

COLONIAL REPORTS.—ANNUAL.

No. 165.

G A M B I A.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1895.

(For Report for 1894 see No. 143 of this Series.)

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GAMBIA.
1895.

Administrator LLEWELYN to Mr. CHAMBERLAIN.

Government House, Bathurst,
April 6, 1896.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to forward, in duplicate, the Blue Book of the Colony for the year 1895, together with my report on the same.

I have, &c.

R. B. LLEWELYN,
Administrator.

BLUE BOOK REPORT, 1895.

1. I am sorry that it is not in my power to give a favourable report of the prosperity of the Colony during the year 1895.

2. It became evident, early in the year, that the yield of the staple export of ground nuts would be far below the estimate, and finally the result showed that the crop was only ten thousand tons instead of the estimate of fifteen, and not quite half the average of the preceding four years.

3. The cause of this misfortune is to be attributed to unfavourable seasons and bad seed nuts.

4. To remedy the latter, the Government purchased about 120 tons of fresh seed nuts in Senegal, and distributed it as far as possible throughout the Protectorate, on loan to the planters.

5. I may here add that these people have faithfully kept their agreement with the Government and, at the time of my writing this, the whole quantity has been practically repaid, and, I may add, cheerfully.

6. It is difficult to foresee what can be done to advance the agricultural industries of a territory in which for eight months of the year there is not a drop of rain, but the Government is trying in every direction to induce the inhabitants to venture on some other cultivation than that of ground nuts.

7. The Botanical Station at Kotri is showing that Liberian coffee will grow, and the fibre extracted from a raffia, of which there is an inexhaustible supply up the river, has been pronounced by a firm of brokers in London to be the best specimen yet sent home from the West Coast of Africa.

8. Owing to the opening up of Kommo and the freedom now enjoyed by the inhabitants of that district, a great impetus has been given to the rubber trade, and the exports last year amounted to 394,165 lbs. valued at 18,879*l.*, which are the largest figures that I can trace for this product. I am glad to report that the

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briskness shown in this trade last year has continued up to the present time and is apparently increasing.

9. The gross revenue for the year was 20,561*l.*; expenditure, 28,867*l.*; value of the exports, 89,000*l.*, including 4,500*l.* specie; value of imports, 97,000*l.*, including 13,500*l.* in specie, all of which figures, except the specie ones, are, I am sorry to say, considerably below the average, and can only be compared with the bad years of 1885-7.

10. On account of this decline in trade it became necessary to draw upon the surplus funds of the Colony, and even then there remained a deficit at the end of the year of 1,826*l.*, a comparatively small amount to be cleared off when the average revenue for the four previous years had amounted to 30,000*l.*, and the revenue and expenditure for 1896 were both estimated in December 1895 at less than 26,000*l.*, a result, however, which I now fear will not be attained.

11. Hopes have been always entertained that, with the establishment of peace and a civilised form of government in the Protectorate, the prosperity of the Colony would advance materially, but, owing to a run of continued unfavourable seasons for agriculture, the changes that have taken place by the establishment of the Protectorate have not yet had a fair chance of showing whether the general hopes of the Government and inhabitants will be realised.

12. It is pleasing to be able to record that the progress of peace and civilised government in the Protectorate has been most marked.

13. The natives have readily paid the Hut Tax, or "Yard Tax," as it is called, of 1*s.* a hut imposed for the first time by an Ordinance passed in March 1895, and in every respect have shown the greatest desire to carry out the orders of the Travelling Commissioners.

14. I have recently travelled throughout the whole of the district on the South Bank, about a hundred miles in length; through the greater part of Kombo and a small part of Fogni, and everywhere the improvements in the towns and roads are most marvellous, and there is general contentment.

15. The inhabitants, even the wild Jolas in Fogni, were glad to see me, and repeatedly expressed their appreciation of the changes the white-man government was working for them.

16. I attended two native courts and heard three cases tried, all charges of abduction, where in one case a fine of 4*l.* was inflicted and paid, in another the case was very properly dismissed, and in the third the offender, who could not pay the fine, was in default sent to prison in Bathurst for five weeks. Another case occurred, at which I was not present, when the headman of a town brought a charge against one of his people for refusing to obey an order given to him. He was fined 4*l.*, half of which he paid, and the members of the court subsequently begged me to relieve the offender of the moiety, as he had begged their pardon, and I readily acceded to their wishes. I mention these details as interesting, and showing that these native courts, which are only

just starting, may possibly be of great service hereafter; but nobody realises more than I do that they require constant careful watching, and their progress will be slow for many years.

17. A novel case was brought to my notice when I was thanked by a head Chief for sending him some coral; the explanation of the matter being, as I subsequently found out, that even head Chiefs in the Gambia Protectorate are not clear from receiving circulars and patterns. Some enterprising firm in England, who deserve success, had sent a circular with a sample of coral to this head Chief and he, not understanding one word of the circular, came to the conclusion that I had sent him a present of a piece of coral. I record this as the first instance of a circular being received by a Native Mandingo in the Gambia Protectorate, and perhaps as a sign of social progress. I do not wish to advocate that circulars or advertisements of all sorts, such, for instance, as those referring to coals or wine, should be sent indiscriminately to all the people, nor would they do any good, but I am not certain that illustrated catalogues of agricultural implements, hand-ploughs, corn mills, axes, tools, light carts or waggons for oxen, &c. might not start some of the people inquiring about such articles, and, if advertisers would send out a dozen copies to the officer administering the Government, he would know where and how to distribute them, and they would be more likely to bear fruit than if sent direct to a Native head Chief.

18. In the Protectorate there was general peace and order, but I regret that in Bathurst there was a serious disturbance in the middle of November between the civil police and the inhabitants of Bathurst, who supported them, and the frontier armed police force, which had been recruited and embodied early in the year from the tribes in the hinterland of Sierra Leone.

19. It soon became evident that these men were not amenable to discipline, and their disbandment was forced upon the Government by the *émeute* in November.

20. The detachment of the West India Regiment which had been stationed here since July 1891 was withdrawn in February 1895, and I hope no armed force will be considered as necessary again for ordinary garrison duty in Bathurst, which seems to be quieter without the presence of soldiery.

21. The health of Bathurst during the year was good. Malarial fever was only fatal in one case, and the immunity which the community enjoyed during the rainy season from fatal fevers is attributed by the Registrar to the exceptionally heavy rains that fell between the first week in July and the first week in September (55 inches in 60 days), accompanied by frequent tornadoes, and also to the active vigilance of the Board of Health in the discovery and removal of causes tending to prejudice the public health.

22. Early on the morning of the 26th of August a most terrific thunderstorm hung over the town of Bathurst for three-quarters of an hour, accompanied by a deluge of rain which flooded the whole town and did not subside until the tide fell in the river. Fifteen inches of rain fell in 27 hours, and the storm was generally admitted to have been the most severe one ever experienced here.

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I attach a copy of the usual comparative and annual meteorological returns.

23. The population of the Colony proper is not increasing, and probably the check that has been given to the introduction of alien children, who I am afraid were often purchased, will keep the figures even more stationary. In 1891, there were 378 alien children on the register, but the figures have now dwindled down to 99.

24. It is difficult to estimate the population in the Protectorate, but a rough estimate based on the number of huts in those parts of the Protectorate visited by commissioners, which is about two-thirds of the whole of the Gambia Protectorate, would give a population of about 75,000, and I think the population of the whole is, at the lowest estimate, 100,000.

25. The Mahommedan system of a plurality of wives, the custom of purchasing as wives girls from their parents, and the practice of prolonged suckling by mothers of infants, together with want of care, all tend to retard a very large annual increase in the population.

26. Much interesting work remains to be done in the Protectorate, and it is impossible to foretell at this early stage what will be the condition of the country in a few years to come; but I hope, as everything looks so promising, that the efforts of the Government to establish law and order will not be in vain, and that all who have laboured in this good work will be gratified by the results in the future.

R. B. LLEWELYN.

4th April 1896.

COMPARATIVE RAINFALL, COLONY OF THE GAMBIA.

	1891.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.
January	·01	—	·02	—	—
February	·16	—	—	—	—
March	—	—	—	—	—
April	—	·01	·40	·07	—
May	·53	1·38	2·16	—	—
June	4·67	3·05	3·29	5·33	0·86
July	7·42	14·89	20·57	16·54	12·00
August	18·84	22·65	30·57	18·64	36·63
September	19·81	4·76	13·00	13·35	12·34
October	1·97	4·39	7·33	1·29	2·95
November	—	—	·15	·64	2·08
December	—	—	·40	—	—
	53·41	51·13	77·89	55·86	66·86

Average, 61·03.

R. M. FORDE, Colonial Surgeon.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS, 1895.

1895. Months.	Average for month at 7 a.m.			Maximum in shade at 3 p.m.			Minimum in shade at 7 a.m.			Rainfall in inches.		
	Dry Bulb.	Wet Bulb.	Dew point.	Highest.	Lowest.	Average.	Highest.	Lowest.	Average.	Total.	Maximum.	Date.
January - - -	67.5	60.9	55.4	72.	62.5	64.5	66.	58.	63.5	—	—	—
February - - -	68.7	64.9	61.0	93.	63.	73.	68.	58.	64.2	—	—	—
March - - -	67.7	62.8	58.8	99.	72.5	78.8	64.5	60.	—	—	—	—
April - - -	68.	64.7	58.	94.	72.5	76.3	69.	61.	63.8	—	—	—
May - - -	71.4	67.	63.6	88.5	71.5	77.8	83.	62.	65.	—	—	—
June - - -	76.7	72.5	69.5	87.5	77.5	82.	74.	66.5	70.4	0.86	0.45	20-3-95
July - - -	78.3	74.5	72.8	90.	81.5	85.	77.5	70.	74.	12.00	2.82	3-7-95
August - - -	76.	74.4	73.2	87.	78.5	83.	77.5	69.	69.8	36.63	11.96	25-8-95
September - - -	77.	75.	71.6	89.5	80.5	86.	79.	70.	78.	12.34	3.27	6-9-95
October - - -	79.	76.	73.9	92.5	85.	88.	78.5	71.	75.8	2.95	0.81	7-10-95
November - - -	75.	70.	66.4	91.5	77.5	86.	77.	66.5	71.	2.08	2.06	19-11-95
December - - -	69.9	61.3	54.6	93.5	83.	87.3	73.	71.5	66.7	—	—	—

Total rainfall for 1895,—66.86 inches.

R. M. FORDE, Colonial Surgeon.

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