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THE GOLD COAST

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THE GOLD COAST

A Survey of the Gold Coast and British Togoland

1919-1946

By

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The Gold Coast

CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

The roughly oblong block of territory known as the Gold Coast lies midway on the Guinea littoral of West Africa. The usually accepted limits of West Africa are the Senegal River on the west, and the Niger Delta on the east, while the Sahara Desert forms a convenient boundary to the north. From the geographical point of view the divisions of this vast territory are latitudinal: first, a band of humid tropical forest which is interrupted near the coast by areas of mangrove and savanna; second, a wooded savanna to the north; and third, a dry, treeless savanna stretching far into the interior where it eventually merges into the Sahara Desert.

In spite of these horizontal zones, the political divisions, along the Guinea Coast, cut directly across them. They have been likened "to a terrace of narrow houses some closely walled-in at the rear, others—the French colonies—opening on to a vast court, the well-nigh limitless hinterland of the Western Sudan."[1] The Gold Coast is one of these "walled-in" colonies, situated between 3°15′ W. longitude and 1°12′ E. longitude, with the French Ivory Coast to the west, the French Mandate of Togoland to the east, the Upper Volta district of the French Sudan to the north, and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. This type of political division, ignoring as it does both economic and tribal areas, has created many difficulties for both the French and British administrations and has led to some discussion of a possible exchange of territories or of a federation of existing units.[2]

[1] Walter Fitzgerald, *Africa, a Social, Economic and Political Geography of Its Major Regions* (New York, 1939), p. 323 (hereafter cited as Fitzgerald, *Africa, a Geography*). Gold Coast Survey Department, *The Atlas of the Gold Coast* (Accra, 1945). D. A. Chapman, *The Natural Resources of the Gold Coast* (Achimota, 1940).

[2] There was some discussion of the advantages of federating the four British West African Colonies, especially after the appearance of an article by Field Marshal Jan Smuts suggesting African regionalism; *Life*, December 28, 1942, pp. 11–15. Neither the British authorities nor the majority of the Africans, however, favor a federation. They believe that regional councils for both intercolonial and international collaboration will be better suited to West African needs. See *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th. ser., Commons, Vol. 391, col. 142–43.

The term "Gold Coast," first applied to this area in the fifteenth century by the Portuguese traders, has since come to include more than just the strip of coast line. The name is now given the entire dependency which includes the colony of Ashanti directly to the north and, beyond that, the protectorate of the Northern Territories. Throughout these pages the term "Gold Coast Dependency" will be used to refer to all three divisions while "Gold Coast Colony" will be reserved for the section on the littoral only. After World War I a fourth unit, the mandated area of British Togoland, was placed under the administrative control of the governor of the Gold Coast Dependency. The area of the Colony is 23,490 square miles, of Ashanti 24,560, of the Northern Territories 30,600, and of Togoland 13,040—a total of 91,690 square miles.[3]

The population of the Dependency is unevenly distributed, as will be seen in the tabulation[4] given below, which gives population figures according to the 1931 census.

Gold Coast Colony	1,571,362
Ashanti	578,078
Northern Territories	717,275
Togoland	293,671
Total	3,160,386[4]

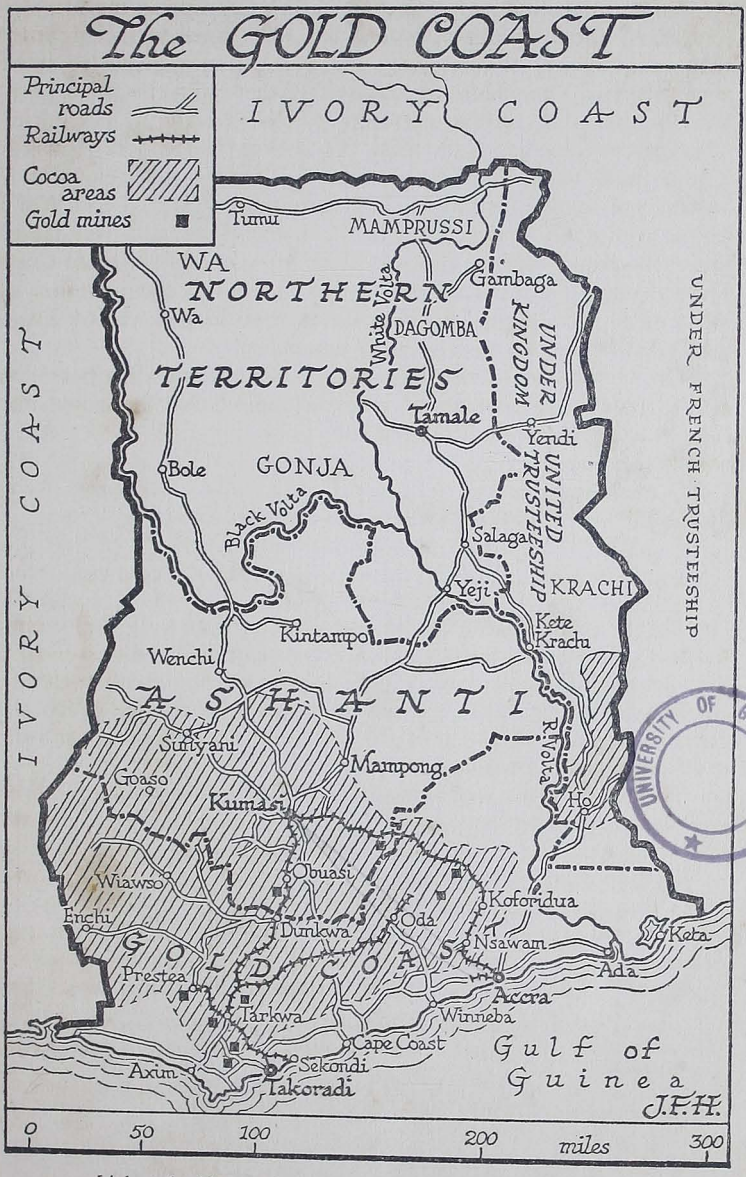
The geographical and economic characteristics of the several divisions of the Dependency are largely responsible for this unequal distribution of population. Physically the entire territory can be divided into four easily recognized areas—the coastal lands, the Ashanti plateau, the plains of the Volta and its tributaries, and the northern plateau grasslands.

The coastal lands, averaging from twenty to forty miles in width and including the greater part of the original colony, contain over half the population of the entire Dependency. This is because most of the important urban centers—Sekondi, Takoradi, Cape Coast, and Accra, the capital, lie within this area.

It is rolling country covered with scrub and grass. The agricultural products include such foodstuffs as cassava, corn, and other vegetables. There is also growing interest in citrus fruits and

[3] *Annual Report on the Gold Coast for the Year 1946*, p. 83 (hereafter cited as *G.C. An. Report*). The French and British Mandates over Togoland were changed to trusteeships in 1946.

[4] *G.C. An. Report, 1938*, p. 12. At mid-year 1938, the estimated population for the Dependency was 3,786,659.



[Adapted with permission from Rita Hinden, *Plan for Africa.* London: George Allen & Unwin.]

bananas for local use and export. Coconut palms—useful for both kopra (dry coconut) and coconut oil—grow well on the more level tracts of the coastal zone, especially in the western and eastern parts. Fishing in the Atlantic, in the coastal lagoons, and in the rivers is another occupation of the peoples of this district. That portion of the coast to the west, beyond Cape Three Points, has a far heavier precipitation (up to 100 inches) than the rest of the littoral, and rain forest is dominant. As a result, the population of this western section is less dense, and its economic and social development has been slower than the eastern part.

The Ashanti plateau, as a geographical division, should not be confused with the political section of the same name. They are not co-terminus. The plateau contains most of the rain forest of the Dependency which is to be found not only in Ashanti but in the Gold Coast Colony as well. It averages 500 to 1,500 feet above sea level and has a high rainfall, usually exceeding fifty inches. The forest itself consists of tall, massive trees, often 200 feet in height, whose thickly entangled branches form a green roof overhead, impenetrable by the sun. A network of vines provides so close a vegetation that the heavy rains cannot cause erosion, and thus the rich soil is preserved. The moist, twilight atmosphere within the forest is ideal for the growth of cacao which requires great humidity and shade. The preservation of the forest is therefore essential to the economic prosperity of the people. Devastation caused by railroad building, mining activities, and wasteful agricultural and timber-cutting methods has already made serious inroads on this precious natural heritage. There is evidence, moreover, that the Sudan type of vegetation—which is infinitely less valuable—is gradually moving southward. The creation of forest reserves and systematic reforestation is, then, one of the most serious problems of the Dependency. The Gold Coast Government's attempted solution will be the subject of a later discussion.

The third physical division includes the plains of the Volta River and its tributary, the Black Volta. This stream takes its rise in the French Sudan to the north and runs the full length of the Dependency, emptying into the Gulf of Guinea near Ada, some sixty miles from the eastern frontier. The Black Volta forms the northwestern boundary line of the Northern Territories; turning eastward, it meets the main stream just north of Ashanti. These plains, then, extend north and northeast of the Ashanti plateau. Their supply of

rainfall is low, precarious, and confined to a short season. Population density is under ten on the average, while large areas are completely deserted. There is little agriculture, and cattle raising is prevented by the widespread prevalence of the tsetse fly. Modern irrigation methods and tsetse clearance could greatly raise the economic value of this poorest section of the Dependency.

The last geographical division, that of the northern plateau grasslands (500–1,500 feet), has a more dependable rainfall than that of the Volta plains. Its light soil, suitable for agricultural purposes, and its tsetse-free cattle lands make possible some economic prosperity and hence a higher density of population which is as great as 170 per square mile in some parts.

The climate and vegetation of the Dependency are determined by these same physical divisions. The coastal and rain-forest areas have constant heat throughout the year, accompanied, as has been said, by a high degree of humidity except during the winter when the *harmattan*, a dry northeaster from the Sudan, may bring some relief.

The vegetation of the forest belt is, of course, tropical. Besides cocoa, the oil palm, the kola tree, wild rubber, mahogany, and other valuable timber trees provide exportable products. For local consumption yams, plantains, sweet potatoes, beans, and peanuts are also grown. As it is not possible to keep cattle in the forest area, there is an insufficient meat supply. Fishing and hunting only partially remedy this deficiency, and lack of protein is a recognized source of much of the malnutrition found among the inhabitants of the Gold Coast.

Both the Volta plains and the northern plateau belong to the savanna belt of West Africa and therefore have a Sudan rather than a forest type of climate and vegetation. While there is a high level of temperature throughout the year, the atmosphere is dry instead of moist. In these sections the harmattan, with its load of fine sand particles, is dreaded, while it is the moisture-laden monsoon of the summer months which brings the inhabitants the bulk of their rainfall. Whatever precipitation there is is quickly absorbed, however, and the growing season is a very short one. In the most northern parts millet, guinea corn, peanuts, and beans do well. Farther south yams and rice can be added to the local diet. The trees of the savanna grow in open forests or are sometimes widely scattered. Among them the shea tree is highly valued. Its nut, contain-

ing a rich fat called shea butter, is used for cooking purposes by the inhabitants.

As for the mountainous areas of the Gold Coast the main features are (*a*) a range of hills running southwest to northeast from near Accra to Togoland, and (*b*) the steep scarp face of the Ashanti plateau which runs from southeast to northwest.

Of the Volta River and its principal tributary, the Black Volta, something has already been said. The smaller tributaries, the Red Volta and the White Volta, flow from the Sudan into the northeastern corner of the Dependency. The other rivers are smaller and of less importance than the Volta. Among them it is sufficient to mention the Tano and the Ankobra, in the far western section of Ashanti and the Gold Coast Colony, and the Pra River which forms a portion of the boundary line between these two colonies until it turns southward and flows into the Gulf of Guinea near Sekondi. None of the rivers of the Gold Coast are navigable except the Volta, the Tano, and the Ankobra, and even these can only be used by steam launch or lighter in their lower reaches though there is also a certain amount of canoe traffic. The inhabitants, therefore, must depend almost entirely upon railroad and motor roads for transportation.

The coast line provides no natural harbors and, until the 1920's, surf boats and lighters carried all cargo out to the ocean-going vessels, which added to expense and often resulted in salt-water damage to the cocoa and other perishable goods. Since then, harbor facilities have been provided at Takoradi and, to a lesser extent, at Accra. In this need for more extensive communications lies the explanation of the considerable debt which burdened the Dependency for many years.

The natural resources of the Gold Coast can be considered under four heads: agriculture, forestry, livestock, and mining.[5] Among the agricultural exports cocoa holds first place. The Gold Coast produces almost one-half of the world's supply. Although no accurate survey has been made, it is estimated that one million acres, or 1,563 square miles, with 400 or more trees to an acre, are devoted to this crop. There is economic danger, however, for a one-crop country; and efforts are being made to stimulate the cultivation of

[5] *G.C. An. Report, 1946*, pp. 34–46. Each year the Annual Report contains a full account of the progress in the development of natural resources as well as a survey of the political and social situation in the colony.

other exports, especially since the cocoa industry has been seriously threatened by the development of "swollen shoot," a plant disease.

From the magnificent forests of the Gold Coast mahogany and other valuable timbers are cut for both local and foreign use. Rubber is also exported whenever the price in the world market is high enough to make the tapping of the trees profitable.

Cattle raising is successful only in the tsetse-free districts of the Northern Territories and in a small section on the eastern extremity of the coast. As this does not provide a sufficient meat supply, much importation is necessary. There would be great possibilities for the development of this industry if sufficient revenue were available for further cattle breeding and clearance of the tsetse-ridden areas.

Among the mineral resources gold, which has given its name to the Gold Coast Dependency, has been exported since the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. Though accurate statistics are not available it has been very conservatively estimated that between 1483 and 1903 over £21,000,000 worth of gold reached Europe.[6] Since that time the industry has grown considerably and in some years the value of the annual export has nearly reached the £5,000,000 mark. Its purity gained for it a premium of one shilling to the pound as early as the reign of Charles II and its use for English money was responsible for the name "guinea" being given to the old 21-shilling piece.

In 1915 large manganese deposits were first discovered. Because of the war, mining was immediately begun, and today the Gold Coast is recognized as possessing the world's third greatest supply of this mineral as well as the largest single manganese mine. By 1937 production had reached over 500,000 tons a year.

The diamond-mining industry, begun in the early 1920's, has now developed to such an extent that the Gold Coast takes second place after the Belgian Congo in its supply to the world market. The 1938–1939 exports amounted to 1,440,322 carats of industrial diamonds, valued at £595,989.

Large bauxite deposits were discovered in 1921 in the regions

[6] A. W. Cardinall, *The Gold Coast, 1931. A Review of the Conditions in the Gold Coast in 1931, as Compared with Those of 1921, Based on Figures and Facts Collected by the Chief Census Officer of 1931 Together with a Historical, Ethnographical and Sociological Survey of the People of that Country* (Accra, 1931), p. 76 (hereafter cited as Cardinall, *The Gold Coast, 1931*).

south and northeast of Obuasi—a town in southern Ashanti. Further deposits were later found in the western sections of the Northern Territories. The entire supply is now estimated to be over 290,000,000 tons. Prior to the war, lack of suitable transportation had prevented exploitation but with the outbreak of the conflict the government built a spur line to one of the bauxite deposits and started mining operations. More recently a British company has made surveys in the Volta area with a view to a possible aluminum manufacturing plant.

Smaller deposits of other minerals add to the potential wealth of the Gold Coast. Tin has been located near Winneba, and there are evidences of oil in the area between Axim and Half-Assini on the western littoral. Deposits of limestone and granite and of a high-grade clay suitable for pottery and tile manufacturing also exist.

The native people of this land so rich in natural resources belong, for the most part, to that pure type of Negro which is found in the forest areas of West Africa. Anthropologists believe the peoples of Africa to have been derived from three principal stocks—Bushman, Hamite, and Negro.[7] Due to the wandering of the tribes throughout the centuries, these groups are now somewhat mixed. The Negroes of the southern portion of West Africa, in the area stretching from the Senegal River to the eastern frontier of Nigeria, have been protected by their forests, however, from the invasions of other peoples and have retained, therefore, a purer form of their natural characteristics. Among these characteristics are a dark brown skin (popularly called black), woolly hair, broad nose and wide nostrils, thick lips often everted, and, in the male, a height averaging sixty-eight inches. In West Africa, the Negro usually lives in walled compounds often containing several family groups under the authority of a senior member. They are agricultural, not pastoral, and the hoe rather than the plow is their farming implement. They have achieved a high development of arts and crafts. Politically, every degree of centralization or lack of it is found among them, as will be seen in a later discussion.

In contrast to the pure Negro of the forest belt is the Negroid type of the Sudan. There the open character of the savanna vege-

[7] Lord Hailey, *African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara* (London, 1938), p. 18. C. G. Seligman, *The Races of Africa* (London, 1930), p. 19.

tation made possible the southward movement of the Hamites of the Sahara and of North Africa. As a result of the mingling of Negro and Hamitic peoples a less pure type has resulted. Members of this group are taller and have lighter skins, more aquiline noses, and narrower nostrils than the forest Negro. These characteristics become even more pronouncedly Hamitic in the northern parts toward the Sudan. When living in tsetse-free areas, these people sometimes turn to pastoralism although they often keep their agricultural habits as well. In some sections the influence of Islam has been very strong, while other groups have resisted any Mohammedan encroachment.

The population of West Africa, then, can be divided roughly into two great groups—the pure Negro of the forest area and the Negroid type of the Sudan. In the Gold Coast we find this same division—the Akan-, Ewe-, and Ga-speaking peoples of the south are Negroes, whereas the Moshi–Dagomba-speaking groups in the Northern Territories are Negroid. There are, of course, areas where the two types have intermingled and characteristics are less clear-cut.[8]

It is probable that, in most cases, the present peoples of the Gold Coast were not the original inhabitants. Tradition, which can in many cases be substantiated by what we know of the early history of West African kingdoms, holds that the Akans were the first group to migrate into the Gold Coast. Driven southward by the pressure of Hamitic tribes to the rear, they came from the north and northeast. During the period between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, three successive waves of Akans entered the forest area of Ashanti and the plains of the Volta with some tribal groups penetrating to parts of the coast itself. Originally they had been a nomadic, pastoral people but the character of the land they settled determined a shift to agricultural pursuits. These Akans fall into two great groups, the Twi-Fanti group which is found principally on the coast and in the forest area, and the Twi-Guang group which

[8] There are many small tribal divisions in the Gold Coast and over fifty languages or dialects. The treatment given in this section follows the work that has been done in recent years by various anthropologists and ethnologists. Their study is far from complete, however, and further research may reveal other classifications. Moreover this discussion considers only the outstanding linguistic groups, as it is considered sufficient for the purpose of a general historical survey. Further details can be found in the excellent articles which appear from time to time in *Africa, Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures*, as well as in separate monographs. See, for example, Robert Rattray, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland* (Oxford, 1932), 2 vols.; *Gold Coast Atlas*, 1945.

settled the plains of the Volta and the Black Volta. Many Akan tribes developed centralized yet democratic forms of government in which a paramount chief with his council ruled over large areas of land. Outstanding among these was the Ashanti confederacy, a highly organized group of states which dominated much of the present Gold Coast Dependency during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until its power was broken by the British. The Akans, moreover, often possess marked trading ability, and many of the Fanti on the coast served as middlemen between the European merchants and the tribes of hinterland, and were later to be largely responsible for the remarkable development of the cocoa industry of the twentieth century.

The second group to descend upon the Gold Coast were probably members of the Moshi[9] kingdom to the direct north. By conquest and peaceful penetration, they established themselves as rulers over the original inhabitants of northern and eastern sections of the present Northern Territories and Togoland. They set up several kingdoms, principally the Mamprussi with its capital at Gambaga, and the Dagomba with its capital at Yendi. Most of the principal chiefs were killed, but eventually their rightful heirs were allowed to resume positions of religious authority, while the foreign invaders kept political control. Thus a double set of rulers was established. The holder of the sacerdotal office known as the *tendana* was the priest of the earth god, and as such retained some control over the land and almost as much power as the political head. These people have successfully resisted all Mohammedan invasions and have preserved their original animistic belief, which they share, in its principal tenets, with the other tribes to the south. Though the 1931 census recorded 54,622 Mohammedans for the entire Gold Coast, the majority are so in name only.

South of the rain forest and to the east, the Ga- and Ewe-speaking peoples are found. These tribes appear to have migrated thither from the east during the seventeenth and later centuries. The Ewe people came from Oyo in Nigeria and by a series of stages moved westwards to their present home.

The British mandate of Togoland presents, in almost every case, the same ethnic classifications as does the Gold Coast proper, for the international boundary along the Volta and Daka rivers is merely

[9] The term Moshi is often spelled Mossi and even Mole or More.

an arbitrary one drawn with no reference to tribal groupings. Thus we find representatives of the Mamprussi, Dagomba, Gonja, Akan, and Ewe peoples on both sides of the frontier. The union of the two territories under a single administration has, in many instances, reunited tribes which had been split by the former Anglo-German divisions. There are other instances, however, where the problem is still unsolved, and portions of some Gold Coast tribes are to be found in the French territories of Dahomey, Togoland, the Upper Volta, and the Ivory Coast.

Besides the great linguistic groups of Akans, Gas, Ewes, and Moshi-Dagombas there are a number of smaller tribes whose languages are still unclassified. Representatives of these people are found along the eastern boundary of British Togoland, in the far north, and in several pockets on the western frontier.

Negroes of Hausa and Fulani stock, usually Mohammedan in name at least, are found scattered throughout the towns and along the trade routes of the Dependency, and are almost invariably engaged in commercial undertakings.

At the present time there is only some degree of correspondence between political and linguistic divisions. Thus all the Moshi-Dagomba peoples are found in the Northern Territories, or in the northern province of Togo, which areas are now united under one administration. On the other hand, the Twi-Fanti groups are divided between the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti, and the Twi-Guang between Ashanti and the Northern Territories. In both cases, however, the frontiers have respected the integrity of the lesser tribal divisions. These are so numerous that the Gold Coast Colony contains sixty-three different native states, Ashanti twenty-five, and the Northern Territories twenty-one. Thus it is evident that though several groups may speak the same or closely allied languages, they are often politically autonomous.

For administrative purposes each of the four sections of the Dependency is now subdivided into provinces. The Gold Coast Colony has three—the Western, Central, and Eastern Provinces;[10] Ashanti has two—the Western and Eastern; and the Northern Territories also has two—the Northern and Southern Provinces. Togoland is likewise divided but its Southern Province is joined as an administrative unit with the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast

[10] In 1946 the Gold Coast Colony was redivided into two, instead of three, administrative districts.

Colony, while its northern sections are linked with the two provinces of the Northern Territories. The boundaries of the various provinces have been so drawn as not to cut across the frontiers of any native state.

There is great similarity in the political institutions of these various native states. Each Akan tribe owes allegiance to a paramount chief elected or enstooled from a definite group of families by a council of elders which in turn represents the common people. He is aided in government by divisional chiefs, chiefs, and village headmen and, in theory at least, is not expected to interfere in the internal affairs of these subdivisions. Any Akan chief may be destooled by the people who elected him—a peaceful and democratic method but one which, in practice, leads to a certain instability in political affairs. While the institutions of the other peoples of the Gold Coast are less compact and less democratic than those of the Akans, many of them have paramount chiefs and have adopted the custom of destoolment.

CHAPTER II

THE GOLD COAST YESTERDAY

Sailors and traders of the ancient world had some slight contact with the Gold Coast, but it was the Portuguese who first made it known to Christian Europe.[1] Early in the fifteenth century these hardy seamen, with the inspiration and support of Prince Henry the Navigator, had courageously dared the unknown and ventured down the West African Coast. By 1434 the dreaded waters of Cape Bojador had been passed and exploration begun in earnest. When Henry died twenty-six years later, much of the Guinea littoral was known, and fortifications and trading posts already marked it as a Portuguese monopoly. In 1471 men in the pay of Fernao Gomes, a merchant with a government permit for the trade of the coast south of Sierra Leone, landed on the Gold Coast and obtained from the inhabitants a supply of that precious metal for which the country was later to be named. They called it "Mina," the mine, so great was the quantity of gold that could be purchased, and eventually the site of their first settlement became known as Elmina. During the next decade the export of gold dust and nuggets to the homeland continued. The fame of the place spread and with it came danger of rivals. In 1482, then, King John II of Portugal sent an expedition under Diego d'Azambuja who was accompanied by Bartholomew Diaz and Christopher Columbus, to build a fort at Elmina as a protection against both natives and possible foreign pirates. São Jorge da Mina, St. George of the Mine, was soon completed—the first of that long line of forts which were eventually to be built by

[1] For the early history of the Gold Coast the fullest account is by a former government official, W. Walton Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti from the Earliest Times to the Commencement of the Twentieth Century* (London, 1915), 2 vols. W. Ward, *A Short History of the Gold Coast* (London, 1945), is a textbook for African students and stresses tribal history. Charles P. Lucas, *A Historical Geography of the British Colonies* (Oxford, 1900), Vol. III, *West Africa*, gives a shorter but authoritative account of early history of the Gold Coast. A brief account can also be found in Ifor Evans, *The British in Tropical Africa* (Cambridge, 1929). For the story of the European activity in the earliest days the best history is John W. Blake, *European Beginnings in West Africa, 1455–1578* (London, 1937).

European traders, and many of whose picturesque ruins remain to this day. In the beginning there was little need for the grim protection of São Jorge's great stone walls, but by the early sixteenth century the French and then the English were venturing down the Guinea Coast. In 1530 William Hawkins did the first British trading on the West Coast, and twenty years later another expedition returned to the homeland with gold from the Gold Coast and pepper from Benin. News of commercial profit spread rapidly in Elizabethan England and before the reign was over, Hawkins' son, Sir John, had carried off the first English shipload of slaves to the West Indies, and two chartered companies had obtained monopolies for the trade of various parts of the Guinea Coast.

Dutch, Swedes, Danes, and even Prussians followed the French and English example, so that eventually forts of half a dozen nations marked their trading posts to east and west of São Jorge. The Dutch, most aggressive of all, succeeded in driving out the Portuguese in 1642 and setting up their own headquarters at Elmina. Though rivalry led to many quarrels among the various European groups—as when the Dutch burnt the English forts in 1664 and 1665—the competition was of a commercial nature and there was never any question of opposing territorial or political rights. The unhealthy climate that was later to give the Guinea Coast the name "white man's grave" had already taken a heavy toll of lives. Traders, as a consequence, came seeking spices, gold, and "black ivory," but without a view to colonization. This same treacherous climate accounts, to a great extent, for the fact that the men who entered the service of the trading companies were not usually of a type to give good example to the Africans. In the absence of adequate medical knowledge the tropical fevers worked havoc with their constitutions. Heavy drinking and lax morality aggravated the situation. It is not surprising that most men who went to the Gold Coast did so with the conviction that they were never to return.

Across the Atlantic, however, permanent colonies were now being established, and the demand for slave labor grew year by year. The Hawkins' slaving venture of the sixteenth century had only been a start. It was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that the English began the systematic business of transporting annually thousands of Guinea Negroes to the New World. For a time, chartered companies under royal patronage held the African monopoly and built forts at such places as commercial convenience

or the exigencies of international rivalry made necessary. After the Glorious Revolution, however, monopolies became increasingly unpopular, so that the Royal African Company lost its privileges, and the government opened the slave trade to all British citizens alike. During the eighteenth century this trade in "human raw material" increased yet more. While the merchants of many nations took part, the English had the lead and in some years transported as many as 50,000 slaves.

Though the Royal African Company lost its monopoly, it was still expected, with some government aid, to keep up the English forts as a protection for British citizens. It found difficulty in meeting expenses and was therefore replaced in 1750 by the African Company of Merchants.[2] This new venture was open to any merchant who paid a 40-shilling fee, and resembled the regulated companies of early modern times in that each member traded as an individual, rather than as a part of a corporation. A government subsidy supplied the upkeep of the forts, and the organization remained in control until the early years of the nineteenth century.

By the eve of the French Revolution, only the British, Dutch, and Danes held posts on the Gold Coast proper. The other nations had either confined themselves to other parts of the Guinea littoral or had left the area altogether. Slave trading continued but was beginning to arouse criticism in Europe. On the continent, philosophers of the eighteenth century preached a doctrine of human equality. In England opposition arose from another quarter. The Quakers, and later the Methodists and Evangelicals, objected to the nefarious traffic for humanitarian and religious reasons. In the 1780's some of these antislavery agitators succeeded in getting the British government to consent to a settlement at Sierra Leone for freed slaves. The movement grew. Though delayed by the wars following the French Revolution, parliament in 1807, finally abolished the slave trade in all British possessions.

This change in the attitude toward slavery was not without its effects on the fortunes of the Gold Coast. The local tribes had co-operated with the Europeans by acting as middlemen in the transfer of slaves from the hinterland. Principal among them were the Fanti. There was a bitter enmity between this tribe and the powerful Ashanti federation to the north. As the British used the Fanti as

[2] E. C. Martin, *British West African Settlements 1750–1821* (London, 1927), gives a detailed description of the Gold Coast during these years.

collaborators, they had adopted the policy of protecting them against their more warlike northern neighbors. This dependence on a foreign power had weakened the loose alliance which bound the Fanti tribes together, and had lessened their military skill and initiative. They had, moreover, by this time acquired much experience as traders and, relying on English support, were determined to monopolize the southern traffic and force the Ashantis to work through them in all their dealings with the British. In contrast to these coastal peoples, split up into dozens of small native states, the Ashantis were members of a highly organized military confederacy. During the eighteenth century they succeeded in conquering some of the surrounding states, from which they henceforth collected a regular tribute. Their wealth came from this tribute, from the plunder of war, and from the substantial profits of the slave trade. For this latter activity they preferred to deal with the Dutch at Elmina, and thus avoid the Fanti middlemen. This, however, limited their scope of trade, and they bitterly resented the fact. It is this situation which explains the friendship of the Ashantis for the Dutch and their later anger when they heard there was question of the Dutch selling their posts to the British.

The abolition of the slave trade, accordingly, was not favorably received by the African middlemen of the Gold Coast. In order to earn a livelihood some of these men were now forced to turn to agriculture or other occupations. In the following years the value of legitimate exports somewhat increased but not sufficiently to make up entirely for the lost profits of the slave trade, so that the quantity of European imports soon showed a resultant drop. They declined, for example, from over £1,500,000 in 1806 to less than £600,000 in 1810.[3] The temptation to evade the British naval patrol soon suggested itself. American and even English slavers, built for speed, and flying the Spanish flag, could sometimes slip past the slower British cruisers. It was not until after the Civil War that the cooperation of the United States government and the use of speedy steam pinnaces finally enabled the British navy to end, once and for all, the white man's activity in the African slave trade.

While both the Fanti and the Ashantis kept up, as far as possible, illicit slave-trading activities, they found themselves forced to rely more heavily on legitimate commerce. Under these circum-

[3] Claridge, *History of the Gold Coast*, I, 283.

stances the Ashantis were more desirous than ever, not only to preserve their trade contacts with the Dutch, but to break the Fanti monopoly at the British posts. Conflicts were bound to result, and in the seven wars which followed—marking the course of the greater part of the nineteenth century—the Ashantis could easily have defeated the Fanti, had not the British lent their aid to the latter. It is unfortunate that from the very beginning of the contest the African Company of Merchants adopted this policy which was later to be followed by the British government when it took over the territory from company control. In the early years of the century it would have been easy to establish friendly relations with the Ashantis, because they were willing to co-operate in return for free trade privileges. But the English merchants believed their commerce was safer with the Fanti, and supported their cause. When a dispute arose, they usually assisted in the ensuing war and later on even took the initiative. Once peace was established, the English would then revert to the convenient and inexpensive policy of noninterference in native affairs. This vacillation continued throughout the greater part of the century, and it was only in its last quarter that the British government finally decided to take a definite stand and to annex the territory to the Crown. It will now be necessary to trace briefly the story of this development.

In 1821 the government in London, dissatisfied with the policy of the African Company toward the natives during the three Ashanti-Fanti wars of 1803, 1808, and 1813, and with its insufficient attempts to prevent the slave trade, withdrew its charter and united the Gold Coast settlements to the colony of Sierra Leone. For the first time these forts came under direct British governmental control. The governor of Sierra Leone, Sir Charles McCarthy, presently visited his new territory and rashly decided, though supported by insufficient forces, to plunge into a fourth war with the Ashanti. The English were disastrously defeated, and McCarthy himself lost his life. Though they eventually reversed the situation and conquered the enemy, they had fallen so low in the esteem of the Africans that relations were little improved. The expense and disasters of the campaign led to another change in policy, whereby in 1828 parliament decided to abandon the Gold Coast. But the merchants, who found it of some commercial value, now asked for a return to company government. A "Committee of London Merchants" was therefore authorized to form a new organization which would control

the trade and, with the aid of a government subsidy, keep up the forts. Under the remarkable guidance of Captain George MacLean, a British army officer who was employed as the company's representative from 1828 to 1843, the Gold Coast for the first time knew real peace and prosperity. He so gained the confidence of the Africans that he was able to extend British influence over the entire coastal area and up to the Pra River, the southern boundary of Ashanti. To MacLean belongs the credit of laying the foundation of the present colony, which he accomplished with the paltry subsidy of £4,000 a year. He stationed a soldier in each of the principal coastal towns and established a court for native disputes over which he himself presided. Some of the chiefs aided him in hearing cases which were judged according to native customary law, except where it proved inhuman.

In spite of MacLean's success some domestic slavery still existed among the inhabitants, which led to public criticism in England and in 1840 to a parliamentary investigation. While the select committee appointed for the purpose reported very favorably to the House of Commons on MacLean's work, it recommended that control of the Gold Coast forts should be resumed by the Crown and that the informal method of jurisdiction which had grown up should be more accurately defined.[4] As a consequence, in 1843 the imperial government once again assumed authority. The following year, in an effort to somewhat clarify the relations between the English and the Fanti chiefs, a treaty known as "the Bond" was drawn up.[5] It contained a rather vague acknowledgment on the part of the chiefs of the "power and jurisdiction" of the British government and laid down that:

> murders and robberies and other crimes and offences will be tried and enquired of before the Queen's judicial officers and the chiefs of the district, moulding the customs of the country to the general principles of British law.

No protectorate, however, was proclaimed nor was there any mention of a territorial session. This treaty is of importance in Gold Coast history as it was to have some influence on the subsequent relations of the British and the Africans. Since the chiefs were not conquered,

[4] *Parliamentary Papers, Commons, 1842,* XI, "Report of the House of Commons Select Committee on the West Coast of Africa."

[5] *Parliamentary Papers, Commons, 1865,* V, 419; Claridge, *History of the Gold Coast,* I, 452.

but had voluntarily submitted to British power, they continued during later years to speak of their inherent rights and to maintain an attitude of independence toward unpopular British legislation.

With MacLean's death in 1847, the administration fell into less efficient hands. Though attempts were made at this time to set up a legislative council representative of the chiefs and to collect a poll tax, these measures were not permanent. In 1865, following another tribal dispute and a British refusal to meet their treaty obligations, the fifth Ashanti war broke out. The Merchants' Company failed utterly to repel the consequent invasion of the coastal areas, and its newly gained prestige and prosperity were lost. At home, "Little Englandism" was exerting an influence, and there was much clamor for complete and final withdrawal from so troublesome an area. Parliament, therefore, sent out a special commissioner to investigate the matter and determine whether the Gold Coast should be abandoned. A select committee was appointed to study his findings. It drew up a long report covering every angle of the situation on the West Coast and recommended that, while it was not possible for the British government to withdraw wholly or immediately, nevertheless "all further extension of territory or assumption of government" would be "inexpedient," and that the object of British policy "should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all, except, probably, Sierra Leone."[6]

The immediate result of this report was that the British government once again assumed control of the Gold Coast, but the recommendation for eventual withdrawal was never carried out. The reasons for this are varied, because at different times during the nineteenth century political, commercial, humanitarian, and religious groups all exercised influence on British colonial policy.

Not many years after the select committee of 1865 drew up its report, the era of Little Englandism was to draw to a close, and the slogan of "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform" was to give way before a renewed imperialism. Increased nationalism, industrial competition, the need for new markets, for raw materials, and for opportunities of profitable investment were all forces which led many

[6] *Parliamentary Papers, Commons, 1865,* V, iii, "Report of the Committee Appointed to Inquire Into the Condition of the British Settlements on the West Coast of Africa."

of the nations of Europe to a new interest in colonial expansion in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Political and economic forces, however, were not the only ones at work. The influence exercised by the humanitarian and religious bodies was also a powerful one. Even in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, such societies as the Wesleyans, the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society, and various missionary bodies had begun to work for the betterment of backward peoples.[7] They had succeeded in obtaining the abolition of the slave trade and of slavery, in founding Sierra Leone as a colony for both freed Negroes and white emigrants, and in beginning the work of spreading Christianity and education among the natives of the different parts of the British Empire. In the Gold Coast itself, the earliest missionaries were Portuguese priests. They were followed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by an occasional representative of the churches of the various European nations which had settlements on the coast, but no attempt at organized missionary and educational work throughout the territory was made until the nineteenth century. In 1827, Swiss missionaries of the Basel Society came to the eastern section of the Gold Coast and eventually built up flourishing establishments. They were followed in 1835 by the Wesleyans, in 1847 by the North German Missionary Society, and in 1880 by the Catholics. No further groups came until the twentieth century.

The members of these various bodies, as well as those who supported them at home, were usually animated by the highest ideals. They desired to spread the blessings of Christianity among the pagan tribes; also, to repair the harm done through the slave trade by helping to develop legitimate commerce. Some have cynically described this alliance of humanitarian and commercial interests in the terms of Cecil Rhodes' well-known phrase, "philanthropy plus 5 percent."[8] It is quite true that many of the early traders to the Gold Coast were not exemplary characters and that some of them gave the Africans models of the worst rather than of the best of the European manner of living. It is also true that some of the missionaries had commercial as well as religious interests. This does not change the fact, however, that hundreds of men volunteered for work in a land best known

[7] Klaus Knorr, *British Colonial Theories 1570–1850* (Toronto, 1944), contains a full account of the various pressure groups which influenced British colonial policy.

[8] Quoted by Leonard Barnes, *The Duty of Empire* (London, 1935), p. 140.

in England as the "white man's grave," and left behind them a record of what was often heroic devotion and zeal in their work of evangelization.[9]

The fact that the British decided to remain in the Gold Coast and eventually annexed it as a colony, after so many years of vacillating policy, can be explained, then, by the pressure of various groups in England. Commercial and political influences were probably the strongest, but to these must be added the idealism of those who wished to give the Africans the best of Christian civilization.

The years that immediately followed the report of the select committee of 1865 were filled with events which brought great changes on the Gold Coast. In 1850 the Danes had sold their forts to the British and in 1872 the Dutch, discouraged at the lessened commercial profits which resulted from the almost continual warfare between the Fanti and the Ashantis, decided to do likewise. This left the English as the sole representatives of the various groups of Europeans who had, from time to time, held trading posts on this section of the Guinea Coast. The transfer of Elmina and the other Dutch forts to the English angered the Ashantis, however, and in 1873 led to the outbreak of a sixth war. This time the British determined to settle the quarrel once and for all. They brought troops from England and, cutting a road through the forest, advanced to Kumasi, the capital of the Ashanti confederacy, defeated the enemy, and left their town in smoking ruins. The Treaty of Fomana which ended this war imposed severe terms on the Ashantis. The Asantehene—their king—was forced to dissolve the confederacy and grant independence to all the tribes which had been united under his authority. He remained as paramount chief of his own tribe of Kumasi alone. He was further required to do all in his power to abolish human sacrifice, and to pay a large indemnity to the English.

In the same year (1874) the British government decided to assume full control over the coastal areas by annexing them as the Gold Coast Colony.[10] A legislative and executive council were set up to aid the governor, and provision was made for the beginnings of roads, sanitation, and other elementary needs.

[9] The Methodists and the Basel Society, for example, had to make repeated starts to establish themselves, because the men first sent out died within a few months of their arrival. The African Society of Lyons, a Catholic body, lost 280 men in less than sixty years in their West African missions alone.

[10] *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1874, LXVI, 957.

If order and prosperity once more returned to the Gold Coast, it was not so in Ashanti. The British had broken up the existing government, and had made no provision to replace it. The now independent tribes began quarreling among themselves, and almost constant civil war resulted. The former Asantehene, King Prempeh, begged the British to send a resident to Kumasi and to assist him in restoring order. For a time the English refused, going back to their old policy of noninterference. This further embittered the Ashantis, and conditions grew worse from year to year. In the 1890's, however, a new development led the English to change their attitude. The French in the Ivory Coast and the Germans in Togoland were beginning to seek treaties of friendship with the various tribes on the western, eastern, and northern boundaries of Ashanti. If the English did not definitely establish themselves in the hinterland, there was danger that the Colony might be shut in on all sides. Urged on by this international rivalry the English, in 1896, demanded that Prempeh accept British protection and fulfill the unkept terms of the Treaty of Fomana. When he refused, troops entered Kumasi and the governor demanded his submission and the immediate payment of the long overdue indemnity of 50,000 ounces of gold. King Prempeh, a mere youth, was now thoroughly disheartened by the poverty and disorder of his kingdom and the superior strength of the English. Therefore he, with the Queen Mother and other notables, in a dramatic scene before his chiefs and people and the British soldiers, made his complete submission to the governor by removing his crown and embracing the governor's feet. He then claimed the protection of Queen Victoria. When he insisted that he was unable to pay so great a sum as 50,000 ounces of gold, however, the governor refused to believe him and arrested him then and there. The Ashantis—stunned by what appeared to them an act of treachery—made no move to retaliate, and the King, his mother, and several members of his family were eventually deported to the island of Seychelles off the east coast of Africa, where they remained until 1924.

For a time there was apparent peace between the Ashantis and the English. A small garrison was stationed in Kumasi and the inhabitants seemed resigned to accept the situation. They still had possession of the golden stool, however, for the British had never been able to locate its hiding place. To the Ashantis this stool was a symbol of their nationhood, it contained the "sunsum" or soul of the people and, according to an ancient tradition, as long as they kept its possession

their spirit could never be broken.[11] The governor, Sir Frederic Hodgson, who had some vague notion of the importance which the Ashantis attached to this symbol, believed that the English could never completely establish their authority until they had secured it. In 1901, consequently, he decided to visit Kumasi and demand the stool. Accompanied by only a small detachment of troops, he made his way through the forest from Accra to Kumasi where he called together an assembly of the principal chiefs. In a speech that was highly offensive to the recently humbled African leaders, he ordered the Ashantis to agree to a considerable annual levy and to give up the golden stool. Incensed at his tactless demand and eager to regain their independence, they besieged Hodgson in the fort and mobilized their forces for war. It was only after bitter fighting that the rebellion was eventually quelled and peace restored. This time the English realized the inadequacy of compromise and in September 1901, a Royal Order in Council annexed Ashanti outright and determined its boundaries. At the same time, the so-called Northern Territories, the very primitive section which lies between Ashanti and the Sudan, was formally declared a protectorate.

Treaties with France in 1889, 1893, and 1898 had already defined the frontier between the Ivory Coast and the Gold Coast and had set the eleventh parallel, with a few deviations, as the extreme north boundary. In the Heligoland Treaty of 1890 and again in 1899, a dividing line between the English and the Germans in Togoland was agreed upon. The opening of the twentieth century, consequently, found the Gold Coast divided into three main divisions—one colony and two protectorates—with German neighbors to the east and the French on the north and west.

In the meantime, while Ashanti wars were being fought and international boundaries delimited, the Gold Coast Colony itself had been making some progress. This was more marked in the economic field than in the political. An ordinance providing for native government was enacted in 1883.[12] Its main purpose was to safeguard the traditional position of the chiefs; but it had not been conspicuously successful and their authority was steadily diminishing, especially in regard to the educated classes in the coastal towns. The strengthening and modernizing of tribal government and its co-ordination with the functions of the central government remained as one of the major

[11] Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 292; *Ashanti Annual Report, 1921*, pp. 21–29.
[12] *British and Foreign State Papers, 1882–1883*, LXXIV, 605–16.

problems of the British authorities in the Gold Coast. It was not until the 1920's that any successful solution was found.

In economic matters more promising conditions obtained. A remarkable increase in prosperity came during the first and second decades of the twentieth century due, in large part, to the sudden development of the cocoa industry. Cacao seedlings were first brought to the Gold Coast in 1857 by the Basel missionaries; but it was a native laborer, returning from work in a plantation in Fernando Po, who really introduced the industry. In 1879 he smuggled in some cocoa pods. The seeds grew successfully and in a few years the first small consignment of cocoa, 121 pounds of beans valued at £6 1*s*., was exported to Europe. The Africans seemed to have realized the possibilities of such a crop, and cocoa farms spread rather rapidly. With absolutely no European capital and very little government help, the farmers near the coast, and later those in the interior, went ahead with their planting of cocoa trees. The following figures[13] tell the story of the rapid development of the Gold Coast's chief item of export. The tabulation gives the quinquennial average of the cocoa export.

Years	Five-Year Average by Tons
1891–1895	5
1896–1900	230
1901–1905	3,172
1906–1910	14,784
1911–1915	51,819
1916–1920	106,072
1921–1925	186,329
1926–1930	218,895

After cocoa, it was usually gold which held the second place in the list of the Gold Coast exports. The traders obtained much of this precious metal from the natives in the early days of the European settlements. Until the 1880's there was not any attempt at regular mining and, even then, lack of suitable means of transportation hampered development. In 1901 a short railroad, the first in the Gold Coast, was completed from Sekondi on the coast to Tarkwa, the center of an auriferous area. This brought about something of a boom and hundreds of concessions were granted by the chiefs. Though many of the ventures proved unwise, some valuable proper-

[13] *Gold Coast Handbook, 1937* (London, 1937), p. 38.

ties were leased and large-scale operations begun. By 1912 gold accounted for more than £1,500,000 in the list of annual exports.

As a result of the Ashanti revolt of 1900 further railroad development was believed to be imperative, so that three years later the Sekondi-Tarkwa line had been continued on to Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti. This made rapid communication with the interior possible in the event of further local outbreaks. Once the cocoa farms had spread to Ashanti, the railroad was of great value, too, for shipping purposes. A second line was begun in 1911 to connect Accra, the capital of the Gold Coast Colony, with Kumasi, but completion was delayed until after the war. Gradually better roads were also built and some motor transportation was introduced.[14] By 1919 the Dependency had some 1,200 miles of motor roads but the old system of native head carriers was still used in less developed areas.

There were other commercial products to be transported to the coast or to local markets, for the government early realized the danger of a one-crop economy. It made some limited attempts to stimulate the output of timber, rubber, coconuts, palm oil, palm kernels, cotton, and other tropical products. It also encouraged cattle raising in the Northern Territories, fishing on the coast and in the rivers, and truck farming to add to the food supply of the Dependency. Here was a field in which there were immense opportunities for improvement, provided that technical aid, capital, and increased transportation facilities could be made available. Later government efforts in this matter will be discussed in a further chapter.

A vast field for social work, too, lay at hand. In the laissez faire atmosphere of the nineteenth century, such little education as existed was largely in the hands of the missionaries, but early in the twentieth century the government undertook a policy of increased aid to mission schools and even of opening establishments of its own. In 1919 there were 19 government schools and 204 mission schools which were assisted by government funds, and probably about 250 unassisted schools.[15] Some progress in technical, agricultural, and teacher training had also been made. The Accra Technical School

[14] Sir Hugh Clifford, governor of the Gold Coast during these prewar years, states that it was the Ford truck which was most responsible for the opening up of the forest areas to motor transportation. Lighter than the English lorries, it could be used on native-built roads, and its standard parts made repairs possible even in the primitive conditions of the hinterland. See "The Gold Coast," *Blackwoods*, CCIII (1918), 57.

[15] *Report on the Education Department, 1919*, pp. 6, 18.

and the Accra Government Training College were both opened in 1909.

The first two decades of the twentieth century, then, were marked by a very rapid economic progress which had far outstripped that in the political field. There was also a territorial addition, for Togoland, the German colony to the east, was conquered by the French and British in the first month of World War I and was temporarily divided between them until the peace conference should determine its final status.

To the north the natives of Ashanti, under the able and sympathetic administration of the chief commissioner, Sir Francis Fuller, had begun to appreciate British rule and had found in cocoa farming a legitimate and profitable outlet for energies that had formerly been only too often expended on slave trading or warfare.

In the Northern Territories, too, some progress was made after 1901 when that section had been declared a British protectorate. Slave raiding and tribal wars were prevented, roads built, trade encouraged, and a few beginnings of missionary and educational work undertaken.

During the first world war the population of all three sections, the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories, loyally supported the British cause and made generous offering toward the war expenses. It was evident that the Ashantis had, to a great extent, laid aside their resentment against the British and that peace was firmly established throughout the Dependency. But much-needed improvements in the political, social, and economic fields were brought to a standstill by the war and, in 1919, the people of the Gold Coast looked forward eagerly to the return of peace and to a new era of development for their country.

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNORSHIP OF SIR GORDON GUGGISBERG, 1919–1927

At the end of World War I a new governor, Sir Gordon Guggisberg, was appointed for the Gold Coast. He arrived in Accra in October 1919, full of interest and enthusiasm for the work he was about to undertake. Early in the century he had spent some time in the Dependency and in Nigeria as head of the Survey Department; and for a few months in 1914 he was director of the Gold Coast public works, until he was recalled to the army for active duty in Europe, commanding the Royal Engineers. He was not, therefore, unacquainted with the problems of the Colony he was to govern so successfully for the next eight years. The situation he found on his arrival was an unusual one in several ways, for the war had not only cut down the official staff to the absolute minimum and prevented much development that was pressingly needed, but had also stirred up unrest among some of the educated population.

Guggisberg was well aware of these difficulties but even more so of the fundamental soundness of the relations between the government and the Africans, and of the great promise which the Gold Coast held out for rapid economic and social progress. During his years of surveying in West Africa, his work had given him much opportunity for close daily contact with the Negro, and he was convinced that it was only lack of opportunity which had prevented him from reaching an intellectual development comparable to that of the European.[1] A spirit of idealism seems to have guided him in his attitude toward the African. At the end of the war he had made a vow to dedicate the rest of his life to the welfare of his fellow men, and therefore welcomed the offer made by Lord Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, of the governorship of the Gold Coast. A man of energy, foresight, and administrative ability, he carefully outlined in a "Ten Year Development Plan" what he hoped to ac-

[1] Baron Sydney Olivier, "Sir Frederick Gordon Guggisberg," *Dictionary of National Biography, 1922–1930* (London, 1937). "Governor's Address," October 9, 1919, *Gold Coast Gazette*, October 13, 1919, p. 1103.

complish during the 1919–1929 decade. In each address to the legislative council, and on other appropriate occasions he explained his policy to the Africans, reviewed what had already been accomplished, and outlined what was still to be done in the future.

His main object was "the general progress of the people of the Gold Coast towards a higher state of civilization and the keystone of the progress is education."[2] Since schools and other necessary social services were very costly and brought in no financial returns, it would be necessary to greatly increase the revenue of the Dependency. This, he believed, could be best accomplished by an improved and extended transportation system which would open up new areas to the world market, and reduce freight rates on both exported and imported goods. The plan called for an expenditure of £24,000,000 to be obtained from the existing surplus of £1,250,000, from loans, and from the augmented revenue which he expected would soon result from such progress.[3] Though the 1920–1923 depression and other unexpected developments made it necessary to reduce the total expenditure to £16,645,848, the bulk of the scheme was carried out as planned, and when Guggisberg left the governorship in 1927, the greater part of the work was already completed.

The fact that boom conditions characterized the cocoa market in 1919 and in the early months of 1920 helped the new governor to gain the support of his officials and of public opinion for what appeared to many as a daring undertaking. The price of cocoa soared to £80 a ton and even, in some cases, to £120.[4] The Gold Coast farmers and middlemen enjoyed conditions of a pleasant if unstable prosperity, but they were not to last. By the middle of the year 1920 a depression had forced down world prices, with a resultant sharp decline—not only in the incomes of the Africans but also in the general revenue of the Colony which was so largely dependent on export and import taxes. The government officials had always realized the danger of a one-crop economy,[5] but the farmers,

[2] "Governor's Address to the Legislative Council," March 1, 1923, *Gold Coast Gazette*, March 17, 1923, p. 349.

[3] Frederick Gordon Guggisberg, *The Gold Coast: A Review of the Events of 1920–1926 and the Prospects of 1927–1928* (Accra, 1927), p. 72 (hereafter cited as *Events, 1920–1926*). This volume contains Guggisberg's final address and report to the legislative council and gives a very complete summary of the progress of these years.

[4] The normal price of cocoa in the 1920's was about £50 a ton, but it dropped to £20–30 a ton in the early years of the 1930 decade.

[5] Cocoa exports accounted for from 70 to 80 percent of total exports during the

ignorant of economic laws and often blissfully improvident, had a painful object lesson—one which, unfortunately, was soon forgotten by the greater number of them.

The depression conditions lasted from the summer of 1920 until the early months of 1923. The government reduced the official staff and some of the estimated expenditures of the Ten Year Plan, but refused to cancel the export tax on cocoa or to make any changes in projected railroad and harbor developments. The tax on cocoa, first levied in 1916 as a war measure to replace the revenue ordinarily obtained from import duties, aroused much criticism among the Africans who believed that they bore the burden of the tariff, which amounted to 12 to 28 percent of the value of the cocoa. The governor, on the other hand, was convinced that it did not harm the farmer and that the resultant revenue was essential. He went even further and levied new export duties on kola and on timber.

The whole question of taxation has always been a difficult one on the Gold Coast, for the Africans hold that it is one of their rights to be free of direct levies. During these years, in spite of the criticism against customs duties, the total of all rates amounted to only 16 shillings per head in comparison to £23 in the United Kingdom. Because of the uneven distribution of wealth a graduated income tax would have been the most just form, but Guggisberg was of the opinion that the cost of collection, under existing conditions, would be out of proportion to the amount of revenue obtained. Even if such a type of levy had been practical, it is doubtful if it could have been enforced in face of the deep-rooted opposition of the Africans.

But customs duties could not provide sufficient revenue for the ambitious aims of the Ten Year Plan, and loans were therefore made in London—one for £4,000,000 at 6 percent in 1920, and another for £4,628,000 at 4½ percent in 1925. The capital thus obtained was used for waterworks and for railroad and harbor development. In order to provide a sound financial position for the Dependency, in the face of an increasing debt, Guggisberg set down definite principles by which all future estimate committees could be guided. The most important of the rules he summarized as follows: ". . . . that the annual revenue should cover both Recurrent and Extraordinary

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period 1919–1932, but they have since dropped to from 50 to 60 percent and mineral products have increased. S. Herbert Frankel, *Capital Investment in Africa* (London, 1938), Table 78.

Expenditure and a contribution to the Railroad Renewals Fund, after which there should be a small annual surplus for contingencies."[6] In a lean year the government would first reduce extraordinary expenditure and then recurrent ones. In a flush year it would consider lowering taxes and railroad rates. He provided, moreover, for the nucleus of a General Reserve Fund of £500,000 "which should be built up annually by its own interest until it reached an amount proportional to our capital value as a country." This fund was not to be used without the permission of the colonial secretary and then only in the wholly exceptional case of a complete failure of trade and after every possible economy had been made. He set the final amount at £2,000,000 and thereafter all interest would go into the general revenue. His plan has since been followed, and during the great Depression of the 1930's the Gold Coast was able, by stringent economies, to weather the storm without touching the Reserve Fund.[7] Provision was also made by Guggisberg for definite annual contributions to sums for the renewals of railroad and harbor facilities. Though the Colony debt was over £11,000,000 in 1927, nevertheless, the financial position of the Dependency was sound.[8]

The greater part of the Ten Year Plan was, as has been seen, concerned with transportation. In 1919 the Gold Coast possessed a completed railroad from Sekondi, on the western littoral, to Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti; a branch of this line from Tarkwa to Prestea in the heart of the gold-mining district; and an uncompleted section of track which was eventually to link Accra, the capital of the Colony, with Kumasi. By 1923 this latter part was finished. Between 1923 and 1927 the Central Province Railway, from Huni Valley to Kade, was built in order to open up cocoa and mahogany areas and to increase shipments to the new harbor at Takoradi. In addition surveys were made for possible extensions into the Northern Territories, for Guggisberg believed that this section of the Dependency would never be fully developed until it had railroad connections with the coast. Later governors disagreed with this opinion, however, as it was found that motor roads and good truck service were sufficient and less costly, and that a railroad would probably never pay for itself.

[6] "Governor's Address," *Gold Coast Gazette*, March 17, 1923, pp. 60–71.

[7] In 1946 the General Reserve Fund was £1,500,000.

[8] The ratio of debt charges to domestic exports has never exceeded 10 percent. Frankel, *Capital Investment in Africa*, Table 37.

In all, 233 miles of new railroad were built between 1919 and 1927 and 250 miles of prospective lines surveyed, at a total cost of £5,948,000.[9]

These new means of transportation made possible the further spread of cocoa farms, and freed hundreds of head carriers to augment the insufficient labor supply in both agricultural and mining fields. Nevertheless, there has been much recent criticism of what are now held to be overbuilt or unwisely financed railroad systems.[10] Good motor roads would have provided sufficient transportation in most cases. The work was paid for, moreover, by private loans at high fixed interest rates when equity capital or, better still, government subsidies or low interest rate loans would have done away with the heavy drain that the public debt service made upon the Colony's resources. Though it is unfortunate that Guggisberg was not successful in borrowing at a lower rate, there is perhaps some excuse for the charge of overbuilding. Motor transport was not as developed in the early 1920's as it is now, and lorry rates per ton mile were 2*s.* 9*d.* in contrast to the 4 to 7½*d.* of the freight charge by rail. The governor can scarcely be blamed for not foreseeing that truck charges were to fall as low as 3*d.* per mile within the next ten years.

In spite of Guggisberg's lack of appreciation of the full possibilities of automobile development, he saw the necessity of good roads as feeders for the railroads and for short hauls. At the close of World War I there were some 1,200 miles of roads in the Dependency—many of them built by the chiefs in their desire to transport cocoa to the market—and suitable for only light Ford trucks. In the 1919–1927 period, 3,388 miles of new roads were built and 1,310 reconditioned, thus bringing the total to 4,688 motor miles. Some of them are tarred macadam, the best in British tropical Africa. Transportation methods have changed in the Gold Coast from the days when cocoa was borne along narrow jungle paths by head porters, and palm oil was rolled in eighty-four gallon casks from the forest to the coast, where surf boats carried all cargoes out to ocean-going freighters.

[9] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1930, "Governor's Address," pp. 139–40. No further railroad building was done until the second World War when the urgent need of aluminum led to the construction of a 50-mile spur from Dunkwa to Awaso, in the heart of the bauxite area. *Labor Department Report 1943–1944*, p. 3.

[10] Frankel, *Capital Investment in Africa*, pp. 405–6 and 418–20. Hailey, *African Survey*, pp. 1603–10. Rita Hinden, *Plan for Africa: A Report Prepared for the Colonial Bureau of the Fabian Society* (New York, 1942), pp. 149–55.

It was the inefficiency of these loading methods and the crowded conditions on the beaches of the various ports—where thousands of tons of perishable cocoa were sometimes piled during the height of the season—that led the governor to make plans for better shipping facilities. The Gold Coast has no natural harbor, but Takoradi on the western littoral was chosen by consulting engineers as the most suitable location at which to develop one. Preparations were begun in 1921 and, in spite of the business slump and much adverse criticism, the work was continued. It was not opened for commerce until 1928 and further extensions were added later, bringing the total cost up to £3,230,912.[11] The harbor is formed by two great breakwaters enclosing an area of 220 acres and containing wharves for cocoa, timber, and manganese export, sufficient storage and loading space, and a petroleum berth equipped with pipe lines from ships to tanks two and a half miles inland. During most of the 1930's the harbor operated at a loss because of the burden of its heavy debt charges and the competition of the cheaper surf-boat ports at Accra and other coastal towns. While this method of financing the undertaking has been subjected to the same type of criticism as that leveled at the railroads, the harbor has since proved itself invaluable in the economic development of the Dependency.

The Ten Year Plan called for extended communication facilities, and both telephone and telegraph services were substantially increased. The estimates for further water supply and hydroelectric developments, on the other hand, had to be greatly reduced as it was later seen that certain medical and educational requirements were even more essential.

As Guggisberg had foreseen, new means of transportation brought with them an augmented commerce. The average annual value of the total trade (exports and imports) for the seven-year period 1920–1926 was over twice as much as that of 1913–1919. The Colony's revenue also showed well over a 100 percent increase.[12] Guggisberg felt that he had been justified in undertaking the Ten Year Development Plan.

The foundation of all this prosperity was, in large part, the export of cocoa; and it was necessary, therefore, to make every effort to safeguard the industry. The protection of the forests, an absolute

[11] *G.C. An. Report, 1928–29*, p. 21.

[12] *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 174. Average annual revenue, 1913–1919, £1,635,650; 1920–1926, £3,829,705.

essential to its well-being, was becoming year by year a more serious problem. Originally a belt of dense rain forests had covered the entire southern portion of the Gold Coast, but by the early twentieth century the entire Ho district of Togo, three-fourths of the Eastern Province, and one-third of the Central Province had given way to a savanna type of vegetation. Experts found that deforestation was going on at the rate of 300 square miles a year, and informed the government that it would be necessary to set aside some 40 percent of the remaining area as reserves, if further damage was to be prevented.[13] Because of African opposition to any official action, Guggisberg urged the chiefs to establish reserves themselves, according to the by-law power given them in the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883. As nothing was done in 1924 to carry out his request, he warned them again that he would give them but two years more. At the end of this period only six native reserves totaling 240 square miles had been established, whereas the Forestry Department had declared that 6,000 square miles were necessary. The failure of the chiefs was due to a number of reasons: ignorance of the danger involved in further deforestation, fear that the reserves would become crown lands, unsettled boundary disputes between stools, and the fact that the chiefs of the Central and Eastern Provinces had already alienated lands available for reserves.

Forced on by the grave necessity of the situation, Guggisberg again conferred with the chiefs in order to obtain suggestions which might prevent a repetition of the deadlock of 1911. Though his Forestry Bill met with local opposition in 1927, it became a law. It provided for the establishment of Forestry Department reserves whenever the chiefs failed to do so, but it did not deprive the Afri-

[13] In 1910 a British expert made a thorough study of the forest situation for the British government. See H. Thompson, *Reports of Gold Coast Forests*, Cd. 4993, 1910. This led the Gold Coast government to pass a law in 1911 authorizing the establishment of reserves. Some of the Africans, however, raised strenuous objections on the grounds that such reserves would be the beginning of official seizure of tribal land. A delegation was sent to London to protest against the legislation and in reply the secretary of state for the colonies appointed a special commissioner, Sir H. C. Belfield, to determine whether there was actual danger to native rights. See *Report on the Legislation Governing the Alienation of Native Lands in the Gold Coast*, Cd. 6278, 1912, and Casely Hayford, *The Truth About the West African Land Question* (London, 1913).

Though Belfield reported that African rights were sufficiently safeguarded by the Ordinance, the government decided, in view of the opposition that had been aroused, not to apply the law.

cans of ownership, as only the forest rights and not the land itself were bought by the government.

From the very beginning of Guggisberg's term of office he had insisted that if a higher state of civilization was his aim for the people of the Gold Coast, the keystone of that progress was education. In this field above all was he an enthusiast, and it is for his changes in educational policy and for the building of Achimota College that he is remembered, as well as for the Ten Year Plan and for the inauguration of a new constitution and Native Administration Ordinance. While many still believe that some of his decisions as to primary schools were unwise, most are agreed that Achimota has proved itself a very worthwhile institution.

One of his first acts on arrival in the Gold Coast was to appoint a committee to study the educational situation. Their report was identical, in large part, with that published by the Phelps-Stokes Commission which visited West and South Africa in 1920, in an attempt to suggest methods by which African education could be improved in line with those which had been successfully worked out at the Tuskegee and other institutes in the United States.[14] Guggisberg was encouraged by the fact that the two reports agreed to such a great extent with his own theories. He soon prepared, in conjunction with the Education Department and the heads of the missions, a very definite plan for the guidance of those responsible for the schools of the Dependency. It was based on sixteen principles,[15] among which were the necessity of improved teacher training, well-staffed and equipped secondary schools, equal opportunities for boys and girls, more stress on trade schools and training in agriculture and handicrafts rather than exclusive attention to literary subjects, the value of games and Scout methods, and, above all, the absolute necessity of character training if the African was to develop personal worth and the power of leadership. To implement this policy a new education ordinance was introduced in 1925 to the legislative council,

[14] This commission was financed, in very large part, by the Phelps-Stokes Fund. In her will Miss Caroline Phelps-Stokes had bequeathed her fortune to Trustees with the instruction that the income be used, *inter alia*, "for the education of Negroes, both in Africa and the United States, North American Indians and needy and deserving white students." See *Education in Africa: A Study of West, South, and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission; Report Prepared by Thomas Jesse Jones* (New York, 1922); Edwin Smith, *Aggrey of Africa* (London, 1929), chap. x.

[15] "Governor's Address," *Gold Coast Gazette*, February 3, 1925; *ibid.*, April 25, 1925, pp. 580–615.

and put in effect two years later. Because the new law required a higher standard, which many were unable to meet, by 1930 some one hundred and fifty bush schools had been closed. There was much criticism at the time,[16] especially because only about 10 percent of the children of the Dependency attended school of any kind.

If inefficient establishments were closed, through the lack of properly trained teachers, the government and the various missions made every effort to fill the need by opening normal schools for both men and women. Outstanding among these was the Prince of Wales College at Achimota. The story of the inception and development of this remarkable experiment in African education is a fascinating one. The foundation stone was laid in 1924; it was dedicated by the Prince of Wales the following year and on January 28, 1927, it was formally opened by Governor Guggisberg.[17] Planned on a large scale and equipped in the most up-to-date manner, it was finally completed in 1931 at a cost of £617,000. Though it was freed from government control by the creation of an Achimota Council in 1930, it receives a grant of £48,000 a year from the general revenue of the Dependency. The staff was composed of both Europeans and Africans and every effort was made to provide on native soil for the best in English education, but at the same time to adapt it to African requirements and to preserve all that was worth while in the indigenous culture of the past. Among the members of the original staff was James Kwegyir Aggrey, the African deputy vice-principal. A native of the Gold Coast, he went to America as a young man where he attended a college for Negroes, and later worked for his doctorate at Columbia University. His deep appreciation of the need for co-operation between the white and the black races, and his own personal gifts and charm gained for him so much admiration from educational leaders that he was chosen in 1920 as a member of the Phelps-Stokes Commission. While the group was in the Gold Coast, Guggisberg met Aggrey for the first time, and, impressed with his ability and personality, he later readily acquiesced in his appointment as the deputy vice-principal of Achimota. As a native of the Colony and yet with wide experience of racial problems in the rest of Africa and in the United States, he was able—not only to break down the misunder-

[16] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929–1930, pp. 168, 218.

[17] *Report on the Achimota College 1926–27. G.C. An. Report, 1926–27*, p. 39. Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp. 225–45 and *passim*. A fuller account of Achimota College will be given in a later chapter.

standing and opposition that grew up in connection with the new college—but also to further, to a remarkable degree, a mutual understanding between the two races. After his sudden death in the summer of 1927 Guggisberg wrote of him that "Africa had lost one of her greatest sons" and by his passing "a blow had been dealt to the progress of the African races . . . . Aggrey, indeed, was the finest interpreter which the present century has produced of the black man to the white."[18]

During his lifetime Aggrey had often referred to the fact that it was necessary to use both the black and white keys of the piano to produce beautiful music and he used this simple figure as an example of the co-operation which should unite the two races. After his death Principal Fraser of Achimota had several artists on the staff design a shield for the college which would embody this idea. Black and white bars form the body of the shield while beneath is the motto, *Ut omnes unum sint.*

Besides Achimota these same years saw the opening of several trade schools throughout the Dependency. They were all boarding schools with European headmasters who used Baden-Powell Scout methods for maintaining discipline and building up school spirit, with the hope that not only technical training but character development would result.

The improvement of health and sanitation services were also included in the Ten Year Plan, and a large modern hospital near Accra, eighteen smaller hospitals, and twenty dispensaries were completed before 1927. A start was made in infant welfare work and the Medical Research Institute was enlarged. Important as these additions were, they were entirely insufficient for the size of the population, and in view of the widespread incidence of malnutrition, and of malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy, sleeping sickness, and other serious diseases. The problem was a grave one which would require greatly increased governmental attention and financial aid, if it were to be satisfactorily solved.

[18] Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp. 286–87.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, 1919–1927

In the preceding chapter a survey was made of the material advancement of the Colony during the years 1919–1927. A far more difficult problem faced Governor Guggisberg in the matter of political development and native administration. Before discussing his policy in these fields, it would be helpful, perhaps, to give a general picture of the method of government which existed in the Gold Coast at the opening of his period of office. An attempt will then be made to trace the improvements which he brought about through the new constitution of 1925, and through a completely revised native administration ordinance.

Shortly after the new ordinance was promulgated Guggisberg's extended term of office came to an end. The actual working out of the new laws and their results will therefore be left to a subsequent chapter.

The system of government of the Gold Coast has been described in official reports as a mixture of direct rule by the central government and of indirect rule through the indigenous African institutions. There is a steady bias toward the latter.[1] The direct government, as in the majority of British Crown Colonies, is administered by a governor assisted by an executive and a legislative council and a staff of political and technical officials. Local government is largely in the hands of African chiefs and their councils of elders who are, generally speaking, representative of the various sections of the community. Native administration was regulated by the 1883 ordinance until 1927, when it was replaced by a new code.

The governor is the chief executive authority for the entire Dependency, but is responsible to the secretary of state for the colonies and must refer all important matters to him. He makes appointments for all positions whose salary is £400 a year or less, while

[1] *G.C. An. Report 1931–1932*, p. 4. A detailed description of Crown colony government is given by Sir Frederick Lugard, *Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London, 1922), chapters v–ix; Lord Hailey, *African Survey*, pp. 160–73, 224–35; Martin Wight, *The Gold Coast Legislative Council* (London, 1947), is a detailed and valuable study of constitutional development, 1925–1945.

those with higher remunerations are under the control of the colonial office. In case the Africans disagree with the governor on any point, they do, on occasion, send petitions or delegations to the colonial secretary.

The executive council, during the period under consideration, consisted of the following British officials: the colonial secretary, the chief commissioners of Ashanti and of the Northern Territories, the attorney general, the financial secretary, the director of medical services, and the secretary for native affairs. It is an advisory body to whom the governor must submit all bills before proposing them to the legislative council. The governor has the final word in case of disagreement, but the members may always report their views to the colonial office. The advantages of an executive council lie in the fact that the representatives of various departments may thus give their advice and criticism, while their viewpoint is usually broader than that of separate committees.

The administrative branch is made up of political and technical services. The former included, during this period, the colonial secretary, the secretary of native affairs, and the division of the political officers who reside in the various provinces and districts. For administrative purposes the Gold Coast Colony was divided into the Western Province with six districts; the Central Province with four; and the Eastern Province with eight. At the head of each province was a provincial commissioner, while in each district, a district or assistant district commissioner resided.[2]

Ashanti was divided into an Eastern and a Western Province, each with four districts, while the Northern Territories had a Northern Province with four districts and a Southern Province with five.

The number of political officers has varied from time to time, depending to some extent upon the financial condition of the Dependency. In 1922, for example, there were eighty-nine officers, of whom forty-four were assigned to the Colony, twenty-three to Ashanti, and twenty-one to the Northern Territories—a comparatively large staff. This number was somewhat reduced during the Depression of the 1930's.

Lugard speaks of the political officer as "the backbone of the colony,"[3] for on him depends, in large part, the character of the relations between the central government and the African authorities.

[2] Some of these arrangements were changed when the 1946 constitution went into effect.

[3] Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 128.

He must help to guide local rulers, administer justice, enforce ordinances, settle disputes, compile endless routine reports, and—in some of the smaller districts—supervise such technical work as road-building and sanitation. His aim is to foster co-operation between the British and the Africans and to promote progress and civilization. For this, much sympathy, firmness of will, initiative, and a sense of fair play have been considered necessary, and graduates of the English public schools and of Oxford or Cambridge have often been appointed by the colonial office.

The technical service includes such departments as the medical, agricultural, public works, and survey. With the ever increasing activity of their staffs and the growing power of African authorities in local government, the problem of co-ordination between these two groups is becoming more acute. It is possible, however, for the political officer to act as a link between them, representing the interests of the local authorities without prejudicing the necessary independence of the various departments in technical matters.

The legislative council forms another part of the central government of the Gold Coast Colony. First inaugurated in the nineteenth century, in 1916 it was given new form and in 1920 included eleven official members—the executive council and heads of several other departments—and nine unofficial members. Among the latter there were usually three chiefs, three educated Africans from the coastal towns of Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi, and three Europeans representing commercial interests, but all were appointed by the governor. So constituted, the council was not representative of the entire Colony and had no real power, as the government kept control through its official majority, but it did allow for public discussion of projected laws and provided a means for adapting them more fully to local needs. In actual practice, the Gold Coast council has had greater influence than in most African colonies, and more than once legislation has been abandoned because of opposition by the council.[4]

A study of the history of the various colonies and dominions in the British Empire will provide examples of the normal development of a legislative council. The unofficial members are eventually

[4] See, for example, Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1931, for opposition to ... proposed income tax. The law was not passed until 1943. J. W. de Graft Joh ... see *Towards Nationhood in West Africa* (London, 1928), chapter xi has a dis... mis- of Crown colony government in the Gold Coast from the African's point ... who had

elected in whole, or in part, instead of being appointed by the governor. The next step toward self-government is the exchange of an official for an unofficial majority, but with the governor still retaining some control either through a body of reserved subjects on which the council may not legislate or through the veto power. In the final stage the governor's power is progressively held in abeyance until ultimately withdrawn. This process marks the course by which a dependency gradually advances toward responsible government, the essence of which is the accountability of the executive to the legislative body.

Many of the educated class on the Gold Coast were keenly conscious of the fact that other British colonies had advanced through these various stages to eventual self-government, and they looked forward to the day when they too could claim the same right. This desire expressed itself from time to time under various forms. There have been movements which were nationalistic in character, appeals for increased African participation in the European administration, protests against legislation which was considered inimical to native rights, as well as outright demands for increased self-government.

One of the earliest manifestations of this spirit of self-determination was in 1871, when a number of chiefs and educated natives met together and drew up an elaborate constitution creating a Fanti Confederation. They were influenced in part by the House of Commons resolution of 1865, which had recommended that the English encourage the Africans to prepare for eventual self-government; and in part by the desire to meet their Ashanti enemies with the strength of a united front. In spite of the British government's official statement, however, the plan was regarded with disapproval by the local authorities and, as a result, came to nothing.[5] Three years later, the British finally decided to take over full control of their Gold Coast settlements and these were annexed as a Crown colony. This move ended, for a time, any clamor for independence.

The national spirit which had given birth to the Fanti Confederation did not entirely die out. Some thirty years later it flared up afresh in another form—in the opposition to the Public Lands Bill of that year. Ever since the 1860's the chiefs had been selling land

[5] *Parliamentary Papers, Commons, 1873*, XLIX, "Correspondence Relative to Fanti Confederation." The constitution of the confederation is printed pp. 3–9. For African opinion on the affair see Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa*, vi

to foreigners. As the government did not want the country to come under the control of European mining interests, it passed an ordinance placing any transfer of public lands to private persons under the supervision of an official concessions court. The Africans believed that such a step would have the effect of converting native holdings into Crown lands, and that eventually the British government would be the owner of all the unoccupied areas of the Gold Coast. In an effort to organize the opposition to this new law, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society was formed by many of the chiefs and educated Africans of the Central Province. It sent a deputation to London to protest against the bill which, as a result, was withdrawn and replaced in 1900 by the Concessions Ordinance. This second law gave the British courts some supervision over the validity of concessions, but made it quite clear that the Africans retained possession of their land.

The Aborigines' Rights Protection Society continued, after its victory of 1897, to lead the opposition to any government policies which it considered contrary to African rights. It was recognized by the governor as a correct channel of local opinion until 1925, when the inauguration of the provincial councils provided what the government considered a more representative body.

During World War I an official policy once again aroused local criticism. In 1916 an export duty was imposed in all West African colonies on cocoa, palm products, groundnuts, hides, and skins. The Gold Coast legislative council unofficial members voted solidly against these measures, but they were passed by the official majority. After the war, the Africans asked that the tax be discontinued, but they were again refused. At the same time the world-wide agitation for self-determination was affecting the Africans as well as other dependent peoples.[6] One result of these postwar conditions was a

[6] In New York, for example, Marcus Garvey headed a convention of Negroes which drew up, in 1920, the *Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World*, demanding, in colorful and flamboyant language, full political, civil, and social rights and declaring that Africa belongs to the Negro. For the full text see R. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa* (New York, 1921) II, App. XLIX.

In Paris, a Pan-African Congress met during the Peace Conference under the presidency of M. Diagne, an African deputy from Senegal, and prepared resolutions of a more reasonable character, asking for an increased share in the government rather than for immediate control of Africa as had done Garvey. See Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 83. For the comment of the missionaries on the postwar unrest see *International Review of Missions*, XII (1923), 161; XIII (1925), 3–24. The missionaries believed that some of the trouble was due to returned soldiers who had

quickening of the political ambitions of the peoples of West Africa. In March 1920, a conference of representatives of the four British colonies, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Gold Coast, and Nigeria, met in Accra where the National Congress of British West Africa was organized. At its first general meeting a number of resolutions were passed, the most important of which asked for fuller African elected representation and for control of the purse.[7] In October 1920, the Congress authorized a delegation of African students in London to petition for these reforms. Though its resolutions were not made in any spirit of disloyalty,[8] the secretary of state for the colonies replied that West Africa was not yet ready for elected councilors. Shortly afterwards, however, he reversed his opinion and granted the principle of election to the Nigerian council, while in the Gold Coast, Governor Guggisberg, convinced that the "time had come for giving Africans greater and better representation,[9] began preparations for a new type of town council for the coastal cities, for a constitution which would provide for elected members to the legislative council, and for a reorganization of the Native Administration Ordinance. In 1924 the first of these changes, the Municipal Corporations Bill, was introduced into the council. It was to replace the former ordinance of 1894 which had applied to Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi, providing for town councils with an official majority and with the power to impose local rates and perform certain administrative functions. This law had not been successful, however, as the Africans felt they had no real responsibility, and in many elec-

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lost much of their respect for Europeans during their war contacts. Communistic propaganda and echoes of the Pan-African movement all helped to feed the new spirit of dissatisfaction.

[7] The story of the congress by a native of the Gold Coast is to be found in M. Sampson, *Gold Coast Men of Affairs* (London, 1937), pp. 27–31, 168 ff. See also Buell, *op. cit.*, pp. 832–33; George Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa* (London, 1936), p. 371. This book was written by a native of Trinidad who was, at the time, bitterly opposed to British rule, and who was sometimes inaccurate in his statements. He presented the viewpoint of the radical Negro, however, and often drew attention to facts worthy of consideration. Chapter xiv deals with the history of the African nationalist movement, especially in the Gold Coast.

[8] The congress declared that its fundamental policy was: "To maintain strictly and inviolate the connection of the British West African dependencies with the British Empire and to maintain unreservedly all and every right of free citizenship of the Empire and the fundamental principle that taxation goes with effective representation." Quoted by M. A. Ribeiro, "The Political History of the Gold Coast," Achimota Discussion Group, *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future* (Achimota, 1940), p. 14.

[9] *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 238; Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, I, 833.

tions few, and sometimes no one, took the trouble to stand for office or to vote.

Guggisberg believed that a new type of council with an elected majority would teach the Africans valuable lessons of local self-government and prepare them for positions of wider responsibility. The Municipal Corporations Bill of 1924 accordingly provided for a majority of elected councilors, gave them power to levy new rates and draw up the estimates—subject, however, to government approval—and opened the franchise to all who owned or occupied a house of a £5 ratable value. The municipal members of the legislative council approved of this new ordinance but when it was published there was an outburst of opposition centering in Accra, where the poorer classes feared the imposition of increased rates, while others held that African institutions would be undermined by the power of an elected mayor.[10] In view of sustained disapproval, Guggisberg eventually withdrew the ordinance, but he made no attempt to hide his disappointment. He believed that municipal government was the finest training field for wider responsibility and told the legislative council:

> . . . . it is the acid test of fitness of the citizens of our urban areas to take a greater share in the government of the country. I use the word "acid" advisedly after the experience of the past few years for municipal government in this country requires far greater resolution than it does in the more advanced countries of the world.

And again he told them that he found this refusal:

> . . . . the only real disappointment which I have had as your Governor. . . . . Perhaps the time is not yet ripe. Anyway, seeing that the citizens of our seaports think as they do, it would not be right at the present moment to force the responsibility of local municipal self-government on them. Until they feel they can resist the popular outcry . . . . until, in fact, they feel themselves better fitted to bear the responsibility of municipal self-government, the application of the Ordinance should be deferred.[11]

Since the 1924 Bill had failed, the government in 1927 finally amended the former Town Council Ordinance so that there were then five official and five unofficial members, including one European appointed by the governor and four elected Africans.

[10] Ribeiro, *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future*, pp. 14–16.
[11] *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 13; Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 523.

It may seem somewhat contradictory that the Africans, after demanding increased self-government, should have opposed the Municipal Corporations Bill. It is necessary to distinguish, however, between various groups of public opinion. The educated Africans in the coastal towns, having almost no opportunity to share in tribal administration, were constantly agitating for greater representation in the municipal and central government; while most of the chiefs and the bulk of the people, on the other hand, were far more interested in their own institutions or in avoiding the burden of increased rates.

During these years Guggisberg made efforts to satisfy the demands of the intellectual classes in another direction, by promising them an increased share of the administrative positions usually held by Europeans. The economic development of the Gold Coast had not broken up tribal life to the same extent as in most African colonies, so that greater social and educational progress had therefore been possible. This had resulted in a fairly large group of literate persons in Accra, Sekondi, Cape Coast, and other towns, among whom were clerks, teachers, clergymen, merchants, and even doctors and lawyers.

The government was not adverse to giving Africans positions of responsibility whenever candidates with the necessary force of character and educational requirements were available. As the Gold Coast possessed no institution of higher learning prior to 1927, suitable training could only be obtained in England. To satisfy this fundamental need for African leaders had been one of Guggisberg's primary aims in establishing Achimota. Graduates from this institution would not be available for some years, but in the meantime the governor promised to make as many appointments as possible and in the years 1919–1927 there was an increase from three to thirty-eight in the number of Africans holding positions usually occupied by Europeans.[12] On the grounds that natives were living in

[12] *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 254. Guggisberg refused to consider appointing Africans as provincial or district commissioners, giving as his reason that the chiefs would not co-operate with educated Africans or those of other tribes; that there were sufficient opportunities for political positions in their own local government; and that there were, at the time, no suitable candidates. The Africans, however, believe that this is an unjust policy. See, for example, Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929–1939, pp. 153–56, 184, 232.

The governors who followed Guggisberg, as a result of changed conditions, were able to declare themselves willing to appoint Africans as political officers whenever those with the proper qualifications applied. See, for example, Governor Slater's

their own country and had not, therefore, two establishments to provide for as have the Europeans, they received one-sixth less salary and shorter periods of leave.

Among the various political problems of the Gold Coast one of the most important—that of the local administration—yet remains to be discussed.

As has already been pointed out, one of the aims of the British government is to rule, as far as possible, through the agency of indigenous institutions. Such a policy is usually defined as "indirect rule." It is not a new practice—parts of the Roman Empire were thus governed, for example—but it is one which has been the subject of much comment and study since it was initiated by Lord Lugard in Northern Nigeria, and developed, with striking results, by Sir Donald Cameron in Tanganyika.[13] Indirect rule has, in fact, become the foundation of a new school of colonial administration, and has been adopted by the British as a pattern for the rule of many of their colonies.[14] It is in line with the trend toward a more enlightened and progressive treatment of dependent peoples which has become increasingly evident since the end of World War I. Lugard pointed out in 1922 that while it is generally conceded that the Africans will eventually be sufficiently advanced for self-government, nevertheless they are not yet ready to stand alone and still need the guidance of controlling powers. The advocates of indirect rule assert that this method provides the best means of preparing them for this future goal.

The essential aim of this policy "is the development of an African society able to participate in the life of the modern world as a community in its own right";[15] or again, it has been defined as "a system

statement, Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929–1930, p. 232. No actual appointments were made, however, until 1943.

[13] Lugard, *Dual Mandate*. Lugard, *Revision of Instructions to Political Officers* (Lagos, 1918), gives his explanation of the theory and practice of indirect rule. Sir Donald Cameron, *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria* (London, 1939).

[14] Governor Slater, for example, told the legislative council in 1930 that ". . . . government's declared policy . . . . is so to guide the development of native institutions in this country that they will become more and more an integral part of the machinery of government." Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1930, pp. 84–85. Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 199.

[15] Lucy Mair, *Native Policies in Africa* (London, 1936), p. 12. This book contains a good discussion of indirect rule in general, and of its application to the Gold Coast, pp. 12–18, 157–68, 264–69. It is written from the viewpoint of the anthropologist.

One of the leading English authorities in this field is Marjory Perham. See

by which the tutelary power recognizes existing African societies and assists them to adapt themselves to the functions of local Government."[16] Such a policy requires the conservation of what is best in African culture and the utilization, to the fullest extent, of the indigenous institutions in administering the colony. It is this last aspect of indirect rule which has met with most imitation and with most criticism, for it has been assumed that the whole system consists in this alone, and has therefore left itself open to the charge that it merely perpetuates the domination of an antiquated and oppressive authority. It must be remembered, however, that maintenance of tribal institutions is not its principal object, for its advocates expect them to undergo radical changes as they become subjected to the influence of modern social and economic conditions. It is their hope, furthermore, that this evolution will not be toward a slavish imitation of Western methods but rather toward a new development which will combine the best in both European and African cultures. As Miss Perham states, the aim of this theory is "to hold the ring, to preserve a fair field within which Africans can strike their own balance between conservatism and adaptation."[17]

Indirect rule has been criticized not only by certain students of colonial theory, but by some of the Africans as well.[18] In the Gold Coast, members of the educated class often held that it did not make sufficient provision for their talents and training in the administra-

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her "A Re-statement of Indirect Rule," *Africa: Journal of the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures* (hereafter cited as *Africa*), VII (1934), 321–34; Hailey, *African Survey*, pp. 133–35, 527–45 *passim*.

Since a correct application of this theory requires a detailed knowledge of local institutions, much stimulus has been given to anthropological research in Africa. The Gold Coast government inaugurated a Department of Anthropology in 1921 under the direction of Captain Robert Rattray. See *Report on the Department of Anthropology*, 1921. This department remained in existence until the retirement of Rattray in 1930 when the government decided that it would be wiser to train selected political officers in this field rather than to confine the work to a special department. Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1930, "Governor's Address," p. 86.

The International Institute of African Languages and Cultures was founded in 1927 to encourage such studies. For a statement of its aims see *Africa*, VII (1934), 1–27.

[16] Marjory Perham, in *Africa*, X (1937), 397.

[17] *Ibid.*, VII (1934), 331.

[18] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, pp. 156, 170; *ibid.*, 1935, pp. 121, 144; Padmore, *How Britain Rules Africa*, p. 383; P. D. Quartey, "Indirect Rule from a Native's Point of View," *Negro Year Book and Annual Encyclopedia of the Negro, 1937–1938* (Tuskegee Institute, Alabama, 1937).

tion of the Colony, and that the government used it to keep illiterate, pro-British chiefs in office.

To understand this attitude on the part of the intelligentsia and to account for the difficulties which indirect rule in the Gold Coast has encountered, it will be necessary to consider the provisions of the original Native Administration Ordinance, their unsatisfactory consequences, and the efforts of the government to better the situation by providing the Gold Coast in 1925 with a new constitution, and in 1927 with an improved legislation for native rule.

It will be remembered that throughout the early nineteenth century the British had interfered as little as possible with the rule of the local chiefs and had even considered, in accordance with the 1865 recommendation of Parliament, eventual withdrawal from the Gold Coast. Merchants and missionaries, however, wished to retain their trade relations or religious establishments; and it was finally realized, after the Ashanti War of 1873–1874, that if peace and order were to be secured the government must take more responsibility for its maintenance. The Colony was therefore annexed in 1874, while two years later a legislative council with appointed members was inaugurated, to be followed in 1878 by a Native Jurisdiction Ordinance which provided for the recognition of the chiefs. This last measure was replaced in 1883 by a second law which remained the basis, until 1927, for all native administration.

The Ordinance of 1883 confirmed the authority of the paramount and divisional chiefs,[19] though it failed to recognize the right to be consulted which the native councils had formerly possessed by customary law. It gave the paramount chiefs the power to make by-laws covering a wide range of subjects, such as the administration of public lands and forests and the upkeep of roads. On the judicial side it recognized African tribunals, but only in minor civil and criminal cases; while at the same time their jurisdiction was merely concurrent with that of the British courts and they had no power to enforce decisions. The ordinance was silent on the subject of the election and destoolment of chiefs, thus indirectly recognizing that such matters were the affair, not of the British government, but of

[19] *British and Foreign State Papers, 1882–1883*, LXXIV, 604.

The term "paramount chief" includes those who are not subordinate to any other paramount. There is one at the head of each of the 63 native states. The term "divisional chief" refers to those who are directly subordinate to a paramount. Beneath divisional chiefs are chiefs and headmen. See *Native Administration Ordinance, 1927*, for lists of paramount and divisional chiefs.

native law. No provision was made, furthermore, for direct taxation nor for the administration of those tribal revenues which custom allows the chiefs to collect from time to time for specified purposes.

The whole ordinance bore the mark of the laissez faire spirit of the nineteenth century. The British government recognized the local institutions, but made no attempt, as did Lugard later in Nigeria, to adapt these old forms to modern conditions. In their desire to protect the position of the chief, the English gave him wide authority which he could use or misuse in his own way, but they took from him his former power over life and death and his position as the one source of justice. This was particularly unfortunate at the very time when the cessation of the Ashanti wars lessened the need for tribal cohesion and tempted dissatisfied elements to destool their rulers or to seek independence.[20] Another weakness lay in the fact

Period	Number of Destoolments
1904–1908	7
1909–1913	23
1914–1918	38
1919–1924	41

that the government directly took over the bulk of administrative duties instead of sharing them with the chiefs, as should have been done according to the theory of indirect rule. To sum up, then, the British had left the chiefs their full powers in some fields but with no provision for official guidance or control; while in certain administrative matters they had unnecessarily deprived them of authority, thus preventing the development which comes of responsibility, and the added prestige it would have given them in the eyes of their subjects.

Examples of this situation can be found, for instance, in the matter of the African tribunals where, official supervision being unprovided for, judicial practices were sometimes corrupt. Another case in point is that of the by-laws. Regulations for the establishment of forest reserves and for the destruction of diseased cocoa pods were passed—due to government insistence—by the local authorities, but the legislation was not satisfactorily enforced. The chiefs had neither sufficient experience to realize their necessity, nor adequate power to execute them.

The growing prosperity of the Colony, with its resultant increase

[20] "Governor's Address," *Gold Coast Gazette*, April 25, 1925, p. 632. Guggisberg gives the following tabulation of destoolments:

of education and wealth, tended to lessen respect for tribal authority; while the position of the chief, as it then stood, gave the Gold Coast the benefit of neither direct nor indirect rule. Such was the situation in 1919 when Guggisberg came into office. After several years as governor he was convinced that the only remedy lay in strengthening the position of the chiefs, rather than in developing a purely European type of government. He believed that if these traditional rulers could receive more educational advantages and improve their methods of local government, they would gradually be able to take a place of leadership and to win over the educated to work with them. This same opinion was shared by Nana Ofori Atta, one of the few educated chiefs at that time. In 1913 he had been elected paramount of an Eastern Province state and had been appointed to the legislative council three years later. He was to make this goal of raising the position of the chiefs and of encouraging them to mutual co-operation the principal achievement of his long political career which did not end until his death in 1943.

It was for the purpose of improving the local administration that Guggisberg made a first, though unsuccessful, attempt in 1921 to introduce a new native jurisdiction ordinance to the legislative council. It provided merely for the consolidation of a number of existing laws, for the recognition of the authority of paramounts over chiefs in judicial matters, and for the reservation of all land cases to the courts of the provincial commissioners; but it met with so much opposition that the governor decided to delay it for further research. He then turned his attention to the preparation of a constitution which would give new form to the legislative council and, by providing for increased representation of chiefs, would help indirectly to rehabilitate their authority. Once they had a stronger position in the council it would be easier to get support for a more efficient native administration ordinance.

In May 1925, the new constitution[21] was granted to the Gold Coast, giving for the first time the right of elected representation. It provided for fifteen official and fourteen unofficial members. Of the unofficial members, five were Europeans—three appointed by the governor to represent the banking, shipping, and mercantile interests; one elected by the local chamber of commerce; and one chosen by the chamber of mines. Among the nine African members,

[21] *Laws of the Gold Coast in Force, 1936*, Vol. IV.

three were elected to represent the towns of Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi, and the six others were paramount chiefs elected in each of the three provinces of the Colony by a provincial council of paramount chiefs. According to population, the provincial council of the Eastern Province elected three representatives, the Central Province two, and the Western Province one. At these councils each paramount was accompanied by eight of his subordinate chiefs whom he was obliged to consult before expressing his opinion. For purposes of election, the voting strength of each one was calculated in proportion to the number of his subjects. In the Eastern Province there were three divisions—the Akan, the Ga, and the Ewe—with a paramount representing each section.

It was the intention of the government that these provincial councils of chiefs should not only exercise an elective function, but should also help to strengthen African authority by providing an opportunity for discussion of matters of tribal interest and by advising the government on any proposed legislation affecting the people. Guggisberg believed they would be of great value and so expressed himself.

> It was at the preservation of native institutions that I aimed when devising what is the outstanding feature of the new Constitution: the Provincial Councils. These Provincial Councils are really the breakwaters, defending our native constitutions, institutions, and customs against the disintegrating waves of Western civilization. They are the chief means by which the nationality of the Africans of the Gold Coast will be built up out of many scattered tribes; for it must be remembered that, although each Council functions for its own Province, yet arrangements have been made by which these Councils can meet and discuss many questions . . . . As time goes on, the experience and knowledge gained . . . . will help the Paramount Chiefs . . . . to develop gradually into bodies carrying far greater responsibility than they do in the present day.[22]

Although the new constitution had finally granted the educated classes elective representation, they opposed it fiercely on the grounds that the chiefs had twice as many members in the council as had the municipalities. What many of them really wanted was a constitution which would give them a more predominate position in the council and which would replace African institutions as rapidly as possible by a parliamentary type of government. They feared, too, that the chiefs would be mere tools in the hands of British officials and

[22] *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 23.

use their increased power to hold up the political development of the Gold Coast. One African newspaper wrote of the new law:

The issue is one of life and death with us, for if you perpetuate the possibility of the return of dummies to the Legislature, our national independence is gone forever. Probably that is what has been aimed at all the time, to so gag the people that while they have a machinery ostensibly of an advanced type, yet to be truly and really voiceless in the affairs of their own country.[23]

Deeply concerned by this bitterness which the new constitution was engendering between the chiefs and the intelligentsia, Dr. Aggrey wrote in the spring of 1926 to a friend in America:

The new Order in Council concerning the new Legislative Council has stirred up a hornets' nest. Part of the people of the Eastern Province, especially the educated, are against it. . . . . The Paramount Chiefs of the Eastern Province[24] . . . . including Nana Ofori Atta and Konor Mate Kole are heartily for it. . . . . The political atmosphere is charged.[25]

As Dr. Aggrey had said, the atmosphere was indeed charged and the educated classes were determined to prevent the new constitution from going into effect. Members of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society and of the British West African Congress agitated against the provincial councils in the press, through members of the legislative council and, in the fall of 1926, finally sent a delegation to London to petition for an amendment to the constitution.[26] When these measures failed, the dissenters turned to the chiefs themselves and succeeded in persuading a number of them that provincial councils were contrary to customary law. The government answered by pointing out that in the past the chiefs had often met of their own accord, to discuss matters of intertribal concern. In spite of the opposition, electoral arrangements were made and on May 17, 1926, the three provincial councils met for the first time. In the

[23] Quoted by Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, I, 839, from the *Gold Coast Leader*, May 22, 1926. The Gold Coast newspapers are often extremely critical of both British policy and of the chiefs. This opinion, however, is probably representative of only a minority of the population.

[24] "Nana" is the title given to an Akan chief and "Konor" to those of the Krobo tribe. In 1928 Nana Ofori Atta was knighted and was thereafter known as Nana Sir Ofori Atta or Sir Ofori Atta.

[25] Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp. 259–60.

[26] Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, *Petition for the Amendment of the Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925* (London, n.d.).

Eastern Province, which was largely in favor of the new law, eleven out of twelve chiefs assembled, but in the Central Province only half of the paramounts put in an appearance, while the Western Province, under the influence of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, flatly declined to elect its representative. The government therefore left the Western Province unrepresented, but provided for the sixth chief by appointing Nana Ofori Atta, even though he belonged to the Eastern Province.

Gradually the bitter opposition to the new constitution lessened and by 1928 the Western Province had its own chief in the legislative council while twenty-five out of the twenty-eight states of the Central Province were represented at the provincial council.

To Guggisberg this legislation brought:

> . . . . the keenest personal satisfaction. . . . . The new Constitution is far more solidly based on the institutions which the people of this country have found best suited to them, and far more likely to develop into something bigger and wider, than any mushroom constitution based on the ballot-box and the eloquence of politicians over whom the people have no control except at election time.[27]

Once the new legislative council was functioning, Guggisberg determined to solve the problem of the inefficient native government by different tactics. He invited the six head chiefs on the council to make proposals for a more satisfactory native administration ordinance. After preliminary conferences, the councils of the Eastern and Central Provinces prepared in joint session, without any official assistance, the draft for a new bill. When it had been revised by the attorney general it was introduced—for the first time in the history of the Colony by an unofficial member, Nana Ofori Atta—to the

[27] *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 23. Some writers did not fully approve of the new constitution. Professor Buell believed that the provincial councils should have been based on an ethnic rather than a geographic principle, since they are meant to be tribal institutions. He was also of the opinion that the true goal of the Gold Coast is not an African legislative council—which is a European device—but rather a united nation governed by institutions of local origin. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, I, 842–43.

Professor MacMillan, on the other hand, expressed the belief that the economic and social development of the Gold Coast had already gone too far for indirect rule to be practical as it was in Nigeria, Tanganyika, and other less advanced colonies. He would prefer a strong central government rather than the preservation of native institutions. William MacMillan and Others, *Europe and West Africa; Some Problems and Adjustments* (London, 1940), pp. 94, 106, and *passim*.

A fuller discussion of this matter will be found in a later chapter.

legislative council and passed on April 19, 1927, just a few days before Guggisberg's extended term of office came to an end.

The purpose of the new ordinance was to arrest the decay that was threatening African institutions, to place the authority of the chiefs on a more stable basis, and to extend their powers in some fields. To implement this aim the authority of the "oman" or state council, with its traditional personnel of paramounts, lesser chiefs, and councilors, was recognized as the highest authority within each native state. It was made responsible, subject to appeal to the provincial council, for disputes over election and destoolment. The latter council was also given jurisdiction over the demands of subordinate chiefs for independence, but in all executive or constitutional matters the final decision rested with the governor, who was guided by the reports of the native councils and the practices of customary law. The ordinance further empowered the governor to refer any matter to the councils for hearing and determination, a provision which proved most valuable especially for intertribal disputes and cases which require a detailed knowledge of local conditions or native customs. The jurisdiction of the paramount chiefs' tribunal was extended in civil matters, and decisions were made enforceable by execution against property. Disputes between different provinces were to be referred to a joint session of the provincial councils of the provinces concerned.

Although these measures strengthened native authority and lessened certain defects, especially through the functions of the provincial councils,[28] fundamental weaknesses still remained. The government had given itself no power to vary the schedule of chiefs who could hold tribunals—of which there were too many—nor to make a chief's right of jurisdiction dependent on official recognition of his election. Since political officers, furthermore, were not empowered to supervise these tribunals the dispensation of justice often remained corrupt, and one of the most essential elements of successful indirect rule was thus neglected.

On the administrative side no increased powers were delegated the chiefs, and it still remained necessary for the government to take official action when the by-laws for such essentials as forest reserves and plant-disease control were not enforced. A certain amount of financial control is another essential of successful African

[28] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1931–1932, "Governor's Address," p. 288; *G.C. An. Report, 1930*, p. 3.

rule, but this too was neglected, as no provision was made for required direct taxation nor for stool treasuries. As these weaknesses became increasingly evident during the following decade, the legislative council tried to remedy the defects by amendments, but it was not until the 1940's that a completely reorganized and more satisfactory type of native authority ordinance was finally adopted.

The same type of opposition which had been stirred up by the 1925 Constitution was also shown to the 1927 Native Administration Ordinance. Once the Africans realized, however, that increased authority was given, not to the paramount chief as an individual, but rather to the state council, criticism gradually ceased from all but the usual die-hards.[29]

[29] The municipal members of the legislative council tried to delay passage of the bill. Minutes of the Legislative Council, *Gold Coast Gazette*, May 21, 1927, p. 1055. Their criticism is to be found in Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, *Petition to the House of Commons* (London, 1935), sections 51–56.

CHAPTER V

THE GOLD COAST COLONY, 1928–1939

When in April 1927, Guggisberg's term of office ended, he left to his successor, Sir Ransford Slater, a Dependency which had made much recent progress and yet which had many difficulties still to solve. As has been seen in chapter iii, the preceding years had been ones of almost unbelievable material growth, and by 1927 external trade had reached a record peak. In the political field, however, the story was a different one. Chapter iv has given an account of the efforts of Guggisberg to strengthen the position of the chiefs and to increase African representation on the legislative council, both of which measures met with opposition from the educated class. The present chapter will be concerned with the story of this opposition and then with the gradual betterment of relations. The world-wide economic Depression, with its attendant problems, various political developments, especially in the provincial councils system, social developments, and an ever increasing progress and maturity among the Africans of the Gold Coast, all combine to make the years 1928–1939 very eventful ones.

It will be recalled that Dr. Aggrey had likened the quarrel between the chiefs and the intelligentsia over the 1925 constitution to the stirring up of a hornets' nest.[1] The municipalities were jealous because they had only three members on the legislative council whereas the chiefs, representing the rural areas, had six. This was a fair division since the rural population of the Colony is far greater than that of the towns, but the urban leaders did not want to see the chiefs' powers increased. They complained that the tribal rulers were too ignorant to represent the country properly on the legislative council, and they criticized their methods of local administration as backward and often corrupt. Some of them held that the British policy of preserving traditional usages was unwise, and that it would be better if these customary practices were replaced by European governmental institutions. Underneath their objections, however,

[1] See p. 53 above.

was the fear that the chiefs would become autocratic, or that the British would use them as tools in order to hold the Colony back from a rapid transition to self-government. This was the key to the intelligentsia's opposition to improvements in the status of the chiefs. Fundamentally, however, there has never been a real antagonism between the two groups, for they both belong to the same upper class, and both have been interested in winning from the British the right to eventual autonomy. Their disagreements concerned the means rather than the final goal, the provincial members preferring their traditional political system to the Western institutions favored by the urban representatives. In the long run, the underlying division of forces in the Gold Coast is not between the chiefs and the intelligentsia, but between the Europeans and the Africans on the fundamental issue of constitutional development. Because of this basic unity, the disagreements between the rural and coastal groups lessened during the years following the quarrel over the 1925 constitution, and they gradually learned the value of political co-operation. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that, in spite of this growing harmony, antagonisms appeared again from time to time, but they usually were the result of quarrels between individual chiefs and municipal leaders, or between certain extreme groups rather than between the rulers and the educated classes as such. Moreover, as the number of educated chiefs and the opportunities for political experience increased during the 'thirties and 'forties, the former distinctions were further lessened and the unity of the two classes became more evident.

The first step toward this mutual understanding between the provincial and municipal members of the legislative council was largely the work of Casely Hayford, one of the Gold Coast's outstanding statesmen. Since the early years of the twentieth century Hayford, the originator of the British West African Congress, had been an influential leader of the educated classes. He was at first antagonistic to the 1925 constitution and to the provincial councils system, but he later recognized their value and became, as Dr. Danquah, another African leader, has written of him:

> . . . . one of the few leaders of his time who had the imagination to see through the present constitutional guarantees of Provincial Councils and Tribunals of Chiefs to a future constitutional order in which all the Provincial Councils would cease to remain three separate interests in the Eastern, Western and Central Provinces of the Colony and come together

in a national consultative assembly with a greater scope and a recognized constitution wider than what a "protective society" could ever be.[2]

Once Mr. Hayford realized that there was a greater future for the provincial councils than for the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, he worked with Nana Sir Ofori Atta for their success. Thus these two great leaders of the educated classes and the chiefs were able to bring about a fusion of the hitherto divided interests. After this conciliation had taken place in the spring of 1929[3] the municipal and provincial members usually worked harmoniously together in the legislative council.

There was one small group of intelligentsia, the remnants of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society at Cape Coast, however, which remained antagonistic to the provincial councils and on several occasions opposed its policy, most notably in the Society's petitions to London against the 1925 constitution.[4] But even these Cape Coast extremists were probably in agreement with the majority group on the fundamental issues of Gold Coast development, even though they did not always see eye to eye on the methods to be used.

The most significant feature of the new constitution was the provincial council system. The new law established a council in each of the three administrative provinces of the Colony "which shall consist of the Head Chiefs whose headquarters are situated within the Province."[5] Each paramount could be attended by as many as eight of his own council who, in turn, represented the various divisions of the state, and no decisions were to be taken without their consent. The paramounts then elected delegates to the national legislative council. Thus the democratic character of the native institutions was preserved, the more so in view of the fact that any chief could be destooled by his people if they found his leadership unsatisfactory.

Governor Guggisberg had planned that the provincial councils should not only perform an elective function but should also give the paramounts and their councilors an opportunity to consult on

[2] Magnus Sampson, *Gold Coast Men of Affairs Past and Present*, p. 35. This statement occurs in the introduction which was written by Dr. Danquah.

[3] For a full account of this important reconciliation and for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the chiefs and the intelligentsia see Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, chap. v.

[4] Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, *Petition for Amendment of the Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925; Petition to the House of Commons*, 1935.

[5] *Gold Coast Colony (Legislative Council) Order in Council, 1925*, clause 16.

subjects of common welfare and to advise the government in any projected legislation affecting the people. He had also foreseen the value of interprovincial meetings where the chiefs could discuss the interests of the Colony as a whole and thus replace sectional views by a wider outlook. While there were several such interprovincial conferences during the early 1930's, the joint provincial council system was not definitely established until 1932.

Besides the political problems of the early part of the 1930 decade there were economic and social ones as well. In 1928 the new port of Takoradi was opened. It was soon found, however, that further deepening of the harbor was necessary as well as the building of a berth for oil tankers. A second loan of £1,170,000 at 4½ percent was made in 1931 in addition to the earlier one of 1925. In view of the economic depression that was being felt in the Gold Coast as elsewhere by that time, it proved to be a heavy financial burden.

Results of the slump in world prosperity were evident as early as 1929, when the price of cocoa dropped suddenly from £50 to £41 a ton, and in 1930 to as low as £20.[6] By that year, too, the annual revenue of the Dependency was only about two and a half million pounds in contrast to over four million in 1927. This loss of revenue was due to three main causes. Because of lower cocoa prices less was collected from export taxes. Secondly, the import receipts on liquor fell some 50 percent in 1930, due to ordinances which provided for gradual restriction of the importation of geneva and gin. In the third place, the accustomed revenues from the railroads dropped sharply. These reductions led to large budget deficits for the first time since 1924.

The question now arose as to whether there was any reserve on which the Colony could draw in such an emergency, or would it be necessary to balance the budget by sharp curtailment of expenses? It will be remembered that Guggisberg had so reorganized the finances of the Gold Coast in 1923 that the Colony had gradually built up a general reserve fund which at this time amounted to £1,200,000. This sum, however, was not to be used except with permission of London and only in the wholly exceptional case of complete failure of trade. In addition to the reserve fund, the Gold Coast had an accumulated surplus of over £2,000,000. This last sum might ease the situation for a time, but with a depreciated

[6] *G.C. An. Report, 1930.*

revenue of some £1,500,000 a year and with no assurance as to how long the Depression would last, the government was faced with the necessity of drastic reduction of expenses. It was in such a crisis that the danger of a one-crop economy became evident. Governor Slater therefore increased import taxes, curtailed developmental projects of every kind, lessened social services, and compulsorily retired over 200 European and African officials before the end of their term of office.[7] When even these reductions did not appear sufficient, in his budget address of 1931 he suggested that an income tax be levied throughout the Gold Coast Colony. Up to this time all revenues had resulted from indirect levies, the bulk coming from import and export duties. The Africans had always felt a strong resentment against any form of direct taxation and earlier attempts to introduce it had failed. Though the rate suggested by Governor Slater was very low—six shillings on the pound—it aroused widespread criticism from both the African and European inhabitants. In the legislative council the provincial and municipal members gave evidence of their growing unanimity of purpose by a joint opposition to the bill. They argued that it was unjust to introduce an income tax until every source of revenue had been tapped. They suggested that the salaries of the British staff be cut, since this was being done in England and in other countries faced with Depression deficits. They saw no reason why the general reserve fund should not be used. The representative from Accra, Dr. Nanka-Bruce who was its leading physician, stressed the fact that the people in the cities were suffering from unemployment and that their health was beginning to show the strain of hard times. He believed that it was a most unpropitious time to introduce a measure which would only serve to increase suffering and unrest. The people, he held, would prefer to have all government services—even those for health—cut still further rather than pay an income tax.[8] He argued further that it was unjust to impose a levy without an increase in self-government.

In every country where direct taxation is imposed there must be equal representation. I will only put this proposition: Is the government prepared to give this country full representation and is government prepared

[7] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1930, p. 16, and 1931, p. 266.

[8] *Ibid.*, 1931, pp. 367–84. It is probable that the greater majority of the natives, not understanding the true nature of an income tax, were influenced by the criticism of an interested minority. There has always been, however, a prejudice against any form of regular taxation.

to give the control of our finances to the people of this country? If not, it is better that we remain where we are and try to balance our budget in some other way.[9]

The colonial secretary answered these objections with the statement that he did not see why responsible government was any more necessary for direct taxation than it was for indirect; that the prejudice of the Gold Coast against taxation would have to be dropped in these bad times; that if salaries were cut, the Colony could no longer expect to get able officials, and finally that the one great weakness of the Dependency was its lack of a sense of personal responsibility to contribute toward the expenses of the state.

The governor finally ended this prolonged budget session by telling the councilors that he had never intended to leave the unofficial members unrepresented on a commission of investigation. A finance committee was then formed which included Nana Sir Ofori Atta and Dr. Nanka-Bruce as well as both official and unofficial European members.

The Africans eventually won their point, for the next budget made no provision for an income tax, and in 1932 an ordinance was passed which required a 4 to 10 percent levy on all official salaries.

The following year the Gold Coast still faced a budget deficit, due largely to the heavy charges of the loans made in the 1920's. Governor Shenton Thomas, who replaced Slater in the fall of 1932, now suggested a local or stool tax to be collected by the chiefs. This would enable each state to pay for its own needs and thus relieve the central government. In addition it would be of immense value in training the Africans to civic responsibility. He promised that the matter of the income tax would be dropped until the Depression was over. The chiefs, however, did not approve of his suggestion for a local tax, and nothing more was done about it at the time.

By 1934 world trade had begun to improve and the danger of budget deficits was apparently over. In comparison to other colonies the Gold Coast had come through those trying years with relative ease and with its reserve fund untouched. During one of the legislative sessions of that year, the chiefs thanked the governor for the cut which had been made in official salaries, and voted that this reduction be discontinued.

Before leaving the discussion of the Gold Coast finances during these years, there is one more point it would be wise to consider. The

[9] *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 385.

government loan of £4,000,000 made in 1920 bore an interest rate of 6 percent. Those made in 1925 and 1931 amounted to £5,750,000 at 4½ percent. These debt charges proved a very heavy burden during the early 1930's and both the African and unofficial European members of the council suggested conversions at a lower rate of interest. If this action had been taken the Colony would have saved at least £177,500 a year. When pressed to give reasons for his refusal to convert the loans, Governor Thomas answered that the Gold Coast had greatly benefited by the increased transportation facilities which this money had made possible. It would be unfair to ask the shareholders to lower their income for improvements received by another country.[10] High interest rates were, of course, common during the 1920's; but the failure to convert these loans during the Depression, and the earlier mistake of not having used equity capital, have been the subject of much criticism, not only by the Africans but by Englishmen interested in colonial welfare.[11]

The spring session of the 1934 legislative council opened auspiciously with Governor Thomas' congratulations on the improving financial condition of the Colony. But before the session was over, it had developed into one of the most difficult a Gold Coast governor ever had to face. The chief cause of the dissatisfaction was two new ordinances proposed by the government, one concerned with the water supply, and the other with the prosecution of seditious acts.

The purpose of the former, the Waterworks ordinance, was to shift the cost of the pipe-borne water supply in Accra, Sekondi, and Cape Coast from the general revenue of the Colony to the cities' inhabitants. The attorney general very justly pointed out that it was not fair to use money supplied by the Colony as a whole to provide for the improvements of individual cities, and that in all other parts of the world, municipalities expected to pay for such services. As was usual on questions of direct taxation, not only the municipal representatives but all the African councilors objected to the bill. They argued that the citizens were too poor at this time to bear another levy in addition to the local house rates. Probably they feared the

[10] *Ibid.*, 1933, p. 7.

[11] See for example: Rita Hinden, *Plan for Africa*, pp. 149–55, 171; Lord Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 1324; M. Dowuona, "Economic and Social Development of the Gold Coast," *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future*, p. 23. In 1945, a part of the 6 percent £4,000,000 loan was repaid from the Gold Coast sinking fund, while the remainder was converted to a 3 percent basis. This conversion reduced the annual loan charges from £265,000 to £80,400.

criticism of their own people on so delicate a point as further taxation, especially as so much unrest had been caused by the recent proposal for an income tax. More fundamental than either of these reasons was the fact that the bill left the control of the water rate entirely in the hands of the governor and his executive council. In spite of the protests of the African councilors, the bill was passed by the usual vote of 20 to 9—twenty ayes of the European official and unofficial members against the nine nays of the Africans.[12] The Africans, feeling themselves helpless before the official majority, wrote: "the waterworks ordinance reeks with unfettered bureaucracy."[13]

If the Waterworks bill aroused such dissatisfaction, the Sedition amendment was to cause far greater unrest and lead to very strained relations between the government and the Africans. Ordinance 21 of 1934 provided for various changes in the criminal code of the Colony, including Clauses 4 and 5 which extended the former definition of sedition and the manner in which it was to be punished. The reason for this new policy was not so much that literature of a radical nature had been imported into the Gold Coast but rather the general political unrest which was evident during these years of economic crisis. The government believed that the extremist views taken by certain sections of the local press at that time would only serve to intensify dissatisfaction and foster race prejudice.[14] During the debates over the ordinance, the attorney general explained that writings which tended to incite one class or one race against another were particularly dangerous in a colony with so many illiterates.[15] The Africans answered that they understood the necessity of a law against sedition, which, in fact, the Colony had had since 1892. It was the manner in which it differed from the sedition law in England to which they objected. According to the Gold Coast version it was a criminal offense even to have seditious material in one's possession and the onus of proof was put on the defendant rather than on the prosecutor. Moreover, it was the governor rather than the courts who was to decide what material was of a seditious nature. In reply, the government pointed out that the African was protected since no prosecution would take place without the consent of the

[12] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1934, p. 114.

[13] Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, *Petition to the House of Commons*, Section 58.

[14] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1934, I, 155.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

attorney general, and in that case the defendant would go before the courts for trial. The Africans were not satisfied with these explanations and the ordinance passed the second reading with the usual division between African and European votes.[16]

Two laws, then, the Waterworks bill and the Sedition code ordinance had been passed within the same session over the united protests of the African members. Public opinion was aroused and some of the population felt the time had come to demand of the colonial office in London an investigation of the recent legislation. In spite of some recent disagreements between the intelligentsia and the chiefs over local administration, the two groups were firmly united in their opposition to the 1934 ordinances. They believed that the time had come to oppose not only this particular legislation, but to broaden their attack to the whole constitutional field and demand increased political powers. It is in this combined effort that the fundamental unity of the two groups is particularly evident. Though conflicts appear again in later years this ground of common purpose must not be forgotten. As a result of this co-operation a committee of Accra citizens, organized to arrange for a Gold Coast delegation to England, obtained the chiefs' full political and financial support. Nana Sir Ofori Atta, the provincial leader, and Dr. Frederick Nanka-Bruce and Mr. Korsah, municipal representatives of Accra and Cape Coast respectively, headed the delegation, which included five other outstanding men from both the Colony and Ashanti. The members decided not to confine their requests merely to a withdrawal of the unpopular bills, but to ask for general constitutional reforms. The petition which they presented to the colonial secretary in July 1934 included, therefore, demands for the elimination of the official majority on the legislative council, for permanent African representation on the governor's executive council, and for the eligibility of nonchiefs as provincial members of the legislative council.[17] While the petition was refused at the time and the delegates returned home with practically nothing to repay them for the time and considerable expense involved, the decade of the 1940's was eventually to see their requests granted. The strong opposition put up by the African members of the legislative council against the water and sedition

[16] *Ibid.*, I, 56.

[17] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1934, pp. 225–27. *Papers Relating to the Petition of the Delegation from the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti*, Sessional Paper No. XI of 1934. (Accra, 1934.)

bills indirectly had a beneficial result, however, for it made the general populace realize for the first time that the unofficial members were really interested in public opinion and not just in their own personal welfare.

During this same summer of 1934, the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society decided to send its own delegation to England. The members of the Society represented the extremist group of the intelligentsia who were still dissatisfied with the 1925 constitution and who had not taken part in the conciliatory movement which was uniting the chiefs and many of the educated leaders for co-operative political action. Since it did not agree with the petition of this group it prepared one of its own. When the Society's delegates were refused a hearing by the King-in-Council, they turned in desperation to the House of Commons. On May 29, 1935, Sir Arnold Wilson presented the Society's petition to the House.[18] This document asked, as did Ofori Atta's petition, for a withdrawal of the 1934 legislation, but herein the resemblance ended. Instead of accepting the 1925 constitution and going on from there to ask for further political rights it returned to conditions as they existed in the nineteenth century and contrasted the "liberal and considerate spirit" shown by the British in the 1844 treaty with present policy. The whole argument lacked a realistic outlook and showed that the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society was still fostering an antagonism against the provincial councils and against the position of the chiefs.

On August 16, 1935, over a year after their arrival in London, the representatives of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society were finally received by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies. Though the legal advisers of the two delegates were not allowed at the meeting, the Africans were able to state their case fully. Their demand for an inquiry into the affairs of the Gold Coast by the Colonial Office, however, was rejected.[19] They then determined to remain in London until they received satisfaction. Several Labour members of the House of Commons believed that the delegation had been unfairly treated, and they endeavored to help the Africans. From time to time throughout 1935–1936, they brought the case of the Gold Coast to the attention of the House.[20] Though the Soci-

[18] *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 302, col. 1103; Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, *Petition to the House of Commons*.

[19] *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th. ser., Commons, Vol. 312, cols. 374 and 1024.

[20] *Ibid.*, Vol. 304, cols. 2065–2066 and 2126; Vol. 312, col. 1505; Vol. 313, cols. 1013–1014.

ety's petition was never reconsidered, and the Africans eventually returned home, some good appears to have resulted from the efforts of the two delegations. The water bill was not enforced until 1938, when the population could better afford to pay the rates, and very few prosecutions took place as a result of the Sedition ordinance.

When a new governor, Sir Arnold Hodson, replaced Sir Shenton Thomas in the autumn of 1934, it was evident from the tone of the new governor's first address to the legislative council that he was determined to show more sympathy for the interests of the Africans than had been done in recent years. It is only fair to point out, however, that the governorships of Slater and Thomas had coincided with the difficult and trying years of the Depression. Now that prosperity was returning, Hodson had the pleasant task of initiating developmental projects and of appointing Africans to at least some of the positions which these new activities made possible. Ofori Atta and others remarked in the council that since his coming the cooperation between the government and the people was "very much closer and more cordial than it had been in the past."[21]

Hodson came to the Gold Coast in the fall of 1934 and in November gave his first address to the legislative council. At this time he confined his remarks to generalities, and carefully avoided any of the issues which had caused so much friction in the past. The promulgation of the Waterworks ordinance, as has been seen, was delayed until 1938, while little was done to enforce the new sedition law, and the imposition of an income tax was never attempted during Hodson's term of office. Although these problems were avoided for the time being, it was growing increasingly evident that some changes must be made in the ordinance governing native administration. In the first place, the bill had been poorly drafted. It was so intricate that the Africans easily misunderstood it, and the law courts found it hard to apply. On one occasion the attorney general of the Gold Coast remarked that "the architects of this measure left a somewhat unwelcome legacy to their successors who tore their hair in despair in endeavours to get it in shape."[22]

In addition to its poor form the ordinance was faulty in that it made provision neither for stool treasuries nor for proper judicial

[21] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1936, p. 119; *ibid.*, 1935, p. 127; for criticism of Hodson, however, see J. B. Danquah, *Liberty of the Subject* (Kibi, Gold Coast, n.d.), pp. 21–24.

[22] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1936, p. 60.

supervision by British officials. Unless the government of the chiefs were efficiently carried on, they could never hope to merit the respect of the educated Africans or to obtain their co-operation in local affairs. Due to the laissez faire policy of the period prior to 1920, the paramounts had not received the training and supervision which would have helped them to improve local government according to modern needs.

Though the intelligentsia had often co-operated with the chiefs in the legislative council, they still remained critical of their methods of government. They had much to criticize, of course, for rural administration was inefficient and sometimes corrupt. In spite of this attitude, however, the municipal members usually opposed native administration amendments intended to improve local government. They were suspicious of any measure which would give the British further power of supervision over rural institutions. They feared that if the chiefs had increased powers they might become, on the one hand, autocratic or on the other, mere puppets of the government officials. The British in their turn urged the educated citizens of each state to take an interest in local government and become members of the various councils—village, divisional, or *oman*—so that the old complaint that there was no place for the intelligentsia in the civic life of the Gold Coast would no longer be true. Once on these councils, they could use their influence and training to raise the standard of native administration.

During the 1930 decade the government made several attempts to introduce regular local taxation, sound treasury systems, and more efficient courts. Sometimes the chiefs themselves objected to these measures, but usually it was the municipal members who tried to prevent the passage of such legislation. On one occasion when an urban representative was blocking an amendment which would strengthen local government, Nana Sir Ofori Atta broke out in disgust:

> If I listen to these Barristers I often wonder what they really think of the Chiefs. One day they would say to the Chiefs "You are our Almighty God" and the next day the Chiefs would not be worthy of the respect due to the scavenger.[23]

[23] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1936, p. 85. Several of the chiefs speak very good English. Others have not a full command of the language, but they manage, nevertheless, to express themselves clearly and forcefully. There has been a very marked improvement in the debates of the chiefs over the years 1926–1946.

Similarly Nana Acquah III, the paramount of Winneba, added that if the municipal members were not curbed, the authority of the chiefs would soon be completely undermined.[24]

The lack of definite annual revenue and efficiently managed treasuries was perhaps the outstanding weakness of the native government. Most of the population objected to the establishment of stool treasuries because they feared it would lead to the imposition of regular local taxes. In 1931 an amendment (Ordinance 23) allowed the chiefs to inaugurate treasuries, but no use was made of the permission. The paramounts feared destoolment. In some of the native states, especially in the Western Province where the large gold mines were located, substantial royalties were annually paid to various stools by European companies. This money was sometimes extravagantly spent by African officials rather than applied to those social and economic improvements which were pressingly needed and which would have benefited the entire population. In other states which had neither mines nor cocoa plantations as sources of wealth, a wisely controlled budget was even more necessary.

Prior to 1936 such states depended on court fees or occasional levies for their finances. No public accounting was made as to how the money was spent and there was often much dissatisfaction on this score. Since the 1931 ordinance already permitted state treasuries, the present problem was to get the chiefs to avail themselves of this right. Two other ordinances were introduced in 1936 and 1939, making it legal for a chief to impose regular taxation, provided his state council agreed and had the governor's permission. The British officials did all they could to get the various chiefs to apply the ordinances, as improvement in local government and the expansion of needed social services depended so largely on a sound financial structure. Response was slow at first, but gradually opposition weakened, especially after the governor promised a share of central government funds to those states which had satisfactory treasury systems.

Another amendment which made possible further improvements was Ordinance 18 of 1935 which allowed the district commissioners a right of supervision over the native tribunals, which were sometimes notoriously corrupt, and gave them a restricted authority to review judgments.

[24] *Ibid.*

The native administration was also strengthened by an increasing use of the provincial councils. Governor Guggisberg had hoped that they would be of much value in uniting the sixty-three small states and in widening the outlook of the various chiefs. His hopes were not in vain and once the first antagonism had broken down, these chiefs came to be regarded as the mouthpiece of the people. As early as 1929 occasional intercouncil committees conferred on subjects of common interest. This movement led to the inauguration of joint provincial councils, which were meetings of the three councils as one, whenever united action was desirable. They also provided for a standing committee made up of four representatives from each province, with a chairman elected for a two-year term. Its purpose was to give advice or take action on matters referred to it by the councils, to consider the agenda for the annual sessions of the provincial councils, and to make recommendations for their adoption or rejection. Its successful development has been thus described:

> The Standing Committee has within a very short time of its existence made its influence felt and is fast becoming an indispensable factor in the Provincial Council system. Guided, therefore, along right channels and with the State Councils and the State Treasury developed, the Provincial Councils may in the near future grow to be a strong bulwark of our heritage.[25]

This quotation, showing the high place the council has come to hold in the political life of the Gold Coast is probably representative of general public opinion. Appreciation of native government by the intelligentsia had at first, as we have seen, been characteristic of only a few far-sighted leaders. Only very gradually did this prejudice begin to break down. It was possibly the united action of the paramounts in 1937 in putting over an economic boycott against European firms which won these chiefs the greatest respect of the professional classes.

This boycott, or "cocoa holdup" as it was popularly termed, was the direct result of an agreement on the part of European companies to control the cocoa market in both the Gold Coast and Nigeria.[26]

[25] Magnus Sampson, "A Starting Point in Native Institutions," Achimota Discussion Group, *Pointers to Progress*, edited by C. T. Shaw (Achimota, 1942), p. 34.

[26] The text of the agreement is given in *Report of the Commission on the Marketing of West African Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, 1938, Appendix J. (Hereafter cited as *Report on Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, 1938.)

As has been seen, the economic life of the Colony depends to a very large extent on cocoa because in some years as much as two-thirds of the entire revenue has come from the tax levied on its export. The world price fluctuated severely during the period 1918–1938, going as high as £122 a ton in 1920 and dropping to £18 in 1930. This unfortunate dependence on a one-crop economy caused much distress and uncertainty in the Colony and led the peasant farmer, in his ignorance of the forces of world economics, to suspect that alien capitalists were to blame for the situation. In actual fact the trouble was due in part to a faulty organization of the cocoa industry within the Colony itself, in part to the situation resulting from the intense competition among the cocoa-buying firms of West Africa, and to some extent also to the unsatisfactory state of the world market for primary produce.[27]

In the mid-thirties the price per ton averaged about £21, but in 1936 various local and foreign influences combined to send it up to £44. The following year the fourteen major firms dealing in Gold Coast and Nigerian cocoa made a secret buying agreement whose purpose was to control the price and prevent the ruinous intercompany rivalry. Several of these firms, especially the United Africa Company, also controlled the bulk of imports into the Gold Coast and had established merchandise stores throughout the Dependency. If the agreement had succeeded, the African would probably have found that both the buying of his products and the sale of European imports would have been in the hands of a single combine.

In the fall of 1937 rumor of the pending agreement began to leak out among the Africans. Seven years earlier they had suffered in a similar situation and the price of their cocoa had been greatly lowered. This time they decided to reject it. By October the farmers of the Gold Coast Colony, of Togoland, and of Ashanti had united under the guidance of their chiefs or of farmers' unions in a solid determination to resist to the bitter end. Not only did they refuse to sell any cocoa whatsoever, but they boycotted the retail stores of the firms connected with the pool. The holdup lasted from October until the end of April and involved an almost complete stoppage of

[27] A further discussion of the cocoa industry will be found in chapter viii. Several good accounts of this problem have been written. Besides the excellent parliamentary report of 1938 there is a thought-provoking discussion in MacMillan, *Europe and West Africa*, pp. 80–92. A survey of a typical cocoa village is given by W. R. Beckett, *Akokoaso: A Survey of a Gold Coast Village* (London, 1943). The *Gold Coast Annual Report* has good summaries on the cocoa industry.

the economic life of the Dependency. The great personal suffering it entailed was borne bravely, in the hope that once and for all the threat of a monopoly might be removed.[28]

Governor Hodson believed that he should maintain a strictly neutral policy throughout the crisis. That he endeavored to do so can perhaps be concluded from the fact that both the European firms and the Africans accused him of favoring the opposite side.[29]

In November representatives of the government, of the buyers' firms, and of the Africans met in Accra for conferences, in the hope of reaching a satisfactory settlement. As the European merchants refused to give up their agreement, Hodson suggested that, in view of the great harm the boycott was causing, the producers give the plan one season's trial, with the understanding that they could resubmit their case if they were dissatisfied. Because of the remarkable co-operation which the joint provincial council and the farmers' leaders were able to obtain from the entire population, Ofori Atta, the representative of the Africans, was in a position to refuse the governor's plan and to hold out for a complete abandonment of the agreement. Consequently the boycott continued and in March a parliamentary committee, under the chairmanship of William Nowell, arrived in the Gold Coast to study the whole problem of the West African cocoa market. By the end of April it succeeded in negotiating a truce between the producers and the buyers, and within the next four months the whole of the accumulated stocks, amounting to some 476,000 tons, were sold.

The Nowell Commission afterwards published a very full report covering the cocoa problem in general, the history of the holdup, and its recommendations for future policy. It strongly condemned not only the merchants' attempt to control the price but also the inefficient and often dishonest methods of the African brokers and middlemen.

During the boycott, the European companies complained that the strike was not the wish of the farmers at all, but was fomented by radical agitators and encouraged by the chiefs for reasons of personal gain. They condemned the government for a weak policy in not forcibly breaking the holdup. The Nowell Commission, however, reported that the Africans had been almost one hundred per-

[28] J. B. Danquah, *Liberty of the Subject* (Kibi, Gold Coast, n.d.), pp. 9–24. This pamphlet gives an interesting account of the holdup by an African writer.

[29] *Report on Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, 1938, Sections 181 and 219.

cent behind the movement and had supported the chiefs' actions. It approved of Hodson's efforts to remain neutral and stated that "we consider that the local government acted throughout with tact and that credit is due to Sir Arnold Hodson and his officers for their handling of a very delicate situation."[30] It recommended that for the future the government help the producers to combine into some sort of co-operative selling organization of their own, and in conclusion it forthrightly stated that "*in all the circumstances it is our opinion that the Agreements should be finally withdrawn.*"[31]

Hodson consequently appointed a Gold Coast committee to study the possibilities of a local organization. The outbreak of the war in 1939 delayed the adoption of such a plan and during the war years the British government itself marketed the cocoa.

One of the outstanding results of the cocoa holdup was that the successful leadership of the chiefs in this affair strengthened the confidence and respect, both of the common people and the educated classes, for their authority. Thenceforward there appears to have been more co-operation between these two groups, though disagreements were sometimes to reappear. After the establishment of the joint provincial council, the chiefs took an ever more active part in the affairs of the Gold Coast as a whole, for these meetings opened their eyes to the general as well as to the purely local aspect of their problems. Among the topics discussed, the question of advanced government positions for Africans was one of those most frequently introduced. Sir Gordon Guggisberg had made definite plans for the gradual increase of Africans in positions usually held only by Europeans. According to this program "the number of Africans holding European appointments should steadily grow from 27 in 1925–26 to 151 in 1935–36."[32] But the plan had not been carried out, and in 1938 only forty-one Africans were in such positions. This failure to carry out Guggisberg's plan has naturally been most disappointing, both to the educational institutions which have trained the youth of the Gold Coast and to the Africans themselves. The latter have made many complaints,[33] and in 1938 the joint provincial council directed Ofori Atta to make another strong representation in the legislative council concerning the matter. The governor, in reply, promised to discuss the problem at the forthcoming conference of colonial gov-

[30] *Report on Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, 1938, Section 230. [31] *Ibid.*, Section 489.
[32] *Events, 1920–1926*, par. 225; see also chapter iv above.
[33] See for example Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, p. 153 ff.; and 1937, p. 97.

ernors[34] and the next year, 1939, he announced a new policy of government appointments. Plans were being made to establish an intermediate grade of officer. If a man proved competent he would then be given a scholarship for further training in England as a direct preparation for advancement.[35]

The sympathy between the chiefs and the educated classes which was increasing during the late 1930's was evident in the establishment of the Gold Coast Youth Conference. This association was not a society but merely a convention, a calling together from time to time, of the various societies and clubs of the Gold Coast to discuss affairs of common interest to their members. Its aim was not meant to be political but rather to awaken the young people to the economic and social needs of their country.[36] One of the interesting characteristics of this association was that, while it was organized by Dr. Danquah and other professional men, it also counted many of the most important chiefs among its patrons. In one of its earliest publications it spoke with pride of the excellent work done by the joint provincial council and recognized that this body was in a position to win the co-operation of the various sections of the country and to guide them to united action.

Another organization of a somewhat different type was begun in the winter of 1939, namely, the Achimota Discussion Group, at first made up only of members of the college staff, but later enlarged to include representatives of the missions, the government, the provincial councils, and private citizens.

Here was an opportunity for that meeting of minds between the two races which was so necessary if co-operative action were to go on. The members planned to meet unofficially from time to time in order to talk over the various problems of the Gold Coast and to suggest possible solutions. The results of these conferences were published and they gave an excellent picture, not only of a certain section of public opinion but also of the friendly spirit which characterized the meetings. The idea of these study groups later spread to Ashanti and a successful conference was held in Kumasi.[37]

[34] Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1938, pp. 91, 100.

[35] *Ibid.*, 1939, I, 23, 196–97; see also chapter above.

[36] "Gold Coast Youth Conference; Its Constitution and History," *First Steps Towards a National Fund* (Accra, 1938), pp. 23–24.

[37] Achimota and Kumasi Discussion Groups, *Towards National Development; Post-War Gold Coast* (Achimota, 1945).

An Anglo-American mission group, when making a recent educational survey