

COLONIAL REPORTS—ANNUAL.

No. 990.

SIERRA LEONE.

REPORT FOR 1917.

(For Report for 1916 see No. 939.)

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

May, 1919.



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No. 990.

REPORT ON THE BLUE BOOK OF SIERRA LEONE
FOR THE YEAR 1917.*

I.—FINANCIAL.

Revenue.

The Revenue for 1917, including £457 derived from the sale of Crown Lands, and £10,000 received from the City Council of Freetown in partial reimbursement of the expenditure incurred by the Government on the Water Works Extension, amounted to £546,449, as compared with £551,106 in the preceding year.

The shortage in revenue was due to the following causes :—

- (a) The non-receipt of £18,500 as a reimbursement from the City Council, as the water authority for Freetown.
- (b) A decline in the Customs receipts.
- (c) A decline in the receipts from House Tax, Court fines, and Spirit Licences in the Protectorate.

The last two causes are directly attributable to war conditions.

The total revenue for the three years 1915 to 1917 is shown in the subjoined table :—

	£
1915	504,425
1916	551,106
1917	546,449

The revenue exceeded the expenditure by £33,605, and the year ended with a cash balance of £19,684.

The total expenditure for the years 1915 to 1917 was as follows :—

Year.	£
1915	546,771
1916	532,940
1917	512,844

Loan Expenditure.

By the Public Loan Ordinance, 1913, the Governor was authorised to raise by loan a sum of £1,000,000 for the following purposes :—

	£
Redemption of Bonds of the 1904 loan ..	518,000
Railway Extension	232,000
Harbour Works	250,000
Total	£1,000,000

* A Sketch Map will be found in the Report for 1914, No. 851 [Cd. 7622-42].

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The net proceeds of the loan of £1,000,000 which was issued under the provisions of this Ordinance on the 30th of December 1913, amounted to £942,827, while the total expenditure incurred up to the end of 1917 amounted to £911,626, of which £308,435 was spent on railway extension, £108,626 on Freetown Harbour Works and £494,565 on the redemption of bonds.

There is thus a balance of £31,201 still unexpended.

Only £4,660, chargeable to loan funds, were expended during the year.

Assets and Liabilities.

The excess of assets over liabilities at the close of the year amounted to £280,428, of which £149,961 represents the cost price of securities held by the Crown Agents on account of surplus funds. On the 31st of December, 1917, the market value of these securities amounted to £104,235. The assets include unallocated stores in the Railway, Public Works, Railway Extension, and Prison Departments to the value of some £83,000. To the excess of assets detailed above, should be added the sum of £19,974 which still remains to be reimbursed to general revenue by the City Council, in repayment of the sum expended by the Government on Freetown, Water Works Extension.

Public Debt.

The funded debt of the Colony at the close of the year amounted to £1,730,048.

The amount standing to the credit of the sinking funds on the 31st of December, 1917, was £101,753.

The net liability of the Colony, therefore, amounted to £1,628,295 at the end of the year.

Currency.

In addition to the Imperial coinage and the West African silver coinage the five-franc pieces of France, Belgian, Italy, and Switzerland are legal tender in Sierra Leone, the value of each being fixed at 3s. 10½d. In 1916, however, it was found necessary, owing to the depreciation in value of the five-franc pieces of these countries, to prohibit their importation into the Colony and Protectorate.

The currency notes for £1 and 10s. issued in the United Kingdom under the Currency and Bank Notes Act, 1914, are also legal tender.

The currency was supplemented during the year by a further issue of West African Currency Notes. Although not legal tender in Sierra Leone, the Government guaranteed to accept these Nigerian notes in payment of dues, and they are redeemable at the Bank of British West Africa at face value.

The value of these notes issued to the Banks for circulation at the end of the year amounted to £14,500 and included a two-shilling denomination to the value of £250.

The Port of Sherbro Fund.

The balance to the credit of this fund on the 1st of January 1917, was £937. The receipts, including an annual contribution of £300 from the Sherbro District House Tax Fund, amounted to £1,050, which makes a total of £1,987. The expenditure amounted to £996,

leaving a balance of £991 available for carrying out improvements in Bonthe and other places within the limits of the Port of Sherbro.

General.

Since the outbreak of war there has been a marked depreciation in the capital value of the securities held by the Colony. The various loans issued by the Imperial Government for the prosecution of the War have had the effect of depressing other gilt-edged securities paying a lower rate of interest.

The balance standing to the credit of the Colony House Tax Fund on the 1st of January 1917, amounted to £4,147. The revenue collected during the year was £2,493, making a total of £6,640.

The expenditure on various works and improvements for the benefit of the inhabitants of the districts in which the tax is collected amounted to £1,936 leaving a balance of £4,704 at the close of the year.

At the end of the year the Public Officers' Guarantee Fund amounted to £3,133 which has been over-invested by £89.

Owing to the loss of revenue occasioned by the War, it was found necessary to enact legislation providing for the imposition of export duties on palm kernels, palm oil, and kola nuts as from the 1st of January, 1918.

Freetown Municipality.

Two distinct funds are under the administration of the Municipality of Freetown.

The City Fund.—The expenditure during the financial year commencing on the 1st of November 1916, and ending on the 31st of October 1917, amounted to £5,880, while, in spite of an increase in the rates from 4 to 5 per cent., the revenue for the same period was only £5,390.

This fund has a debt to the Government of £2,500. Up to the end of the year, the total contributions to the sinking fund amounted to £905 16s. 2d.

Water Works Fund.—The revenue derived from the waterworks for this period was £21,513, which shows a large increase over the revenue of all previous years. The increase was due entirely to the demands of shipping which amounted in value to £18,360. The working expenditure totalled £6,522. There was thus a profit on the year's working of £14,991.

The Municipality has a debt of £27,948 2s. 11d. advanced to it by the Government in connection with the Freetown Waterworks for repayment of which this fund is liable. Up to the end of the last financial year £2,934 11s. 6d. had been paid into the sinking fund in respect of this loan.

In addition to the above charges the Waterworks Fund is liable for the cost of the Malamah Extension amounting approximately to £30,000.

Profiting by the sound financial position of the fund, the Municipality, as mentioned at the beginning of the report, paid over to the Colonial Government the sum of £10,000 during the year. The total expenditure incurred by the fund amounted to £17,151, leaving a net cash balance of £4,362. Of this balance, £500 was paid as a donation to the Red Cross Fund.

II.—TRADE, AGRICULTURE, AND INDUSTRIES.

The net revenue collected by the Customs Department from all sources during the year 1917, after the deduction of drawbacks and refunds, amounted to £263,585, which shows a decrease in comparison with the return for 1916 of £14,959.

An increase is shown in the revenue derived from *ad valorem* duties of £11,188. This increase is due entirely to the enhanced prices of goods imported, of which cotton goods are mainly responsible.

The specific duties, however, showed a decrease of £26,431. Of this decrease, £17,727 is due to a falling-off in the imports of spirits. Kerosene, unmanufactured tobacco, and sugar, were also, to a minor extent, responsible.

The gross revenue derived from import duties in the Port of Sherbro amounted to £35,639, and from those in Freetown to £220,263, as compared with £45,121 and £226,016, respectively, in the preceding year.

The trade of Bonthe and York Island has been irregular both in period and volume, since the outbreak of war, while that of Sulima and other small ports has practically ceased, but with the advent of peace, it is anticipated that the conditions at these ports will improve.

Imports.

The total values of the imports for the three years 1915-1917 are as follows:

	£
1915	1,080,031
1916	1,135,667
1917	1,332,752

Commercial imports amounted in value to £1,288,499, as compared with £1,058,333 in 1916.

In spite of increased prices, Government imports again continued to show a decrease, amounting in value to £14,253 as compared with £77,334 in the preceding year and with £196,770 in 1914. This decrease was due to the closing down of practically all public works.

The statistics of the importation of alcoholic liquors into the Colony, show a decrease of 52,031 gallons in the quantity, and an increase of £1,080 in the value, of spirits imported, as compared with the figures for the preceding year. The decrease in the quantity of the spirits imported was due to the fact that the usual sources of supply of trade spirits have, owing to the War, been almost entirely cut off, while countries other than those which have hitherto been regarded as the home of their manufacture do not appear to have yet found an acceptable and satisfactory substitute. The trade in spirits, however, with the United States of America continued to increase, the quantity imported from that country in 1917 being more than double that of the previous year. If the present tendency is not checked by artificial restrictions, it is anticipated that in the course of time spirits supplied by the United States of America will take the place of those formerly supplied by Germany.

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Exports.

The following table shows the value of the exports from the Colony for the three years 1915–1917 :

							£
1915	..	..	..	..	..	..	942,868
1916	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,174,546
1917	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,497,995

Of the figure for 1917, £1,276,434 is represented by the produce and manufactures of Sierra Leone, as compared with £1,101,846 in 1916. This increase was mainly due to the enhanced values of kola nuts, palm kernels, and palm oil, which are the chief domestic exports of the Colony.

SIERRA LEONE PRODUCTS.

Palm Kernels.—The exports during the year 1917 show an increase in volume of 12,704 tons and in value of £161,803. Of the total quantity exported, which amounted to 58,020 tons, 56,599 tons went to the United Kingdom and 1,380 tons to France. The kernels shipped in 1917 exceed those exported in any other year both in quantity and value.

The average price of kernels was about 10s. per ton in advance of the average price paid during the year 1916 but the margin of profits on which exporters had to work, was less.

The Imperial Government fixed the price of kernels, as from May 1917, at £26 a ton, which was estimated to give a fair profit to each section of the trade. Although this object was at first secured, owing to the increase of shipping and other expenses, it was found necessary by shippers to lower the price paid to the native producer. This had an adverse effect on the quantity brought to market. The native might, in ordinary circumstances, accept a price diminished by such a situation, but the increase amounting to from 200 to 300 per cent. which he has to pay for imported goods acts as a deterrent against production. Towards the end of the year these influences began to make themselves felt.

In view of the adverse factors which militate against trade in these abnormal times and of the fact that the native was getting less for kernels than in the days prior to the War, the condition of the kernel trade during 1917 was in many respects remarkable.

Palm Oil.—Only 543,183 gallons valued at £62,385 were exported as compared with 557,751 valued at £53,622 in 1916. The reduction in the quantity exported may be attributed to the consumption of increased quantities of palm oil for local purposes such as the manufacture of native soap owing to the high cost of similar imported articles during the War. The demand for the product was well maintained and the price sanctioned was, so far as can be judged, fair. Of the total quantity exported, 526,043 gallons went to the United Kingdom, 11,324 gallons to France, and 5,816 to other British West African possessions.

In 1913, out of a total of 617,089 gallons exported, 509,688 went to the United Kingdom, 69,786 to Germany and none to France.

Kola Nuts.—The exports of kola nuts during 1917 showed a decrease in quantity of 782 tons, but an increase in value of £18,407, as com-

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pared with the figures for the preceding year. The decrease in the quantity exported was due entirely to the poorness of the 1917 crop. The total exports amounted to 1,702 tons, valued at £321,127. The trade, which is mostly in the hands of Syrians, is confined almost entirely to other West African countries north of Sierra Leone. In 1917 these countries would have suffered from a shortage of this highly appreciated stimulant, had it not been for the supply of unwonted quantities from Grand Bassam. Even with this aid to the market, the price in October rose to the unprecedented height of £30 per measure of from 160 to 172 lb.

Ginger.—The average price per ton in 1917 was about £4 less than in the previous year. The high average price of £36 per cwt. which was offered in 1916 stimulated production. As a result 1,137 tons valued at £25,863 were exported in the year under review as compared with 971 tons valued at £25,814 in 1916. Of the quantity exported, 904 tons went to the United States of America, 224 tons to the United Kingdom, and the remaining 9 tons to Dakar and the Gambia.

Piassava.—Although the monthly average price paid for this commodity was £44 a ton and the price rose steadily until it reached £78 a ton in December, the quantity exported showed a further decline, only 471 tons valued at £8,300 being shipped as compared with 883 tons valued at £18,998 in the preceding year. This decline was due chiefly to the uncertainty and lack of shipping facilities at the Sherbro ports, as a result of which exporters became wary in buying, which in its turn discouraged the native from collecting and preparing as much of the product as he would otherwise have done.

Practically all the piassava exported from the Port of Sherbro comes from the Northern Sherbro District.

The whole of the quantity shipped went to the United Kingdom.

Hides.—The number of hides exported is returned as 9,167 and their value as £4,667, as compared with 14,989 valued at £6,396 in 1916.

Owing to the prohibition on the importation of hides into the United Kingdom, opportunities for shipment have been fewer and several exporters, in consequence, held large stocks throughout the year.

The actual dimensions of the trade in hides which is carried on by land with adjacent countries cannot be estimated as no statistics are available.

SHIPPING.

774 vessels, of an aggregate tonnage of 1,526,640 tons entered and cleared, as compared with 796 ships, aggregating 1,553,312 tons, the year before. This return includes 73 sailing vessels of an aggregate tonnage of 4,782 entered and 76 of an aggregate tonnage of 4,750 tons cleared. The corresponding figures from the previous year were:—

Sailing ships entered, 51; aggregate tonnage, 2,273 tons; sailing ships cleared, 50; aggregate tonnage, 3,016 tons.

The decrease in tonnage represents a difference of four or five steamers of the size of those engaged in regular trade with this Colony prior to the outbreak of hostilities. So far as the shipping which calls at Sierra Leone is concerned, the above represents the sole effect achieved by the intensified campaign of frightfulness on the sea which was announced early last year.

German shipping entered in 1913 was over 27 per cent. of the total while British shipping was 70 per cent. In the year under review British shipping was responsible for 93 per cent., whilst, needless to say, Germany's share was *nil*.

The subjoined table gives a statement of the total shipping inwards for the years 1915–1917.

Year.			Number.			Tons.
1915	..	..	569	..	..	809,405
1916	..	..	399	..	..	777,722
1917	..	..	386	..	..	764,248

The outward figures were practically identical.

General Features of Trade.

The predominating factors during the year under review have again been the total absence of German trade and the shortage of shipping; this latter condition placed a somewhat severe restriction on the commerce of the Colony.

It is, however, satisfactory to observe that the aggregate trade with the United Kingdom increased in value from £1,612,595 to £1,919,228 in the year under review. The Mother Country was responsible for 75 per cent. of the import trade and for 61 per cent. of the export trade as compared with 79 and 61 in 1916.

After the trade with the United Kingdom and with other West African countries, British and foreign, that with the United States of America, came next in importance. This trade aggregated £235,009, which is more than four times its value in 1913. Exports to the United States rose to £20,536, and imports from that country, to £214,475.

AGRICULTURE.

(a) Government Experimental Farm.

During the year the farm was visited by parties of chiefs and their retinues from the Karene District. These chiefs were supplied with plants and seeds to cultivate in their chiefdoms and some of them expressed a desire that the Government should assist them to make plantations of economic plants. One of the most influential chiefs subsequently made a tour of his country in order to explain to his people what he had seen at Jala. It must, however, be confessed that the demonstrations of the Agricultural Department, valuable and interesting as they may be from a scientific point of view, have hitherto failed to bring about any appreciable improvements in the crude and wasteful methods of agriculture pursued by the natives. As in other countries, the farmer in Sierra Leone is conservative in his ideas. In spite of the obvious advantages afforded by improved methods, he prefers to work the land as he has always worked it and as his fathers have worked it before him. The only way of overcoming this unprogressive mental attitude is by means of education combined with the policy, which is now being pursued, of establishing an experimental farm or plantation under the Agricultural Department, in each District.

(b) *General.*

A promising industry in cocoa is being built up in the Northern Sherbro District. Practically all the cocoa is, however, sold in an unfermented state. In order to afford assistance and advice to native planters a Government cocoa station was established at the beginning of the year at Bumpe in the above mentioned District.

The groundnut crop in the north of the Protectorate suffered severely owing to the heavy and prolonged rains, and disease was common.

Forestry.

Over 700 acres have now been planted and sown with gum copal in the Kassewe Hills Reserve. The plants show great promise.

Owing to the shortage of staff very little important work was performed during the year.

III.—LEGISLATION.

Only nine Ordinances were passed during the year, of which the following are of some importance :—

The Native Produce Ordinance, which regulates the sale of native produce and provides penalties for its adulteration.

The Customs Duties (Export) Ordinance, 1917, which provides for the imposition of export duties on palm kernels, palm oil, and kola nuts as from the 1st of January 1918.

In consequence of the War, a number of Proclamations, Regulations, and Orders-in-Council were issued including provisions which revised the maximum prices imposed in the Colony, and restricted the export of certain commodities.

IV.—EDUCATION.

Colony Schools.

The number of Elementary and Intermediate Mission Schools in the Colony is 99, of which 74 are assisted by the Government; of these 18 have been graded as Intermediate and 56 as Elementary under the provisions of the Education Code, 1916.

Denomination.	Number of Schools.	Number Enrolled.	Average Attendance.
Church of England	38	2,916	2,129
Wesleyan Methodist	21	2,109	1,431
United Methodist	11	746	464
Roman Catholic	7	790	604
Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion ..	9	332	238
African Methodist Episcopal	2	128	95
United Brethren in Christ	2	155	48
Seventh Day Adventist	2	74	58
Total	94	7,250	5,067

Compared with the previous year there appears to be a decrease of 13 in the number of schools; this is due to the new classification under the Education Code 1916; there is also a decrease of 539 in the roll number and of 353 in the average attendance.

The total income from all sources of the assisted Elementary and Intermediate Schools was £9,136, as compared with £8,108 in the previous year; school fees totalled £1,001, as compared with £1,087, whilst the total expenditure was £8,210. The Government contributed in grants the sum of £3,388, as compared with £3,569 in the previous year. All the Assisted Schools have now been inspected under the provisions of the Code, and it is satisfactory to report that the managers of 95 per cent. of these schools have provided an adequate staff for the purposes of complying with the conditions of the Code.

Some progress has been made in the composition of simple grammatical English. A more intelligent knowledge of arithmetic was discerned in 60 per cent. of the schools, but in the rest the subject still continued to be very badly taught. Geography was a general weakness; in very few schools did pupils show a practical knowledge even of the map of Sierra Leone or of West Africa. Hygiene and sanitation have been well taught in all the schools and the cumulative results of this teaching may be of benefit to the Colony in a few years' time.

The Government Training Institute is now at work and has fifteen student teachers on its roll. Rules have been passed by which Elementary, Intermediate, Full and Honours Teachers' Certificates can be obtained at the Training Institute and Fourah Bay College. Existing teachers have been afforded an opportunity of qualifying for a certificate by passing certain prescribed examinations such as the London Matriculation, within the next three years.

The enrolment and attendance at the Government Model School were as follows:—

Roll.	Average attendance.
302	244

At the time of writing, it is contemplated that secondary classes should be established for practising purposes as from 1919. Owing to the loss of the Principal and Vice-Principal at sea during 1917, the staff now consists of 2 Europeans, the Acting Principal and Instructress, a Native Assistant to the Principal and 11 native teachers—7 males and 4 females; among these are included a Manual Training Assistant and an Arabic Master. Members of the staff also undertake the work of the Government Training Institute.

There are 2 Industrial Schools in the Colony though at the time of writing 3 others have been approved by the Governor; of the 2 former, 1 is at Mobe in the Northern Sherbro District (Roman Catholic) and the other at Waterloo in the Headquarters District (Seventh Day Adventist). The former is a grant-aided institution. The enrolment and attendance were as follows:—

	Enrolment.	Average attendance.
Mobe (Boarding school)	56	48
Waterloo	74	58

The total amount of grants earned by the Mobe School was £98 9s. 5d. The Sherbro and Northern Sherbro Districts recruit their skilled craftsmen mainly from this institution. The pupils belong mainly to the Sherbros, Mendes, and Gallinas tribes of the Protectorate; the Waterloo institution deals mainly with the Sierra Leoneans.

There are thirteen Secondary Schools in the Colony, of which eight are missionary and five proprietary. The total enrolment is 1,285 and the average attendance 1,050. Three of the missionary schools are now grant-aided institutions and will be inspected by the Director of Education.

There are five Mohammedan Schools or Madrasas for boys and girls; the roll number was 690 and the average attendance 426, as compared with 656 and 451 in the previous year. Over a third of the children belong to the Protectorate tribes and consist mainly of Mandingoes, Temnes, Susus, Mendes, and Fulahs. The subjects taught are English, Arabic, arithmetic, geography, hygiene and sanitation, drawing and handwork. Fees are charged at one school only.

The Mohammedan community continue to show their appreciation of the advantages afforded by the Government. For the first time in their history, a Mohammedan boy has passed a public examination, the Cambridge Preliminary. Though the Government pays the fees of 99 per cent. of the teaching staff, they, nevertheless, contributed £212 in the current year towards their school fund.

The Madrasa Islamia is approaching completion and is estimated to have cost nearly £700. The Madrasa Umaria expects in the next year to be housed in a new building, 90 per cent. of the expenses of which will be incurred by the Mohammedan community at the Village of Aberdeen.

University Education.

Fourah Bay College is the only University College in West Africa. The average number of students keeping term was 19.

Nine students matriculated during the year, while six completed all their examinations for the B.A. degree.

Two graduates passed the Durham B.C.L. Examination and two took Second Class Honours in the LL.B. of London University.

Diocesan Technical School.

The total number of students on the roll of the Diocesan Technical School reached 46, as against 40 in 1916. These are drawn mainly from the Secondary Schools of the Colony.

Six scholarships affording free education are tenable in the School for two years, and renewable for a third on the recommendation of the Principal.

Protectorate Schools.

There were at the end of the year 140 pupils on the roll of the school at Bo for the sons and nominees of Chiefs, as compared with 123 at the end of 1916.

The school fees amounted to £860 while the total cost of maintaining the school was £3,885. The balance of £3,025 was met from the revenue of the Colony.

The Government Elementary Day School at Bumpe was continued successfully, and, although it suffered somewhat in the early part of the year owing to the death of the Paramount Chief, it recovered before the end, when the number of pupils on the roll rose to 67 with an average attendance of 54.

Early in April a Government Vernacular School (Mende) was opened at Baima in the Ronietta District, one day's journey from Bo. In less than one month it had reached its maximum number of pupils, viz., 30. Its average attendance from this time to the end of the year was 29.4.

Fifty-one non-Government schools with a total of 1,697 names on the rolls, were inspected and reported on. Progress was shewn in many of the boarding schools but the day schools stagnated, as in previous years.

The sum of £594 was awarded by the Government in grant-in-aid, of which £394 was earned by the boarding schools.

V.—GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

Hospitals.

In 1917 the number of patients treated at the various hospitals and dispensaries throughout the Colony and Protectorate totalled 51,765, as compared with 49,368 in 1916.

In the Colonial Hospital, Freetown, 1,664 in-patients and 8,456 out-patients were treated, as compared with 1,096 and 8,749, respectively, in 1916. 262 operations were performed during the year.

At the Lunatic Asylum at Kissy there were 102 male and 34 female patients at the beginning of the year. 27 males and 15 females were admitted making a total of 178; of these, 23 died and 16 were relieved and discharged.

At the Female Incurable Hospital there were 35 patients at the beginning of the year and 83 were admitted. Of these, 53 were relieved and 24 died. On the 31st of December 41 patients remained.

At the Male Incurable Hospital there were 73 patients at the beginning of the year. 212 were admitted, 119 were discharged (as cured) and 82 died.

At the Leper Asylum there were 4 patients at the beginning of the year and 4 were admitted. Of these, 2 died and 4 absconded.

European Nursing Home.

There were 138 admissions during the year. Of these, 62 were officials and 44 belonged to the mercantile and shipping communities.

Post Office Savings Bank.

The deposits numbered 13,170 and amounted to £55,784 18s. 8d., showing an increase of 2,804 in number and of £3,700 14s. 8d. in value when compared with the preceding year. The withdrawals totalled 7,996 and amounted to £57,631 19s. 0d., showing a decrease of 334 in number and an increase of £517 2s. 7½d. in value in comparison with the figures for 1916.

The average value of each deposit was £4 4s. 9d., and of each withdrawal £7 4s. 2d., as against £5 0s. 5d., and £6 17s. 1d. in the previous year.

1,750 accounts were opened during the year and 1,375 were closed, showing a net decrease of 375. At the end of the year the names of 6,906 depositors were on the books, and the amount standing to their credit, inclusive of interest, was £107,562 9s. 7d. The average value of each account was at the close of the year, £15 11s. 6d.

The total sum invested amounted to £112,057, but, at the end of the year, the value of these investments had shrunk to £83,753. The dividends on these investments amounted to £3,875 2s. 3d.

The net profits of the Savings Bank were £280 8s. 9d.

VI. JUDICIAL STATISTICS.

Police.

The police force is employed only in the Colony, police work in the Protectorate being performed by a force of court messengers under the administration of the District Commissioners.

At the end of the year under review the authorised strength of the police force consisted of a total of all ranks of 285, including three European Officers: the Commissioner and two Assistant Commissioners of Police, one of whom, however, had been released for military service.

Prisons.

The total number of prisoners received into Freetown Prison was 886, as compared with 1,311 in 1916. The daily average number of prisoners in custody was, however, 276, as compared with 262 in the preceding year.

The death-rate was again high. Of the prisoners received during the year 234 were found, on admission, to be suffering from disease. The high death-rate is, without doubt, due to the physical and physiological conditions of the prisoners who enter the prison. 154 were found to be suffering from venereal diseases in the active stage and 118 from amoebae and their cysts, 75 from ankylostomiasis, 66 from ascaris, and 57 from cardiac valvular affections.

Criminal Statistics.

The returns of the Supreme Court of the Colony show that there were 60 convictions in that court during the year. None of these cases was for homicide.

In the Police Magistrate's Court at Freetown 1,745 persons were convicted summarily, as compared with 2,063 in 1916. These figures include 493 convictions for larceny, as compared with 573 in 1916.

In the District Courts of the Colony, there were 258 convictions, as against 343 in the preceding year. 93 of these were at Waterloo and 165 at Bonthe.

In the Circuit Court of the Protectorate there were 84 convictions, as compared with 101 in 1916; of these, 4 were for murder.

In the Courts of the District Commissioners in the Protectorate, there were 471 convictions, as compared with 620 in the preceding year.

The criminal statistics, especially of the Protectorate, are not a very reliable index to the amount of crime. Many cases are dealt

with in the courts of the Paramount Chiefs and of these no return is made; on the whole, however, it may safely be said that the scarcity of serious crimes in the Protectorate, in view of the large population, is remarkable and speaks well for the law-abiding disposition of the tribes.

VII.—VITAL STATISTICS.

European Population.

The number of European and American residents was:—

Officials	..	..	..	..	244
Military	..	..	..	..	636
Others	..	..	..	..	210

The following is a comparative tabulation of the deaths of Europeans due to climatic and non-climatic causes in the Colony and Protectorate for the last three years.

Year.	Landed from Vessels.		Colony and Protectorate.				Totals
			Non-Military.		Military.		
	Climatic.	Non-Climatic.	Climatic.	Non-Climatic	Climatic.	Non-Climatic.	
1915 ..	1	1	7	3	2	—	14
1916 ..	3	3	2	1	3	4	16
1917 ..	—	12	4	2	1	3	22

The average number of resident European officials was 110, as against 172 in 1916. Among these, 197 cases were placed on the sick list for a total period of 1,673 days. The average number of days upon the sick list for each patient was 8.93 and the daily average on the sick list was 4.58. The percentage of deaths to the total number of residents was .95 and to the average number 1.81. While recognizing that these figures are satisfactory, it should be remembered that the European official community is composed of men in the prime of life and selected as constitutionally fit for service in the tropics.

Nine officials were invalided during the year.

The percentage of invalidings to the total number of residents, was 4.28.

Cline Town.

The average number of Europeans at this station was 56. Altogether 56 cases were placed on the sick list for a total of 408 days. Among officials, 1,710 cases were treated at the dispensary, and of the general public there were 3,717 cases with 5,969 subsequent attendances. This is a large increase over the 1916 figures

Hill Station.

The total number of residents at Hill Station during the year was 71, as compared with 81 during 1916. Of these, 44 were officials, 5 missionaries, 5 military officers, and 17 non-officials. The families of military and civil officers are included in the last number. On the whole, the health was again good.

Population of the Colony (as distinguished from the Protectorate).

The population of the Colony was returned at the last decennial census, in 1911, as 75,572 (41,001 males and 34,571 females). The number of deaths recorded during 1917 was 1,887 or 24 per 1,000, and of births 1,545 or 20 per 1,000, of the population.

The population of Freetown, according to the 1911 census, was 34,090; the births registered in 1917 numbered 774 and the deaths 1,046. These figures show a birth-rate of 23 and a death-rate 33 per 1,000 respectively.

The infantile death returns for Freetown for the last three years are subjoined:—

1915	..	..	..	..	219
1916	..	..	..	..	218
1917	..	..	..	..	300

Registration of births and deaths is compulsory in the Colony, but not in the Protectorate. The excess of deaths over births registered in the Colony, which has been apparent in the returns for some years past, suggests that the population of the Colony is on the decrease. There is, however, a constant influx into the Peninsula of natives from the Protectorate, and the figures given must in any case be accepted with caution as the present system of registration can be hardly described as effective. The next census, which is due in 1921, should throw some interesting light on this question.

It is impossible to give any valuable account of the chief causes of death, as medical certification of death is neither compulsory nor usual.

Protectorate Population.

The population of the Protectorate at the census of 1911 was estimated at 1,327,560, of whom 1,323,151 are natives other than those in military barracks, while the remainder, numbering 3,426, are non-natives. This estimate is based on the number of houses on which tax has been paid and on the assumption that so many persons live in one house, the number varying from 5 to 10, according to the district and tribe.

General.

In the Colony, and, more especially, in the Protectorate, cases of smallpox made their appearance from time to time, but the infection was prevented from spreading into an epidemic. Eight native public vaccinators were appointed and this number was subsequently increased to thirteen. Out of a total of 105,988 vaccinations reported as performed, 68,763 were returned as successful. Only 73·5 per cent. of the cases performed were, however, re-inspected.

Sanitation.

529 mosquito breeding-places were found, resulting in 431 prosecutions with 388 convictions.

An extensive campaign was carried out in Freetown in connexion with mosquito-breeding plants such as *Dracena*e and trees having natural or artificial cavities, such as paw-paw and cotton trees. Owing to an outbreak of yellow fever in certain parts of the Protectorate, native sanitary inspectors were employed on anti-mosquito work there and one has been posted to the Makene District, where three Europeans died within a period of 4 months. No evidence of any plague infection was discovered in any of the rats examined during the year.

The Cape Peninsula, which was formerly a favourable habitat of the *Glossina palpalis* and had been cleared during the previous year, was kept as open as possible and much grubbing was done so that farming operations, chiefly confined to the growth of low crops, could be carried out by those living in the vicinity.

Owing to the shortage of staff and funds, sanitation was, generally speaking, confined during the year to ordinary routine and maintenance work.

Climate.

The mean maximum temperature at Tower Hill Observatory was 85·7° F., while the mean minimum temperature was 74·5° F. The rainfall was 130·81 inches.

The subjoined table gives the observations taken in 1916 at certain out-stations :-

Station.	1917. Mean Air Temperature in shade. °F.		Total Rainfall. Inches.
	Maximum.	Minimum.	
Batkanu	93·93	69·65	127·66
Bo	89·32	68·81	103·56
Bonthe	87·87	72·85	133·02
Kaballa	86·74	65·5	94·93
Kissy	84·52	73·63	107·86
Hill Station	82·93	70·48	135·70
Moyamba	89·4	69·9	101·25
Daru	90·12	69·41	174·05

VIII. POSTAL, TELEGRAPH, AND TELEPHONE SERVICES.

The number of post offices and postal agencies open at the end of the year was 43. Money order business was transacted at 20 offices and postal order business at 35.

The total number of articles which passed through the Post Office during the year amounted to 1,479,351, as compared with 1,526,444 in 1916.

The Money order transactions numbered 9,585, and amounted to £139,274, showing a decrease of 113 in number, but an increase of £7,004 in value when compared with the figures of the previous year.

The postal orders issued numbered 44,828 and amounted to £29,855, as compared with 49,736 to the value of £32,952 in 1916. 48,387 orders amounting to £34,233 were paid---an increase of 1,729 in number and of £1,158 in value when compared with the figures of the previous year.

The postal revenue totalled £8,523, showing an increase of £476, as compared with 1916. The Customs duties collected in respect of parcels amounted to £3,419, and stamps to the value of £2,808 were sold in connection with inland revenue services.

The expenditure amounted to £11,832, which shows a decrease of £255 when compared with the figures of 1916.

Telegraph and Telephone Services.

The only non-military land telegraph in Sierra Leone is under the control of the Railway Department. Telegraph and telephone services are in operation between Freetown and Pendembu (227½ miles from Freetown). There is a telegraph line from Sengema to Pujehun, a distance of 47 miles.

There are also telegraph and telephones service between Boia and Kamabai on the branch line.

The Railway Department has under its control over 1,100 miles of electrical wiring.

There is a public Telephone Exchange in Freetown.

Telegrams can be sent to all parts of the world from any railway station through the African Direct Telegraph Company in Freetown.

There is a wireless station at Freetown under the control of the African Direct Telegraph Company.

The revenue derived from the Railway Telegraph Department in 1917 was £3,048, as compared with £2,418 in 1916.

Railway.

The main line of the Sierra Leone Government Railway extends from Freetown (Water Street Terminus) to Pendembu, a distance of 227½ miles. There is a branch line from Boia Junction to Kamabai, a distance of 104 miles.

A mountain line 5¾ miles long, runs from Freetown to Hill Station. There are also short branch lines connecting the terminus at Freetown with the Government Wharf, the Government Quarry (Public Works Department) and the Recreation Ground and Ascension Town Cemetery.

The gauge of all the lines is 2 feet 6 inches.

The total mileage open for traffic was 338 miles, exclusive of sidings. The earnings of the line amounted to £158,495, expenses to £135,588, as compared with £156,429 and £127,466, respectively, in 1915. These figures include revenue from, and expenditure on, wharf cranes.

The allocation of working expenditure was as follows:—

	£
Way and Works	35,181
Locomotive Carriage and Wagon	67,109
Traffic	21,680
General	11,241
Telephone Exchange	377
Total	£135,588

	1916.	1917.
Total number of passengers	503,706	572,836
Tonnage of goods	54,570	56,155
Train miles	425,740	443,335

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Receipts per open mile	463	0	0	469	0	0
Receipts per train mile	0	7	4	0	7	2
Working expenses per open mile	377	0	0	401	0	0
Working expenses per train mile	0	6	0	0	6	1

The total rolling stock in use consisted of 42 locomotive engines, 98 coaching vehicles, and 363 goods vehicles, including two breakdown vans, and two sand wagons, in addition to a travelling crane.

Roads.

The Moyamba-Sembehun Road was finally completed with the exception of a suspension bridge across the river at Sembehun.

Several of the roads in the Colony and Protectorate are now fit for light motor traffic.

Public Works.

No works of importance were undertaken during the year.

General.

A policy of rigid economy was again forced on the Colony by the War and the Administration was hampered throughout the year by shortage of staff. The productivity of the country was, however, well maintained by the native population, and it is anticipated, now that hostilities have ceased, that conditions will tend gradually to improve. On the whole the Colony has come through the economic stress of the last four years as well as could have been expected and

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has paid its way throughout. In regard to the future, also, it is satisfactory to note that the great demand for oleaginous produce in the European markets assures the commercial position of West African Colonies for at least some years to come.

W. B. STANLEY,
Acting Colonial Secretary.

Freetown,
27th December, 1917.

COLONIAL REPORTS, &c.

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

ANNUAL.

No.	Colony, &c.	Year.
958	Gilbert and Ellice Islands	1916-1917
959	Cayman Islands	"
960	Bermuda	1916
961	Mauritius	"
962	Ashanti	1917
963	Falkland Islands	"
964	Seychelles	"
965	Weihaiwei	"
966	Fiji	"
967	Solomon Islands	1917-1918
968	Grenada	"
969	Turks and Caicos Islands	1917
970	Northern Territories of the Gold Coast	"
971	Ceylon	"
972	Hong Kong	"
973	Zanzibar	"
974	St. Helena	"
975	Malta	1917-1918
976	British Guiana	1917
977	St. Vincent	1917-1918
978	Bahamas	"
979	Gambia	1917
980	Jamaica	1917-1918
981	Gibraltar	1917
982	Bermuda	"
983	Swaziland	1917-1918
984	Trinidad	1917
985	Mauritius	"
986	Cyprus	1917-1918
987	Bechuanaland Protectorate	"
988	East Africa Protectorate	1916-1917
989	Barbados	1917-1918

MISCELLANEOUS.

No.	Colony, &c.	Subject.
79	Northern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1907-8 and 1908-9.
80	Nyasaland	Mineral Survey, 1908-9.
81	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1908-9.
82	Imperial Institute	Rubber and Gutta-percha.
83	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1910.
84	West Indies	Preservation of Ancient Monuments, &c.
85	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1911.
86	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1912.
87	Ceylon	Mineral Survey.
88	Imperial Institute	Oilseeds, Oils, &c.
89	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1913.
90	St. Vincent	Roads and Land Settlement.

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