

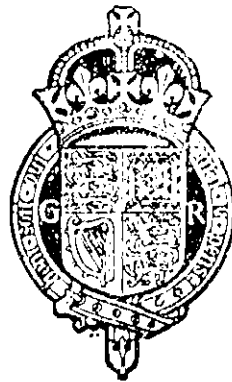
COLONIAL REPORTS--ANNUAL.

No. 1444.

THE GAMBIA

REPORT FOR 1928.

*(For Reports for 1926 and 1927 see Nos. 1347 and 1399 respectively
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1929.

P. 41151 N. 1

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THE GAMBIA.

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT, 1928.

History and Geography.

The first descriptive account of the Gambia dates from the middle of the 15th century, when Alvise Cadamosto, a Venetian, visited the River in charge of an expedition fitted out by Prince Henry of Portugal. He appears to have travelled some forty miles up the mouth in 1481. The Portuguese, who then held the monopoly of the trade between that continent and the West Indies, were driven out in 1482, when a fleet of five ships, fitted out by King John II of Portugal, in 1482, put an end to the Portuguese monopoly. The first voyage of discovery, which was made within the Senegal and Gambia rivers, was made in the 15th century, but one voyage had already been performed. The second voyage under the Charter, which was made in 1588, is described by Halliwell. The Dutch had then traded in those parts for above 30 years, but the "Freemen" never used to go into the river of Gambia, which is a river of secret trade and riches concealed by the Portugals".

The annexation of Portugal to Spain under Philip II in 1580, was at the decline of Portuguese maritime enterprise, and only in the 17th century the English established themselves in the Gambia and the French in Senegal to the north. For the following two centuries these countries contended with varying fortunes for the mastery of the two rivers, the coast ports between, and the trade of the West Indies.

In the 18th century 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 was, however, 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 1815 the seat of Government has been at Bathurst, which was founded by the English merchants who left Senegal and the Island of Gorée when those territories were restored to France after the Napoleonic wars. It was named after the then Secretary of State for the Colonies.

The Colony, which comprises the towns of Bathurst and Georgetown and some adjoining land, has an area of only 69 square miles.

The Protectorate is a narrow strip of territory ten kilometres wide on each bank extending up the river for 250 miles from Bathurst. The Gambia River has its source near the village of Labe on the Futa Jallon plateau. It flows westward for about 700 miles. The river is navigable for ocean-going steamers as far as Kuntaur, 150 miles up river, and for vessels drawing less than two fathoms as far as Koina—292 miles from Bathurst—the easternmost village in the Protectorate, where there is a rise of two feet daily with the tide. During the rains the upper river rises some thirty feet. This year when the floods were again exceptionally heavy the buildings at Basse, the largest market in the Protectorate in the dry season, were several feet under water.

The inhabitants of the Protectorate are mostly Jollofs, Mandingos, Fulas, and Jolas, nearly all of whom are Mahommedans except the last named tribe who are pagan though the Mahommedan religion is gaining ground amongst them and as a result they are gradually dropping their primitive customs.

The currency is British West African silver and alloy coinage and paper. Since the French five-franc pieces were demonetised, little silver has been seen in the Protectorate. There was in circulation during the year about £360,000 worth of alloy coinage, and notes to the value of £191,000. The monetary units and the standards of weights and measures are British, but the people are equally conversant with the metric system owing to their close contact with the neighbouring Colonies.

I.—General.

On the 10th of January, the death of Sir George Denton, K.C.M.G., occurred. He was Governor of the Gambia from 1900 to 1911. The valuable work he did for the advancement of the Colony and Protectorate is gratefully remembered.

In April, the Governor proceeded to Dakar to present the Insignia of an Honorary Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire on behalf of His Majesty to the Governor General of French West Africa. The occasion was marked by great cordiality and the most splendid hospitality.

Shortly after, Sir John Middleton, K.B.E., C.M.G., left the Colony having been appointed Governor of the Dominion of Newfoundland. He was succeeded by Sir Edward Denham, K.B.E., C.M.G., who assumed the administration and arrived with Lady Denham on the 29th of November.

Dr. Hopkinson, C.M.G., D.S.O., Senior Travelling Commissioner North Bank Province, was appointed under Additional Instructions respecting the Constitution of Legislative Council a member of that body, and also of Executive Council.

II. Finance.

The revenue and expenditure for the last five years has been :—

Year	Revenue.	Expenditure.	Loans.	Surplus of Assets over Loans and Liabilities.
	£	£	£	£
1924	208,613	203,635	125,893	175,036
1925	189,086	271,836	113,743	104,436
1926	214,181	213,643	103,601	115,116
1927	252,419	277,625	84,171	109,340
1928	255,385	250,596	62,541	135,759

The expenditure in 1925 included £32,546 for the writing off of the rice and seed nut debts of the Protectorate.

The expenditure in 1927 included the sum of £50,000 which was set aside for the establishment of a Reserve Fund.

The liability to the West African Currency Board incurred in 1922 for demonetization of the five-franc piece was reduced during the year by £21,630.

Customs receipts, which represented 69 per cent of the total revenue of the Colony, brought in £177,368 as against £172,887 the year before.

A comparison of the four chief items of duty during the last five years shows increase in revenue from Groundnuts and *ad valorem* duty, but a decrease during 1928 on Kolas and Tobacco.

Year.	Export Duty. Groundnuts.	Import Duty. Kolas.	Ad valorem Duties.	Tobacco.
	£	£	£	£
1924	57,572	29,231	18,867	11,172
1925	46,124	23,016	16,821	10,748
1926	56,966	32,925	23,318	11,855
1927	64,342	41,795	26,797	17,347
1928	73,809	31,210	33,705	12,846

The cost price of investments held at the close of 1928 was £255,912. The Securities Depreciation Fund stood at £13,993 while the actual depreciation on Surplus Funds Investments was only £1,024.

The funds of the Colony are held in the Protectorate of Finance and are held in a Special Reserve Fund to the credit of £1,804,670 and in the funds of the Public Works Department, which, deriving from the Surplus Funds of the Colony, which amounted on December 31st to £1,073,387 while there is also a Reserve Fund of £53,267.

III. Production.

The total value of exports was £1,156,909. Except for Palm Kernels and Hides representing together only £18,139, the sole export of the Gambia is Groundnuts on which an export duty of £1 a ton is levied.

The tonnage and value of the crop for the last five years has been as follows:—

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Value.</i>
		£
1924	69,622	861,925
1925	48,700	633,957
1926	61,672	862,578
1927	69,249	957,941
1928	73,772	1,122,253

The main percentage distribution of the Groundnut export trade during these years has been:—

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Bunch.</i>	<i>Feet.</i>	<i>Carols.</i>	<i>Dutch.</i>
1924	51	31	3	5
1925	15	36	5	7
1926	39	28	16	13
1927	6	11	20	20
1928	33	33	20	6

The Agricultural Department distributed 17,044 bags of seed to the native farmers. The cost of this distribution is repaid after the crop is gathered and no bad debts either in regard to Groundnuts or Rice have been made since the Government wrote off the liabilities of the farmers in the Protectorate four years ago.

The price of nuts at the beginning of the 1927—28 season was 2s. 6d. to 3s. a bushel or even a little higher towards the end of the season. Nuts were abundant though generally light and of indifferent quality owing to the heavy rainfall.

Increased areas have been devoted to the growing of food stuffs, but no alternative to the staple crop, on which the prosperity of the Colony depends, has as yet been introduced. Guinea-corn suffered severely in many localities from Leo disease due to the ravages of Aphid Sorgi. Millet and maize gave good yields and rice, though extensively cultivated, is not produced in sufficient quantity to satisfy local requirements.

Several outbreaks of cattle disease occurred during the year, some 2,300 head being lost in Koinbo and over 4,000 in the South Bank Province. At present there is some doubt as to whether the disease is rinderpest or contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia and until the arrival of the veterinary expert, who is expected in the new year, segregation of the infected animals and careful restriction of travelling cattle continue to be the only preventives.

IV.—Trade and Economics.

The following table shows the balance of trade (exclusive of Specie) during the last five years :—

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Aggregate.</i>	<i>Imports.</i> (<i>c.i.f.</i>)	<i>Exports.</i> (<i>f.o.b.</i>)	<i>Balance of</i> <i>Exports over</i> <i>Imports in £.</i>
	£	£	£	£
1924	1,563,059	669,700	893,359	223,659
1925	1,328,518	615,927	722,621	106,694
1926	1,555,303	651,137	904,166	253,029
1927	1,862,376	863,376	999,000	135,624
1928	2,166,695	1,010,686	1,156,009	145,323

The largest increases of imports were in Cotton Piece Goods and Rice. The former with 7,122,355 square yards showed an increase of £47,768 over 1927, and the latter with 11,440 tons showed an increase of £32,482 over 1927.

On the other hand, Kola nuts and Tobacco were consumed in less quantities than in 1927, the decrease in value of these two semi-luxuries, as compared with the previous years, being £9,272 and £2,596, respectively. Great Britain supplied most of the following goods.—Apparel, bags and sacks, coal and cement, cottons, lumber, medicine and drugs, oils edible, tobacco and potable spirits. Biscuits, boots, shoes and slippers, hats and caps, rice, soap, sugar, tea and wines were obtained chiefly from France.

The United States of America furnished the greatest value of flour, oil not edible, and motor cars. There is still a preference for vehicles of American production and importations have been of the Ford, Chevrolet and Brockway types.

The percentage of imports for the last five years have been :—

—	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928
British Empire	61.97	51.65	60.10	51.71	48.22
France	12.83	26.61	21.63	30.65	34.08
Germany ...	6.91	7.57	2.54	5.58	5.19
United States of America	5.23	4.66	4.12	5.38	5.00

From the records for the past twenty-five years it appears that the year 1928 is the first in which the British Empire has provided less than 50 per cent of the total imports of the Colony.

The following is the percentage of revenue to trade during the last five years.

—	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928
—	<i>of</i> 13.34	<i>of</i> 11.12	<i>of</i> 11.77	<i>of</i> 13.55	<i>of</i> 11.78

V.—Communications.

582 ships of 1,292,397 tons entered and cleared in 1928 as compared with 569 ships of 1,287,081 tons in 1927. 61 per cent were British and 12 per cent French, German, Italian, American, Dutch and Norwegian steamers, though representing only about 20 per cent of the tonnage of the port, being more than half the imports and carry practically all the exports of the Gambia.

Fifty-nine ships were chartered to remove the Colony's exports of which fifty-eight were foreign.

Until the heavy shipping and port charges at home are reduced, it will be impossible for British ships to compete successfully with their rivals in the carrying trade of this Colony. On general first class cargo from Liverpool, the freights are as high as £3 a ton, from London 50/- a ton, while the French ships carry their cargoes from Marseilles and Bordeaux at about £1 a ton plus 2s. 6d. light dues and handling charges.

His Majesty's Ships "Calcutta" and "Daffodil" and also the cable steamer "Transmitter" called at Bathurst during the year, and Monsieur Jean Lebaudy from Paris in his yacht the "P. Heroasa" and Mr. Wearne of Singapore in his yacht "Black Swan" sailed up the Gambia.

In April, the flying boat "Singapore" with Sir Alan and Lady Cobham on board touched here and received a hearty reception.

A French aeroplane belonging to the Compagnie Generale Aéropostale made a forced landing in the North Bank Province and was subsequently conveyed to Dakar by road.

The Government river service has been maintained without interruption during the year by the steamers "Prince of Wales" and "Vampire", the latter to be superseded in 1929 by a new vessel of slightly smaller dimensions than the "Prince of Wales", now building at Dartmouth.

A weekly schedule was maintained from November to May, and fortnightly from June to October. The "Prince of Wales" had a total mileage of 12,745 and the "Vampire" of 9,886.

In addition to general transport work, the "Prince of Wales" carries out monthly inspections of the buoys in the estuary and on Bijol Island. She was also instrumental in assisting the S.S. "Anchore" to refloat after grounding in the Kai Hai Channel.

The Governor's Yacht "Mansa Kila Ba" was in commission throughout the year and steamed 6,818 miles.

In addition to the Government flotilla of steamers and launches there are a number of privately owned craft in the Gambia. The cutter and choiners, which were formerly so picturesque a sight on the river, are now being gradually replaced by small steam craft and lighters.

A slight increase was recorded in the number of letters handled during the year and the travelling post offices on the Government steamer have proved a great convenience to the public. The four postal stations up river do a considerable business in money and postal orders. The wireless service has worked efficiently and the telephone system in Bathurst is well supported.

VI. Justice, Police and Prisons.

There has been an almost entire absence of serious crimes in the Gambia and of the 30 cases tried by the Supreme Court during the year only two heavy sentences were imposed.

In the Police Magistrate's Court there has been a steady decline since the year 1922 which is attributed to the more settled conditions of trade after the boom of 1920—21.

The native tribunals have discharged their judicial duties with sagacity. The larger number of cases coming before them this year has been due not to increase in crime but to greater efficiency on the part of the Chiefs in its detection and suppression.

On the civil side, the Supreme Court has had eleven suits to decide whilst the Court of Requests and the Cadi's Court in Bathurst have not been unduly burdened with cases. There has been more civil litigation in the Protectorate during the last twelve months and this is ascribed to the greater confidence now felt in the justice administered by the native tribunals.

The Police look after the prisons at Bathurst and Georgetown and the fire brigade at Bathurst is also manned by them. In addition to the constabulary at headquarters, there are four small detachments in the Protectorate.

The Band has been increased and its performances give great pleasure to the people.

No cases of drunkenness were reported during the year on the twenty-one licensed premises in Bathurst. The wine and beer shops are well conducted and, in the majority of cases, close, except on holidays and special occasions, before the legal hour.

VII.—Public Works.

As regards the more important undertakings now in hand, the work on the Slipway has been carried on throughout the year and it is anticipated that it will be opened before the trade season commences next year.

Operations in connection with the Bathurst Reclamation Scheme have been gravely hindered by the difficulty in finding material containing a sufficiently low proportion of mud to suit the dredger in the tidal area at the back of the town. When the ten-acre lot now being raised is ready for occupation, it will be laid out as a place of residence for some of the inhabitants whose yards close by are liable to periodic flooding during the rains.

The work on the deviation of the road between Bathurst and Cape St. Mary is nearing completion and will improve the communications with Kombo—the most fertile Province in the Protectorate.

During the year the Bathurst Market has been extended and a new slaughter house provided and on the confines of the town a new Infectious Diseases Hospital is being erected to replace the temporary building which for many years stood there.

Four new long roads have been laid on either side of the main Back Street and a new 800 ft. main sewer has been laid down by a new sewerage system. The sewer for the central part of the town is not yet put in. All the old dilapidated buildings have now been supplied with baths and sinks and a mad house has been reserved for the public by the opening of a Government Fur Factory.

VIII. Public Health.

In Bathurst, with its population of 10,173 which is nearly doubled temporarily during a prosperous trade season, there was no epidemic during the year under review.

The deaths exceeded the births, of which 263 were registered, by 144.

Of the rainfall of 57 inches, nearly one-half fell in the month of August. It is during the months from June to October that most of the sickness occurs. It was in November, however, that five cases of yellow fever broke out in Bathurst. The quarantine restrictions which were at once imposed have had a disastrous effect on the 1928/29 trade season. Sanitary arrangements in Bathurst are still primitive but the methods of scavenging which have to be carried out by horse carts have been improved by the purchase of a motor dust cart for use on the metalled roads. Improvements in reclamation and water supply are now under consideration.

There are two Hospitals in the Colony, one at Bathurst, the other at Georgetown. At the former 275 in-patients were admitted and 16,179 out-patients during the year and 162 operations were performed. Georgetown received 250 in-patients and 3,583 out-patients and some 4,000 cases were dealt with by the Practitioner Medical Officer and the Dispensary at Fasse and Kauru. The infant mortality figures for Bathurst are 395 per thousand, but the effects of the Women and Children Welfare Clinic have been marked and its usefulness extended by the opening of a sub-clinic in New Street at the end of the year.

IX. Education.

School attendance has remained as irregular during 1928 as in 1927 and compulsory education will have to be enforced before any definite improvement can take place. Of 1694 pupils on the register almost one-half presented themselves for the annual examination. Most of the teachers at work in the schools are not trained and only

a minority hold teachers certificates. Four certificates were granted this year to teachers out of thirteen candidates, but next year it is intended to start definite courses for teachers and also to re-establish a vocational school in Bathurst. Physical instruction and school athletics are encouraged and inter-school sports were held as usual on Empire Day.

The Boy Scouts and Girl Guides movement has taken firm hold in Bathurst, though it is at present run independently of the Schools. One boy has been sent to Manchester University to study medicine and two boys have been educated at Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, with Government scholarships. There are two Mohammedan Schools in the Gambia apart from the village Koran schools. These are at Bathurst and Georgetown and the latter, which has now completed the second year of its existence, has become one of the established institutions of the Gambia.

At it all the future Chiefs and many of the future Headmen of the Gambia are being taught. Its numbers have grown from 70 to 117 of whom 95 are boarders and the accommodation will have to be increased.

The agricultural training there consists entirely of practical work in the school garden, and the whole curriculum is designed with a view to interesting the boys in the country in which their lives will be lived, and to fortifying their characters.

X.—Lands and Survey.

Cadastral surveys are made of plots leased under the Public Lands Ordinance. Leases are granted either from year to year or for a term not exceeding twenty-one years.

In a few cases plans exist of wharf towms made from theodolite traverses, but most of the existing plans are very imperfect being made from compass surveys. No complete survey of the Protectorate has ever been made but successive Anglo-French boundary commissions have delimited its frontiers which terminate with an arc in the Upper River Province.

About £8,000 a year is derived by the Government from rents. There are no large holdings in the Protectorate the land area of which does not much exceed 2,000 square miles.

XI.—Miscellaneous.

The Protectorate Amendment Ordinance and the Protectorate Administration Amendment Rules were the most important pieces

of legislation passed during the year. The former gave the right of appeal to the Supreme Court in all cases, civil and criminal, tried in the first instance by a Commissioner sitting alone or with one or more native members, and in the case of Native Tribunals, composed entirely of native members, gave the aggrieved party the right to have his case re-tried by the Commissioner.

The new Supreme Court Rules made this year are already working well and speeding up litigation in a marked degree.

The first Certificate of Honour ever given in the Protectorate was bestowed on a Chief of Kombo with twenty-eight years' service. This distinction is highly prized by the native authorities.

A collection in Bathurst on Poppy Day for the British Legion produced £138.

Visitors to the Colony included Brigadier-General Sir Samuel Wilson, G.C.M.G., Permanent Under-Secretary of State, and Dr. Stanton, C.M.G., Medical Adviser to the Secretary of State.

A call was also made by the Empire Parliamentary Committee on their way to Nigeria, consisting of the Right Honourable Walter Elliot, M.P., Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, Captain Garro-Jones, M.P., and the Right Honourable William Lunn, M.P., now Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies.

During the year the fort on James Island has been excavated and to a small extent repaired. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century it was the scene of much commercial activity and of constant rivalry between ourselves and the French and on more than one occasion was sacked by pirates. In 1726, a memorial to the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations described the Island as "Walled all round, outworks, small arms with stores, etc., formerly mounted with ninety small guns, now with thirty-eight great guns, with several warehouses, with rooms for the Governor, factors, writers, officers, artificers, soldiers and castle slaves, magazines and store houses with a negro-house for two hundred negroes".

C. R. M. WORKMAN,

Colonial Secretary.

15th July, 1929.

APPENDIX I.

Principal Firms, etc.

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

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Address.</i>	<i>Address in Europe (if any).</i>
United Africa Co., Ltd. ...	Wellington Street	Royal Liver Building, Liverpool, England.
Le Commerce Africain ...	"	22, Rue Ferrere, Barbours, France.
Bathurst Trading Co., Ltd.	"	Royal Liver Building, Liverpool, England.
Etablissements Mourois et Fils	"	Esplanade, Port de France, Casablanca, France.
Compagnie Française de Commerce et d'Industrie	"	27, Cours d'Orléans, 90, St. Michel, France.
General Trading Co., Ltd.	Buckingham Street	Royal Liver Building, Liverpool, England.
Martins & Co., Ltd. ...	Wellington Street	67, Rue de la République, Bordeaux, France.
Etablissements Avezin ...	"	11, Rue de Valenciennes, Lyons, France.
Palmer & Co., Ltd. ...	"	Moorgate, Hall, Finsbury Pavement, London, E.C., England.
V. Q. Paterson & Co., Ltd. ...	"	"

All the above firms are represented on the Bathurst Chamber of Commerce.

APPENDIX II.

List of Barristers, Solicitors, and Patent Agents.

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

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

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

J. G. S. Roberts, Allen Street.

W. D. Condon, B.A., B.C.L. (Oxon.), Barrister at Law, Petton Street.

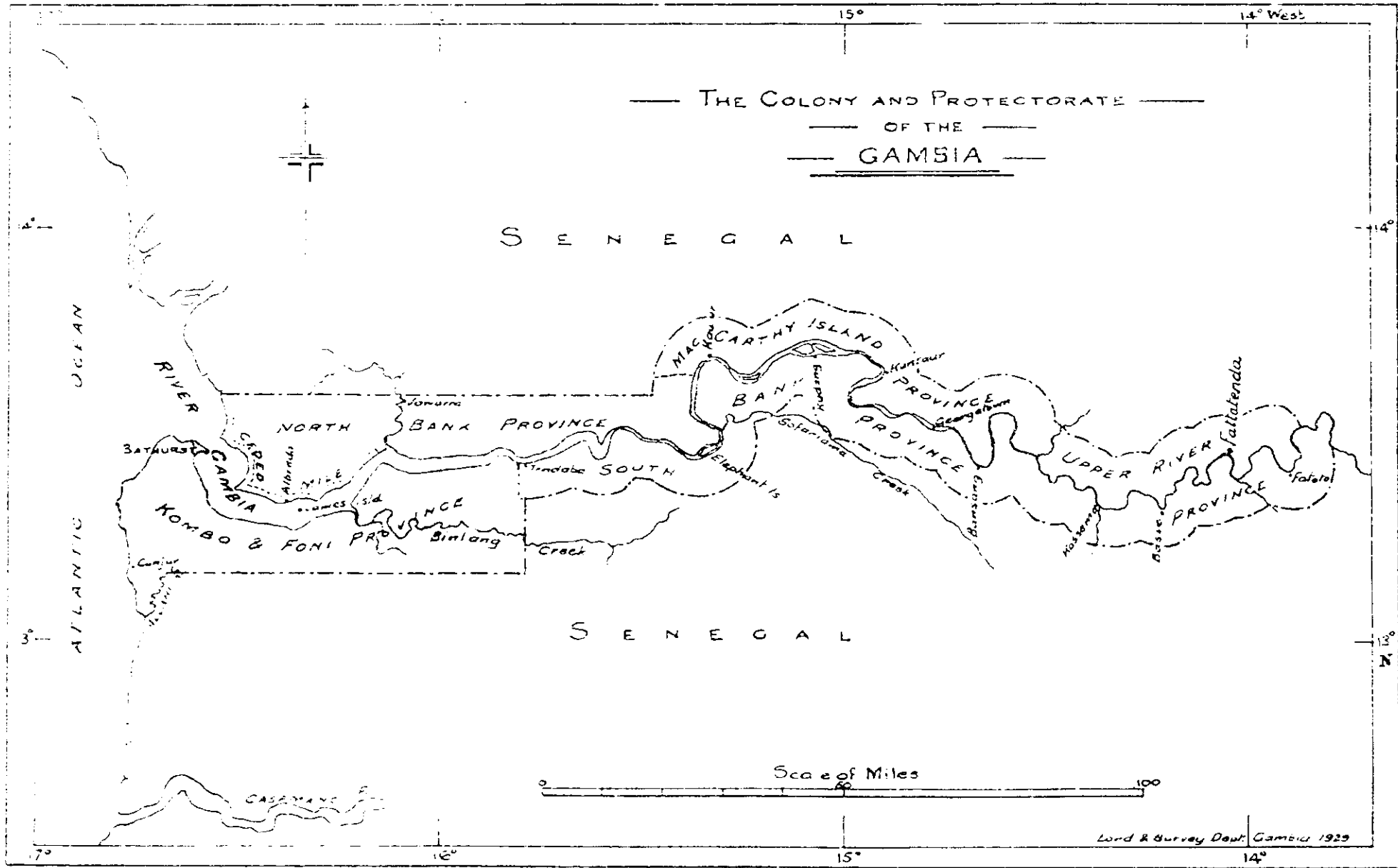
G. S. W. Ladipon Thomas, Barrister at Law, Clarkson Street.

S. A. Benka-Coker, B.A., (Durham), Barrister at Law, Gloucester Street.

T. A. Taylor, Barristers-at-Law, Milton Place.

* Patent and Trade Mark Agent. † Trade Mark Agent.

Scale of Miles



Reports, etc., of Imperial and Colonial Interest

WEST INDIES AND BRITISH GUIANA.

Report by the Hon. E. F. L. Wood, M.P., on his visit during the period December, 1921, to February, 1922 [Cmd. 1679].

3s. 0d. (3s. 2d.).

EAST AFRICA COMMISSION.

Report.

[Cmd. 2387.] 3s. 6d. (3s. 9d.).

WEST AFRICA.

Report by the Hon. W. G. A. Ormsby Gore, M.P., on his visit during the year 1926. [Cmd. 2744.] 3s. 6d. (3s. 9d.).

IMPERIAL CONFERENCE, 1926.

Summary of Proceedings. [Cmd. 2768.] 1s. 0d. (1s. 1d.).

Appendices to the Summary of Proceedings. [Cmd. 2769.]

4s. 0d. (4s. 6d.).

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE NON-SELF-GOVERNING DEPENDENCIES.

Report of a Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. [Cmd. 2825.] 2s. 0d. (2s. 1½d.).

COLONIAL OFFICE CONFERENCE, 1927.

Summary of Proceedings. [Cmd. 2883.] 1s. 3d. (1s. 4d.).

Appendices to the Summary of Proceedings. [Cmd. 2884.]

4s. 6d. (4s. 9½d.).

COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL SERVICE.

Report of a Committee appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. [Cmd. 3049.] 9d. (10d.).

EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA.

Report of the Commission on Closer Union of the Dependencies.

[Cmd. 3234.] 6s. 6d. (6s. 5d.).

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