the production of fibre it was explained that the difficulties of obtaining an adequate supply of water and of proper machinery had still to be overcome.

It was not till 1904-5 that serious attention was again given to the production of fibre, when proposals in connection with the matter were mooted from South Africa and England. It was pointed out, however, that any extension of the cultivation of New Zealand flax meant the breaking up of grass and pasture land, and that the preservation of such land was necessary for raising stock for the meat supply of the garrison.

The withdrawal of the garrison in 1906-7 altered the whole situation. In June, 1906, a deputation consisting of Messrs. H. B. Morrice, H. J. Bovell, and H. W. Solomon interviewed the Secretary of State for the Colonies and urged the establishment of a Government flax mill in the island. With the assistance of a grant-in-aid, flax planting was encouraged, an expert was obtained from New Zealand, and the Government mill was opened in 1907. In 1913 Solomon and Co. opened their first mill, followed three years later by Deason Brothers, and in 1923 W. A. Thorpe and Sons also began milling operations. In 1925 the St. Helena Corporation acquired a lease of the Government mill.

At the present time, therefore, there are four firms engaged in fibre production, and there are eleven stripping and scutching machines operating. There are about 300 people employed in connection with the mills.

The area under the cultivation of *phormium tenax* is estimated at approximately 2,000 acres. The cultivation is suitable for the smallholders and is taken up by them, but by far the greater proportion of the acreage is the property of the millowners themselves.

The export of fibre and tow during the past five years has been in tons :—

	<i>Fibre.</i>	<i>Value.</i>	<i>Tow.</i>	<i>Value.</i>
		£		£
1925 . . . . .	923	33,022	420	10,953
1926 . . . . .	751	25,531	417	10,851
1927 . . . . .	738	24,542	365	7,963
1928 . . . . .	770	22,515	380	6,933
1929 . . . . .	889	26,759	505	9,191

Mr. Mason in his report (1922) discussed the flax industry. He observed that the war with its enormously inflated prices had given a stimulus to flax planting, that it had been established in suitable and unsuitable places and many of the latter when prices become normal would be likely to go out of cultivation ; that the high prices had led to the planting of ground which under normal conditions would yield much better returns if devoted to the production of ordinary agricultural crops. He was of opinion that, owing to the ease with which money could be made, slackness had crept in all round and that a general tightening up of business methods would be necessary if the industry was not to go through a critical stage. He considered that the greatest cause for uneasiness was the general practice of milling leaves too young, and that no time should be lost by the interested parties in putting their house in order. So far as the mills were concerned it would be necessary to study costs and the most economical way of producing fibre. In most cases, he observed, flax did not receive much attention from the time it was planted until it was ready for cutting. A greater yield he thought would result if it was kept free from weeds, especially in the early stages. He strongly recommended some system of grading.



On this point Sir Henry Galway had been equally emphatic in the Colonial Report for 1908, "When the flax industry develops to any extent, say in three years' time, it will be imperative for the success of the industry that the Colony has its own grader, and so allow for all the produce exported being graded before shipment. If this is not done it is more than likely that the different mills will send home varying qualities of fibre, and so tend to give the St. Helena article a bad name in the London market."

These questions call for much closer co-operation amongst mill-owners than is apparent at the present time.

For the past few years an attempt has been made by Captain Mainwaring to establish the manufacture of rope and twine out of the local fibre. The export for the last five years has been :—

	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Value.</i>
		£
1925 ... ..	32	1,500
1926 ... ..	35 $\frac{1}{2}$	2,105
1927 ... ..	18	810
1928 ... ..	26 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,246
1929 ... ..	51	2,051

The successful development of such an enterprise would be of the greatest benefit to the island.

*Fisheries.*—At one time an attempt was made to start a fish-curing industry in the island, but the project failed. It is thought that supplies of fish are not more than sufficient for local needs.

*Lace-making.*—This industry was started in St. Helena in 1897 by Mrs. Jackson, a resident in the island. She had been impressed with its possibility as an industry for women and girls from the success which had attended a similar enterprise in Madagascar. In 1907 the Imperial Treasury gave a grant to assist and develop the industry, and an Association was formed under the presidency of the Bishop with a committee of ladies to assist in the management. The Association dissolved the following year and the industry passed into Government control. A Government lace school was established and Miss Girdwood was appointed Manageress. She soon came to the opinion that the talent of the St. Helenian was strongly in favour of the needle rather than the pillow. Reports on the work of the school were encouraging and it was considered worth while to adopt old Italian patterns and to aim at production of a high quality. It was stated in 1914 that the laces were of excellent quality and workmanship, were chiefly of Florentine and old Italian designs, and that but for the outbreak of war the school would have shown a substantial profit. In 1916 Miss Girdwood was compelled on account of ill-health to resign her appointment; the school then closed and has not since been re-opened. Messrs. Solomon and Co.

have opened a depot in town where the lace can now be purchased, but the St. Helena lace finds difficulty in competing with machine-made lace and with work of cheaper quality.

#### *Ascension.*

The only export from Ascension at the present time is that of turtles. The number of turtles captured during the year was 134. The average number annually exported during the past five years is 86. In former years the export was on a considerable scale, 750 turtles being exported in 1834, 600 in 1850, and 650 in 1853.

Investigations are being made into the possibilities of exploiting the minerals and the phosphates on the island.

About 1,600 tons of lava rock were shipped to England for experimental treatment.

#### IV.—TRADE AND ECONOMICS.

The value of the Colony's trade with overseas during 1929 amounted to £85,976 as compared with £80,307 in 1928. The value of imports decreased by £1,635 whilst the value of exports increased by £7,034.

The Customs revenue amounted to £5,253 as against £4,863 in 1928, the increase being principally due to two large consignments of paraffin oil and petrol imported direct from the United States of America, and to a new flax mill opened during the year. This mill, coupled with a larger crop of green leaf being available for milling, increased the export revenue.

#### *Imports.*

The value of imports during the year amounted to £47,405 distributed as follows :—

	£
United Kingdom ... ..	34,848
South Africa ... ..	8,051
Foreign countries ... ..	4,506
	<hr/>
	£47,405

Importations from South Africa and foreign countries were mainly food, drink, paraffin oil, petrol, and tobacco.

The principal differences as compared with 1928 were :—

<i>Increases—</i>	£
Building Material ... ..	553
Foodstuffs (Unenumerated) ... ..	191
Grain, seed and oil cake ... ..	608
Paraffin Oil ... ..	2,705
Petrol ... ..	497
Motor Vehicles ... ..	552
Tea ... ..	125

<i>Decreases—</i>	£
Chemicals, Drugs, etc. ... ..	289
Coal and Coke ... ..	187
Flour ... ..	2,108
Hardware, Metals, etc. ... ..	1,093
Leather, Boots, etc. ... ..	289
Machinery ... ..	549
Rice ... ..	302
Stationery ... ..	311
Sugar ... ..	512

Government imports in 1929 were valued at £2,362 as against £2,713 in 1928. The value of munitions of war is not included.

#### *Exports.*

The value of exports in 1929 amounted to £38,571 as against £31,267 in 1928, distributed as follows:—

	£
United Kingdom ... ..	36,175
South Africa ... ..	2,396

These exports are classified as follows:—

	<i>United Kingdom.</i>	<i>South Africa.</i>
	£	£
Raw Material ... ..	34,519	1,884
Manufactured Articles, produce and manufacture of the Colony ... ..	1,494	512
Re-exports ... ..	162	—

The principal differences in value as compared with 1928 are:—

<i>Increases—</i>	£
Fibre ... ..	4,244
Tow ... ..	2,258
Rope and Twine ... ..	760
Metal, old ... ..	162
<i>Decreases—</i>	£
Flax Seed ... ..	196

The quantities of fibre and tow exported in 1929 were 889 and 505 tons respectively, as compared with 770 and 380 tons in 1928. The 889 tons of fibre is the largest export since 1925.

## V.—COMMUNICATIONS.

### *Shipping.*

The number of ships calling at St. Helena and Ascension during the year 1929 was 35. Exactly the same number as called during 1928.

They were classified as follows:—

Mail steamers ... ..	26
British warships ... ..	2
*Other ships ... ..	7

The total tonnage, including the sailing vessel (2,652), was 173,459 as compared with 132,315 during the year 1928.

The Union-Castle Company Line is the only one calling regularly at St. Helena and Ascension, and carries mails outward and home-ward once a month.

### *Roads.*

There are 62 miles of road in the island maintained by the Public Works Department, and the expenditure on this service during the year amounted to £1,100.

Motors are now permitted in St. Helena and though the scope for them is limited and the gradients are formidable, they will prove a great benefit from the social as well as from the economic point of view.

### *Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephones.*

Postal communication is monthly between St. Helena and England and between St. Helena and South Africa.

The following statistics show a slight general increase in the business of the Post Office as compared with 1928.

From England—	1928.	1929.
No. of Mails (bags) ... ..	224	248
Parcels ... ..	1,448	1,474
Registered Articles ... ..	928	914
Money and Postal Orders ... ..	£1,578	£1,727
To England—		
No. of bags of Mail ... ..	66	61
Parcels ... ..	123	135
Registered Articles ... ..	1,783	1,771
Money and Postal Orders ... ..	£6,039	£6,822

\* This includes one sailing vessel which called but did not anchor. It was boarded by licensed traders.

From South Africa—	1928.	1929.
No. of bags of Mail ... ..	66	41*
Parcels ... ..	408	519
Registered Articles ... ..	449	556
Money and Postal Orders ...	£220	£252
To South Africa—		
No. of bags of Mail ... ..	32	21†
Parcels ... ..	142	126
Registered Articles ... ..	451	454
Money and Postal Orders ...	£1,463	£1,589

The Eastern Telegraph Company have cable stations at St. Helena and Ascension, where messages are accepted for all parts of the world.

There is no internal post or telegraph service. A telephone system is maintained by private subscribers, the rate per instrument being £5 per annum. The number of instruments is 34. There are 43 miles of wire. The revenue during 1929 was £192 2s. 11d. against an expenditure of £242 15s. 5d.

#### VI.—JUSTICE, POLICE, AND PRISONS.

Subject to all local Ordinances and Orders in force, the law of the Colony is so much of the law of England for the time being as is suitable and appropriate as far as local circumstances permit.

By Royal Order in Council of the 13th February, 1839, the Supreme Court of St. Helena was established. The Governor acts as Chief Justice and is assisted by Assessors, who may be Members of Council or Justices of the Peace. By Ordinance 4 of 1927 the Court is empowered to hold Civil and Criminal Sessions at Ascension.

There were no cases before the Supreme Court during the year under review.

Police Court cases are dealt with by the Police Magistrate or by Justices of the Peace.

The number of cases reported to the Police was 131. In 52 cases action was taken in the Police Court resulting in 20 convictions. Of these convictions eight were for offences against Ordinances relating to the social economy of the island, two for offences against the person, five were for offences against property, and the others were for minor offences. There were four whippings in the case of boys.

The Police force consists in St. Helena of a sergeant and five constables and in Ascension of two constables.

\* Exclusive of parcel bags (35) which are included as mails in 1928.

† Exclusive of parcel bags (15) which are included as mails in 1928.

There is a small Debts Court established by Ordinance No. 2 of 1905. Its jurisdiction is over all requests for the recovery of sums not exceeding £25. The Judge of this Court is usually the Police Magistrate. Eleven cases were heard in this Court during the year.

#### *Gaol.*

The number of persons committed to prison during the year was five, and two were placed on remand. The number in custody on 31st December, 1929, was 2.

#### VII.—PUBLIC WORKS.

It has been a very strenuous year for the Public Works Department and the record is one of some very good work.

#### *Reconstruction of Plantation.*

The reconstruction of Plantation, the residence of the Governor, a building ruinous and dangerous owing to the depredations of white ants, was a work calculated to test to the utmost the training, the ability, and the organization in the Department, for it had been determined to entrust the work to the local staff.

The building was occupied to the last moment and to the extreme verge of safety. Roof, roof framing, ceilings, floors, and staircases had to be replaced; in fact, the shell only of the building was in a condition to remain.

It was decided to replace the slates by Robertson's Protected Metal, and the timber framing by steel framing, and to use embossed steel for the ceilings.

The following extract from the Annual Report of the Department shows the progress of the work:—

"The work on this fine old building commenced in earnest with the full complement of staff on the 6th December, 1928. The balance of the time was occupied in the reconstruction of the Government House stables and coachman's quarters, the repair, renovation, and in many cases, the reconstruction of the Government House furniture, and the fitting up of a suitable residence for His Excellency the Governor.

"On the 6th December, 1928, the staff was divided into two parties, one of which carried out the replacement of all lintels, and the making of doors and window frames.

"The other half commenced the pulling down and reconstruction of the servants' quarters.

"On the 15th July, 1929, the whole of the steel framing with covering and guttering arrived at Plantation.

"On the 22nd July the work of erecting the framing on the lawn was commenced. This was carried out by the foreman carpenter and his men, whilst the second carpenter commenced the dangerous task of dismantling the very heavy timber of the old roof.

"In the meantime, as news had been received that the steel framing was on the way out, two men were trained as sawyers and given practice in cutting up wood for scaffolding.

"On the 30th July the roof was successfully coupled up in accordance with plans supplied from the Crown Agents. The second carpenter had also completed the dismantling of the timbers leaving the portion over the west wing as covering to the new timber stored below the top flooring. In dismantling the roof the whole of the slates, old lead flats and valleys and a very fair amount of timber have been salvaged.

"The foreman carpenter then took over operations under the Superintendent of Works and the second carpenter carried on the completion of window and door frames.

"On the 1st August, 1929, the first steel principal truss was successfully erected. This work was continued until the whole framing was erected and covered. This work was carried out in the remarkable short time of two months."

By the end of the year the new roof with its steel framing and the embossed steel ceilings in the upper storey were in position, and most of the floors in that storey had been replaced. In addition the renewal of all the lintels had been carried out and new door and window-frames had been made.

The work thus carried out is well within the estimate of cost and of time, and is a very creditable achievement on the part of the Public Works staff, justifying the confidence reposed in them. It may be observed that, excluding out-houses, Plantation contains thirty-six rooms and offices, and that in 1895 when it became necessary to renew the slated portion of the roof 5,000 slates were required.

Plantation derives its name from the fact that it is on land which in early days was cultivated as a plantation for supplying the Governor's table and for growing yams to feed the slaves. The present building was started in 1791. During the Governorship of Colonel Wilks, the immediate predecessor of Sir Hudson Lowe, the sum of £4,500 is said to have been spent on repairs and additions to the property, and 27,000 pineasters were planted out in the grounds. The house now stands in very pleasant wooded surroundings, chiefly of oak and pine, and is a most attractive residence.

#### *Roads.*

The end of 1928 saw the arrival of a motor-roller and a stone-crusher.

The roller was a 2½ ton "A" type, made by Messrs. Barford and Perkins. It was fitted with a spindle to carry a driving wheel for operating the crusher. It has been found economical as regards fuel consumption, and owing to the absence of exceptional noise when working it soon became a matter of unconcern to most of the island horses. The crusher is an Acme Stonebreaker weighing 2½ tons, supplied by Messrs. Goodwin and Barsby.

Both roller and crusher have amply fulfilled expectations. The quantity of stone crushed was 8,620 barrels at a cost of approximately £100. By the primitive methods of stone-breaking hitherto

in force the cost of breaking this quantity of stone would have been £270. The first essay with the roller was the intensive treatment of about one mile of the Longwood road. The result showed that, the question of funds apart, there should be no difficulty in giving the roads of the island a first-class surface.

When funds are available it is proposed to obtain a tractor which will also drive the crusher, thus leaving the roller its whole time for working on the roads. The fear that this machinery would lead to unemployment has been falsified, for there is need of additional labour for quarrying the large quantities of stone required to feed the crusher.

The various sections of the sixty miles of road in the island have received attention, and work has been done in repairing and erecting retaining and protection walls.

At the end of the year regulations with regard to motor traffic were promulgated and the first motor-car, an Austin Seven saloon imported by the Honourable H. W. Solomon, O.B.E., made its appearance. It was followed shortly after by a commercial vehicle, a 30 cwt. Chevrolet lorry, imported by the St. Helena Corporation. It is anticipated that within a short time there will be about twelve cars and half a dozen lorries running in the island.

#### *Water Supplies.*

The main water supplies throughout the island were overhauled during the year. Storage tanks have been cleaned, and covers and defective woodwork repaired or replaced.

The Jamestown service lines were thoroughly inspected and found in a satisfactory condition, and all the flushing systems were found in good order.

Two new tanks to hold 16,000 gallons each were erected during the year. The first was erected on the Castle Terrace for the shipping supply. The second was placed at the upper end of Jamestown and will increase the supply for the various needs of the town.

#### *Transport.*

This section of the Public Works Department had an exceptionally heavy programme. In addition to the needs of the Horticultural Department the crusher was making continuous requisition on transport. The carts failed under the strain, but the mules kept in good condition and stood well up to the work. The donkeys took time to recover from the effects of the drought of the previous year, but after careful nursing were able to do their full share. Two motor-lorries would greatly ease the situation.

#### *General.*

Current repairs were carried out on various Government buildings, eighteen in all receiving attention, and the wharf cranes were scraped and repainted. The expenditure on Current Repairs and Minor Works amounted to £410.

Various works were undertaken on repayment for the Admiralty, at a cost of £1,300.

Woodworking machinery, a Ransome Newark Joinery Machine, type 365, fitted with a sawing and planing table arrived in the latter part of the year, and was installed at Plantation where it is first needed. It has been of great assistance to the staff who very quickly appreciated its value as labour-saving machinery.

It was possible to arrange early in the year for a visit to the Colony of Mr. Bathgate, late Assistant Director of Public Works in Nigeria. He reported on the various programmes of Public Works and on the activities and needs of the Department generally. The advice of such an experienced engineer and the series of valuable reports he submitted have been of the greatest assistance to the Government.

### VIII.—AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE.

During the year attention was devoted mainly to the Public Gardens and Maldivia Gardens in Jamestown and to Plantation. Funds were not available for serious work on "Scotland," an estate of about ten acres purchased at the end of 1928 for a Horticultural Station.

The work in connection with the Public Gardens was highly successful, and was an object lesson as to the possibilities of horticulture in the island. With an improved water supply, for the annual rainfall in Jamestown rarely exceeds six inches, it is hoped to obtain still better results. As it is the efforts of the Horticultural Officer have converted a waste and derelict open space into a pleasant and attractive garden.

Maldivia Gardens are situated at the upper end of the town. Fruit and vegetables were supplied from them to the public, and the proceeds were credited to "The Maldivia Fund," out of which the gardens were maintained. These proceeds are now credited to general revenue, and the gardens are supported out of the departmental vote. Experiments with certain vegetables met with success, but owing to the heat and the drought poor results were obtained with cauliflowers and also with strawberries. The gardens possess some fine specimens of mango trees, but owing to fly the yield of fruit was disappointing. Lack of funds prevented any systematic spraying.

At Plantation experiments with sugar-beet, swedes, mangel-wurzels, and turnips were satisfactory, and improvement was manifest in the forage crops generally. Government transport animals depend on Plantation for most of their forage. The small coffee plot was thinned out and cleaned and the ground loosened and given a dressing of guano. The trees were not in a healthy condition and were much overgrown.

The export of fibrous products for the year totalled 1,394 tons, being 889 tons of fibre and 505 tons of tow. This is the highest export yet recorded. The increase is due to new areas being ready for cutting. Doubts are expressed as to whether areas which have been cut two or three times will continue to maintain their yield. The general consensus of opinion is that the yield diminishes with each cutting, and this is certainly the case with the Government flax areas. The subject is one which is under investigation.

An Herbarium has been started and some 500 specimens have been collected.

During the year, owing to the enterprise of the Honourable H. J. Bovell, bees have again been introduced into the island. The yield of honey was not satisfactory, but the experiment has been a valuable one, and will be of great assistance in connection with the hives Government are hoping to introduce.

The year's expenditure of the Department amounted to £1,244. The revenue from "Maldivia" amounted to £41 as against £35 in 1928, and from the sale of timber to £56 as against £27 in that year. The sale of flax realized £257. In addition, there were 72 tons of forage supplied to Government animals, and fuel, vegetables, and fruit were supplied for the use of Government House.

### IX.—PUBLIC HEALTH.

The estimated civil population of St. Helena on the 31st of December, 1929, was 3,846, an increase of 51 since the same date in the previous year. In the past five years the population shows an estimated increase of 145.

The deaths in St. Helena during the year numbered 40, as against 69 in 1928, the death-rate being 10.4 compared with 18.17 in the previous year. For the past ten years the death-rate has an annual average of 11.86 per 1,000.

The deaths according to age were :—

Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	8
Between 1—10 years	...	...	...	...	4
„ 10—30	„	...	...	...	4
„ 30—60	„	...	...	...	11
„ 60—80	„	...	...	...	10
Over 80	...	...	...	...	3

There were 121 births as against 123 in 1928, a birth-rate of 31.46 as against 32.39.

There were 34 marriages as compared with 31 in 1928.

In Ascension with its population of 220 there were no deaths or births.

*Health.*

During the year there were a few cases of chicken-pox, and two cases of typhoid, the origin of which was not traced.

A medical examination of school children was carried out during the year, the total number examined being 713. Cleanliness was reported to be above the average for European children. Adenoids were practically non-existent, and defective vision was present in very few cases. Since the appointment of the Government Dentist a great improvement in the state of the children's teeth was noticeable. As regards height and weight, taking English children as normal, it was found that the height of town children was above normal and that of country children below. The weight of both town and country children was below normal, and as between town and country children the advantage was with the country children.

The Dentist visited all the schools. The number of children treated was 362. The number of teeth extracted or refilled was 1,048. The examination and treatment of children is not compulsory.

The Dentist sums up his report as follows: "The work has been in operation long enough for definite good results to be obvious, and the various people concerned, noticeably parents, are more cordial and willing to do their share towards making it a success."

## X.—EDUCATION.

There are eight primary schools in the island. Three are Government schools, three are maintained by the Hussey Charity, established in 1865 originally for the redemption of slaves, one by the Benevolent Society founded in 1814 for educational purposes and acts of benevolence, and one by the Bishop's Diocesan Fund. These schools provide for about 700 children.

A Government grant of £100 is given to the Hussey Charity Schools, of £20 to the Benevolent School, and of £15 to the Diocesan Fund School.

A carpentry class has been established in connection with the Government Boys' School and the Hussey Charity Schools. The training is quite elementary, but in the opinion of the Superintendent of Education the class "has more than justified itself as a very necessary part of our education system."

At the end of the year a Committee of ladies examined the needlework of the girls in the Government Schools and spoke very highly of the work being done.

There is, however, no provision for technical or secondary education. As regards the former, the comparatively extensive programme of public works and the establishment of a horticultural department will afford some opportunities for training boys. In the case of girls it is proposed when funds are available to start a school of domestic economy under a trained teacher.

Pupil teachers from all the schools attend weekly classes in more or less secondary subjects covering a course of four years. The instruction includes English, elementary French, Algebra, Arithmetic, Geography, History, and Hygiene. These classes are conducted by the Rev. L. C. Walcott, Vicar of the Parish Church, who also acts as Superintendent of Education.

The expenditure on education during the year amounted to £806.

## XI.—LANDS.

Sir Daniel Morris estimated the area of St. Helena to be 28,000 acres, "Of this area probably 20,000 acres or more than two-thirds are composed of barren rocky wastes or clayey slopes totally unfit in their present condition for any agricultural operations." More recent estimates give the area of agricultural and pastoral lands as 10,000 acres.

The multiplicity of records and the diversity of titles introduce some degree of confusion into the tenure of land in the island.

Among the terms in the early days of the East India Company under which land was granted to "the planters, their heirs, and assignees for ever" was the condition "An Englishman to be kept on every ten acres, and to take his turn to appear in arms on guard." Appearance on guard, watch and ward, as it was termed, was commuted as early as 1683 for a payment of 2s. an acre, subsequently reduced to 1s. an acre. As regards the maintenance of an Englishman on every ten acres, the Court of Directors sent instructions in 1717 "not to enforce too rigorously" this condition.

The lands which bore this charge of 1s. an acre became known as "free" lands.

The Company also granted leases. In 1828 the Court conveyed to the Governor their approval of the conversion of leaseholds into permanent tenure, "We are . . . prepared to sanction the grant to such of the parties now holding temporary leases as may by their management of the property and the buildings they have erected have proved themselves worthy of the boon of a permanent title to the lands, with a reservation, however, of our right in each case, when the public service may demand it, to resume possession of the land upon the payment of its valuation, to be assessed by a jury, providing also that a quit rent varying from 3s. per acre to 6d. per acre to be in like manner assessed."

These lands became known locally as "permanent tenure" land.

Lastly, under a Proclamation dated the 7th of August, 1843, the Government gave notice that it would commute the ground rents of the several tenures into rent-free grants at 10 or 12½ years rental according to the nature of the tenure. A considerable number of grantees took advantage of this offer. It does not appear that the right of Government to resume for public purposes was made a condition in this scheme of commutation.

There is still a considerable area of Government land on lease, and during recent years a number of small plots have been granted to smallholders, originally for growing flax.

The number of properties on the Government rent roll amounts to 427, representing about £1,200 per annum in rents.

It is difficult to arrive at the market value of land owing to the paucity of transactions, but from £7 10s. to £10 an acre would not be an unreasonable price for cultivated land.

The only legislation dealing with land is Ordinance No. 1 of 1893, to simplify conveyancing and titles to land and to provide for registration.

## XII.—LABOUR CONDITIONS AND COST OF LIVING.

Wages for skilled and semi-skilled workmen vary from 3/6 to 5/6 per day and for unskilled labour from 2/- to 2/6 per day of eight to ten hours. Women are paid less.

The Government minimum wage is 2/6 per day, amounting to 15/- a week of forty-five hours, the half day on Saturday counting as a full day.

In domestic service the monthly wage for housemaids varies from 10/- to £2, for cooks from 30/- to £4 5s., and for male servants from 30/- to £4 15s.

There is no Government insurance against sickness, unemployment, or old age.

In the case of sickness the St. Helenians themselves to a great extent have been accustomed to provide for sick pay and also for burial expenses by insurance in one or more of the Friendly Societies, which have been for many years a feature of the social economy of the island.

The law governing these Societies is Ordinance No. 31 of 1839. It provides for the formation of Societies "for the mutual relief and maintenance of all and every the members thereof their wives, children, relations, and nominees, in sickness, infancy, advanced age, widowhood, or any other natural state or contingency, whereof the occurrence is susceptible of calculation by way of average, or for any other purpose which is not illegal." It provides also for the making of "proper and wholesome rules," for the rendering of accounts, and for the hearing of complaints before two Justices of the Peace. It is provided further that the Acts of Parliament of 10th George IV. chap. 56 and the 4th and 5th William IV chap. 40, as far as the same are applicable and not repugnant to the Colony's Ordinance shall be in force in the Colony. This Ordinance has stood for nearly a century without the demand or, apparently, the need for revision, except that by the Children Life Insurance Ordinance of 1921 insurance on the life of children under five years of age is prohibited.

There are four Friendly Societies for men with a recorded membership of 1,628, but as already stated several persons are members of more than one Society. The male population of the island over fourteen years of age may be estimated at approximately 1,150.

The oldest of the Societies is the Mechanics' Society founded in 1839. The membership is 393 and the amount of the invested funds is £666. The weekly subscription is 6d., and the sick relief granted is 1/6 per day, decreasing after six months. The burial allowance is £4 or £8 for a member and £3 or £6 for his wife, the higher rate being payable after twelve months' membership.

The St. Helena Poor Society was founded in 1847. It has a membership of 498, and its invested funds amount to £4,400. The monthly subscription is 6d. and it is provided that while the capital remains at £4,000 and upwards the sum of £170 may be expended in sick relief, but no member shall receive more than 5/- per month. The grant for burial expenses varies from £8 to £14 according to length of membership.

The Foresters were established in 1871. The membership is 390 and the invested funds amount to £1,405. The subscription is 3/- to 4/- a month. The sick benefit is 2/- per day decreasing according to the duration of the illness. The allowance for funeral expenses is £14 for a member and £7 for his wife.

The St. Helena Working Men's Christian Association was founded in 1875. Its membership is 347 and its invested funds amount to £880. The subscription is 6d. per week. The rate of sick relief is 1/6 per day decreasing after six months. The burial allowance is £8 for a member and £4 for his wife or widow.

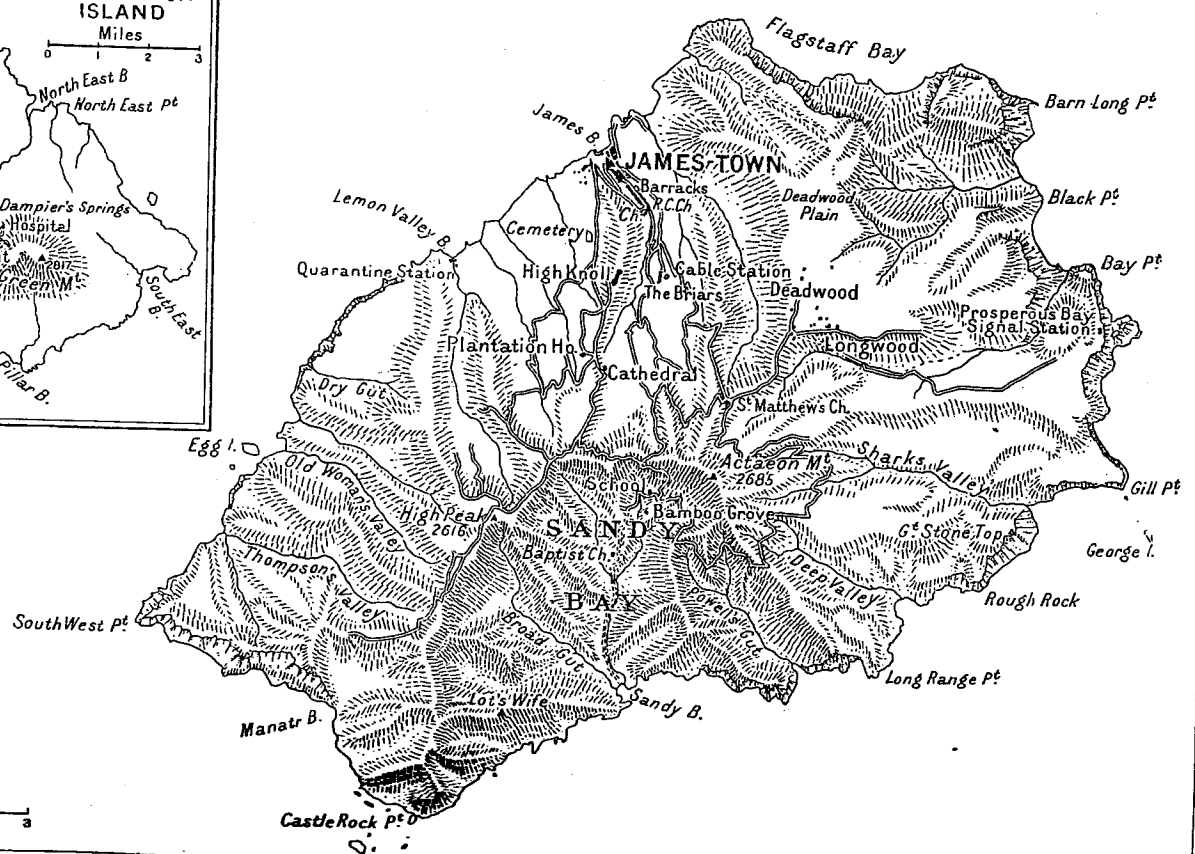
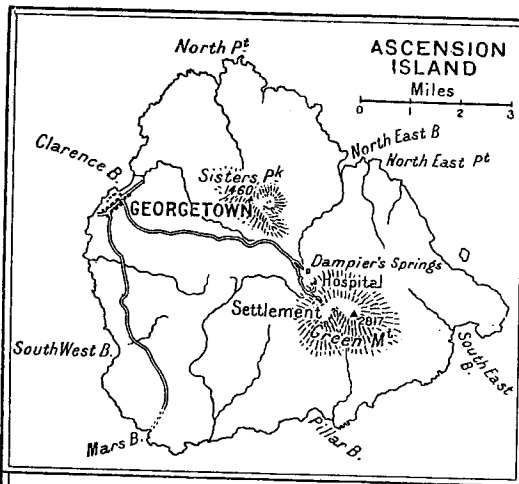
The Societies provide also for medical attendance and medicines. There is an entrance fee payable according to age.

For women there is the Church Provident Society established in 1878. The number of members is 285 and the funds amount to £471. There is no fixed allowance for sick relief, but while the capital remains at £300 grants of varying amounts are made.

The burial allowance is £4 and £3 for members of over or under twelve months standing. Provision is made for medical attendance and medicines.

Unemployment more or less severe has to be reckoned with from time to time, but during the year under review it did not attain serious proportions. Whether sound or not economically and socially, the principle that it is better to employ two men at 2/- a day each than one man at 4/- a day does tend to keep unemployment down. The aim of Government as and when funds permit is to establish new opportunities for employment in the island and to train St. Helenians for employment outside.

As regards old age pensions it has been calculated that the sum of approximately £1,500 a year would suffice to provide all persons of over 70 with a pension of five shillings a week.



**ST HELENA I.**  
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