

XIX.—1927—28.



# Papers

on the subject of the

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION

In continuation of Sessional Paper No. IX

1922-1923.

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Ordered by His Excellency the Governor to be printed.

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I.

*Despatch from the Governor to the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
ACCRA.  
21st December, 1922.

No. 874.

MY LORD DUKE,

With reference to paragraph 37 of Mr. Winston Churchill's Despatch No. 420 of the 7th June, 1922, I have the honour to transmit, herewith, twelve printed copies of the Report of the Committee which was appointed to enquire into the working of the Sisal Plantation at Accra and the prospects of the cultivation of Sisal in the future.

I have, etc.,

F. G. GUGGISBERG.  
Governor.

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.  
&c., &c., &c.

II.

*Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor.*

DOWNING STREET,  
5th February, 1923.

No. 110.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 874 of the 21st of December, forwarding copies of the Report of a Committee appointed to enquire into the working of the Sisal Plantation at Accra.

2. At the time that this project was originally conceived you anticipated a profit of at least £15 10s. 0d. on each ton of sisal produced. This estimate was based upon a price of between £35 and £40 a ton at the port of export, representing approximately £65 a ton in England. The price, however, of sisal has dropped since that date to an average of about £25 a ton at the present time. At this price the Committee estimates that the annual profits of the plantation will amount to a maximum of about £5,500 a year, in which event the capital expenditure of £35,000 which will, according to the estimate, be required before the plantation is in full bearing, be paid off in about seven years.

3. There can, however, be no guarantee that the price will remain at £25 a ton, as I am given to understand that before the war it had fallen as low as £10 a ton at one time. Any further drop in the price will seriously affect the prospects of the plantation becoming a profitable concern, and I shall be glad to learn whether you propose to continue the experiment.

I have, etc.,

DEVONSHIRE.

GOVERNOR,

BRIGADIER GENERAL

SIR F. G. GUGGISBERG, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.,  
&c., &c., &c.

## III.

*Despatch from the Governor to the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
ACCRA.  
26th March, 1923.

No. 252.

MY LORD DUKE,

In reply to Your Grace's Despatch No. 110 of 5th February, 1923, relating to the prospects of commercial success of the Accra Sisal Plantation, I have the honour to transmit, herewith, a copy of a letter on the subject by the Director of Agriculture to whom Your Grace's despatch was referred. I am in agreement with the Director of Agriculture in thinking that the experiment should be continued and I have every hope that the plantation will be in bearing early in 1924.

2. I shall be glad to have an opportunity of discussing this question at the Colonial Office during my forthcoming visit to England.

I have, etc.,

F. G. GUGGISBERG,  
*Governor.*

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE, K.G.  
&c., &c., &c.

*Enclosure to No. III.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
GOLD COAST, 9th March, 1923.

ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION.

As requested in your letter No. 1541/S.S.110/23 dated 6th March, I submit the following observations:—

(a) The latest quotations for African Sisal on the London market, e.g., on 8th February are £36 10s. 0d.; £35 10s. 0d. and £34 per ton according to quality and grade. It has been fairly stationary round these prices for about a year now after falling from the high prices to which, like other products, it soared at the end of the war.

(b) The Committee have based their estimates of revenue on £25 per ton (the average pre-war price).

(c) The market price at the present time is fully £10 above that and this is at a period when practically every other tropical product—at least every product we have to dispose of—is now fetching less than pre-war rates.

(d) The fact that Sisal maintains a comparatively higher price than pre-war under adverse trade conditions, rather tends to indicate that the figure £25 taken by the Committee may be a conservative one, and that therefore the profits may exceed the Committee's estimate.

We have, however, no guarantee that prices will remain at the present level but there is a considerable margin between the present price and that at which the product would be no longer profitable.

(e) I have therefore no hesitation in recommending that the experiment should be continued especially as there are good prospects of the outlay being recovered.

W. S. D. TUDHOPE,  
*Director of Agriculture.*

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,  
VICTORIABORG, ACCRA.

IV.

*Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor.*

DOWNING STREET,

30th April, 1923.

No. 359.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Sir F. Guggisberg's Despatch No. 252 of the 26th March, transmitting a report by the Director of Agriculture on the prospects of the Accra Sisal Plantation.

2. I have conferred with Sir F. Guggisberg on the subject, and in view of his representations I agree that the experiment may be continued for two years from the present date, at the end of which time it should be possible to determine whether it would be successful and, if it so appears, to hand it over to be conducted in future by private enterprise.

I have, etc.,

DEVONSHIRE.

THE OFFICER ADMINISTERING  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE GOLD COAST.

V.

*Despatch from the Governor to the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

ACCRA,

11th November, 1924.

No. 898.

SIR,

With reference to your despatch No. 735 dated 6th August, 1924, I have the honour to forward, herewith, reports by the Director of Agriculture upon the working of the Sisal Hemp Plantation near Accra, for the months August and September, together with a Schedule giving details of production costs for August and September.

2. I attach also, for your information, a Table giving the total capital charges incurred on the plantation and machinery up to 30th June, 1924.

3. Interest charges at 6% per annum upon the net total £34,384 4s. 4d. will absorb £2,063 1s. 1d. while depreciation on the cost of the machinery, factory and railway reckoned at 10% will amount to £687 13s. 1d. per annum.

4. It will be noted that a very heavy item of monthly expenditure is the cost of water: this is at present supplied by Accra Waterworks at the full rate of 7/- per thousand gallons.

5. The cost of production for September has been almost halved compared with previous months, due to a larger output of fibre being obtained and I trust that you will agree with me that these figures show satisfactory progress. I have issued instructions for a balance sheet to be submitted with the annual report on the plantation.

6. Twenty-four tons, three hundred-weights, of fibre have been shipped, but no information has been received up to the present regarding the price realised.

7. The Duke of Devonshire in his despatch No. 359 dated 30th April, 1923, approved of the plantation being continued for two years from that date, after which if the plantation is successful, it is to be handed over to private enterprise.

8. I am of opinion that there is every prospect of success for this experiment, but it will be necessary if the plantation is to be handed over to private enterprise for it to be in perfect condition; this, as the Acting Director of Agriculture points out, necessitates those portions of the plantation which have been reaped, being re-planted, so that a continuous supply of sisal leaves may be assured.

9. I propose therefore, with your approval, to provide in the Estimates for 1925-26 funds for the replanting of the Sisal Plantation.

I have, etc.,

F. G. GUGGISBERG,  
Governor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,  
J. H. THOMAS, M.P.  
&c., &c., &c.

*Enclosure I to No. V.*

#### REPORT ON SISAL HEMP PLANTATION.

The plantation continues to make very satisfactory progress, more particularly the younger areas where appreciable growth was made.

The crop is as healthy as could well be desired.

A small outbreak of Caterpillar of the moth *Plusia acuta* was again experienced but was very quickly controlled by natural enemies and little damage resulted.

It is now 3 to 3½ years since the oldest portion of the plantation was planted and in consequence that part is now ready to be reaped.

The preparation of the factory site was commenced in June, 1923, in anticipation of receiving the buildings in September of that year. Owing, however, to unfortunate delays in England, the factory buildings and machinery did not arrive until early in February, 1924.

The principal machinery that has been installed consists of:—

- (1) One Robey decorticating machine,
- (2) One automatic belt-driven brushing machine,
- (3) One hydraulic baling press to make bales weighing 2 cwts.  
and
- (4) One double cylinder 100 B.H.P. two-cycle crude oil engine.

A branch line half a mile long has been laid from the Weshiang Railway to the factory.

Two and a half miles of light railway have been laid through the plantation, and a line for the tip trucks for removal of refuse has been completed.

The trucks bringing in the leaves are at present worked by hand but a light motor engine has been ordered from England. The pushing of the loaded trucks is laborious, costly and slow and the replacement of the labour by power wherever possible is absolutely essential.

The installation of the machinery was completed by the Public Works Department by June, 1924, but the engine did not run satisfactorily and its re-adjustment was not completed until July.

The decortication commenced in June when 6 cwts. of carefully picked fibre was sent to the Empire Exhibition.

From July 8-21 no decortication took place owing to breakdown of the engine referred to above and during August work was hampered by local labourers staying only a few days in some cases and the necessity for training others in their places.

Up to the end of August, 12 tons of first grade fibre and 2 tons of second grade had been prepared, in addition to the 6 cwts. of Exhibition fibre.

As the men become more expert in their work in the factory, the output will naturally improve and it is estimated that in September it will reach 20 tons a month.

Arrangements have been made to dispose of the produce through Messrs. Wigglesworth & Co., London, shipments to commence this month. Sample bales have been handed to the Agent of the Woerman line for the purpose of testing the market in Hamburg.

Factory hours are from 6 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. with breaks of quarter of an hour breakfast and 1 hour lunch. This permits of the leaves from approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres to be treated in a day. At this rate, however, the area of mature sisal cannot be dealt with during the year. Proposals are being drafted for working 2 shifts a day instead of one, which would effect economy in running owing to reducing the proportion of time taken in starting, etc., as well as enable the area of mature sisal to be dealt with in a reasonable time.

The first measured yield was 14 cwts. of fibre per acre. But the area first cut—the oldest—was not the best growth and an area is now being approached which is estimated to give a greater yield.

As regards cost of operating the machines, the only full month of work—August—was not one with properly trained gangs, hence the cost of production is relatively high.

The following is a statement of factory costs :—

*August, 1924.*

LABOUR.

Reaping leaves	...	...	...	...	£45	4	6
Transporting to factory	...	...	...	...	74	18	2
Decortication and removing refuse	...	...	...	...	46	4	6
Brushing	...	...	...	...	10	15	3
Drying	...	...	...	...	24	1	6
Sorting and hanking	...	...	...	...	37	3	3
Baling	...	...	...	...	4	9	9
Engine	...	...	...	...	8	0	0
General (Overseer and clerk)	...	...	...	...	27	0	0
Plantation work	...	...	...	...	14	0	0

Carried forward £291 16 11

Brought forward	...	...	...	£291 16 11
			<b>MATERIAL.</b>	
Fuel	...	...	...	24 13 6
Lubricating Oil	...	...	...	11 18 6
Petrol	...	...	...	2 14 3
Baling wire	...	...	...	2 18 0
Baling Canvas	...	...	...	11 7 6
Grease, waste, etc.	...	...	...	— 7 9
				<hr/>
				£345 16 5
				<hr/>

Area reaped—29 acres. Average yield fibre 11 cwts.

No. of working days—24.

Fibre output—240 cwts. grade 1. } Average factory cost per cwt.  
 40 cwts. grade 2. { £1 4s. 8d.

C. H. KNOWLES,  
*Acting Director of Agriculture,*  
 6th September, 1924.

*Enclosure 2 to No. V.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
 ACCRA.

13th October, 1924.

#### REPORT ON THE SISAL PLANTATION.—SEPTEMBER.

I beg to submit the attached month's financial statement in reference to the Accra Sisal Hemp Plantation. The monthly statement included all supervision, plantation and factory costs, but not interest on capital or overhead charges. It is satisfactory to notice that the costs per ton have been reduced to nearly half the figure for the previous month.

This is due principally to better results from the various machines, the labourers becoming more expert in their duties, and to the fact that cutting during the month was being done among a much better patch of plants—as is shown by the output of fibre being over double that for the previous months.

2. Of the various items, it will be seen that many of them show a substantial reduction in actual cost although the product dealt with was more than double that of last month.

3. The very large increase in Plantation expenses (Item B.8) is due to extra weeding necessary and the cost of moving the portable tramway line.

4. Transporting leaves is still a heavy item which will be reduced on the arrival of a small petrol locomotive ordered some time ago.

5. The product of the factory is divided into grade 1, grade 2 and tow, the total weight being used in calculating average cost.

6. The cost of water (7/- per 1,000 gallons) is a heavy item, but there is at present no alternative. The tank system of washing continues to be satisfactory and appears to be the most economical method available.

7. I suggest that the figures indicate satisfactory progress.

C. H. KNOWLES,  
*Acting Director of Agriculture.*

Enclosure 3 to No. V.

ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION.

FACTORY PRODUCTION COSTS FOR MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1924.

	Expenditure this month.	Expenditure previous months from 31st July, 1924.	Total to date.	Cost per ton of Fibre this month.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
A. European Supervision, Salaries, Passages and Allowances .. ..	95 0 0	95 0 0	190 0 0	3 2 6
B. 1. Cutting leaves .. .. .	35 17 6	45 4 6	81 2 0	1 3 7
2. Transporting leaves .. .. .	67 19 6	74 18 2	142 17 8	2 4 9
3. Decorticating and refuse .. .. .	43 1 6	46 4 6	89 6 0	1 8 4
<i>Labour.</i>				
4. Brushing Fibre .. .. .	10 6 6	10 15 3	21 1 9	0 6 10
5. Drying Fibre .. .. .	20 10 3	24 1 6	44 11 9	0 13 6
6. Sorting and Hanking .. .. .	31 17 0	37 3 3	69 0 3	1 0 11
7. Baling, Packing and Marking .. .. .	12 16 6	4 9 9	17 6 3	0 8 5
8. Plantation, Weeding, Roads, etc. .. .. .	67 16 9	14 0 0	81 16 9	2 4 8
9. Engine .. .. .	11 2 0	8 0 0	19 2 0	0 7 4
10. General—Overseer, Clerk, Watchman, etc. .. .. .	27 0 0	27 0 0	54 0 0	0 17 9

(6)



TABLE OF CAPITAL CHARGES INCURRED ON THE SISAL HEMP  
PLANTATION AND MACHINERY UP TO 30TH JUNE, 1924.

(a)	Compensation for land	...	...	...	£1,170	0	0
(b)	European supervision	...	...	...	5,120	12	11
(c)	Plantation	...	...	...	18,082	11	1
(d)	Cost of Factory, Machinery and Railway	...	...	...	6,876	11	0
(e)	Erection of Factory, Machinery, and Railway	...	...	...	3,545	17	9
(f)	Water charges to 30th June, 1924	...	...	...	10	12	0
					£34,806	4	9
	Less revenue 1920-24	...	...	...	422	0	5
	Net total cost	...	...	...	£34,384	4	4

## VI.

*Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor.*

DOWNING STREET,

5th December, 1924.

No. 1189.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 898 of the 11th of November forwarding reports by the Director of Agriculture upon the working of the Sisal Hemp Plantation near Accra, for the months of August and September.

2. I am glad to see that the Plantation gives signs of proving a success, and I approve of provision being made in the Estimates for 1925-26 for the costs of continuing to work it.

3. I have to add that as soon as sufficient figures of cost and production as well as of the amounts exported monthly and the prices realised are available to enable a reasonable judgment to be formed of the value of the Plantation, steps should be taken to obtain offers from private firms to take over the property. The Government can, of course, continue to work the Plantation until a reasonable offer is made.

I have, etc.,

L. S. AMERY.

GOVERNOR,

BRIGADIER-GENERAL,

SIR F. G. GUGGISBERG, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.

&C., &C., &C.

## VII.

*Despatch from the Governor to the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

ACCRA.

1st October, 1925.

No. 701.

SIR,

With reference to paragraph 2 of your despatch No. 664 of the 23rd July, 1925, I have the honour to transmit a further report on the progress of the Sisal Plantation, Accra, in respect of the period August 1st, 1924 to July 31st, 1925.

2. For the sake of convenience I have given instructions that the financial and other figures in the report are to be made up to the 31st March, 1925, in order that the next report may correspond to the financial year.

3. A copy of the report of the Committee appointed by the Governor to consider the financial position of the plantation, to which reference is made in the first paragraph of the Acting Director of Agriculture's report is also enclosed.

I have, etc.,

J. C. MAXWELL,

*Officer Administering the Government.*

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

L. S. AMERY, M.P.

&amp;c., &amp;c., &amp;c.

*Enclosure 1 to No. VII.*

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

## REPORT FOR THE WORKING YEAR AUGUST 1ST, 1924 TO JULY 31ST, 1925.

The Committee appointed by His Excellency the Governor in 1925 to consider the financial position of the plantation fixed August 1st 1924 as the day from which the enterprise might be regarded as a going concern. The first complete working year therefore ended on July 31st, 1925, and it is possible to form a reliable opinion on the question of annual costs of working and the general efficiency of the work.

A final statement of accounts cannot be given until all account sales of fibre shipped during the year and the Crown Agents' accounts for March, have been received. Available figures are given in the following Appendices to this report:—

- A. Summary of Monthly reappings and output.
- B. Local production costs for the year.
- C. Shipping and Marketing charges on six shipments.
- D. Total Disbursements for the year.
- E. Receipts, actual and estimated, for the year.

## OUTPUT AND YIELDS.

From Appendix "A" it will be seen that the factory worked for 217 days and produced 212 tons 8 cwts of fibre of all grades from 384½ acres. Of the total output, 263 cwts or 6.2% consisted of tow, and 93.8% of 1st and 2nd grade fibre.

The average output of fibre per working-day was 19½ cwts, and the average yield of fibre per acre 12.19 cwts. The percentage of fibre recovered from the green leaf was 3.1, a proportion similar to that obtained in other countries. The acre-yield of fibre was estimated at 1 ton and over by Mr. Lyne, but this figure was rejected by the Committee and Mr. Knowles' estimate of an average of about 10 cwts has proved near the true mark. The yields from different parts of the plantation showed great variations, monthly averages being :—

9.7, 20.0, 16.9, 15.5, 11.0, 14.0, 9.6, 9.1, 11.9, 12.5 and 10.0 cwts. per acre. The Superintendent, Mr. Symond, is of opinion that certain low-lying areas of poor productivity should not be replanted, and in future years it may be possible to increase the average yield by this means.

The existing plant is capable of a maximum output of 30 cwts fibre per day. Were it possible to attain this figure and to work for 250 days per year the output would be 7,500 cwts or the crop from 600 acres. The output of 4,248 cwts from 384 acres attained by the factory in its first year of working is therefore a creditable performance, in view of the novelty of the whole enterprise and the numerous difficulties experienced with labour, water and general adjustment.

## PRODUCTION COSTS.

The figures in Appendix "B" may be summarized briefly as follows :—

Supervision	£7.16	per ton of fibre
Labour	12.99	" "
Materials	7.02	" "
	<hr/>	
	£27.17	" "
	<hr/>	

The actual cost of supervision cannot be reduced, but the quota per ton will decrease as the area of the plantation and the annual output of the fibre increase. With a full working output of 7,500 cwts, the figure would fall to £4.05.

Other major items are plantation and roads (£3.44), purchase of water (£2.63), cutting leaves (£2.16), fuel (£2.07), and transporting leaves (£2.05). In the case of the first item, the figure includes £.83 per ton for planting new areas, which would properly be chargeable to capital but is included in running-cost on the advice of the Committee.

The fact that all water has had to be bought at a high price has naturally militated against efficiency. Market reports state that the colour of the fibre shipped has not been up to standard, and attribute this to insufficient washing. Refuse and waste which, with a plentiful supply of water, would be washed away, have now to be collected and moved by hand or by truck. The purchase of all water cost £558 18s. 0d. during the year (at 7/- per 1,000 gallons) and added a charge of £2.63 to every ton of fibre turned out. In the case of all fibres which need retting and washing, a cheap supply of water is regarded as necessary for efficiency.

In April 1925 an Austro-Daimler engine was put into operation on the tram lines and all green leaf transported by it to the factory. Previously, the trucks of leaves were pushed along the lines by hand. The economy effected by the engine is shewn in the following figures:—

Month.		Cost of labour for transport of leaves, per ton of fibre output.
August	1924	£5.35
September	„	2.23
October	„	2.24
November	„	2.43
December	„	3.06
January	1925	2.33
February	„	2.03
March	„	2.23
April	„	1.32
May	„	1.02
June	„	1.04
July	„	.68
		aver : 1st 4 months £2.75.
		aver : 2nd 4 months £2.45.
		aver : 3rd 4 months £.96.

The petrol consumption and the wear and tear of the engine are not included in these figures, but the driver and his assistant and all other labour are. It is clear that great economy has been effected.

Labour has been practically unobtainable in the neighbourhood of the factory, and labourers have had to be obtained from the Northern Territories on contract. Expenses of importation average £3 per head of labourers and of their wives and the latter do no work on plantation or factory.

It is probable that the efficiency of each line of work will increase in future years, as a result of experience and of improvements, and there will be some reduction in each item of production-costs. Scarcity of labour and the high cost of water will, however, continue to hamper the efficiency and economy of working.

#### SHIPPING AND MARKETING.

The charges under this heading are given in Appendix "C"; the figures being derived from the account sales of six shipments totalling over 97 tons.

The items are made up as follows:—

Ship	... ..	£4.05 per ton.
Insurance F. & M.	... ..	.75 per ton.
Agent's Expenses and charges	2.20	
		<hr/>
		£7.00

Certain of the agent's charges appear high. The items landing, sorting, sampling, shewing and rent are not shewn separately in account sales, and in consequence it is not possible to ascertain the exact amount of each, but they total £1.59 per ton, which seems an unduly high charge: commission, petties and postage are not included but appear as separate charges, the former being one per cent. of the selling price and the latter one guinea per shipment.

The freight charge on Cacao from Gold Coast to London is £2 7s. 6d. per ton as against £4 per sisal.

## PRICES.

Prices were satisfactory on all shipments, as shewn in the following table compiled from the first five account-sales received :—

21 cwts. 3 qrs. 11 lbs.	@	£43 10 0	per ton.
93 " 2 " 25 "	"	42 0 0	"
736 " 3 " 18 "	"	41 0 0	"
29 " 0 " 27 "	"	40 10 0	"
751 " 1 " 3 "	"	40 0 0	"
4 " 1 " 2 "	"	38 0 0	"
2 " 3 " 24 " (tow)	"	30 5 0	"
63 " 2 " 3 "	"	30 0 0	"
43 " 1 " 24 "	"	29 10 0	"

## RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE.

Total disbursements during the year are given in Appendix "D." They amount to £5,782 8s. 7d. for running costs, and £837 18s. 4d. which is properly chargeable to capital account but which by the decision of the Committee is to be current annual receipts.

The two total £6,620 6s 11d.

Receipts actual and estimated are given in Appendix "E" and the total is £6,849 18s. 7d. For the purposes of this return, unsold fibre has been estimated as worth £38 per ton which is below the average price. It has been assumed that the damaged unsaleable fibre was insured for the full value of £40 per ton, but the exact amount cannot be known until the Crown Agents' accounts are received. In both these cases, charges have been estimated at £7 per ton.

The difference between total revenue and expenditure for the year is given in the following summary :—

Total receipts	...	...	£6,849	18	7
Running Expenses	...	...	5,782	8	7
Gross Profit	...	...	£1,067	10	0
Less capital expenses charged to gross profit	...	...	837	18	4
			£229	11	8

These figures do not take into account overhead charges such as interest and depreciation. On 1st August, 1924, the outstanding liability to Government amounted to £35,398 4s. 0d. on which interest at 6% is chargeable, and the valuation of factory was £6,876 11s. and of buildings £3,855 3s. 9d.

Interest and depreciation amount to the following sums :—

£35,398 4 0 @ 6%		£2,123 17 10
6,876 11 0 @ 10%		687 13 1
3,855 3 9 @ 10%		385 10 4
Total overhead		£3,197 1 3

The estimated loss on the year's working is therefore (£3,197 1s. 3d.)— (£229 11s. 8d.) or £2,967 9s. 7d. a figure liable to minor alteration, when all accounts and account-sales have been received, but substantially correct.

Overhead charges constitute a burden of £15 per ton on fibre in the current year, or of £8 10s. per ton on a full crop of 375 tons. Invested capital on 1st August 1924, amounted to £35 per acre of plantation, a high capitalization for sisal. Mr. Knowles has pressed for a reduction of some £10,000 in the invested capital on the ground that this sum represents unnecessary expenditure and is more fairly chargeable against the industry generally than against the plantation.

#### GENERAL.

The plantation and factory were established in order to ascertain whether the large areas of semi-arid soil of the coastal belt could be profitably used for sisal-growing. The enterprise has been of the nature of an experiment and results must be judged from this point of view. The establishment of a new industry, on hitherto waste areas of land unsuitable for the usual crops, would be of such importance to the country that experiments on a reasonable large scale are fully justified. While every effort should be made to conduct an experiment of this kind in a manner likely to yield figures from which the true value of the industry can be gauged, the experiment cannot be judged in the same light as an undertaking started with the sole aim of immediate profit to the founder.

Several important and valuable facts have emerged from the results of the present experiment. Until this year, no figures were available as to yield of fibre per acre, and local estimates have been proved to have been too high. Methods of planting were not known locally. The production-costs are a source of valuable information as to expenses of operation, and these figures could not have been obtained from other countries. In addition, the suitability of local labour for various factory operations has been tested.

The novelty of the enterprise, the unnecessarily high cost of establishing the plantation, the high purchase-price of water, numerous labour difficulties, the cost of supervision, and lack of experience in handling the machinery have combined to cause a loss during the first year of working. In addition, shipping and selling charges are higher than would occur in a large stable industry.

In future years it is probable that costs of running will be considerably lessened in practically every item of factory and plantation work, with the exception of supervision and water. Smoother running combined with a larger out turn of fibre should bring about an improvement in most lines. In fairness to the experiment, another year of working is necessary, before the question of suitability of the industry to local conditions can be decided.

#### PLANTATION WORK.

The total area of the plantation is estimated by Mr. Symond as 1,000 acres, and in addition a further area of 40 acres has been added during the current year; the cost of this addition has been charged to current annual expenses.

The fields were free from any serious disease during the year, some minor cases of 'Sun-scorch' of the leaves being recorded: this is regarded by the Mycologist as a physiological trouble due, not to an organism, but to the alternatives of heat and rain occurring during the year.

The system hitherto adopted of keeping the plantation clean weeded has been found extremely expensive. This procedure is not necessary even in the case of young plantations of the far more delicate crop cacao, and is practised only on certain tea-estates where questions of disease make it absolutely necessary. In the case of a hardy crop such as sisal it should not be

necessary, even though a clean-weeded plantation may be more pleasing to the eye. The new area of 40 acres is being weeded three times only, between the date of planting and that of reaping. It is possible that a system of 'cutlassing' weeds, such as is used elsewhere, twice a year would be found quite satisfactory.

The area of 1,000 acres appears to be all that the present factory can handle. The maximum area which can be reaped and handled in one year is 600 acres. In the second year there would be 400 acres of uncut sisal, plus 2nd year cutting on 600 acres: a second year cutting appears likely to be of about the same magnitude as a first year cutting from the same plants, so that there would be left over 400 acres for the third year. In the fourth year some of the fields first cut would be coming into bearing with new plants.

Exact information on this point is not yet available, but the point is of importance in the event of a policy being devised of buying leaves from outside growers.

#### CONCLUSION.

I take this opportunity of mentioning with appreciation the care and attention which Mr. Symond and Captain Wingate, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, have bestowed on their work; the novelty of the work, and the difficulties incidental to getting the factory into working order, have needed incessant patience and labour.

G. AUCHINLECK,

*Acting Director of Agriculture.*

*September 8th, 1925.*

## Appendix " A. " to Enclosure 1 to No. VII.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

SUMMARY OF PRODUCTION AND COST FOR PERIOD AUGUST 1ST, 1924  
TO JULY 31ST, 1925.

Month.	No. of working days.	Acres Reaped.	Cwts. of Fibre produced.			Expenditure.
			Grade.			
			1	2	Tow.	
August 1924 .. ..	24	29.0	240	40	—	£467 8 5
September, 1924 .. ..	25	30.3	542	—	66	543 12 5
October, 1924 .. ..	21	29.5	458	12	30	470 17 6
November, 1924 .. ..	24	32.2	500	—	—	484 14 8
December, 1924 .. ..	12	20.0	220	—	—	363 12 2
January, 1925 .. ..	12	20.0	280	—	—	422 10 4
February, 1925 .. ..	8	10.3	100	—	—	297 18 2
March, 1925 .. ..	15	26.2	240	—	—	479 6 8
April, 1925 .. ..	16	26.9	268	14	38	402 7 0
May, 1925 .. ..	25	40.0	399	62	39	388 17 7
June, 1925 .. ..	11	36.0	136	18	26	633 9 5
July, 1925 .. ..	24	48.0	376	80	64	620 3 11
Totals .. ..	217	348.4	3,759	226	263	£5,774 18 3
			4,248 cwts.			
Monthly Average	18.08	29.0	354 cwts.			£481 4 10

*Average yield (of fibre of all grades) per acre .. .. 12.19 cwts.*  
*Factory and Plantation Costs of producing one ton of fibre £27 3 9*  
*Average output of fibre per working day (of 9 hours) .. 19.57 cwts.*

G. AUCHINLECK,

*Acting Director of Agriculture.*

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTION-COSTS, PERIOD AUGUST 1ST 1924  
TO JULY 31ST 1925.

Head of Expenditure.	Total Expenditure for 12 months.	Expenditure per ton fibre.
European Salaries, Passages and Allces.	£1,184 7 2	£5.57
Overseer, Clerk, Watchman .. ..	338 9 0	1.59
Total supervision .. ..	£1,522 16 2	7.16
Cutting Leaves .. ..	458 8 3	2.16
Transporting Leaves .. ..	436 15 4	2.05
Decorticating and Refuse .. ..	340 19 10	1.60
Brushing Fibre .. ..	106 5 9	.50
Drying Fibre.. ..	199 19 10	.94
Sorting and Hanking .. ..	219 10 10	1.03
Baling, Packing, Marking .. ..	81 3 7	.38
Plantation and Roads .. ..	730 4 7	3.44
Engine .. ..	93 19 0	.44
Recruiting Labour .. ..	95 5 11	.45
Total Labour .. ..	£2,762 12 11	£12.99
Total Labour and Supervision ..	4,285 9 1	20.15
Fuel Oil .. ..	438 16 11	2.07
Lubricants .. ..	87 14 6	.41
Petrol .. ..	77 19 9	.39
Baling-wire .. ..	47 10 0	.22
Baling Canvas .. ..	172 18 11	.81
Grease and Waste .. ..	8 19 5	.04
Miscellaneous .. ..	96 11 9	.45
Water.. ..	558 18 0	2.63
Total Material .. ..	1,489 9 3	7.02
Total Labour and Supervision ..	4,285 9 1	20.15
Total .. ..	£5,774 18 4	£27.17

Total output of Fibre—212 tons, 8 cwts.

G. AUCHINLECK,

*Acting Director of Agriculture.*

## Appendix " C ". to Enclosure 1 to No. VII.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

## SUMMARY OF SHIPBOARD AND MARKET CHARGES ON SIX SHIPMENTS.

AUGUST 1ST 1924 TO JULY 31ST 1925.

Nature of Charge.	Total Expenditure on Shipboard and Market (Six % Sales).	Average Expenditure per ton.
	£ s. d.	£
Port Rates .. .. .	4 9 6	.05
Freight to London .. .. .	400 6 6	4.10
Marine Insurance .. .. .	49 12 3	.65
	14 4 8	
Landing, Sorting, Sampling .. .. .	62 4 1	.64
Landing and Shewing .. .. .	25 3 8	.26
Rent and Shewing .. .. .	26 8 6	.27
Rent, etc. .. .. .	41 4 4	.42
Fire Insurance .. .. .	9 18 11	.10
Interest .. .. .	5 12 8	.06
Petties and Postage .. .. .	5 5 0	.05
Commission at 2½% .. .. .	91 11 8	.94
	£736 1 9	£7.54
Less Commission overcharged .. .. .	52 5 11	.54
	£683 15 10	£7.00

Total weight of six shipments :—

S/S. Bata, Roquelle, Sapele, Gaboon,  
 Prahsu, Bathurst, Sapele. . . . . 97 tons 12 cwts. 1 qr. 21 lbs.

G. AUCHINLECK  
 Acting Director of Agriculture.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 1ST AUGUST, 1924 TO JULY 31ST,

1925.

Supervision (Salaries and Passage) .. .. .	£1,576	6	2
Labour, plantation and Roads, £730 4 6			
Less chargeable to capital .. .. .	£177	6	3
Labour, reaping and transporting leaves .. .. .	895	3	7
Labour in factory .. .. .	1,041	18	10
Labour cost of recruiting, £198 8 11			
Less chargeable to capital .. .. .	103	3	0
Labour on site and buildings .. .. .	191	11	2
Labour, Overtime pay fitters .. .. .			
Labour, growing foodstuffs .. .. .	21	0	4
Fuel, Lubricants, baling material .. .. .	7	12	6
Fuel, Lubricants, baling material .. .. .	833	19	6
Purchase of Water .. .. .	558	18	0
Purchase of Water .. .. .	1	8	0
Railway and other Transport .. .. .	56	8	9
Railway and other Transport .. .. .	0	16	2
Miscellaneous Expenses unclassified .. .. .	96	11	9
Austro Daimler Tractor .. .. .	185	19	11
Spare parts Decorticator .. .. .	179	18	0
Refund of Freight Estimated .. .. .			
	44	0	0
 Total Chargeable to capital .. .. .	 £837	 18	 4
 Total chargeable to production-costs .. .. .	 £5,782	 7	 9
 Total .. .. .	 £6,620	 6	 1

G. AUCHINLECK,  
Acting Director of Agriculture.

## Appendix " E " . to Enclosure 1 to No. VII.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED RECEIPTS, (AUGUST 1ST 1924 TO JULY 31ST 1925.)

## 1. Account Sales of Shipments Fibre.

S.S. " Bata " .. .. .	£423	7	8		
Roquelle .. .. .	1,009	12	8		
Sapele/Gaboon .. .. .	829	9	5		
Prahsu .. .. .	377	7	6		
Bathurst .. .. .	825	8	11		
				3,465	6 2
Less charges .. .. .	662	1	0		
					£2,803 4 4
2. Local Sales of Fibre .. .. .					411 8 4
3. Unsold Fibre, Stock in London. (June, 1925).					
31 tons 1 cwt. 1 qr. 25 lbs. at £38 per ton					
estimated .. .. .	£1,178	0	0		
Charges at £7 per ton .. .. .	217	0	0		961 0 0
4. Unsold Fibre, Stock at Factory. (31.7.25).					
42 tons at £38 per ton .. .. .	£1,596	0	0		
Charges at £7 per ton .. .. .	294	0	0		1,302 0 0
5. Unsaleable Fibre damaged on s.s. " Bassa."					
40 tons 1 cwt. 0 qr. 19 lbs. insurance at £40					
per ton .. .. .	£1,600	0	0		
Charges at £7 per ton .. .. .	280	0	0		1,320 0 0
6. Refund of Agents' Commission .. .. .					52 5 11
					£6,849 18 7

G. AUCHINLECK,  
Acting Director of Agriculture.

REPORT OF A COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE GOVERNOR TO CONSIDER THE FINANCIAL POSITION  
OF THE SISAL PLANTATION.

The Committee appointed to advise the Governor as to the financial position of the Sisal Plantation met on May 11th. The Chairman explained that the small acreage of 900 acres of sisal would not stand the charges due for interest, Sinking Fund, etc., on the large amount which had been spent and that it was suggested that some of the expenditure should be considered as expenditure against the industry rather than merely this plantation.

2. The Committee considered that the accounts should be presented in such a manner as to distinguish clearly between the capital expended on establishing the plantation and the yearly expenditure on the crop. The Director of Agriculture fixed August 1st, 1924 as the date on which the plantation might definitely be regarded as a producing concern, and a new set of accounts has accordingly been prepared on this basis. (Appendix A).

3. The Director of Agriculture considered that some of the capital expended on establishing the plantation was unduly heavy for a plantation of this size, and might have been avoided; and he has accordingly prepared a statement showing the amounts which in his opinion represent an unnecessary addition to the capital expenditure, together with an explanation of the various items. As regards the necessity for this expenditure the other members of the Committee did not feel themselves qualified to express an opinion. The statement and explanation of the Director of Agriculture form Appendix B.

4. As regards interest and Sinking Fund the Committee considered that the method of showing them in the accounts depends upon the manner in which the plantation is managed or disposed of by Government. Interest has been calculated as commencing from August 1st, 1924 when production started, and is included in the Profit and Loss Account for the ensuing period in order to show the liability to Government. The total on which the calculation is made will be reduced or increased at the end of each financial year by the difference between the revenue and expenditure of the plantation. As regards Sinking Fund, under the existing system receipts from the plantation are not utilized to meet expenditure but are paid in to Government as revenue, so that any profits that may accrue proceed automatically towards extinguishing the debt. The contribution towards the Sinking Fund would only become a liability when the plantation has the use of its revenue, and is accordingly not included in the present accounts which are drawn up in such a manner as to show the outstanding liability of the plantation.

5. It is recommended that the practice which is customary in commercial undertakings of this character of charging replacements and renewals to the revenue of the year should be followed; and of the items which have been capitalized only the main buildings and the factory are accordingly subjected to an annual depreciation.

6. By this means the indebtedness of the plantation to Government, the annual expenditure on and revenue from the crop, the possibilities of the plantation as a commercial venture, and the liability outstanding to Government at each stage of development are now shown in the accounts.

C. H. KNOWLES,  
*Director of Agriculture.*

C. W. LEESE,  
*Treasurer.*

F. E. TALLAND,

L. G. CORNEY,  
*Acting Auditor.*

27th June, 1925.

## Appendix A. to Enclosure 2 to No. VII.

## ACCOUNTS OF THE SISAL PLANTATION, ACCRA.

## (a) PLANTATION CAPITAL ACCOUNT.—(See Appendix B).

Note.—These accounts are prepared from figures supplied by the Director of Agriculture and are submitted as a specimen of the form in which it is recommended that the accounts of the Sisal Plantation should be kept in future.

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.							
1. Compensation for Crops on land ..				1,170	0	0	Credits (overpayments recovered) ..	399	9	2			
2. Recruiting labour .. .. .				746	19	5	Sale of Crops .. .. .	422	0	5			
3. Clearing .. .. .				2,452	10	3				821	9	7	
4. Salaries .. .. .	4,640	19	1				Balance (to General Balance Sheet) ..				35,398	4	0
5. Passages .. .. .	569	13	0										
6. Travelling Expenses .. .. .	181	11	6										
7. Allowances Bush .. £131 0 6													
Transport .. 59 7 0	190	7	6										
				5,582	11	1							
8. Nurseries .. .. .				321	16	11							
9. Plants and Planting .. .. .				1,158	14	9							
10. Crops Food .. .. .	597	12	5										
Coffee and Cotton .. .. .	17	10	9										
				615	3	2							
11. Roads and Drains .. .. .				251	0	11							
12. Weeding A .. .. .	2,655	5	10										
B .. .. .	4,500	0	0										
				7,155	5	10							
13. Buildings: Plantation .. .. .	3,855	3	5										
Nissen Huts .. .. .	688	8	4										
Petrol, etc. for Lorry .. .. .	206	7	8										
				4,749	19	5							
14. Tools and Implements .. .. .				172	12	0							
15. Car, Petrol, Oil, Tyres, etc. .. .. .				260	2	9							
16. Office: Supplies .. .. .	26	8	4										
Messenger .. .. .	7	13	0										
				34	1	4							
17. Miscellaneous—Labour .. .. .	402	14	7										
Sundries .. .. .	26	8	2										
Lamps .. .. .	9	15	3										
Survey .. .. .	15	0	6										
Cable .. .. .	5	17	0										
				459	15	6							
18. Railway (Portable) .. .. .				138	4	6							
19. Factory Site preparation .. .. .	229	8	4										
Machinery building and main- railway .. .. .	6,876	11	0										
Erection of building and machinery .. .. .	3,556	9	9										
Labour etc. adjusting machi- nery and trial runs .. .. .	288	6	8										
				10,950	15	9							
				£36,219	13	7							
											£36,219	13	7

(b) CROP COST ACCOUNT (FOR PERIOD 1ST AUGUST, 1924 TO 31ST MARCH, 1925.)

	£	s.	d.
European supervision, Transport and Allowances	798	17	4
Clerk, Overseer, Watchman	223	10	6
Labour—Reaping leaves	243	19	0
Transporting leaves	362	9	3
Decorticating machine	219	16	4
Drying	125	10	9
Brushing	62	8	3
Sorting and banking	124	7	2
Baling	51	6	8
Plantation-weeding, roads, etc.	344	19	0
Engine and Machines	78	17	7
Material—Fuel	238	17	1
Lubricating Oil	58	13	4
Petrol and kerosene	16	5	3
Baling Wire	28	18	0
Canvas	110	5	6
Grease and Waste	4	12	7
Miscellaneous	123	3	0
Water	390	6	0
Recruiting Labour	146	15	6
Local Freight to Beach, 2s. 6d. a ton	14	11	2
Insurance (Marine)	20	16	8

£3,788 5 11

Balance (being gross profit for period) carried to Profit and Loss Account	658	2	5
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S.S. "Bata" —	£	s.	d.
Hemp 173 cwts. 0 qr. 51 lbs @ £40 0	346	1	9
" 21 " 3 " 11 " @ £43 10	47	10	5
" 4 " 1 " 12 " @ £40 0	8	14	3
" 8 " 0 " 21 " @ £40 10	16	11	7
Tow 2 " 3 " 24 " @ £30 5	4	9	8

Less 2½% .. 423 7 8  
10 11 8

Less Port rates	£ 0 11 0	412 16 0
Freight to London	44 6 11	
Marine Insurance	5 10 9	
Landing, sorting and sampling	11 4 10	
Rent and shewing	15 2 7	
Fire Insurance	1 8 3	
Interest	0 16 2	
Petties and Postages	1 1 0	
	80 1 6	

S.S. "Roquelle" —	£	s.	d.
Hemp 435 cwt. 3 qr. 12 lbs. @ £40 0	871	14	3
" 21 " 0 " 6 " @ £40 10	42	12	8
Tow 63 " 2 " 3 " @ £30 0	95	5	9

Less 2½% .. 1,009 12 8  
25 4 10

Less Port rates	£ 1 6 6	984 7 10
Freight to London	96 4 10	
Marine Insurance	13 1 6	
Landing and shewing	25 3 8	
Rent, etc.	12 7 6	
Fire Insurance	2 10 3	
Interest 5/9 and 16/3	1 2 0	
Postage and Petties	1 1 0	
	152 17 3	

S.S. "Sapele/Gaboon" —	£	s.	d.
Hemp 204 cwt 3 qr. 7 lbs @ £41 0	419	17	8
" 129 " 3 " 5 " @ £40 0	259	11	9
" 71 " 1 " 20 " @ £42 0	150	0	0

Less 2½% .. 829 9 5  
20 14 9

Less Port rates	£ 1 1 0	808 14 8
Freight to London	77 7 7	
Marine Insurance	10 11 6	
Landing, sorting and opening	19 14 8	
Rent, etc.	19 9 10	
Fire Insurance	2 14 0	
Interest 4/8, 17/11 and 6/10	1 9 5	
Petties and Postages	1 1 0	
	133 9 0	

S.S. "Prahsu" —	£	s.	d.
Tow 43 cwt. 1 qr. 24 lbs @ £29 10	£62	12	8
Hemp 22 " 1 " 5 " @ £42 0	46	16	5
" 7 " 3 " 7 " @ £40 0	15	12	6
" 119 " 0 " 13 " @ £41 0	244	3	9
" 4 " 1 " 2 " @ £38 0	8	2	2

Less 2½% .. 377 7 6  
9 8 8

Less Port rates	£ 0 10 0	367 18 10
Freight to London	36 12 6	
Marine Insurance	5 0 6	
Landing, sorting and opening	12 6 1	
Rent, etc.	9 7 0	
Fire Insurance	1 5 6	
Interest 2/9, 7/5 and 3/4	0 13 6	
Petties and Postages	1 1 0	
	66 16 1	

S.S. "Bathurst" —	£	s.	d.
Hemp 412 cwt. 3 qrs 26 lbs @ £41 0	£846	12	3
Less 2½%	21	3	4

Less Port rates	£ 1 1 0	301 2 9
Freight to London	95 4 4	
Marine Insurance	10 11 6	
Landing, sorting, &c.	18 18 6	
Rent and shewing charges	11 5 11	
Fire Insurance	2 0 11	
Interest 3/6, 13/4 and 14/9	1 11 7	
Petties and Postages	1 1 0	
	141 14 9	

S.S. "Sapele" —	£	s.	d.
Hemp 28 tons 16 cwt 3 qrs			
4 lbs @ £40	£1153	11	5
Tow 1 ton 15 cwt. 2 qrs			
14 lbs @ £30	53	8	9
	1,207	0	2
Less 2½%	30	3	6
	1,176	16	8
Less Charges (average) as above approx:	202	0	0

S.S. "Ba-sa" —	£	s.	d.
Hemp 19 tons 4 cwt. 0 qr.			
5 lbs @ £40	£768	1	9
Tow — 9 cwt 1 qr.			
22 lbs. @ £30	14	3	4
	782	5	1
Less 2½%	19	11	1
	762	14	0

Less charges (average) as above approx:	130	0	0
Local Sales			
Hemp 6 cwts.	10	10	0
" 2 "	1	0	0
Corn	0	0	0
			11 10 0
			3 0 0

(c) PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT (FOR PERIOD 1ST AUGUST, 1924 TO 31ST MARCH, 1925.)

Interest on £35,398 4s. @ 6% per annum from 1/8/24—31/3/25	£1,415 18 6	Balance from Crop Cost Account .. .. .	£658 2 5
Depreciation on Factory £6,876 11s. @ 10% from 1/8/24— 31/3/25 .. .. .	458 8 9	Net Loss .. .. .	1,473 5 1
Depreciation on Buildings £3,855 3s. 9d. @ 10% from 1/8/24 to 31/3/25 .. .. .	257 0 0		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£2,131 7 6		£2,131 7 6

(d) BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH, 1925.

Outstanding Liability to Government .. .. .	£36,156 0 1	Plantation Account .. .. .	£35,398 4 0
		Less Depreciation on Factory and Buildings .. .. .	715 9 0
			34,682 15 0
		Profit and Loss Account (Balance)	1,473 5 1
	<u>£36,156 0 1</u>		<u>36,156 0 1</u>

*Appendix "B" to Enclosure 2 to No. VII.*

## EXPLANATION BY THE DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE REGARDING CERTAIN ITEMS IN THE PLANTATION CAPITAL ACCOUNT.

*Item 3.*—This is excessive but in view of the reduction suggested under item 12, no reduction is suggested here.

*Items 5-7.*—Two Europeans are required in West Africa to superintend continuously the work on a plantation no matter whether a small one or the maximum area which could be supervised by one officer. In the case of sisal hemp one man could superintend the cultivation of 3,000 acres, hence the items 4 and 5 are excessive for a plantation of only 900 acres.

Travelling, collecting plants and to and from Accra should not be necessary while Bush Allowance to the extent of £131 could have been reduced by having quarters ready. To commence a plantation of 900 acres a Superintendent less highly paid than the first one employed would suffice.

The total (£5,583 0s. 0d.) is, therefore, excessive and for 900 acres, £2,500 would be a reasonable amount, or say £2,582 11s. 1d.

*Item 9.*—Is excessive, but unavoidable in the circumstances as young plants had to be collected from all over the country, £1 per acre should be ample.

2. *Item 10.*—Food and other crops should not be planted among sisal.

The huge sum under item 12 £7,155 is considered to have been spent principally on account of the inter-cropping adopted. The books do not show what areas were weeded and how much may properly be considered as against the catch crop.

The total is split up as shown into A. & B. as above because during the last 12 months £569 13s. 6d. was spent on weeding 1,000 acres, at the rate of 11s. 5d. per acre.

If the clearing had been properly done, as should have been the case in view of the large expenditure in item 3, during the first 2 years, only proper three weedings should have been necessary, costing  $930 \times 3 \times 11/5$  or £1,592 12s. 6d. which together with the £569 13s. 6d. making a total of £2,162 6s. 0d. as the cost of weeding the sisal or say £2,655 5s. 10d. the figure at (A) leaving £4,500 (B) as expenditure not necessary for sisal.

*Item 13.* Buildings.—Nissen huts to the extent of £688 were not really necessary and the item £206 for petrol, etc. used in a lorry carrying principally water to the site might have been avoided by arranging for the water pipes being taken there earlier. The use of the lorry otherwise should have been unnecessary owing to the proximity of the railway. The foundations of a large bungalow for the Superintendent were commenced and much labour used in making bricks. The building was then unnecessary and it was not completed, but it is not possible to separate the expenditure on this from the general building. It is estimated to have cost over £650 and it is suggested that the three lots of expenditure referred to should be considered to have been unnecessary reducing the vote by say £1,550 0s. 0d.

*Item 15.*—For this plantation, a car is considered to have been quite unnecessary.

Item 17.—Labour £402 work not specified. The small item for lamp and cable are unnecessary.

## SUMMARY.

The total reductions considered to be justifiable are as below :—

On account of supervision	...	...	£3,000
„ Plants and planting	...	...	228
„ Crops	...	...	615
„ Weeding	...	...	4,500
„ Buildings	...	...	1,500
„ Car	...	...	260
			<hr/>
			10,103
			<hr/>

C. H. KNOWLES,  
*Director of Agriculture.*

## VIII.

*Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor.*

DOWNING STREET,  
27th November, 1925.

No. 1121.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Sir James Maxwell's despatch No. 701 of the 1st of October, transmitting a further report on the progress of the Sisal Plantation, Accra, for the period from the 1st of August, 1924 to the 31st of July, 1925.

2. I regard the results as somewhat disappointing, and feel that there seems little prospect of a Company taking over the Government's liability in the matter. If at the end of another year results are no better, the question of abandoning the Plantation, or making it over to a Company, even at a considerable loss, will have to be considered.

I have etc.,  
L. S. AMERY.

GOVERNOR,  
BRIGADIER-GENERAL  
SIR F. G. GUGGISBERG, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.  
&c., &c., &c.

## IX.

*Report by Mr. L. W. Wood, Assistant Colonial Secretary.*

THE GOVERNMENT SISAL PLANTATION, ACCRA.

I.—GENERAL.

On assuming the administration of the Gold Coast in 1919 one of Sir Gordon Guggisberg's first acts was to enquire into the possibility of initiating various agricultural industries to supplement the cocoa industry, particularly in those parts of the country in which cocoa could not be produced. The Accra plains constituted such a region, and appeared to be suitable from the agricultural point of view for the production of sisal.

2. His Excellency, after consulting the Department of Agriculture and visiting the German plantations in Togoland, came to the conclusion with the approval of the Secretary of State that it would be a legitimate experiment if Government attempted to ascertain whether sisal could be grown on the Accra plains as a commercial proposition. It was decided, therefore, that Government should form a plantation, and an area of 1,000 acres was selected in the neighbourhood of Accra.

3. 900 acres of this area have now been planted up. The site is loaned to Government under an arrangement whereby, with the consent of the Stools which actually own the land, Government has agreed to hand the plantation over to these Stools as soon as the total cost of establishing it on a paying basis has been recovered with interest from the profits of the concern. Compensation was paid to farmers whose crops were destroyed in the process of clearing the site.

4. The scheme was not initiated without a certain amount of opposition; and in order to clear the air His Excellency appointed a Committee to go into the whole matter. The majority of the Committee were satisfied from the evidence produced that the plantation was likely to be a financial success. The members were doubtful whether the African would ever be induced to take up the industry for himself owing to its peculiar nature, but the majority were of opinion that the experiment was justified and recommended that it should be continued. The Committee were unanimously of the opinion that Government should not contemplate running the plantation indefinitely. It was pointed out that the question of eventually transferring the plantation to private enterprise depended entirely upon the owners of the land, and that nothing could be done in that connection without their consent.

5. One of the difficulties which has continually confronted the officers in charge of the plantation is the question of labour. It was at first hoped that it would be possible to interest the local farmers in the project to such an extent that they would come forward and work on the plantation, thus acquiring some knowledge of the sisal plant itself and the methods of obtaining the hemp from it. It has been found, however, that local labour has not been available in anything like the quantity necessary, and indentured labour has had to be obtained from the Northern Territories and the Northern section of the British Sphere of Togoland.

6. Early in 1924 when the plantation was approaching the bearing stage, steps were taken to erect a factory to instal the necessary machinery for extracting the fibre from the leaf, and to lay down tramways throughout the plantation to facilitate the conveyance of the leaf to the factory. The extraction of the fibre requires a liberal supply of water for washing purposes. This is at present obtained from the Accra Water Works, but it is very costly and the possibility of a change in the system of washing and in the source of the water is being considered.

7. The first shipment of sisal hemp produced on the plantation was made in October, 1924. Since then consignments have regularly been exported. The hemp is sold in the United Kingdom by Messrs. Wigglesworth and Company, Limited who act as agents of Government in this matter.

## II.—POLICY.

8. The object of the experiment is eventually to establish a sisal industry on the Accra plains. To do this it is necessary firstly to convince the inhabitants of the Accra plains that sisal can be grown there on a commercial scale with success and profit; and secondly to persuade them to take up the industry for themselves or to permit others to take it up for them. It is the first place the aim of Government to encourage the local farmers to form comparatively small plantations adjacent to the Government plantation and in due course to convey their leaf to the central factory on the Government plantation for conversion into hemp. To further this purpose Government is prepared to extend the tramway system to any such small plantations of the local farmers. It is not intended that Government should make a profit out of this policy is at present hindered by two factors. It is too early yet tributed amongst the local farmers in payment for their leaf. The carrying out of this policy is at present hindered by two factors. It is too early yet for the financial success of the plantation to be visibly established to the satisfaction of the conservative African; and the extension of the area under sisal is at present discouraged by the owners of the land. Time is needed to remove these difficulties, and it may take years to persuade the people themselves to grow sisal on their own land. It should be emphasized that to be a commercial success sisal must be grown on a large scale; and the idea of putting large tracts of land under one crop is an entirely new one to a people accustomed to cultivate only small individual farms. Government has no intention of abandoning the plantation so long as the revenue derived from it at least balances the cost of maintenance until the time comes to hand it over to the Chiefs in accordance with the arrangement originally arrived at with them or unless it is transferred to private enterprise with the consent of the Chiefs. It is not anticipated that any merchants would take over the plantation without a definite guarantee that no objections would be raised to a very considerable extension of the area under cultivation. In that case the policy of Government, *viz.*, to establish a sisal industry on the Accra plains, would still be effectuated, but it would mean that the owners of the land instead of cultivating it themselves would receive rent for the least of it for the purpose of growing sisal.

## III.—CAPITAL COST.

9. In 1925 His Excellency appointed a committee to enquire into the financial aspect of the Plantation and the system of keeping the accounts. The Committee recommended that the 1st August, 1924, was adopted as the date from which the plantation might be regarded as a producing concern. The capital cost of bringing the plantation into bearing was estimated at £35,000. This sum includes the capital outlay and the cost of maintenance up to the 1st August, 1924. The actual expenditure, in fact, amounted to £36,219 13s. 7d. It is proposed to debit interest on this sum to the cost of maintenance of the plantation after the 1st August, 1924. The original proposal to create a sinking fund for the repayment of the capital expenditure is not considered to be a practical measure so long as the present system of paying the receipts from the plantation direct to the Revenue of the Colony is continued. As soon as the plantation has the use of its own revenue, then it will be necessary to set aside each year a sum to form a sinking fund for the repayment of the capital, which is regarded as having been advanced from public funds.

## IV.—RESULTS TO DATE.

10. As has been said, the 1st August, 1924, has been adopted as the date from which the enterprise may be regarded as a going concern. Complete statistics are available in respect of the period 1st August, 1924, to 1st August, 1925. During that twelve months the factory worked for 217 days and produced 212 tons. 8 cwts. of fibre of all grades from 384½ acres; of the total output 263 cwts. or 6.2% consisted of tow and 93.8% of 1st and 2nd grade fibre.

11. The average output of fibre per working days was 19½ cwts. and the average yield of fibre per acre 12.19 cwts. The percentage of fibre recovered from the green leaf was 3.1.

12. The existing plant is capable of a maximum output of 30 cwts. of fibre per day. If this figure could be attained and work could be carried on for 250 days in a year the output would be 7,500 cwts. or the crop from 600 acres. The output of 4,248 cwts. from 384 acres in the first year of working of the factory may, therefore, be regarded as satisfactory in view of the novelty of the whole enterprise and the numerous difficulties experienced with labour, water and general adjustment.

13. During the twelve months under review the total expenditure was £6,620 of which £5,782 was in respect of working costs and £838 capital expenditure. The estimated net amount received from the sale of the fibre was £6,850. When interest on the capital and depreciation of machinery and buildings are taken into account, it will, therefore, be evident that the plantation was run at a loss.

14. There is no doubt that the plantation is over-capitalised from the commercial point of view, and it has been suggested that the figure taken as the capital cost of bringing it into bearing, *viz.* £35,000, should be reduced to £25,000, the difference of £10,000 being regarded as the cost of establishing a sisal industry rather than as part of the cost of bringing the plantation into bearing. This would result in the charges on account of interest being considerably reduced. The fact that the factory is not working up to its maximum power, the high cost of water and the high cost of labour are all factors which increase the cost of maintenance. Attention is being paid to all these points, and it is hoped that in the near future a large reduction in working costs will be possible. An Austro-Daimler engine has recently been put into operation on the tramways to haul the trucks loaded with leaves to the factory replacing the old systems of man-haulage with the result that the cost of transporting the leaf to the factory has been more than halved.

15. Market reports indicate that an improvement in the quality of the finished product is possible and will result in an increased price being obtained for the fibre. This matter is also receiving attention. For example, certain new and up to date machinery has been ordered which, when installed, it is anticipated will result in better brushing and baling. Experience is constantly suggesting means by which production can be cheapened and the value of the finished product can be increased, and there is every reason to anticipate greatly improved results in the near future.

L. W. WOOD,

13th January, 1926.

## X

*Despatch from the Governor to the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

ACCRA.

2nd June, 1926.

No. 459.

SIR,

With reference to your Despatch No. 1121 dated 27th November, 1925, I have the honour to forward, herewith, a Report upon the working of the Sisal Plantation, Accra, for the period April the 1st, 1925 to March 31st, 1926. For the purpose of comparison, a plantation progress report for the period April, 1924 to March, 1925 is also attached.

2. The total output of fibre during the past financial year was 285 tons 5 cwts., while the cost of production was £27.94 per ton. It is noticeable that the item for " Supervision " which previously amounted to £10.46 per ton of fibre has been reduced to £5.90 per ton and in this connection I am advised that a plantation two or three times greater than the present area of 1,040 acres would cost no more in supervision. This is important when considering the financial position of the plantation as a whole, for the figures submitted show that at the price sisal hemp fetches in the market the revenue from a plantation twice the size would not only be sufficient to cover the whole of the working expenses and to provide for depreciation but would also pay interest on the capital.

3. The total cost of production amounted to £7,969 7s. 10d. made up of Labour and Supervision £5,878 16s. 11d. and materials and extras £2,090 10s. 11d. In the latter water figures as the item next largest to fuel oil, the charge for the former being at the rate of 7/- per thousand gallons. It has now been found possible to reduce the cost of water and in the current year this item should show a corresponding decrease.

4. Special expenditure, chargeable to Capital but paid from votes for the year under review, amounted to £779 5s. 4d., bringing the gross total expenditure for the year to £8,748 13s. 2d.

5. It is not possible to give a final statement of receipts from sales of fibre as the account sales for the fibre produced between November 1925 and March 1926 have not yet been received, but the unsold fibre has been estimated at £32 10s. 0d. net per ton, while the average price for previous shipments has been £33 per ton.

6. The total revenue for the period was £9,427 5s. 7d. which includes a period of three months during which there was no production of fibre to set off against the production costs which continued throughout the year. This period of three months is arrived at by taking the number of working days in each month and from Appendix " A " it will be observed that the number of working days in June was 11, in September 2, in October none and in November 13. It is therefore just to assume that had the factory been at work for the whole year the revenue would have been increased by approximately £3,000. The cause of the stoppage was machinery trouble in the factory, which it is hoped has now been overcome. The total number of days on which the factory was at work during the year was 205 out of a possible 305.

7. The liability of the plantation to Government is £35,398 4s. 0d. If interest be calculated at 6%, an amount of £2,123 17s. 10d. per annum would be payable. The factory stands in the books at the figure of £6,876 11s. 0d. and buildings at £3,855 3s. 0d. on both of which depreciation is charged at 10% per annum £1,073 3s. 5d. in all.

8. These charges therefore amount to £3,197 1s. 3d. making a total expenditure of £11,945 14s. 5d. as against a revenue of £9,427 5s. 7d. but had the factory worked full time the additional production would probably have produced sufficient revenue to cover the whole of the expenditure charges including interest on Capital.

9. Appendix " C " shows in detail the shipboard and marketing charges incurred, these amount to £6.90 per ton against £5 for local sales at C.I.F. rates. The question of discontinuing further shipments and disposing of the whole of the sisal output locally is at present receiving consideration.

10. With reference to paragraph 2 of your Despatch No. 1121 dated 27th November, 1925, Government has been approached by a Major Jecks of 9 and 11, Fenchurch Avenue, London, with a view to the taking over by a Company of the Government's interest in the plantation. Major Jecks has made a tentative offer of £18,000 for the factory, plant, buildings and Government's interest in the land, but he has been informed that he must make his own arrangements with the owners of the land on which the existing plantation is situated and for any further areas which he desires to put under cultivation. Major Jecks has taken steps to obtain a concession from the Sempe and Akumadse Chiefs but he has not yet come to terms with the James Town people who are also interested in the adjoining land.

11. For your information I enclose a copy of a letter from the Colonial Secretary to Major Jecks setting forth the position of Government in the matter, to which no reply from Major Jecks has yet been received.

Until a reply is received to the above letter no further action is possible by this Government.

12. It cannot too frequently be emphasised when considering the financial aspect of the sisal plantation that this venture was embarked upon solely as an educational measure to demonstrate to the non-agrarian population of the dry zone in the neighbourhood of Accra, that there exists a crop of economic value which can easily, without a great expenditure of time or labour, be grown upon the uncultivated land lying between the sea and the cocoa belt.

13. That the local population would at once commence to grow sisal hemp was not anticipated, it was realised that a considerable period must inevitably elapse during which interest in this novel crop would gradually be stimulated and it is satisfactory to observe from the final paragraph of the plantation Progress Report by the Superintendent of the Plantation, for the period March, 1924 to April, 1925 that some, at any rate, of the Africans in the neighbourhood are beginning to awaken to the possibilities contained in the cultivation of this product.

14. In the event therefore of the offer by Major Jecks being no further proceeded with by him, I am of opinion that it would be inexpedient at this juncture for Government to abandon the plantation at the time when the maximum output is being obtained from the earliest planted areas; and I trust that no action will be taken for the present to terminate an experiment which has proved successful and which may well be of immense benefit to the areas in this Colony that are at present without a staple industry.

I have etc.,

J. C. MAXWELL,

*Officer Administering the Government.*

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

L. S. AMERY, M.P.,

&c. &c. &c.

## Enclosure 1 to No. X.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

REPORT FOR THE WORKING YEAR 1ST APRIL, 1925  
TO 31ST MARCH, 1926.

The previous report dealt with the installation of the factory and the first eight months of its running, and was submitted in that form to coincide with the financial year. The present report comprises the working of the factory during the following twelve months.

A final statement of accounts cannot be given until all account sales of fibre shipped during the year and the Crown Agents' accounts for July, 1925 1926 have been received. Available figures are given in the following Appendices to this report :—

- (a) Summary of monthly reapings and output.
- (b) Local Production Costs for the year.
- (c) Shipping and Marketing charges.
- (d) Total Disbursements during the year.
- (e) Receipts, actual and estimated, for the year.

## OUTPUT AND YIELDS.

From Appendix A. it will be seen that the factory worked for 205 days and produced 285 tons 5 cwts. of fibre from 322 acres of first cutting and 332 acres of second cutting. Of the total output 95.1% was 1st and 2nd grade fibre and 4.9% of tow.

The average output of fibre per working day was 27.8 cwts., compared with 11.0 cwts. in the previous year. During the last four months it will be seen that the average per day reached 35 cwts. The average yield of fibre per acre was 12.4 cwts. compared with 10.9 cwts. previously. Second cuttings gave an average of 6.9 cwts. per acre. The variation in yield per acre from different parts of the plantation was from 10-16.8 cwts. in first cuttings. It is becoming evident that an average of approximately 12 cwts. per acre will be realised over the whole plantation for first cuttings, but it is as yet too early to estimate the total yield of fibre per acre in its bearing life.

## PRODUCTION COSTS.

The figures in Appendix B. may be briefly summarised as follows :—

Supervision ... ..	£ 5.90	per ton of fibre.
Labour ... ..	14.75	„ „
Materials ... ..	7.29	„ „

£27.94

Supervision shews a substantial decrease from £10.46 previously owing to the increased output, and the labour rate has gone down from £17.69 as the men become more proficient. Materials naturally shows little change.

The item Plantation, Roads, etc., includes the constant taking up and relaying of the plantation light railway in different areas, and all labour which cannot be included under a specific heading. This item, which shows a decrease of £2.33, was greatly increased during a stoppage of two months owing to a breakdown of a piston in the factory engine, when it was inadvisable to disperse the laboriously collected labour force. Also during excessive rains in June when production was held up.

Water (£1.73) was paid for at the very high rate of 7/- per 1,000 gallons, which was reduced to 3/6 from March 11th, 1926, too late to affect this report.

The use of an Austro-Daimler tractor (6 h.p.) to replace hand haulage of trucks has made most satisfactory reductions in the transport costs from £2.82 to £1.08 per ton fibre. Petrol consumption and wear and tear of the tractor are not included in this comparison, but the wages of the driver and all loaders, etc., are. The cost of the tractor being only £125, and petrol consumption being approximately £0.25 per ton fibre, it is clear that great economy has been effected. A more powerful tractor (Fordson) and extra leaf trucks were ordered during the year, but arrived too late to have any effect on this year.

An area of 40 acres was cleared and planted, and some 470 acres replanted after harvesting. These costs are included in the production costs, though they really belong to the Capital Account or the crop reaped from them in due course.

Local labour was extremely scarce at the commencement of the year and it was decided to increase the rate of pay from 1/6 to 2/- per day. Since this there has been no shortage at all, with the sole exception of the work of cutting in the field, for which it is still necessary to recruit labour in the Northern Territories, at a cost which approximates £3 per head. Every effort is made to induce local labour to take up this work, but so far without success.

#### SHIPPING AND MARKETING.

Under appendix C. it is only possible to give these charges for two shipments, no further details having been received from our brokers in England re sales of fibre produced from November 1925 onwards. The brokers' total charges show a slight decrease from £7.4 to £6.9 per ton fibre.

A local firm has purchased two consignments from the factory on a c.i.f. basis, and the charges per ton then become as low as £5, the gross price realised being exactly the same as that from our brokers. This local firm, on behalf of the consumers to whom they sell, has expressed perfect satisfaction with the product and offered to take the entire output of the factory. This, apart from the greater revenue, would be a great convenience, as the fibre could be sold in Accra for spot cash and all shipping and marketing work obviated.

#### PRICES.

Prices realised in England on the two shipments of which particulars are to hand were Grade I. £39 and £40 per ton, Grade II £37 and £38, and Tow £29 and £30. In the local sales, to test the market, a trial consignment was sold at £38, and a second lot of 50 tons readily accepted at £40. Market prices in England have been very steady.

#### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE.

Total disbursements, Appendix D., were £8,748 13s. 2d., of which £7,969 17s. 10d. represents running costs, the balance being for items properly chargeable to Capital Account, but paid for from the current year's votes. Appendix E. gives receipts actual and estimated, total £9,427 5s. 7d. Unsold fibre has been estimated at £32 10s. 0d. per ton net, while the average of all previous consignments has been £33. Differences are shown in the following summary :—

Total revenue	...	...	...	£9,427	5	7
Production Costs	...	...	...	7,969	7	10
				<hr/>		
				£1,457	17	9
Less capital expenses charged	...			781	5	4
				<hr/>		
				£676	12	5
				<hr/>		

These figures do not take into account charges for interest on capital and depreciation. It must also be taken into account that the Production Costs this year include the expenditure over a period of three months when there was no production of fibre, and that had it been possible to keep the factory at work for the whole period the revenue would have been increased by over £3,000 with very little addition to the production costs.

On August 1st, 1924, the liability to Government was £35,398 4s. 0d., on which interest at the very high rate of 6% is charged, and the valuation of the factory was £6,876 11s. 0d. and buildings £3,855 3s. 9d., on both of which depreciation is 10% Interest and Depreciation amount to the following sums:—

£35,398	4	0	at	6%	...	...	£2,123	17	0
£ 6,876	11	0		10%	...	...	687	13	1
£ 3,855	3	9		10%	...	...	385	10	4
							£3,197	1	3

It will therefore be seen that had the factory worked full time, the plantation would have paid all charges for the year, inclusive of nearly £800 new capital, an extension of 40 acres and the replanting of 470 acres of the harvested areas; and still have the net profit shown above.

#### GENERAL.

The year commenced with excessive rains and ended with eight months comparative drought, but the plants remained healthy. The fields were free from disease. It has been gratifying to have sufficient labour and with the machinery running smoothly an average monthly production of 40 tons was maintained during the last 4½ months. Production costs have shown satisfactory decreases, more especially when it is remembered that the labour rate of pay had to be increased by 33%.

An area of 40 acres has been added, and this will receive only three weedings in its life before harvesting, in order to test whether less weeding than the existing plantation has had will have an adverse effect on the yield of fibre per acre.

J. E. SYMOND,  
*Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.*

12th May, 1926.

## Appendix "A." to Enclosure 1 to No. X.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

## SUMMARY OF PRODUCTION AND COST FOR THE PERIOD

1ST APRIL, 1925 TO 31ST MARCH, 1926.

Month.	No. of working days.	Acres Reaped.	Cwts. of fibre produced.			Expenditure. £
			Grade 1.	Grade 2.	Tow.	
April 1925	16	A. 26.90	268	14	38	402 7 0
May "	25	*A. 22.48	399	62	39	588 17 7
		*B. 35.00				
June "	11	B. 36.00	136	18	26	633 9 5
July "	24	A. 24.00	376	80	64	620 3 11
		B. 48.00				
August "	20	A. 17.00	447	40	13	647 14 9
		B. 25.50				
September "	2	A. 4.50	50	0	0	516 8 10
October "	0	0	0	0	0	550 1 2
November "	13	A. 34.00	352	40	8	640 5 9
December "	25	A. 56.00	727	55	23	772 10 8
January 1926	24	A. 66.00	735	50	25	738 10 0
February "	21	A. 71.50	647	55	18	679 3 0
March "	24	B. 187.50	808	66	26	759 11 1
Totals .. ..	205	A. 322.38				
		B. 332.00	4,945	480	280	7,549 3 2
		654.38		5,705		
Spares and replacements (not charged to any one month)						420 4 8
						£7,969 7 10
Monthly Average	17	54.53		475.4		£664 2 4

Average yield (fibre all grades per acre—A. 1st cutting .. ..	12.4 cwts.
B. 2nd cutting .. ..	6.9 cwts.
Average output of fibre per working day (of nine hours) .. ..	27.8 cwts.
Factory and Plantation costs of producing one ton fibre .. ..	£27 18s. 9d.

\*A—1st cutting.

\*B—2nd cutting.

J. E. SYMOND,

Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation

## Appendix "D." to Enclosure 1 to No. X.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 1925  
TO 31ST MARCH, 1926.

	£	s.	d.
Supervision.—European and African Salaries, passages and allowances .. .. .	1,686	3	3
Labour—Plantation, Roads, etc. (including plantation light railway) .. .. .	1,188	10	1
" Reaping and transporting .. .. .	1,055	5	10
" In factory .. .. .	1,416	18	5
" Recruiting .. .. .	184	15	7
" New clearing .. .. .	55	17	3
" Stumping and replanting .. .. .	291	6	6
Fuel, lubricants and baling material .. .. .	1,077	7	4
Purchase of water .. .. .	494	15	6
Railway and other transport .. .. .	84	8	5
Insurance of fibre, marine .. .. .	13	15	0
Spares and replacements. (including freight from England) ..	420	4	8
Total.—Equalling production costs .. .. .	£7,969	7	10
Special Expenditure chargeable to Capital, but paid from this period's votes :—			
1. Quarters allowance (incurred 1924) .. .. .	80	6	8
2. Austro-Daimler Tractor .. .. .	185	19	11
3. Extra leaf trucks for light railway .. .. .	206	16	0
4. Fordson Tractor (exclusive freight, not yet known) ..	306	2	9
Total Expenditure .. .. .	£8,748	13	2

J. E. SYMOND,  
*Superintendent,*  
*Accra Sisal Plantations.*

## Appendix " E. " to Enclosure 1 to No. X.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

RECEIPTS ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED 1ST APRIL, 1925 TO 31ST MARCH, 1926.

I. *Account sales of shipments.*

S.S. " Shonga " .. .. .	£1,517	7	7
S.S. " Palma " .. .. .	1,840	0	1

	£3,357	7	8
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Less charges .. .. .	624	18	8
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£2,732 9 0

II. *Local Sales.*

10 tons, 14 cwts. .. .. .	£399	18	4
50 tons, 6 cwts. .. .. .	2,012	7	0

	2,412	5	4
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Less c.i.f. . . . .	305	11	5
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£2,106 13 11

III. *Unsold fibre—London.*

138½ tons estimated at £32 10s. 0d net			
per ton .. .. .	£4,501	5	0

£4,501 5 0

£4,501 5 0

IV. *Damaged fibre.*

Insurance claimed .. .. .			37	2	0
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V. *Freight rebates*

49 15 8

Total

£9,427 5 7

J. E. SYMOND,

Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.

*Enclosure 2 to No. X.*

## PLANTATION PROGRESS REPORT APRIL, 1924 TO MARCH, 1925.

At the commencement of this Financial Year, the buildings and machinery for the plantation factory had just arrived from England. These were some months overdue, having been ordered nine months before in the hope of commencing the work of harvesting in January 1924; the earliest planted portions of the plantation being ready for reaping at that date.

The factory was erected by June 1924 but owing to various delays and the relaying of the engine crankshaft being necessary, a proper start was not made until August.

Labour was sufficient for the first nine months of the year, but for the remaining quarter a very serious shortage hampered operations considerably, and reduced the output. In some months it was only possible to work the factory on alternate days. This shortage was probably due to the cocoa season and the commencement of large public works in the neighbourhood. Local labour will not work continuously in the field and it was necessary to rely on Northern Territories men for this work, though men for factory work were generally obtainable for short periods.

Harvesting commenced in the earliest planted areas, which did not, however, give the best yields. I am of the opinion that this was due to the planting of cassava as a catch crop in the early days. Yields varied as much as from 9-20 cwts. to the acre of fibre, the best yield being obtained from areas on high ground which had not been inter-cropped.

Experiments for percentage yield of fibre from the leaf gave 3.26% under normal working conditions, some early poling was noticeable amongst the 1920 planting which was from fairly large suckers. The percentage however was not high.

The output of fibre during the period was 136 tons of which 8 tons were tow. The first report from the brokers in England was that the fibre was of exceptional strength and good decortication, but not quite up to the East African standard in colour and length. Value was estimated at £44 a ton with 1st grade East African at £49. On a slightly declining market our fibre realised prices from £40-43 10s. 0d. a ton, which was creditable for a product from an entirely new source. An outbreak of disease affected many plants during December 1924 which might be termed "Sun-Scorch". The tips of the leaves show light green blotches which rapidly whiten and spread downwards; finally drying up and becoming brown. The affected leaves are only good for very short length fibre, as the affected patches are so sunken that they pass through the decorticating machine without being scraped. The Mycologist was of the opinion that the disturbance was logical, and probably due to excessive heat after rains. The trouble ceased with the advent of dry weather.

Much interest was shown in the plantation by both Europeans and Africans. Several of the latter were interested in prospects and would no doubt be prepared to plant when it is possible to give them a guarantee that their crop will be taken from them when mature.

J. E. SYMOND,

*Superintendent,*

Accra Sisal Plantation.

7th January, 1926.

## Appendix " A. " to Enclosure 2 to No. X.

SUMMARY OF PRODUCTION COST FOR PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 1924—31ST MARCH,  
1925.

Month.	No. of working days.	Area reaped in Acres.	Cwts of fibre produced.			Expenditure. £ s. d.
			Grade I.	Grade II.	Tow.	
April .. ..	26	—	—	—	—	3,240 13 4
May .. ..	27	—	—	—	—	
June .. ..	25	—	—	—	—	
July .. ..	27	—	—	—	—	
August .. ..	24	29.0	240	40	—	467 8 5
September .. ..	25	30.3	542	—	66	543 12 5
October .. ..	21	29.5	45 <sup>8</sup>	12	30	470 17 6
November .. ..	24	32.2	500	—	—	484 14 8
December .. ..	12	20.0	220	—	—	363 12 2
January .. ..	12	20.0	280	—	—	422 10 4
February .. ..	8	10.3	100	—	—	297 18 2
March .. ..	15	26.2	240	—	—	479 6 8
			2,580	52	96	
Totals .. ..	246	207.6	2,728 cwts.			£6,770 13 8

Monthly average            20.5            17.3            227.3 cwts.

Average yield fibre per acre all grades—10.9 cwts.

Factory and Production costs of producing 1 ton fibre—£49 10s. 11d.

Average output of fibre per working day—11 cwts.

J. E. SYMOND,

*Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.*

## Appendix " B. " to Enclosure 1 to No. X.

ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTION COSTS, PERIOD APRIL 1ST, 1924—31ST MARCH,  
1925.

Head of Expenditure.	Total Expenditure for period.			Expenditure per ton fibre.
	£	s.	d.	
European salaries, passages, Supervision—allowances, Overseer and Clerk .. .. .	1,428	17	8	10.46
Cutting leaves .. .. .	265	8	0	1.94
Transporting leaves .. .. .	385	4	3	2.82
Decorticating and refuse removed .. .. .	245	6	10	1.80
Brushing Fibre .. .. .	67	11	9	.45
Drying fibre .. .. .	141	7	3	1.03
Sorting and Hanking .. .. .	136	14	2	1.00
Baling, Packing, Marking .. .. .	55	8	11	.40
Plantation and Roads .. .. .	886	9	11	6.49
Engine .. .. .	75	14	9	.59
Recruiting labour .. .. .	159	5	6	1.17
Fuel Oil .. .. .	238	17	1	1.75
Lubricants .. .. .	84	1	0	.61
Petrol .. .. .	19	3	10	.14
Baling wire .. .. .	28	18	0	.21
Baling Canvas .. .. .	110	5	6	.81
Grease and Waste .. .. .	4	12	7	.03
Miscellaneous repairs and material .. .. .	40	10	7	.30
Water .. .. .	390	6	0	2.85
Insurance .. .. .	20	16	8	.16
Railway freights—includes Plantation light railway	208	6	3	1.53
Equipment of factory, labour and material	407	1	7	2.98
Do. from Head Office expenditure .. .. .	1,370	5	7	10.02
Total .. .. .	£6,770	13	8	49.54

Total output of fibre—136 tons, 13 cwts.

J. E. SYMOND,

*Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.*

## Appendix " C. " to Enclosure 2 to No. X.

## SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

## SUMMARY OF SHIPBOARD AND MARKET CHARGES ON SIX SHIPMENTS.

Nature of Charge.	Total Expenditure on Shipboard and Market.	Average Expenditure.
	£ s. d.	
Port Rates .. .. .	6 8 9	7.047
Freight to London .. .. .	598 16 0	4.379
Insurance (Marine) .. .. .	59 12 3 } 20 16 8 }	.587
Landing, Sorting, Sampling .. .. .	102 18 1	.754
Landing and Shewing .. .. .	25 3 8	.183
Rent and Shewing .. .. .	50 18 6	.37
Rent, etc. .. .. .	63 11 1	.468
Fire Insurance .. .. .	14 4 8	.104
Interest .. .. .	10 7 9	.075
Petties and Postage .. .. .	7 7 0	.054
Commission 1% .. .. .	51 18 11	.379
	£1,012 3 4	7.400

Total weight of the six shipments—136 tons, 13 cwts.

J. E. SYMOND,

*Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.*

## Appendix " D. " to Enclosure 2 to No. X.

## TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR YEAR 1ST APRIL, 1924—31ST MARCH, 1925.

	£ s. d.
Supervision—Salaries, Passages, allowances, Overseer and Clerk ..	1,428 17 8
Labour, Plantation, Roads, etc. .. .. .	886 9 11
Labour, Reaping and Transporting .. .. .	650 12 3
Labour, in Factory .. .. .	722 3 8
Labour, Recruiting .. .. .	159 5 6
Fuel lubricants, Baling Material .. .. .	526 8 7
Purchase of Water .. .. .	390 6 0
Railway and other Transport—includes light railway on plantation	208 6 3
Insurance of fibre locally .. .. .	20 16 8
Labour and Material { Equipment of Factory Expenditure by Supt. Sisal	407 1 7
• Equipment of Factory from Head Office Books ..	1,370 5 7
	£6,770 11 8

NOTE.—The last item includes final payments for the factory itself which came into this financial period.

J. E. SYMOND,

*Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.*

## Appendix " E. " to Enclosure 2 to No. X.

## SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY RECEIPTS ACTUAL &amp; ESTIMATED.

(1ST APRIL, 1924-31ST MARCH, 1925.)

## I.—Account sales of shipments—Fibre.

S.S. " Bata " .. .. .	£423 7 8	
" Roquelle " .. .. .	1,009 12 8	
" Prahsu "—" Sapele "—" Gaboon "	1,206 16 11	
" Bathurst " .. .. .	846 12 3	
" Sapele " .. .. .	1,240 7 7	
" Bassa " .. .. .	278 1 2	
	5,004 18 3	
Less charges .. .. .	991 6 8	4,013 11 7
2. Local sales .. .. .		4 0 0
3. Insurance paid on 1 bale lost .. .. .		4 8 9
4. Insurance claimed on damage to " Bassa " above		555 3 5
		£4,577 3 9

NOTE.—These shipments are 5 cwts. in excess of production in factory during this period. This is practically balanced by the sale of 6 cwts. to Messrs. Woermann who are still disputing payment.

J. E. SYMOND,

*Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.*

*Enclosure 3 to No. X.*

COLONIAL SECRETARY' OFFICE,

ACCRA, GOLD COAST,

8th March, 1926.

SIR,

With reference to the correspondence between this Government and yourself ending with your letter dated the 16th ultimo from Lagos, relating to the Government Sisal Plantation near Accra, I am directed by the Governor to inform you of Government's present position in the matter.

2. With respect to your concession from the Sempe and Akumadse Chiefs, I am to inform you that as regards the Concessions Ordinance, Government is not able to grant you any remission peculiar to that concession; but Government is prepared to extend to agricultural concessions generally the exemption from payment of royalties which has already been granted in the case of timber concessions.

3. Further, Government is also willing to exempt concessions such as yours (namely, concessions in respect of which cultivation of an intensive character is intended to be carried out throughout the whole concession area), from the provisions of clauses (6) to (9) of section 11 of the Concessions Ordinance.

4. As concerns the joining of the various plots comprised by your concession, it does not seem possible for Government to do anything special in that behalf; but if the communications in question are to be on land owned by the grantors of your concession, it is not anticipated that any special difficulty will arise. In this connection, however, you should not overlook the provisions of the Proprietary Railways Ordinance, Chapter 110 of the Statute Book of this Colony.

5. There remains to be considered the question of Government's disposal to you of its interest in the present Government Sisal Plantation and in the appurtenances thereof; and on this point I am to inform you that, on the proceedings in the Concessions Court with respect to your concession reaching the "Order for Survey" stage, Government would be willing to assign to you its said interest for the agreed sum of £18,000; on the condition that, if the undertaking proves a failure, or if the concessionaire company goes into Liquidation, Government shall have the option of taking from the then holders of the concession an assignment of the whole concession at a fair valuation; provided that it is to be understood that the final details to regulate and implement this arrangement would be settled on such terms as the Law Officers may advise.

I have, etc.,

J. C. MAXWELL,

*Colonial Secretary.*

MAJOR B. E. JECKS,

9 & 11, FENCHURCH AVENUE,

LONDON, E.C. 3.

## XI.

*Despatch from the Governor to the Secretary of State.*

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

ACCRA.

7th July, 1927.

No. 531.

SIR,

With reference to Sir James Maxwell's despatch No. 459 dated the 2nd of June, 1926, I have the honour to transmit herewith a report upon the working of Sisal Plantation, Accra prepared by Captain J. M. Wingate, Acting Superintendent, for the period April 1st, 1926 to March 31st, 1927.

2. The total output of fibre during the period under review was 459 tons while the cost of production was £17.32 per ton. The output in 1925-26 was 285 tons 5 cwts. and the cost of production was £27.94 per ton.

3. In 1926-27 the cost of the plantation was £7,954 15s. 11d. Special expenditure chargeable to *capital* but paid from votes *i.e.* Revenue for the year amounted to £571 15s. 5d. The figure for interest on capital and depreciation is calculated at £3,348 5s. 10d. The total expenditure, therefore, during the year amounted to £11,874 17s. 2d.

4. It is not possible at this stage to append a final statement of receipts from sales of fibre as the account sales for the latter part of the period under review have not yet been received, but the total revenue is estimated to amount to £14,966 0s. 3d. On the year's working, therefore, a profit should be made of £3,091 3s. 1d. after deduction of all charges including interest on capital and depreciation of machinery and buildings.

5. I venture to think that you will agree that the position disclosed by the report is satisfactory. In your despatch No. 226 dated the 10th March, 1927, you approved of the fibre being disposed of by local sale with effect from the 1st of July.

6. As regards the offer made by Major Jecks to take over the factory, plant, buildings and Government's interest in the land, to which reference is made in paragraphs 10 and 11 of Sir J. C. Maxwell's despatch No. 459 dated the 2nd of June, 1926, the position is unaltered. Government has granted Major Jecks an extension of time until the 31st July, 1927 to arrive at a decision in this matter.

7. In forwarding the report to Government, the Acting Director of Agriculture (Mr. Auchinleck) observes :—

“ Before dealing with the report, I wish to make the point clear  
 “ that the Department of Agriculture has so far rightly limited itself to  
 “ the problem of ascertaining whether sisal can be grown and prepared  
 “ profitably on the Accra Plains. The further problem of devising a  
 “ policy whereby farmers may be induced to undertake the cultivation  
 “ of this crop has wisely been left for final consideration until the pre-  
 “ liminary trials were complete enough to supply exact and reliable  
 “ figures and facts.

“ There has been an assumption that, coincidentally with the  
 “ experimental period, there should have been a campaign of propaganda  
 “ aimed at establishing an industry among farmers. In the opinion  
 “ of every officer of this Department, such a campaign would have been  
 “ premature and unwise, and had the industry been a failure agricul-  
 “ turally or financially the farmers would have had a just grievance  
 “ against the Government.

“ It would be unfair to judge the Department and its work on any point other than the efficiency with which the plantation and factory have been operated. The problem of fostering an industry among farmers is not an agricultural one; it is administrative and its solution will depend upon Government’s policy with regard to land tenure, engagement of labour, and authority of chiefs over the people. In other words it lies within the sphere of the Political and not the Agricultural Department.

“ The experimental period is now ended, and Government can, for the first time, consider its policy with reference to encouraging an industry among the farmers. I do not regard it as wise or fair that the decision, with reference to the policy deemed advisable, should lie solely with the Department of Agriculture. I recommend that it be referred to the proposed Board of Agriculture for full discussion, and that the Government act on the decision of the Board.

“ I am satisfied that the industry can be a profitable one among farmers. At the same time the publication within a five-mile radius of the factory (including Achimota village) is limited to 1,600 persons, and it does not appear that the industry can be a large one in that locality unless farmers from elsewhere be settled on the land. In addition the crop is not a popular one among local farmers, and special measures will be necessary to induce them to adopt it. During the whole period of the trials, there has not been a single farmer in the neighbourhood of the plantation who has planted sisal. It is clear that, with this crop as with others, mere demonstration is of little effect, and that other measures will have to be considered if the Government desires to foster the industry. A campaign of propaganda and inducement cannot be carried on by the Superintendent, who has exacting technical duties and considerable financial responsibilities in connection with his superintendence of the 1,000 acres of plantation and the factory.

“ Treasury accounts in connection with the plantation and factory are as follows :—

EXPENDITURE.				RECEIPTS.			
“ 1920 .. ..	24	0	0	1922-23 ..	£146	1	4
“ Jan-March, 1921	212	2	11	1923-24 ..	9	10	3
“ 1921-22 ..	5,153	17	3	1924-25 ..	1,164	5	1
“ 1922-23 ..	3,621	5	7	1925-26 ..	7,743	13	7
“ 1923-24 ..	12,168	0	8	1926-27 ..	15,564	19	3
“ 1924-25 ..	6,338	10	1				
“ 1925-26 ..	8,982	7	4				
“ 1926-27 ..	8,229	14	8				
	<hr/>				<hr/>		
	£44,729	18	6		£24,628	9	6

“ The period covered since inception is just over six years, and of that time, four years have been necessary for the growth of the plants to maturity. In the period, more than half of the original capital of over £37,000 has been covered by receipts. Before the plantation and factory were entrusted to the Department of Agriculture, they had been over-capitalized to the estimated extent of £11,000 (see Report of Committee appointed to consider the financial position of the Sisal Plantation, March, 1925). The enterprise has therefore been proved to be sound, and under the Department’s control there need to be no apprehension concerning the recovery of the invested capital.

“ The year’s working during 1926-27 has resulted in a net profit of £3,091 3s. 1d. (see Section ‘Receipts and Expenditure’ of Captain Wingate’s Report). Charges other than operating costs were high, and included £3,348 5s. 10d. for interest and depreciation, and £571 15s. 5d. for new capital expenditure charged to the current year’s working.

“ Every item of labour has been carried out at less cost in 1926-27 than during the first year of working (1925-26). Total labour costs per ton of fibre were reduced from £14.75 to £10.40. At the same time, transport charges were reduced from £1.08 to £.76 per ton, and brokers' charges were reduced by £1.36 per ton. The average output per day rose from 27.80 cwt. to 33.8 cwts., and the average price rose from £38/38.10 to £39.10/40.10 owing to improved methods of preparation and baling.

“ The exact itemisation of costs and market charges, in Appendices B and C to Captain Wingate's Report, bear witness to the care and efficiency with which the whole experiment has been conducted. These figures form the basis upon which the Government can lay down a considered policy. Under no system of private enterprise would figures of this value be put at the disposal of the public, and even had the whole experiment been a proved failure the value of the figures would have been equally great.

“ I wish to state that it is unlikely that profits during 1927-28 will be as high as during 1926-27. The drought during 1926 was the severest on record in our meteorological returns for Accra, the total rainfall being just over 10 inches for the year; in consequence, re-planting was delayed, growth of existing plants was brought to a standstill, and there will be almost certainly a shortage of leaf in 1927-28. In addition to unfavourable weather, the factory has naturally worked for more days in 1926-27 than in the first year of operation 1925-26. An estimate of the 1927-28 crop will be prepared at a later date, when it can be compiled with reasonable approximation to certainty.

“ In conclusion, I wish to indicate to Government that Mr. Symonds and Captain Wingate have carried out a difficult and strenuous task with thorough efficiency. They have handled 1,000 acres of cultivation, supervised a complex factory, and in addition have supplied exact detailed figures of each operation on a scale which would not be required from an employee of a private firm. During 1926-27 Captain Wingate has had the whole work and responsibility on his shoulders, and has further increased the standard of efficiency. Both officers deserve full recognition of their work from Government.”

8. The observations of Mr. Auchinleck will be brought to the notice of Sir Ransford Slater, but meantime I desire to associate myself with Mr. Auchinleck with his remarks concerning Mr. Symonds and Captain Wingate.

I have, etc.,

JOHN MAXWELL,  
*Officer Administering the Government.*

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,  
L. S. AMERY, M.P.,  
&c., &c., &c.

## Enclosure to No. XI.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

## REPORT FOR THE WORKING YEAR 1ST APRIL, 1926 TO 31ST MARCH, 1927.

The previous report comprised the working of the factory for the 12 months—1st April, 1925 to 31st March, 1926. This report deals with the factory and plantation results for the Financial Year ended 31st March, 1927.

A final statement of accounts cannot be given until all Account Sales of Fibre shipped during the year and the Crown Agents' accounts for March 1927 has been received. Available figures are given in the following Appendices to this report :—

- (A) Summary of Monthly Reapings and Output.
- (B) Local Production Costs for the Year.
- (C) Shipping and Marketing Charges.
- (D) Total Disbursements during the Year.
- (E) Receipts, Actual and Estimated, for the Year.

## OUTPUT AND YIELDS.

From Appendix " A " it will be seen that the factory worked for 275 days and produced 459 tons of fibre from 204.40 acres of first cutting, 464.70 acres of second cutting, 774.90 acres of third cutting, 824.30 acres of fourth cutting and 168.40 acres of fifth cutting.

The yields of fibre for each cutting were :—

1st cutting	..	..	9.26	cwts.	per	acre.
2nd	"	..	4.58	"	"	"
3rd	"	..	3.69	"	"	"
4th	"	..	2.35	"	"	"
5th	"	..	1.40	"	"	"

Owing to the shortage of mature leaf, the fourth and fifth cuttings were done prematurely and consequently gave much lower yields than if they had been done at the normal time.

The average output of fibre per working day was 33.8 cwts., compared with 27.80 cwts. in the previous year. Of the total output 94.5% was 1st and 2nd grade fibre and 5.5% of Tow.

The variation in yield per acre from different parts of the plantation for the various cuttings were :—

7.10	..	..	11.80	cwts.	1st	cutting.
4.00	..	..	5.10	"	2nd	"
3.10	..	..	4.30	"	3rd	"
1.60	..	..	2.73	"	4th	"
1.40	..	..	1.40	"	5th	"

From the above figures a fair estimate of the total yield per acre in its bearing life would be approximately 25 cwts. of fibre.

## PRODUCTION COSTS.

The figures in Appendix " B " may be briefly summarized as follows :—

Supervision..	£3.10	per	ton	of	fibre.
Labour ..	10.40	"	"	"	"
Materials ..	3.82	"	"	"	"

Supervision shows a substantial decrease from £5.90 previously, owing to the fact that Mr. Symond's salary was not a charge against the plantation as from 5th December, 1926 and also owing to the increased output.

The labour rate has come down from £14.75, due to the daily tasks having been increased as the men became more proficient. The decrease in materials is due to,

- (a) Price of water being reduced from 7/- to 3/6 per 1,000 gallons,
- (b) Small quantity of spares and replacements required  
and
- (c) That bales are not now completely covered with canvas but have only a canvas label put on one side.

All labour items shew decreases, (due mainly to the increased output) with the exception of Cutting which shews a slight increase. This increase is due to the fact that when cuttings are done which give small yields the daily tasks have to be increased. This means that the distance from cutting areas to the light railway is also increased and much time and labour is therefore spent on carrying.

A Fordson tractor, which replaced the small Austro-Daimler Petrol unit, has made a satisfactory reduction in the Transport costs from £1.08 to £0.76 per ton fibre. Kerosene consumption and depreciation are not included in this comparison but the wages of the driver, driver's assistant and all loaders, etc. are. The cost of the Fordson being £306 2s. 9d. and the kerosene consumption being approximately £0.23 per ton fibre. It is clear that definite economy has been effected.

#### SHIPPING AND MARKETING.

The charges under this heading are given in Appendix " C " and are for 14 shipments only. The Account Sales for the remaining 3 shipments have not yet been received from the Brokers in London.

It is gratifying to note that the Brokers total charges shew a decrease of £1.357 per ton. This decrease is due to selling consignments " Forward ".

The only local sales made during the year were 3 tons 7 cwts. 1 qr. 21 lbs. to the Accra Prison, and a sample lot of Sisal Waste to Captain MacKenzie. However, it has now been decided to terminate our present selling arrangements with our London Brokers on the 1st July, 1927, and to call for local tenders for the purchase of the factory output. This arrangement should prove to be a great convenience and should reduce market charges considerably.

#### PRICES.

During the period prices were as follows for the different grades :—

##### OLD PREPARATION.

Grade 1.	£38 to £38 10/- per ton
Grade 2.	£36 per ton
Tow	£27 per ton.

##### NEW PREPARATION.

Grade 1.	£39 10/- to £40 10/- per ton
Grade 2.	£38 10/- to £39 per ton
Tow	£28 to £31 per ton.

#### RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE.

Total disbursements, Appendix " D " were £8,526 11s. 4d., of which £7,954 15s. 11d. represents running costs, the balance of £571 15s. 5d. being for items which should come under Capital Expenditure but have been paid

for out of the current year's votes Receipts, actual and estimated, which are shewn in Appendix " E " total £14,966 0s. 3d. Unsold fibre has been estimated at £31 per ton which is a conservative figure. Interest and Depreciation amount to the following sums :—

£37,918 12 10 at 6%..	..	£2,275 2 5
6,876 11 0,, 10%..	..	687 13 1
3,855 3 9,, 10%..	..	385 10 4
		<hr/>
		£3,348 5 10

The following is a summary of the year's accounts :—

<i>Total Revenue.</i>		<i>Total Expenditure</i>
£14,966 0 3	Production Costs .. .. .	£7,954 15 11
	Capital Expenses charged .. .. .	571 15 5
	Interest and Depreciation .. .. .	3,348 5 10
		<hr/>
		£11,874 17 2
		<hr/>
	Revenue .. .. .	£14,966 0 3
	Expenditure .. .. .	11,874 17 2
		<hr/>
	Profit .. .. .	£3,091 3 1

It will be seen from the above figures that the very satisfactory profit of £3,091 3s. 1d. has been realized after all charges, including Interest on Capital and Depreciation on Machinery and Buildings, have been paid.

#### GENERAL.

Practically no difficulty is now experienced in obtaining local labour for inside work though it is still necessary to recruit volunteers from the Northern Territories for work in the field, such as harvesting and weeding, etc. The average supply of volunteers from the Northern Territories is 80 per annum.

The total rainfall for the year was exceedingly small being only 10.10 inches. The annual average for this district is 28 inches.

The very severe drought experienced has been decidedly trying to the young plants and has delayed replanting to a great extent. It is hoped however to have the whole plantation replanted during the coming rains.

The area of 40 acres which was planted in May 1925 with the object of finding out whether clean weeding was necessary in the growing of Sisal, is looking very healthy. This plot was to receive three weedings during its life (every 6 months for the first 18 months). The three weedings have now been made and the plants are as far advanced as those in areas which have received more frequent weedings. If this method is found to be an efficient one, the total cost of weeding will be reduced from £5 to approximately £2 per acre.

The preparation and packing of the fibre has been greatly improved by the installation of 2 new Hand Brushing Machines and a larger Baling Box. The price obtained for the new product is about £2 per ton in advance of that realized for the old preparation.

In conclusion it may be stated that the time is now ripe for the African farmers to take up the cultivation of Sisal and that several have stated their intention of making a start during the coming wet season.

J. M. WINGATE,  
Acting Superintendent,  
Accra Sisal Plantation.

27th May, 1927.

*Appendix " A. " to Enclosure to No. XI.*  
**ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.**

**SUMMARY OF PRODUCTION AND COST FOR PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 1926 TO  
 31ST MARCH, 1927.**

Month 1926.	No. of Working Days.	Acres Reaped.	Cwts. of Fibre produced	Expenditure. £ s d.
April .. ..	21	A —	800	706 8 11
		B 155.40		
		C —		
May .. ..	21	A 53.00	760	702 2 2
		B 47.00		
		C —		
June .. ..	23	A 66.00	780	674 9 10
		B 40.50		
		C —		
July .. ..	24	A 35.00	800	759 8 6
		B 106.00		
		C —		
August .. ..	23	A 7.40	660	718 16 11
		B 91.00		
		C 64.20		
September ..	23	A —	820	653 8 10
		B —		
		C 188.00		
October .. ..	25	A 18.90	800	623 10 1
		B —		
		C 132.30		
November ..	24	A —	760	642 8 10
		B —		
		C 208.70		
December ..	23	A 7.70	760	614 17 4
		B 24.80		
		C 181.70		
1927. January .. ..	23	A —	760	578 10 10
		B —		
		C —		
		D 278.00		
February .. ..	20	A —	740	582 5 8
		B —		
		C —		
		D 312.00		
March .. ..	25	A 16.40	740	625 7 2
		B —		
		C —		
		D 234.30		
		E 168.40		
Totals ..	275	A 204.40 B 464.70 C 774.90 D 824.30 E 168.40	9,180	£7,881 15 1
Spares and Replacements not charged to any one month				73 0 10
				£7,954 15 11
Monthly Average	22.91	203.05	765	

Average Yield of Fibre all Grades per Acre .. .. . { (A.) 9.26 cwts.  
(B.) 4.58 cwts.  
(C.) 3.69 cwts.  
(D.) 2.35 cwts.  
(E.) 1.40 cwts.

Average Output of Fibre per Working Day of 9 Hours-33.38 cwts.

Factory and Plantation Costs of Producing 1 ton of Fibre—  
£17 6s. 7d. .. .. .

- A. 1st Cutting.
- B. 2nd "
- C. 3rd "
- D. 4th "
- E. 5th "

J. M. WINGATE,

*Acting Superintendent.*  
*Accra Sisal Plantation.*

23.5.27.

## Appendix " B. " to Enclosure to No. XI.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

ANALYSIS OF PRODUCTION COSTS FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 1926 TO 31ST

MARCH, 1927.

<i>Head of Expenditure.</i>	<i>Total Expenditure for 12 months.</i>	<i>Expenditure per ton fibre.</i>
European and African Salaries, Passages and Allowances		
Total Supervision .. .. .	£1,420 4 0	£3.10
Labour — Cutting Leaves .. .. .	1,448 16 1	3.16
Transporting Leaves .. .. .	349 9 7	.76
Decorticating and Refuse .. .. .	594 5 8	1.29
Brushing Fibre .. .. .	344 2 10	.76
Drying Fibre .. .. .	330 16 3	.72
Grading and Hanking .. .. .	300 7 9	.65
Baling, Packing and Marking .. .. .	138 17 5	.30
Plantation, Roads. etc. .. .. .	783 4 6	1.70
Stumping and Clearing .. .. .	162 4 6	.35
Engine .. .. .	51 15 6	.11
Recruiting .. .. .	273 8 3	.60
Total Labour .. .. .	£4,777 8 4	£10.40
Total Labour and Supervision .. .. .	£6,197 12 4	£13.50
Materials—Fuel Oil .. .. .	£534 16 9	1.17
Lubricants .. .. .	157 5 5	.34
Petrol and Kerosene .. .. .	170 13 10	.37
Baling Wire .. .. .	44 7 6	.10
Baling Canvas .. .. .	76 5 9	.17
Grease and Waste .. .. .	9 12 8	.02
Misc. Repairs, Buildings .. .. .	119 16 1	.26
Extras—Freight, storage and Cranage .. .. .	228 7 3	.49
Water .. .. .	342 17 6	.74
Spares and Replacements .. .. .	73 0 10	.16
Total Materials and Extras	£1,757 3 7	3.82
Total Labour and Supervision	6,197 12 4	13.50
Grand Total .. .. .	£7,954 15 11	£17.32
Total output of Fibre .. .. .	459 tons.	

J. M. WINGATE,

Acting Superintendent, AccraSisal Plantation.

23rd May, 1927.

## Appendix "C." to Enclosure to No. XI.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

SUMMARY OF SHIPBOARD AND MARKET CHARGES FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL,  
1926 TO 31ST MARCH, 1927.

<u>Nature of Charge.</u>	<u>Total Expenditure on</u> <u>Shipboard and Market.</u>			<u>Average Expendi-</u> <u>ture per ton.</u>
	£	s.	d.	£
I.—Sales in England.				
Commission @ 1% .. .. .	154	15	4	.38
Landing and Sorting .. .. .	80	0	11	.23
Port Rates .. .. .	2	17	11	.008
Rent and Shewing .. .. .	27	16	10	.08
Insurance .. .. .	9	11	7	.04
Interest .. .. .	0	15	6	.002
Petties and Postages .. .. .	1	1	0	.003
Freight .. .. .	1,681	10	0	4.80
	£1,938	9	1	£5.543

N.B.—“ Sales in England ” is compiled from the figures of fourteen shipments only, no other shipment figures yet being sent by our Brokers in England.

J. M. WINGATE,

Acting Superintendent, Accra Sisal Plantation.

23rd May, 1927.

## Appendix "D." to Enclosure to No. XI.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD 1ST APRIL, 1926 TO 31ST MARCH,  
1927.

Supervision, European and African Salaries, Passages and Allowances .. .. .	£1,420	4	0
Labour, Plantation, Roads, etc. (including plantation Light Railway) .. .. .	783	4	6
Labour, Reaping and Harvesting .. .. .	1,798	5	8
Labour, in Factory .. .. .	1,760	5	5
Labour Recruiting .. .. .	273	8	3
Labour, Stumping and Replanting .. .. .	162	4	6
Fuel, Lubricants and Baling Material .. .. .	1,112	18	0
Purchase of Water .. .. .	342	17	6
Railway and other Transport .. .. .	228	7	3
Spares and Replacements (including Freight from England) .. .. .	73	0	10
	£7,954	15	11
Special Expenditure chargeable to Capital but paid from this year's votes			
1. 2 Hand Brushing Machines (inclusive of Freight, Inspection Charges and Insurance) .. .. .	£456	8	11
2. 1 Baling Box (inclusive of Freight and Inspection Charges) .. .. .	109	12	4
3. Inspection Charges and Insurance on Fordson Tractor .. .. .	5	14	2
	£571	15	5
Total Expenditure .. .. .	£8,526	11	4

J. M. WINGATE,

Acting Superintendent, Accra Sisal Plantation.

23rd May, 1927.

## Appendix " E. " to Enclosure to No. XI.

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION AND FACTORY.

RECEIPTS ACTUAL AND ESTIMATED, 1ST APRIL, 1926, TO 31ST MARCH, 1927.

I. *Account Sales of Shipments*

S.S. " Sapele " .. .. .	£1,812	1	10
S.S. " Shonga " .. .. .	393	18	7
S.S. " Benue " .. .. .	566	15	2
S.S. " Gambia " .. .. .	1,441	12	9
S.S. " Palma " .. .. .	840	0	6
S.S. " Bereby " .. .. .	218	7	9
S.S. " Prahsu " .. .. .	773	16	9
S.S. " New Brunswick " .. .. .	840	3	2
S.S. " Warri " .. .. .	905	19	9
S.S. " Chama " .. .. .	1,037	14	9
S.S. " Egwanga " .. .. .	448	2	3
S.S. " Bakana " .. .. .	2,007	8	2
S.S. " Prahsu " .. .. .	1,013	3	7
S.S. " Sapele " .. .. .	1,020	19	10

Less Charges .. .. .	£13,320	4	10
	2,060	13	5

£11,259 11 5

II. *Local Sales*

To Prisons Department 3 tons. 7 cwts. 1 qr. 21 lbs. .. .. .	103	16	10
To 1 sample lot Sisal Waste to Captain Mac-Kenzie .. .. .	1	15	0

III. Unsold fibre in London 106 tons at £31 per ton .. .. .	3,286	0	0
IV. Unsold fibre in Factory 3 tons at £31 per ton .. .. .	93	0	0
V. Damaged Fibre Insurance Claimed .. .. .	98	15	2
VI. Freight Rebates .. .. .	123	1	10

£14,966 0 3

J. M. WINGATE.

Acting Superintendent, Accra Sisal Plantation.

23.5.27.

XII.

*Despatch from the Secretary of State to the Governor.*

No. 682.

DOWNING STREET,  
4th August, 1927.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Mr. Maxwell's despatch No. 531 of the 7th of July, in which he transmitted a report of the working of the Sisal Plantation, Accra, for the period from the 1st of April, 1926 to the 31st of March, 1927.

2. I agree with Mr. Maxwell in thinking that the report discloses a very satisfactory position and I am glad to express my appreciation of the work of Captain Wingate and Mr. Symond, whose efforts have been largely responsible for this state of affairs.

I have, etc.,

W. ORMSBY GORE.

*(for the Secretary of State).*

GOVERNOR,

SIR A. R. SLATER, K.C.M.G., C.B.E.,  
&c., &c., &c.

XIII.

TELEGRAM DATED THE 1ST SEPTEMBER, 1927, FROM THE COLONIAL SECRETARY TO THE DIRECTOR OF THE COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE BUREAU, LONDON.

With reference to your telegram dated 29th July Accra Sisal Plantation regret Government unable to grant Jacks any further extension please so inform him.

XIV.

*Extract from the report of the Committee on Agricultural Policy and Organisation.*

\* \* \*

5. THE SISAL INDUSTRY.

180. Previous reports which have been issued on the subject of the Accra Sisal Factory and Plantation are as follows :

- (a) *Report of a Committee on the Sisal Plantation, Accra :—*  
(Printed as Sessional Paper IX—1921/22.)
- (b) *Report of a Committee appointed to consider the Financial Position of the Sisal Plantation* (undated, but subsequent to March 1925).
- (c) *Summary of history and position of the Sisal Plantation* (prepared for the Governor by Mr. L. W. Wood in January 1926).

In addition, full annual reports have been submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies from the Department of Agriculture for the financial years 1924/5, 1925/6 and 1926/7.

181. It is necessary to preface further remarks by stating that two distinct questions have to be considered, (1) the success or otherwise of the Accra Sisal Plantation and Factory, and (2), the possibility of creating a Sisal industry among African farmers in the neighbourhood of Accra. The first is an agricultural question, evidence on which may fairly be required from the Department of Agriculture, the second is not agricultural but is administrative and economic. This distinction should be more clearly realized than it has been in the past, both in fairness to the Department of Agriculture and in order to clear the ground for future action.

182. Captain Wingate, the Acting Superintendent of the Plantation and Factory gave evidence before the Committee, and from his Report are quoted the following figures relative to work during the year 1926/27.

<i>Total Revenue.</i>		<i>Total Expenditure.</i>
£14,966 0 3	Production Costs .. .. .	£7,954 15 11
	Capital Expenses paid from current receipts ..	571 15 5
	Interest and Depreciation .. .. .	3,348 5 10
		£11,874 17 2
	Net profit for year .. .. .	3,091 3 1
£14,966 0 3		£14,966 0 3

The interest and depreciation are derived as follows:—

£37,918 12 10 Capital Expenditure, interest @ 6% —	£2,275 2 5
Depreciation @ 10% on £10,731 14 9 .. —	1,073 3 5
	£3,348 5 10



The acreages reaped and yields per acre were as follows :—

	<i>Acres Reaped.</i>	<i>Hundredweight of fibre per acre obtained.</i>
First cutting .. .. .	204.40	9.26
Second „ .. .. .	464.70	4.58
Third „ .. .. .	774.90	3.69
Fourth „ .. .. .	824.20	2.35
Fifth „ .. .. .	168.40	1.40

The factory worked for 275 days, turning out an average of 33.38 hundredweight of fibre per day.

182a. The revenue and expenditure on the factory and plantation since their inception and up to March 31st, 1927, are given by the Treasury Department as follows :—

<i>Expenditure.</i>		<i>Revenue.</i>	
1920 .. .. .	£24 0 0	1922-23 .. .. .	£146 1 4
Jan.-March, 1921 .. .. .	212 2 11	1923-24 .. .. .	9 10 3
1921-22 .. .. .	5,153 17 3	1924-25 .. .. .	1,164 5 1
1922-23 .. .. .	3,621 5 7	1925-26 .. .. .	7,743 13 7
1923-24 .. .. .	12,168 0 8	1926-27 .. .. .	15,564 18 3
1924-25 .. .. .	6,338 10 1		
1925-26 .. .. .	8,982 7 4		
1926-27 .. .. .	8,229 14 8		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Total	£44,729 18 6	Total	£24,628 9 6

When it is taken into consideration that the period covered has been just over six years and that sisal takes four years to come into bearing, it will be realized that these results are remarkably good and that they are evidence that the agricultural and manufacturing work, which are the only matters that can fairly be asked from the Department of Agriculture, have been of a high standard of efficiency. The factory and plantation, under Department management are sound propositions, and the original experiment is concluded. The Government has now to decide whether they wish special efforts made to foster the sisal industry among Africans, and to fix a definite policy accordingly.

183. The Committee is of opinion that this experiment may now be regarded as having been conducted for a period long enough to enable its failure or success to be estimated. For the first time since its inception it is now safe to plan a campaign of propaganda based on results actually obtained. The results obtained up to date from the experiment have proved (1) that sisal can be grown profitably in that locality, (2) that it can be manufactured profitably at the factory in spite of the fact that the whole enterprise, before being handed over to the Department of Agriculture, had been seriously over capitalized. This point is made clear and definite, because it has been popularly assumed that, coincidentally with the early experimental period and while results were still uncertain, the Department of Agriculture should have induced farmers to adopt this cultivation. It is hardly necessary to indicate the unsoundness of this popular view.

184. Now that the experimental work is complete and the Department able to supply exact figures and facts on any point of cultivation, manufacture and sale, plans may be made for the future. Alternative plans are :—

- (a) The Department may continue to run the enterprise as it stands at present until all capital has been repaid to Government.
- (b) The plantation and factory may be sold outright to a private firm or individual.
- (c) The Department may increase the cultivation up to the limit of the factory-capacity, partly by new Government plantation, partly by farmer's and labourers' allotments.

The original alternative, that the enterprise should be handed over to the chiefs, is unworkable. Skilled technical work of this sort cannot be carried on by a Committee of chiefs or farmers.

185. The first of the alternatives presents no difficulties. Under the management of the Department the original capital can be paid back in the course of 12 to 20 years. In this connection the Chairman has satisfied himself that, owing to the 1926 drought and the fact that the area of plantation is below the factory capacity a portion of the 1927 crop has been reaped in 1926 and is not likely to be as large as that of 1926. Even assuming a drop of half the 1926 profits in 1927 the enterprise still remains quite sound. The second alternative has been considered already, an offer for purchase is still under negotiation, and there is little doubt that the publication of a few more balance-sheets will bring more offers. The adoption of this alternative would undoubtedly relieve the Government of further responsibility, but sale at the present moment would involve loss of part of the capital. It is also extremely unlikely that a private firm would, or could, foster the industry among farmers as efficiently and authoritatively as the Department is in a position to do. The Committee is not even satisfied that a private firm without the advantages that Government possesses in the matters of obtaining labour, could run the plantation and factory profitably, quite apart from any scheme for extending the industry among farmers. This may be regarded as lying within the judgment and discretion of the purchaser alone, but very little permanent good would be done to the reputation of the Government by the sale of an enterprise which afterwards failed.

186. It appears probable to the Committee that the surer way of establishing the industry would be to adopt the third alternative, particularly if it were accompanied by a scheme to settle a nucleus of population, available as labourers, in the vicinity of the factory. The Committee therefore has decided to give in full Captain Wingate's proposals on this matter, and to recommend them for careful consideration by Government. They are as follows :—

(1) The present plantation to be extended to 3,000 acres, the full capacity of the factory.

(2) Estimated cost of bringing the additional 2,000 acres into bearing is £8,000, made up as follows :—

Clearing 2,000 acres at £1 per acre ... ..	£2000
Planting 2,000 acres at 14/- per acre ... ..	1400
Weeding 2,000 acres at 15/- per acre (3 weedings during life of plant) ... ..	4500
Cost of extra agric. implements ... ..	100
	<hr/>
	£8000
	<hr/>

(3) In view of the proposed extensions it would be necessary to augment considerably the present local labour force. It is suggested that the following inducements might prove attractive to casual labour and may be a means of getting them to settle on the plantation :—

(a) To erect a village for local labour on similar lines to the present one for Northern Territories labour. 50 acres of land adjoining the village to be set aside for the cultivation by the labourers of their own food crops. Each labourer to be given about  $\frac{1}{4}$  acre free of rent and to be at liberty to dispose of his food as he may think fit.

(b) To approach trading firms in Accra with a view to getting a native store erected and stocked on the plantation. At present the labourers have to go to Accra to buy their food and cloths, etc.

- (4) In order to attract the local farmer to the cultivation of sisal hemp, the following scheme might offer the necessary inducement :—

500 acres to be divided into blocks of 5 acres each and to be cleared and planted by Government.

Farmers invited to take over these blocks at a cost of clearing and planting. This amounts to about £8 10s. 0d. to be paid to Government by the farmers when their crops are sold.

In the event of any part of this 500 acres not being taken up by the farmers the crop would be dealt with by Government. It might be advisable to advertise the above scheme in the local press giving, in support, the following figures :—

Estimated yield of dry fibre per acre-25 cwt. 41 tons leaf.	
Estimated yield of dry fibre per 5 acres-125 cwt. 205 tons leaf.	
Probable amount Government would be able to pay	
farmers for leaf .. .. .	£0 10 0 per ton.
The return for the 5 acres would therefore be	
10/- x 205 .. .. .	£102 10 0
Less cost of clearing and planting .. .. .	8 10 0
	<hr/>
Estimated profit every 3½ years .. .. .	£94 0 0

To get this return a farmer would only have to work four months each year.

Captain Wingate's suggestions open up interesting possibilities notably the feasibility of starting a co-operative profit-sharing scheme or a system of bonuses to growers, after an adequate sum has been set aside annually for repayment of capital to Government.

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## XV.

*Minute by the Secretary for Native Affairs.*

Colonial Secretary,

I do not think that at present any interest to speak of is taken in the Sisal Plantation by the local natives, with the exception of those who think they will be able to establish claims in respect of the ownership of the land, when the moment comes for Government or private enterprise to recognise this in some valuable form. At present the Government only occupies the land and is under an obligation to hand it back, improved in value, when the profits from the Plantation have extinguished the cost of establishing it.

2. At the same time I think there is reason to hope that, if the Plantation continues to be the success it is being and if Mr. Wingate's "several African farmers" carry out their intention of "making a start" at the cultivation of Sisal and if their experience is such as to encourage others to follow their example, there may in the course of a good many years gradually grow a practical local interest and a local industry. The late Governor repeatedly said that it must be expected to take years for the idea to catch on. I certainly do not think there is any reason yet to give way to pessimism. In fact the situation is encouraging in that at any rate "several" have expressed an intention of beginning, and very favourable for a prolonged wait for further development of interest, in that meanwhile under good management the plantation in paying very well.

3. In my opinion something definite should be done now by Government to foster this little beginning of interest by making the good results of the Government experiment and the good prospects for participation by the small farmer as widely known as possible. The District Commissioner should be given the facts and figures and instructed to carry out systematic propaganda. He should explain the position fully to the Chiefs and then get in touch with farmers themselves and explain it fully and repeatedly to them.

4. I think the interests of the natives will be well and sufficiently served by the first of the alternative policies suggested by the Committee\* namely:—

"The Department may continue to run the enterprise as it stands at present until all capital has been repaid to Government."

If in the meantime a private enterprise were willing to give the Government such terms as would repay the whole of the capital expenditure, that could in my opinion be accepted without detriment to the natives, with whom the private concern would have to make its own terms as to leasing the land, but I see no reason why the Government should dispose of its interest at a loss. The adoption of the Committee's first alternative would allow ample time for the development of that local interest in the cultivation which is the prime object of the whole experiment.

5. I do not see why Government should put more money into expanding the present plantation. No doubt that would ensure greater profits and a quicker repayment of the capital, but in the circumstances that does not appear to me to be necessary or even desirable. I think it is a good thing that the concern should go on doing well, as it is doing, during a long period. A protracted demonstration is needed. Such extension as may take place should I think be by the efforts of local farmers. This will not amount to much at first, but the rate of progression may grow. I must draw attention to the fact that Captain Wingate's estimate of £8,000 is only for the cost of bringing 2,000 acres into bearing and does not include what it would cost Government to acquire the right to occupy an additional 2,000 acres, even if the Chiefs and people could be persuaded to agree. Right up to the

\*See para 184 on page 64 above.

negotiations of Major Jecks with them they have shown themselves very unwilling to concede any rights over as much land as that so close to Accra. But assuming that they have been persuaded, there would certainly be claims for compensation again to settle. I cannot find on this file any record of the amount paid in compensation on account of the area now occupied, but I gather it must have been between £1,500 and £2,000. Probably the acquisition of the right to use another 2,000 acres (twice as much) would cost Government at least the same.

6. With regard to His Excellency's observation at the end of paragraph 5 of his minute dated 2nd August, 1927, as to the possibility of arranging a lease with a private firm or individual, I think there is no doubt that the Chiefs themselves would agree with the Committee that " the alternative that the enterprise should be handed over to the Chiefs is unworkable " and that they would at any time prefer to get a good return out of the enterprise by consenting to an arrangement with a concessionnaire than have the plantation and the plant on their hands simply losing the value created by the Government.

C. W. WELMAN,  
*Secretary for Native Affairs.*

*22nd August, 1927.*

No. 949.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

ACCRA,

30th November, 1927.

SIR.

I have the honour to refer to your despatch No. 682 of the 4th August, 1927 and previous correspondence relating to the Sisal Plantation, Accra.

2. Since my assumption of office in the Gold Coast I have carefully investigated the affairs of the plantation, its financial position and prospects, and I now enclose for your information the accompanying extract\* on the subject from the report of the Departmental Committee on Agricultural Policy and Organisation, which recently concluded its labours. This extract contains a summary of the present position and outlines the possible alternative policies to be adopted in the future.

3. I also enclose a copy of a minute† by the Secretary for Native Affairs in which he sets forth his views on the matter. It will be seen that Mr. Welman recommends :—

(a) that the District Commissioner, Accra, should be given the facts and figures relating to the Sisal Plantation and instructed to carry out systematic propaganda directed towards encouraging farmers to plant sisal.

(b) that Government should continue to run the plantation *as it stands at present* until all Capital has been repaid to Government, unless a private concern is prepared to take it over at the full capital cost.

(c) that there is no reason why Government should put more money into expanding the present plantation :

and that he is of opinion that there is no reason why Government should dispose of its interest at a loss and that the Chiefs concerned, if it comes to handing the plantation over to them in due course, would prefer to lease it to a Concessionaire rather than attempt to run it themselves.

4. I referred the question to the members of the Executive Council for their views, and, acting on their advice, I decided to adopt Mr. Welman's recommendations. In the meantime Major Jecks, to whose offer reference is made in paragraph 6 of Mr. John Maxwell's despatch‡ No. 531 of the 7th July, 1927, applied for an extension of time to arrive at a decision in the matter. The terms under which the plantation was to be handed over to him would, as you are aware, have involved Government in considerable financial loss, and accordingly I caused him to be informed that Government was unable to extend the period of time granted to him to come to a decision. The negotiations with Major Jecks are, therefore, at an end.

5. A Sessional Paper containing all the correspondence to date relating to the Sisal Plantation in continuation of Sessional Paper No. IX of 1921-22, copies of which were forwarded under cover of Sir Gordon Guggisberg's despatch§ No. 874 of the 21st December, 1922, is being prepared and will shortly be published.

I have, etc.,

A. R. SLATER,

Governor.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE,

L. S. AMERY, M.P.,

etc., etc., etc.

XIX.—1927—28.

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# Papers

on the subject of the

## ACCRA SISAL PLANTATION

In continuation of Sessional Paper No. IX

1922-1923.

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Ordered by His Excellency the Governor to be printed.

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GOLD COAST.

Government Printer, Accra

1927.

Price 3s.