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ST. HELENA

REPORT FOR 1930

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1930.

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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 $7^{\circ}53'$ South and longitude $14^{\circ}18'$ 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.

A note on the history of St. Helena and Ascension will be found in the Report for 1929—Colonial Reports, No. 1475.

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.

A note on the climate of St. Helena will be found in the Report for 1929—Colonial Reports, No. 1475.

I.—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 in 1928 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 smallholders. 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 £6,000, amounted to £18,590, being £1,618 under the estimate and £1,866 under the revenue for the previous year.

The ordinary revenue showed a deficit of £2,628 as compared with the estimate. Under the head of Customs there was a shortfall of £1,302, occasioned by trade depression, most of the flax mills being closed for some months. There was a heavy deficit also of approximately £1,220 under Sale of Stamps.

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

			<i>including</i>	
		<i>Revenue.</i>	<i>Grant-in-Aid</i>	<i>Expenditure.</i>
		£	of	£
		£	£	£
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
1930	... ..	18,570	6,000	25,819

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

			<i>Revenue.</i>	<i>Expenditure.</i>
			£	£
1926	... ..	...	13,522	15,224
1927	... ..	...	16,600	15,940
1928	... ..	...	14,162	15,794
1929	... ..	...	15,256	17,434
1930	... ..	...	12,510	17,962

Assets and Liabilities :—The statement of assets and liabilities shows a deficit of approximately £5,000 on 31st December, 1930.

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, 1930, was 238 as compared with 228 in 1929. The total deposits amounted to £3,430, a decrease of £2,139 over that of 1929.

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, 1930, was £17,135, as against £17,370 on the same date in 1929.

III.—PRODUCTION.

Fibre Industry.

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 Harvard, 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>
		£		£
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
1930	540	11,890	342	4,915

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 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>
		£
1926	35 $\frac{1}{20}$	2,105
1927	18	810
1928	26 $\frac{1}{2}$	1,246
1929	51	2,051
1930	52	2,243

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

Ascension.

The only export from Ascension at the present time is that of turtles. The number of turtles captured during the year was 106. The average number annually exported during the past five years is 93. 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.

IV.—TRADE AND ECONOMICS.

The value of the Colony's trade with overseas during 1930 amounted to £64,256 as compared with £85,976 in 1929. The value of imports decreased by £2,994 and the value of exports decreased by £18,726.

The Colony's trade was affected during the year by grave depression, the export of fibre and tow being suspended for some months. The previous year benefited by the importation of two large consignments of oil and petrol.

The Customs revenue amounted to £3,847 as against £5,253 in 1929.

Imports.

The value of imports during the year amounted to £44,411 distributed as follows :—

	£
United Kingdom	36,160
South Africa	5,101
Foreign countries	3,150
	£44,411

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

The principal differences as compared with 1929 were :—

<i>Increases—</i>		£
Chemicals and Drugs		146
Flour		468
Hardware		356
Machinery		286
Stationery		395
Mechanical Transport		4,085
Petrol		151
<i>Decreases—</i>		
Drapery		2,152
Grain		2,027
Paraffin Oil		1,981
Coal and Coke		296
Beer		292

Government imports in 1930 were valued at £3,871 as against £2,362 in 1929. The value of munitions of war is not included.

Exports.

The value of exports in 1930 amounted to £19,845 as against £38,571 in 1929, distributed as follows :—

	£
United Kingdom	18,699
South Africa	1,146

These exports are classified as follows :—

	<i>United Kingdom.</i>	<i>South Africa.</i>
	£	£
Raw Material	16,962	354
Manufactured Articles, produce and manufacture of the Colony	1,124	765
Re-exports	386	—

The principal differences in value as compared with 1929 are :—

<i>Increases—</i>					£
Rope and Twine	...	...	...	...	237
<i>Decreases—</i>					£
Fibre	...	...	...	...	14,869
Tow	...	...	...	...	4,276

The quantities of fibre and tow exported in 1930 were 540 and 342 tons respectively, as compared with 889 and 505 tons in 1929.

V.—COMMUNICATIONS.

Shipping.

The number of ships calling at St. Helena and Ascension during the year 1930 was 40 as compared with 35 during 1929.

They were classified as follows :—

Mail steamers	...	...	...	...	26
British warships	...	...	...	...	1
Other ships	...	...	...	...	13

The total tonnage was 187,387 as compared with 173,459 during the year 1929.

The Union-Castle Company Line is the only one calling regularly at St. Helena and Ascension, and carries mails outward and homeward 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 £1,050.

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. At the end of the year fourteen cars and five lorries were licensed.

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 decrease in the business of the Post Office as compared with 1929.

From England—	1929.	1930.
No. of Mails (bags) ...	248	256
Parcels ...	1,474	1,415
Registered Articles ...	914	885
Money and Postal Orders ...	£1,727	£1,304

To England—		1929.	1930.
No. of bags of Mail		61	71
Parcels		135	173
Registered Articles		1,771	1,543
Money and Postal Orders ...	£6,822		£5,966
From South Africa—			
No. of bags of Mail		41	41
Parcels		519	396
Registered Articles		556	459
Money and Postal Orders ...	£252		£207
To South Africa—			
No. of bags of Mail		21	26
Parcels		126	108
Registered Articles		454	430
Money and Postal Orders ...	£1,589		£2,196

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 1930 was £129 16s. 10d. against an expenditure of £106 10s. 0d.

In September, a loan of £1,000 was sanctioned on the recommendation of the Colonial Development Advisory Committee for the rehabilitation of the telephone service.

The terms of the loan were that it should be free of interest for one year, thereafter paying 2½ per cent per annum, and that it should be repayable by 5 per cent annuities.

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 three 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 142. In 67 cases action was taken in the Police Court resulting in 25 convictions. Of these convictions eight were for offences against Ordinances relating to the social economy of the island, five for offences against the person, four were for offences against property, and the others were for minor offences.

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

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. Ten cases were heard in this Court during the year.

Gaol.

The number of persons committed to prison during the year was thirteen, and four were placed on remand.

VII.—PUBLIC WORKS.

The Public Works Department were concentrated on the reconstruction of Plantation House, and the work progressed so rapidly and successfully that it was necessary to anticipate funds that would be available during the next year. By the end of December the restoration was almost completed. An account of what has been a very creditable achievement on the part of the Department will be given in next year's Report.

Under Current Repairs two cottages were made habitable, Scotland Cottage and "Rock Cottage." Repairs were also carried out in the Girls' School and the Boys' School, and New Ground House was renovated. Other Government properties also received attention.

Damage caused by falling rocks and landslides on to the roads involved an expenditure of over £200.

Roads.

In connexion with the improvement of roads £1,000 had been provided in the Estimates: for mechanical transport, £500; and for re-surfacing, £500. In July the Colonial Development Advisory Committee recommended a free grant of £6,350 (subsequently sanctioned) for the improvement of roads in the island. In order to enable the Superintendent of Works to concentrate on Plantation, the roads were temporarily placed under the supervision of the Government Secretary. It was not, however, till the end of the year that additional road machinery, which the grant permitted, was available, and a road reconstruction programme could be fairly launched.

A good deal of attention has been given during the year to widening of roads, the improvement of corners, and the strengthening of walls.

Water Supplies.

During the year approval was given for a water supply for St. Paul's District, and work was well under way before the close of the year.

The new scheme will benefit Plantation House, and several dwellings in the near neighbourhood. It will also make possible a very desirable scheme of cottages and smallholdings, for which there are suitable areas.

VIII.—AGRICULTURE AND HORTICULTURE.

Further improvements were undertaken in the Public Garden in Jamestown. The garden is small but until it was taken in hand by the Horticultural Officer it had remained for years derelict and was an eyesore and a reproach.

In November the main street of the town was planted with Jacaranda trees. They have done well and it is expected that they will flower in three years.

Very considerable improvements have been made to Plantation House gardens and grounds, and their attractive appearance is a very fine setting for Plantation House.

Considerable attention was given during the year to the culture of flowers and vegetables and useful information has been obtained. Antirrhinums, stocks, carnations, sweet peas, dahlias, cornflowers, larkspurs were very successfully grown. As regards vegetables better results were experienced than in the previous year.

Government imported four hives of bees in March. Three of them were placed in Maldivia and one was handed over to Mr. Lester of the Eastern Telegraph Company. The bees have taken kindly to the island, the honey is excellent, and cultivated plants have greatly benefited. By the end of the year there were several wild swarms about the island.

On 22nd April, the first Arbor Day was held and an area in the country was planted with various trees by the Town School boys. The land is Government land leased to Solomon and Company, but the Hon. H. W. Solomon, O.B.E., readily released it for this small experiment in re-forestation.

An allotment scheme has been started and a few plots were taken up.

It is the policy of the Government to encourage smallholdings, but cottages and a water supply are essential to the success of any scheme.

The sum of £1,000 was provided in the Estimates for the development of "Scotland Estate." From July to December extensive

clearing was undertaken. Two areas were planted with potatoes but it was found that the soil needed a good dressing of calcium or other fertilizer.

Some fruit trees were also planted and, with the exception of the grape vines and citrus trees, have made good growth.

An application was made to the Colonial Development Committee for assistance towards Horticultural Development in the island. This application received favourable consideration but before making a grant the Committee decided to provide funds for the visit of a geologist and of a forestry expert.

IX.—PUBLIC HEALTH.

The estimated civil population of St. Helena on the 31st of December, 1930, was 3,905, an increase of 65 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, the same as in the previous year. For the past ten years the death-rate has an annual average of 12.00 per 1,000.

The deaths according to age were :—

Under 1 year	...	...	...	...	8
Between 1—10 years	...	...	...	...	5
" 10—30	"	...	...	...	5
" 30—60	"	...	...	...	8
" 60—80	"	...	...	...	10
Over 80	...	...	...	...	4

There were 120 births as against 121 in 1929, a birth-rate of 30.98 as against 31.46.

There were 39 marriages as compared with 34 in 1929.

Health.

Throughout the year the health of the island was good.

A medical examination of school children was carried out during 1929, 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.

For most of the year the island was without a dentist, no successor to Mr. Murray, who was transferred early in the year to Seychelles, being appointed.

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.

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 £830.

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 were thus granted to the planters were~~
"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 about eight 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 1,581, but as already stated several persons are members of more than one Society. The male population of the island of fourteen years of age and over may be estimated at approximately 1,200.

The oldest of the Societies is the Mechanics' Society founded in 1839. The membership is 376 and the amount of the invested funds is £765. 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 478, and its invested funds amount to £4,900. 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 400 and the invested funds amount to £1,662. 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 327 and its invested funds amount to £570. 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 297 and the funds amount to £500. 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. During the year under review it threatened to attain serious proportions owing to the closing down of all the flax mills except those of Solomon and Company. Subscriptions for a Relief Fund were raised, but the grants from the Colonial Development Committee help to ease the situation.

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.

There is a Poor Relief Board, established under the Poor Relief Ordinance, 1914. Its members are elected annually by the rate-payers, and they shall be a Board "for the care and management of the concerns of the poor." "They shall examine into the state and condition of the poor and shall enquire into and determine the proper objects of relief, and the nature and amount of the relief to be given, and shall enquire into and superintend the collection and administration of all monies to be raised and applied by the Parish to the relief of the poor." The annual revenue of the Board is about £900 to £1,000, derived from a 5d. rate, and a Government contribution of £82.

Cost of Living.

The cost of living is moderate. Good meat, including fowls, is obtainable at 1/- per lb., fish is cheap and good, eggs vary according to season from 1/6 to 2/- per dozen, fresh butter is 2/6 per lb., fresh milk and fresh vegetables are usually obtainable at reasonable prices, rice, which with fish forms the staple diet of the St. Helenian, is 3d. per lb.

There are no duties on imported foodstuffs. On wines the duty is 4/- per gallon, and on spirits under proof 12/6 per gallon. The duty on cigarettes is 3/- per lb. and on pipe tobacco 2/- per lb.; on unmanufactured tobacco it is 6d. per lb.

There is a five per cent. *ad valorem* duty on certain articles regarded as luxuries, which brings in about £120 a year to the revenue.

XIII.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Meteorology.

At Hutt's Gate, 1,900 feet, where the principal observations are taken, the rainfall for the year was $29\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The heaviest fall was .92 on the 28th May. At Plantation at the other end of the island the rainfall was 29.87 and the heaviest fall was 1.36 on the 27th May. The number of raindays at Hutt's Gate was 203 and at Plantation 178. The rainfall decreases as sea-level is approached till at Jamestown it is usually below ten inches.

At Ascension the rainfall for the year on Green Mountain, about 1,900 feet, was 29.25 inches, and at Georgetown, sea-level, 3.2 inches.

Legislation.

Nine Ordinances, five Orders in Council, and three Proclamations were issued in the course of the year.

During the year a Revised Edition of the Ordinances of the Colony was published. It had been prepared by Mr. Leslie Lea, late Legal Adviser and Crown Prosecutor in the Colony.

The last Edition was published in 1854.

Staff.

The Governor proceeded on leave at the end of June and returned at the end of December. During His Excellency's absence Major C. A. C. Lucas, O.B.E., Officer Commanding Troops, assumed the Administration.

Miss Hainsworth was appointed Nursing Sister vice Miss Thompson whose term of engagement had expired.

Mr. Murray the Government Dentist was transferred to Seychelles.

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