

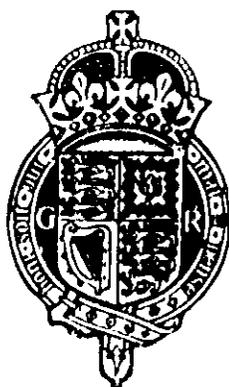
COLONIAL REPORTS—ANNUAL.

No. 1201.

GAMBIA

Report for 1923

(For Report for 1922 see No. 1160)



LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

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No. 1201.

GAMBIA.

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT, 1923.*

PREFACE.

The Gambia is the smallest but the oldest of the possessions of Great Britain in Africa. For centuries past it has been the resort of mariners, but it was not until Elizabethan days that our sea-power enabled us to plant outposts here.

The first book to arouse the interest of our nation in this part of the world was that entitled "The Discovery of the River Gambia and the Golden Trade of the Ethiopians. Also the commerce with a Great Black Merchant called Buckar Sano and his report of the Houses covered with Gold and other Strange Observations for the Good of our Country. Set down as they were collected in travelling part of the year 1620 and 1621 by Richard Jobson, gent." This book was the outcome of the Charter granted by King James I to the "Company of Adventurers of London trading in Africa," which established Fort James, our first settlement ashore on the Dark Continent. A century later the Royal African Company controlled the commerce of the Gambia, and made large profits on their cargoes of slaves and gold and ivory and beeswax.

Chartered company administration, however, was ruined by the Act of 1807, which abolished the slave trade, and although an annual subsidy of £23,000 was paid to the company, it was unable to make a profit, and its assets were taken over by the Crown. Since 1816 the seat of Government has been at Bathurst, which was founded by the English merchants who left Senegal and the Island of Gorce when those territories were restored to France after the Napoleonic wars. It was named after the then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

* NOTE.—A sketch map will be found in the Report for 1914, No. 861 [Cd. 7622-53].

I.—GOVERNMENT FINANCE.

The Revenue and Expenditure for the last five years have been :—

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Revenue.</i>	<i>Expenditure.</i>	<i>Excess of Assets over Liabilities.</i>
	£	£	£
1919	180,535	143,451	231,028
1920	268,788	171,160	328,657
1921	183,201	225,461	286,396
1922	204,244	430,312	99,687
1923	407,581	211,316	295,951

The ordinary revenue for the year 1923 amounted to £229,688, to which has been added the demonetization loan of £177,893.

Customs duties brought in £161,877; the *ad valorem* duties produced £36,515, and the amount received from the 10 per cent. duty on cotton piece-goods showed a decided increase over that for 1922—£23,270 as against £15,040.

The duty on kola nuts brought in £37,301, and the duty on tobacco produced £15,308. The raising of the duty on unmanufactured tobacco from 6d. to 9d. a pound by Resolution of Legislative Council in November came too late to affect materially the revenue in 1923.

The duty on spirits dropped from £6,054 in 1922 to £4,213.

The loan from the West African Currency Board to cover the loss on the demonetization of the five franc piece was reduced by £30,000 during the year.

II.—TRADE AND AGRICULTURE.

(a) Trade.

The year 1923 showed an improvement over 1922, the total value of the Colony's trade upwards and outwards (exclusive of specie) being £1,674,322, an increase of £213,057 over 1922 notwithstanding the fall in prices of many articles of commerce.

Of cotton piece-goods eight and a half-million yards were imported, an increase of three million yards over 1922.

Great Britain supplied 98·37 per cent. of the total.

The bulk of biscuits and wheaten flour came from France; tobacco, kerosene and petrol from the United States of America direct.

More than half the total importation (4,605 tons) of rice was supplied from Germany, the freight rates being lower from Hamburg to Bathurst than from London.

61,394 gallons of wine, nearly all from France, showed an increase of 16,096 gallons over 1922.

Of the principal articles of import three only exhibit a decrease in quantity, viz., kola nuts, soap and spirits.

The volume as well as the value of imports was greater than in 1922.

Imports amounted to £790,013 or £136,592 above 1922.

Exports amounted to £884,309 or £76,465 above 1922.

The total exportation of groundnuts amounted to 64,178 tons. This is below the average of the past ten years. 47½ per cent. went to England and 39½ per cent. to France. The trade in hides, once considerable, has now dwindled to a negligible quantity and shows no sign of recovery.

(b) *Agriculture.*

The Agriculture Department has now taken over the quarters of the Naval Wireless Station at Cape St. Mary and has established a seed farm and plant nurseries there.

The unusually heavy rainfall caused fungoid diseases to be more prevalent than usual during the ripening period of the groundnut crop.

The employment of Produce Inspectors has not been a success and has not been supported by the merchants, at whose request the system was introduced. A new scheme is to be tried next year in the hope of improving the interior quality of the staple product of the Colony.

A large falling-off in the number of "strange farmers" from Senegal somewhat reduced the total output. Efforts are being directed to encourage the inhabitants of the Gambia to rely on themselves instead of on their neighbours.

At the headquarters of the Department attention is being paid to the raising of improved varieties of seed for distribution throughout the Protectorate, as well as to the introduction of new crops, in the hope of eventually establishing new industries.

Problems connected with soil improvement, manurial requirements of the crops now grown, and the control of pests and diseases affecting them are also being investigated.

In the North Bank Province the cattle plague carried off in some districts so much as 80 per cent. of the stock. The disease was exactly the same as that which occurred in 1917 in the South Bank Province, which was identified as contagious pleuropneumonia.

III. LAND AND CLIMATE.

The areas in the Protectorate known as public lands are leased in small parcels for not more than 21 years; 160 grants were issued during the year, 12 of which were licences for wharves.

A theodolite traverse survey and azimuth of Kossema was completed during the year, and several new markets have been opened at centres of trade.

A covered market has been built at Kuntaur, the largest town in MacCarthy Island Province. An increase in the applications for land is anticipated in the coming year, as occupiers of land for trading purposes are now being instructed that the grant of a trading licence does not give authority for the occupation of land.

The meteorological returns for Bathurst and Georgetown were as follows :—

	Average max. shade.	Average min. shade.	Average mean.	Rainfall.
Bathurst ...	92·2°F.	65·2°F.	78·7°F.	65·53 in.
Georgetown ...	101·5°F.	65·5°F.	83·5°F.	36·07 in.

The highest maximum shade temperature was 110°F., in the month of April, at Georgetown, and the heaviest rainfall recorded in one month was 27½ inches in Bathurst.

The wet season of 1923 was exceptional, being 22·57 inches in excess of the average annual rainfall for the last 40 years.

IV.—EDUCATION.

During the year 1923 there were 1,428 children in attendance at the ordinary elementary schools in Bathurst, 240 at the Mohammedan school in Bathurst, and 94 at the Georgetown schools.

The greatest difficulty is still felt by all the Missionary Societies in securing suitable teachers.

The salaries now offered are far in advance of those paid five years ago, but the reluctance on the part of likely lads to take up teaching as a profession is as marked as ever.

Parents show but little interest in educational matters, and many heads of families leave Bathurst with their children to go up river during the trading season. Hygiene classes have been held by the Medical Officer of Health, and an Officer of the Gambia Police Force has given instruction in physical training to some of the teachers and older children in the various schools.

There is little open space in Bathurst for playgrounds, but every Wednesday afternoon MacCarthy Square is reserved for the use of the school children, amongst whom cricket and football competitions are being started.

The results of the annual examinations were more satisfactory than in the preceding year, but the methods of teaching English still leave much to be desired.

Far too high a percentage of pupils leave school before they have acquired a satisfactory minimum of education, and in the absence of a compulsory system this cannot be prevented. As none of these boys take up farming pursuits, and very few learn a trade, the number of would-be clerks is far in excess of the demand.

V.—COMMUNICATIONS.

(a) Shipping.

The number of vessels entered was 296 and of vessels cleared 299 with an aggregate of 1,052,982 net tons, of which three-fifths were British.

The passenger rates by the cargo steamers of Messrs. Elder Dempster and Company, Limited, which conduct the passenger and mail services to and from the Colony, were reduced during the year from £42 to £34, as against the pre-war rate of £22.

The number of German vessels entered and cleared at this port has increased from 40 in 1913 to 74 in 1923.

The cargo facilities and passenger accommodation provided by the German ships, as well as their punctuality, are far in advance of any other ships calling here.

(b) Marine Department.

The steamer, "Prince of Wales," which was purchased by Government in 1922, made 23 trips up the river during the year, the distance run being 12,542 miles.

The "Vampire" went 14 times up the river, the mileage being 9,074. This ship was fitted with a new boiler and had in consequence to be laid up for some months.

The "Mansa Kila Ba" made 14 trips, and the mileage covered was 4,211. A new starboard engine was installed in this vessel.

The launch "Waterwitch," which is used by the Commissioners of the Upper River Provinces, was overhauled during the year.

(c) Posts and Telegraphs Department.

Two travelling post offices serve wharf towns up the river, and there are four land post offices.

The old issue of postage stamps bearing only the portrait of the King was destroyed.

Forty-seven mails were received from Europe, and thirty-four despatched to Europe during the year.

A monthly letter-mail service with Dakar has been maintained.

The letters received during the year numbered 128,168, and the newspapers 67,463.

The new telephone system, which was commenced during 1923, was practically completed by the end of the year.

Wireless communication is maintained between Bathurst and Georgetown during the trade season.

Wireless communication with ships at sea was established in June.

Wireless messages sent during the year totalled 1,053.

The Savings Bank Branch was transferred from the Treasury to the Post Office at the beginning of the year.

An extension to the Post Office building, a double-storied concrete annexe, was completed in July, and the administrative, wireless and telephone sections were transferred to it.

VI.—THE PROTECTORATE.

The five Provinces have now five Travelling Commissioners and two Assistants, and this year for the first time each Province has had a Commissioner in residence throughout the year. It has not been found possible to build permanent headquarters for each Commissioner, but compounds of a better bush-type than formerly have been erected for the rainy season.

There is still a balance of £45,400 due from the Protectorate natives to the Government on account of the rice and seed-nut debt contracted in the year 1920, about one-half of it having been paid.

In the Upper River Province the Gambia Company carried out a short route march. The roads in this Province have been improved, and a considerable trade is done over the border.

In MacCarthy Island Province a giraffe was captured and sent to the Zoological Gardens, but unfortunately it died on the voyage.

In the South Bank Province lions are becoming troublesome again, and, in the North Bank, hyænas. A man was killed by a pack of them whilst walking at night near Farafenie. Nothing was left of him but his head, his kettle and his shirt.

Mousa Molloh, ex-King of Pulladu, who was deported some years ago, was repatriated this year, and has returned to end his days amongst his own people.

VII.—VITAL STATISTICS AND SANITATION.

(a) *Public Health.*

No case of plague was reported in 1923.

The difficulty experienced in successfully prosecuting anti-mosquito measures is due largely to the native inspector's lack of qualification. A definite course of graded instruction with promotion and higher remuneration after examination is required.

During July, instead of the previous ten years' average of 7·6 inches, 27·49 inches of rain were recorded, and this was followed by 24·10 inches in August.

About a quarter of the 400 acres covered by Bathurst is liable to annual flooding; this year the proportion was greatly increased and the period prolonged.

The standard of health in Bathurst was lowered, probably owing to the excessive damp. The increase of infant mortality, from an average of seven per month for the first six months of the year to 29 in July, speaks for itself.

Cases of smallpox occurred from March to July, but, owing to vaccination and immediate measures for isolation, the outbreak was not of a serious character.

The general death-rate of the Colony was 43 per thousand, and the birth-rate 26 per thousand. Only thrice in the last 20 years have the births been more numerous than the deaths. There were a great many deaths from tetanus.

Infant mortality during 1923 showed a slight improvement, there being 498 deaths as compared with 502 in 1922.

A course of lectures on hygiene was given by the Medical Authorities to School Teachers and Government Inspectors.

The African population of Bathurst is about 9,000.

An Ordinance to prevent the adulteration of bread or flour and to standardize the weight of loaves, and ensure that bread is baked only in approved and licensed bakehouses, was passed in 1923.

(b) *Medical.*

There are five Medical Officers on the staff, one of whom resides in the Protectorate during most of the year, with his headquarters at Georgetown, MacCarthy Island.

Out-patients treated at the Bathurst Hospital numbered 8,712 and in-patients 596.

There was an epidemic of influenza during October and November, but the case mortality happily was small.

A Mother and Child Welfare Committee has been started, and Clinics in connection with such welfare work have been instituted at the Hospital.

Two additional African nurses have been appointed, and a new maternity ward has been erected.

VIII.—JUDICIAL.

(a) *Supreme Court.*

The cases tried in the Supreme Court numbered 38, as compared with 56 in 1922. This decrease is partly attributable to the increased powers recently given to the Travelling Commissioners, and partly to the gradual return to more prosperous conditions.

Offences against property preponderated, and it is doubtful whether sentences of imprisonment alone for such offences will ever prove a sufficient deterrent.

The Supreme Court Ordinance was amended in April to provide for a continuous session of the Court from the first week in November until the end of June.

There were 150 fewer cases tried in the Police Court than in 1922.

842 cases were tried by the Native Tribunals of the various districts in the Protectorate.

The number of actions on the civil side of the Supreme Court was 56, as compared with 37 in 1922.

(b) *Legislation.*

There were 16 Ordinances passed in 1923. The most important of these were those dealing with the increased powers of the Travelling Commissioners; the registration of Trade Marks, and the pensions of Government officials.

(c) *Police.*

Approval has been given for the appointment of an African Inspector and four sub-Inspectors. Great difficulty is still experienced in obtaining as recruits men whose standard of education is high enough to qualify them for eventual promotion to the senior ranks.

The Force was brought up to strength during the year, and an additional police post at Kossema was opened.

The duties of the Government House Guard, formerly performed by the West African Frontier Force, are now carried out by the Police, owing to the Gambia Company being permanently stationed at Cape St. Mary.

The cost of the Force for 1923 was just under £10,000, a reduction of £1,000 on the previous year's expenditure.

The town of Bathurst is patrolled regularly by the Police, but thieving and larceny is rife, and unless the offenders are caught red-handed they are seldom apprehended later, and the recovery of stolen property is exceptional.

There are 15 premises licensed for the sale of liquor in Bathurst, but no case of drunkenness on licensed premises has occurred during the year.

The registration of domestic servants and the duties in regard to passports are now in the hands of the Police.

Blue uniform instead of khaki was issued to the Force in November, adding much to their smartness. Boots have been discontinued, and as a consequence the appearance of the men has been improved, and their usefulness, as well as their comfort, increased.

(d) Prison.

290 prisoners were admitted in 1923; this was 38 less than in 1922. There were a number of cases of beri-beri in the early part of 1923; but, in consequence of a change of diet from polished to unpolished rice, and of the removal of part of the prison to a site on the Cape St. Mary Road, and the provision of increased quantities of green vegetables and "sour" obtained from the garden maintained in connection with the new prison, the disease appears to have been eliminated from the Gaol.

The prison accommodation was increased by the erection of some buildings at the Cape Road Prison capable of holding 130 men without congestion, and further improvements are under consideration.

The system of using policemen specially detached for duty as warders is still in force and has worked well.

The daily average of prisoners during the year was 89 as against 93 in 1922.

IX.—PUBLIC WORKS.

No large programme was laid down for the year, and the value of unallocated stores was reduced to £7,300.

The wages of artisans tended to fall, mainly owing to shortage of demand by the commercial firms, who did very little building work during the year. Local wages were, however, too high for the quality of the output.

The principal repair work done by the Department during the year was the renovation of Government House, which required a complete overhaul from cellars to roof.

A system of history sheets has been started which will not only give a financial record of each building but will provide a basis for comparison between the approximate costs of various types, and will eventually show which type of building is the most economical to erect and maintain.

In addition to the Post Office, extensions have been added to the hospital and gaol on the Cape St. Mary Road.

The transport service is standardized on Cubitt motor cars and lorries, the total mileage performed being 39,000 miles.

The horses and carts formerly used by the Public Works have now been handed over to the Board of Health.

The disused portion of the Old General Cemetery has been cleared. This will render available some 7½ acres of the best ground in Bathurst.

X.—GENERAL.

In March the Colony was visited by Rear-Admiral Sir. R. W. Bentinck, K.C.M.G., C.B., on H.M.S. "Lowestoft," flagship of the Africa station, and three calls were made during the year by the gunboats "Thistle" and "Dwarf."

The new flagship of the Africa station, H.M.S. "Birmingham," visited the Colony in December, but the Admiral was not aboard.

The German howitzer, presented by the War Office as a war trophy, was placed in position facing Government Wharf.

In accordance with the re-grading system of the African staff, examinations were held in June and November.

A revision of the Standing Orders was issued.

Empire Day was observed as usual as a public holiday. In the morning the schools assembled in MacCarthy Square to hear an address from the Governor, and also the messages from Their Majesties the King and Queen. In the afternoon athletic sports were held, and the day ended with the presentation of prizes and trophies—the Educational trophy reverting to the Roman Catholic School and the Sports trophy to one of the Wesleyan Schools.

*Bathurst, Gambia,
May, 1924.*

The following Appendices are printed :—

- (1) Work conducted at the Imperial Institute during the year 1923 for the Colony of the Gambia.
- (2) List of principal firms trading in the Gambia.
- (3) List of Barristers, Solicitors and Patent Agents.

PUBLICATIONS ON THE GAMBIA.

"The Gambia Colony," F. B. Archer (St. Bride's Press). 1905.

"The Gambia," H. Reeve (Smith, Elder). 1912.

Annual Trade Report of the Colony, 1922, obtainable from the Crown Agents.

APPENDIX I.

WORK CONDUCTED AT THE IMPERIAL INSTITUTE
DURING THE YEAR 1923 FOR THE GAMBIA.*Economic Investigations and Enquiries.*

Reports on a number of products forwarded by Government Officers were furnished to the Government of the Gambia during the year as a result of investigations carried out in the Scientific and Technical Department, supplemented when necessary by reference to commercial experts. In addition, information relating to Gambia products was supplied to enquirers.

Groundnuts.—Groundnuts grown in the South Bank Province from seed supplied by the Philippine Bureau of Agriculture were found to contain a satisfactory amount of oil. They compared favourably with the West African groundnuts commonly shipped to the United Kingdom and would be saleable at about the same price. These nuts were considerably smaller than those referred to in the report for 1922, which were stated to have been grown at Bathurst from similar seed.

Castor Oil Seed.—A sample of castor oil seed received for examination gave a satisfactory yield of oil of normal character and appearance. Consignments of similar seed would be saleable in the United Kingdom at about the same price as Bombay castor seed.

Information was supplied as to the cultivation, preparation and marketing of castor seed, together with particulars of machines suitable for shelling and decorticating the seed.

Cassava.—An enquirer in the Colony was furnished with the names of manufacturers in the United Kingdom interested in supplies of cassava products, and also of firms willing to undertake the sale of consignments from the Gambia.

Fibres.—A sample of *Hibiscus cannabinus* fibre was found to be of exceptional length, of good strength and of satisfactory composition. Merchants who were consulted by the Imperial Institute were of opinion that if properly prepared and free from pieces of bark, the fibre should be readily saleable in this country.

An enquiry was received from a firm operating in the Gambia with reference to Arghan Fibre. Information was furnished regarding the identity of the plant, its mode of occurrence and the nature of the soils on which it grows, the method of preparing the fibre, and the possibility of obtaining suckers for trial cultivation.

Soils.—In continuation of the investigation of soils from different parts of the Gambia, detailed reports were furnished by the Institute on the composition and physical condition of samples of soil and sub-soil taken in the MacCarthy Island Province, and recommendations were made as to the most suitable manures. One of the samples represented a much heavier type of soil than any of the series examined.

Miscellaneous.—Information was also supplied to enquirers in the Colony on the following subjects: Makers of agricultural machinery; makers of machinery for the preparation of palm oil; and firms from whom seeds for trial cultivation could be obtained.

Publications.—A report on the operations of the Imperial Institute was published as No. 1 of the Bulletin of the Imperial Institute, Vol. XXI (1923), in which reference was made to the work conducted for the Gambia in recent years.

Gambia Court.—The area devoted to exhibits from the Gambia has been extended and now occupies 550 square feet. An additional show-case has been provided for the exhibition of specimens of native pottery, basket-work, etc.

A portable photograph screen has been supplied to separate the Gambia Court from that of Sierra Leone. One side of this screen is utilised for photographs of scenes in the Gambia. A contour relief map of Africa has been hung in the Court.

Lectures on the Gambia have been given in the Court by the Guide-Lecturers to school parties, and by Colonel Nangle, F.R.G.S., to members of the general public. Specimens of Gambia products have been supplied to schools.

No new exhibits were received from the Colony during the year.

APPENDIX II.

Principal Firms, etc.

The following are the principal firms carrying on a general import and export trade:—

Name.	Address.	Address in Europe (if any).
*African and Eastern Trade Corporation, Ltd.	Wellington Street	Royal Liver Building, Liverpool.
*Barthes and Lesieur ...	" "	8, Cours de Gourquo, Bordeaux.
*Bathurst Trading Co. Ltd.	" "	34, Leadenhall Street, London, E.C.
*Compagnie Francaise de l'Afrique Occidentale.	" "	32, Cours Pierre Puget, Marseilles.
*Etablissements Maurel et Prom.	" "	18, Rue Porto Dijoaux, Bordeaux.
*Gambia Trading Co., Ltd.	Buckle Street	23, Water Street, Liverpool.
*Maurot Frères ...	Wellington Street	6, Quai Louis XVIII, Bordeaux.
*Louis Vozia & Co. ...	" "	83, Cours de Verdun, Bordeaux.
*Palmino, Ltd. ...	" "	Moorgate Hall, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C.
Antoine Blain ...	" "	

*Members of the Bathurst Chamber of Commerce.

APPENDIX III.

List of Barristers, Solicitors and Patent Agents.

Barristers are entitled to practise as Solicitors and vice-versa.

*S. J. Foster, M.A., B.C.L.(Oxon), Barrister-at-Law, Wellington Street.

*I. J. Roberts, 6, Buckle Street.

*M. J. R. Pratt, M.A., B.C.L. (Durham), Barrister-at-Law, Allen Street.

†G. K. Roberts, 6, Buckle Street.

* Patent and Trade Mark Agent.

†Trade Mark Agent.

COLONIAL REPORTS, ETC.

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

ANNUAL.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Colony, etc.</i>	<i>Year.</i>
1167	Bermuda	1922
1168	Grenada	"
1169	St. Lucia	"
1170	Leeward Islands	1921-1922
1171	Fiji	1922
1172	Ceylon	"
1173	Gibraltar	"
1174	British Guiana	"
1175	Barbados	1922-1923
1176	Basutoland	"
1177	St. Vincent	1922
1178	Bechuanaland Protectorate	1922-1923
1179	Mauritius	1922
1180	Swaziland	"
1181	British Honduras	"
1182	Uganda	"
1183	Federated Malay States	"
1184	Unfederated Malay States	"
1185	State of Brunei	"
1186	Straits Settlements	"
1187	Falkland Islands	"
1188	Kenya Colony and Protectorate	"
1189	British Solomon Islands Protectorate	1922-1923
1190	Jamaica	1922
1191	Seychelles	"
1192	Bahamas	1922-1923
1193	Somaliland	1922
1194	Northern Territories of the Gold Coast	1922-1923
1195	Leeward Islands	"
1196	Turks and Caicos Islands	1922
1197	Nigeria	1923
1198	Weihaiwei	"
1199	Gilbert and Ellice Islands	1922-1923
1200	Ashanti	1922-1923

MISCELLANEOUS.

<i>No.</i>	<i>Colony, etc.</i>	<i>Subject.</i>
83	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1910.
84	West Indies	Preservation of Ancient Monuments, etc.
85	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1911.
86	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1912.
87	Ceylon	Mineral Survey.
88	Imperial Institute	Oil-Seeds, Oils, etc.
89	Southern Nigeria	Mineral Survey, 1913.
90	St. Vincent	Roads and Land Settlement.
91	East Africa Protectorate	Geology and Geography of the northern part of the Protectorate.
92	Colonies—General	Reports of the Colonies.
93	Pitcairn Island	Report on a visit to the Island by the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.