

Presented by  
AHR Joseph  
29.8.52



COLONIAL OFFICE

Statement  
by His Majesty's Government  
ON THE REPORT OF THE  
COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO  
DISTURBANCES  
IN THE  
GOLD COAST  
1948



LONDON: HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
1948

SIXPENCE NET

Colonial No. 232

Q79075

1/Dp/DT 507.7 C722  
Africana Cases.

# STATEMENT BY HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO  
DISTURBANCES IN THE GOLD COAST, 1948.

THE serious and widespread nature of the disturbances in the Gold Coast in February and March of 1948 led the Governor to suggest, and His Majesty's Government to agree, that the Commission of Enquiry should be given very wide terms of reference. They were asked to enquire into the disturbances and their underlying causes and to make recommendations on any matter arising from their enquiry.

The Commission have interpreted these terms in their broadest sense and have presented a Report which ranges over a wide field of political, social and economic problems. Their recommendations are numerous and in some cases far-reaching. His Majesty's Government have decided therefore to issue, with the Report, this statement both of their observations on the contents and of their intentions on the recommendations. The recommendations are dealt with under the chapter headings below. There are, however, some comments of a general nature which His Majesty's Government feel must be made not only in explanation of the principles by which action on the recommendations is to be guided, but in justification of the policy which has been and will continue to be pursued by the Gold Coast administration with the support of His Majesty's Government.

It is an axiom of British colonial policy that progress, whether political, social or economic, and whether in local affairs or at the centre of government, can be soundly achieved only on two conditions: first that it rests on the foundations of tradition and social usage which already exist, and second that changes and developments carry with them the substantial acceptance of the people. It is not impossible, within these limitations, to banish abuses, to adjust anachronisms and to introduce the framework of a modern civilisation, but the process must be evolutionary. A European system cannot be imposed arbitrarily on an African society; readiness to give must be matched by willingness to receive.

If some of the Commission's recommendations appear to involve radical changes of system it is not to be implied that they have not themselves recognised the inevitability of advance by stages. Nevertheless the manner of presentation of some of their proposals may lead to misunderstanding, in that it may appear that they advocate plans which conflict with the conditions for progress laid down above. The Commission's proposals on land reform, for example, and their suggestions for fiscal arrangements as between regional and local authorities, take rather less than adequate account of the obstacles of present opinion and usage. Again, their comments on Chiefs do substantially less than justice to the strength of the tradition and custom which a large part of the country still regards as essential to an ordered society.

A further comment on the manner of presentation of the Report is that, from the extent and range of its recommendations, it may be inferred that the Gold Coast Government have, in their past actions and present plans, shown tardiness in meeting popular demand for progress. The Commission were naturally met by repeated representations from the more advanced section of the community which is eager to accelerate the pace of political development, and have properly recorded and given weight to these representations. His Majesty's Government think it necessary, in the detailed comments that follow, to emphasise that in many cases the recommendations are in line with the course of policy which the Gold Coast administration is already pursuing. It would be unfair to the administration not to make that point clear. The 1946 constitution

was not a belated recognition of long-standing demands, but a necessary and accepted step in constitutional advancement. The proposals to which His Majesty's Government are now announcing their willingness to agree are not the fruits of an outbreak of disorder, but a further advance which had to a large extent already been envisaged.

These observations having been made, His Majesty's Government wish to record their deep appreciation of the work of the Commission. The events of February 28th and subsequent days and the parts played by individuals and organisations in those events have been thoroughly and impartially investigated. The Commission's conclusions on these matters deserve the widest publicity and study throughout the Gold Coast. Their analysis of the underlying causes of the disturbances is being studied with equal care by the administration, and there will be full consultation with all elements of the people in deciding on remedial measures. On future constitutional advance His Majesty's Government have indicated their views below in the comments on Chapter V of the Report. It need only be added that they see in the events of February and March no reason to be deflected from the course of ordered constitutional progress which is their declared policy.

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTORY**

The only recommendation contained in this chapter is in paragraph 28, where it is suggested that, in order to secure co-ordination of economic planning in the Gold Coast the responsibility for economic policy should rest with the Financial Secretary, on whose immediate personal staff there should be an Economic Adviser and an Economic Statistician. The present position is that the original development programme drawn up in 1946 is now in active process of revision. The revised proposals will be laid before the working sub-committee of the Economic Advisory Committee consisting of the Colonial Secretary, the Financial Secretary, the Secretary for Rural Development, the Secretary for Commerce and Industry and four African unofficial members representative of the Colony and Ashanti, which is to be charged generally with the co-ordination of development planning. It is not considered necessary to appoint an Economic Adviser in addition to the officers already responsible for advising the Government on economic matters. It is proposed that the executive responsibility under the Governor for economic policy should rest with the Financial Secretary in the sphere of commercial and industrial development and the Secretary for Rural Development in the sphere of agricultural and allied policy. These officers will work in close co-ordination with each other. A Statistician has recently taken up his duties in the Gold Coast and is shortly to submit comprehensive proposals for a statistical service and for machinery to ensure that development plans are considered in relation to priorities and to the available supplies of capital goods.

## **CHAPTER II: THE DISTURBANCES**

While deploring the loss of life which followed upon the attempted march on Government House on the 28th February, His Majesty's Government have noted with satisfaction the Commission's observations in paragraph 44 on the manner in which the Police acted in most difficult circumstances.

The legal aspect of the recommendation in paragraph 58 will require further study. It is not clear whether full weight has been given to the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code relating to the right of a Police Officer to demand the aid of any person in the prevention or suppression of a breach of the peace, and of the Criminal Code relating to justification for the use of force.

As regards the recommendations in paragraph 59, the Intelligence Branch of the Police has already been strengthened. The Gold Coast Government has been making every endeavour to secure efficient tear gas but have had difficulty in obtaining supplies. Delivery has now begun.

### CHAPTER III: EMERGENCY POWERS

His Majesty's Government note the conclusion of the Commission in paragraph 60 that the state of emergency existing in the Gold Coast justified the assumption of wide emergency powers; and in paragraph 66, that the Governor acted in good faith and reasonably under the powers he had lawfully assumed.

In paragraph 61 of the Report the Commission regard as excessive to the occasion the power taken under Regulation 29(5) of the Emergency (General) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations, 1948. Regulation 29 empowers the Governor to make a Removal Order against any person in the interests of public safety and order. The provision in the Regulation to which the Commission take exception reads as follows:—

“ No action, prosecution or other legal proceeding calling into question the legality of anything done under or by virtue, or in pursuance, of this regulation or any Order or direction made or issued thereunder shall be brought, instituted or maintained, or shall be entertained by any Court at any time.”

The considerations which were in the mind of the Gold Coast Government in framing this Regulation should be set out in greater detail than appears in the Report. The Report admits that *habeas corpus* proceedings might have been used as an occasion for causing a serious breach of the peace. How serious this risk was at the time when the regulation was made can be illustrated by the events of March 4th, when a case relating to an alleged seizure of goods during the boycott was heard. On that day, owing to popular excitement, the Supreme Court area had to be isolated and the building to be surrounded by a double cordon of infantry and armed police. In the state of excitement then prevailing there can be no doubt that court proceedings involving the Convention leaders would have led to the gravest disorder. The Commission's comment that no such power as that in Regulation 29(5) was assumed by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom even in the midst of a life and death struggle in the late war appears to overlook the fact that no internal disorder existed or was likely to be aroused in this country.

It is pertinent to remark that the regulation was not without precedent in the Gold Coast; it had previously appeared in Section 7 of Chapter 49 (The Defence of the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti Ordinance) and Regulation 17 AA (3) of the Defence Regulations (Gold Coast), 1939.

His Majesty's Government recognise, however, the force of the contention that the right of access to the courts should be safeguarded to the utmost extent possible, and are considering whether the desired end could not be achieved by the insertion in such regulations made under emergency powers of a provision whereby proceedings might be instituted only by leave of a Judge of the Supreme Court obtained in such manner as might be prescribed by Rules of Court. It would then be for the court to order its proceedings in such a way that public safety was not endangered.

### CHAPTER IV: EX-SERVICEMEN

The matters referred to in paragraph 96 of the Report had already been under consideration by the Gold Coast Government and the following action had been taken:—

(1) An increase in disability pensions to ex-servicemen had already been approved by the Gold Coast Government, and was about to be announced when the disturbances occurred. The increases ranged from 60 per cent. to 100 per cent., and took effect from 1st April, 1948.

(2) The matter of war service credit has already been disposed of to the satisfaction of the ex-servicemen by the adoption of a new war service credit formula.

(3) A Sessional Paper (No. 5 of 1945) was issued giving full details of resettlement arrangements. Steps have recently been taken to make the work of the Gold Coast Legion more widely known.

## CHAPTER V : CONSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL REFORM

His Majesty's Government are in agreement with the principles underlying the recommendations for constitutional reform in this chapter. They are pledged to assist the people of the Gold Coast by all means in their power in their progress towards self-government and they are anxious that this progress should be as rapid as the interests of the people themselves and the needs of good government permit. It is the accepted policy that Native Authorities and Town Councils should be built up as efficient and representative organs of local government; that the parliamentary system should be developed through the Legislative Council; and that an increasing place should be found for Africans in all branches and at all levels of the government service and in the central executive organisation of Government. If, however, political evolution is to go forward smoothly it cannot be accomplished by disorder and agitation, and must be effected by building on existing institutions rather than by creating new ones.

Before commenting on the detailed recommendations made by the Commission in paragraph 122 of the Report, His Majesty's Government wish to make certain general observations. They cannot accept the criticisms of the 1946 constitution contained in paragraphs 101 and 102. This constitution was framed in consultation with the representatives of the people of the Gold Coast; it was accepted with enthusiasm by the press and the public and by the members of the old and new Legislative Councils; and it has been in force for two years only. His Majesty's Government have received no demands from the Gold Coast during this period for further constitutional reform. The Gold Coast was the first territory in West Africa to be granted an unofficial majority on its Legislative Council; this was a notable and, in the view of His Majesty's Government, a necessary step forward. The Commission argue that "the concession of an African elected majority in the Legislature in the absence of any real political power provided no outlet for a people eagerly emerging into political consciousness. On the other hand, it provided a powerful stimulant for intelligent discontent." His Majesty's Government do not agree. Since 1942 Africans have taken part in the formation of policy through their membership of the Executive Council. Under the existing constitution the unofficial majority on the Legislative Council has been in a position to exercise an important influence over policy, and in the particular sphere of finance the Standing Finance Committee of the Council has shown itself willing and able to undertake effective control. The type of constitution which combines an unofficial majority on the Legislative Council with an official executive government is an essential stage in the political evolution of Colonial Territories. The very fact that it makes the business of government dependent on agreement between the executive and the legislature is in itself an advantage; and though the system may not be perfect, it has worked well in other parts of the British Commonwealth.

In paragraphs 104-114 of the Report the Commission discuss the system of Native Administration and the position of Chiefs. While they reach no definite conclusion, they refer at some length to the views of Africans with a

modern political outlook. In the very short time available to them in the Gold Coast the Commission were not, it is understood, able to travel extensively in the rural areas, and they can therefore have had less opportunity of hearing evidence from representatives of the rural communities which form the great bulk of the population of the Gold Coast. His Majesty's Government therefore feel it necessary clearly to state that, while they attach the greatest importance to modernising the Native Authorities and making them fully representative of the people, they regard the Chiefs as having an essential part to play. In general the Chiefs in the Gold Coast are the traditional leaders of the people. Their functions in regard to local administration are based on popular support ; and the transfer or delegation of any of their functions would require popular sanction, since the position of the Chiefs affects the whole system of relationships on which community life is traditionally based. Increasing numbers of Chiefs recognise the need for modernising their institutions and in this every encouragement is given to them by the Gold Coast Government and their administrative officers. Although much remains to be done very considerable progress has already been made.

In paragraph 118 the Commission disclaim any intention of drafting a constitution. They have indicated the broad pattern which in their view changes in the constitution should follow and, as they say, their recommendations require detailed examination by those having precise knowledge of the existing constitution and of the different cultural, social and economic conditions of the three areas of the Gold Coast. In the view of His Majesty's Government and of the Gold Coast Government, the Commission's proposals must first be considered by representatives of the public in the Gold Coast itself, and for this purpose it is suggested that, subject to the agreement of the Legislative Council, a fully representative committee should be set up locally as soon as may be possible to examine the proposals in paragraph 122 of the Report and to consider the extent to which they can be accepted and the manner in which they should be implemented. It would be wrong for His Majesty's Government to form any final conclusions until the views of this committee are known, but if the proposals are acceptable to local opinion, and subject to the comments which follow, His Majesty's Government for their part would regard them as broadly acceptable and would be prepared to arrange for their early implementation.

### **Local Authorities other than Town Councils**

His Majesty's Government agree with the Commission's view that local government bodies in the rural areas must be built up from the existing Native Authorities. As has already been stated, it is the settled policy of the Gold Coast Government that Native Authorities should be developed into efficient organs of local government and should be made fully representative of the people of the area, and the Chiefs are becoming increasingly alive to the necessity for this. Every effort is being made by the Gold Coast Government to speed up the process and this policy will be actively pursued. Considerable progress has already been achieved.

As regards finance, His Majesty's Government do not agree with the Commission's view that the ultimate aim should be for Local Authorities to be financed by grants from the Regional Councils and that rates should be levied by those Councils and not by the Local Authorities. The system of rates levied by the Local Authorities is now becoming well understood in the Gold Coast and it is doubtful whether the people would accept the substitution of regional levies. This would, moreover, be inconsistent with the process of decentralisation and the building up of a local sense of responsibility to which the Commission themselves attach importance.

## **Regional Councils**

His Majesty's Government agree that Regional Councils should be built up in the Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories and that these should have executive functions with power to make bye-laws. They believe that these councils should be developed from the existing Joint Provincial Council for the Colony, the Ashanti Confederacy Council and the Territorial Council for the Northern Territories. The methods of financing the expenditure of Regional Councils; their relations with the central Government and Legislative Council and with Local Authorities; their procedure; their composition and the methods of election of their members are all matters for detailed consideration and recommendation by the local committee referred to above.

## **Town Councils**

His Majesty's Government recognise the importance of clarifying the relationship between Town Councils and Native Authorities and this will be a matter for the local committee to consider. It is suggested, however, that it should not be necessary to create such an artificial office as the Chief of Accra as the Commission recommend.

## **The Gold Coast Assembly**

His Majesty's Government agree that there is a case for increasing the membership of the Legislative Council; the actual numbers will no doubt be considered by the local committee in relation to the present needs of each region. They also agree that at this stage the elected members of the Council should be elected by the Regional Councils, apart from those for Accra, Cape Coast, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi, where the existing methods will presumably be maintained. Finally they agree that it would be desirable for the Legislative Council to be presided over by a Speaker, but prefer and would suggest that he should be nominated by the Governor rather than elected by the Council, and should be chosen either from the members of the Council or from outside the Council at the Governor's discretion.

## **The Executive Council**

It is the general policy of His Majesty's Government that the machinery of executive government in the African Territories should, where this is appropriate to local circumstances, be developed on the basis of Executive Councils of members each responsible for a group of departments. The Governor of the Gold Coast has been considering since his assumption of office means of introducing this system with the inclusion of Africans as members with executive responsibility. His Majesty's Government therefore welcome the broad outline of the proposals made by the Commission under this head and they agree that the Executive Council should consist of 9 members under the presidency of the Governor, 4 of whom would be *ex officio* members and 5 would be Africans. They would suggest that the *ex officio* members should be the Chief Secretary, who should be the senior member with responsibilities including defence and security, and the members with responsibility for justice, finance and economic affairs; and that there should be three full-time salaried African members drawn from the Legislative Council with responsibility for health, labour and social welfare, for education and for communications and works. In addition there would be two African members without executive responsibility who, at the Governor's discretion, might either be drawn from the Legislative Council or appointed from outside it. The Chief Commissioners would cease to be members of the Executive Council, since it would not be easy for them to attend the more frequent meetings which the new character of this body would require, but the Governor should be entitled to invite them to be present at meetings of the Council when matters of particular concern to them were being discussed.

His Majesty's Government agree with the Commission that the African members of the Executive Council should be nominated by the Governor, but

as an alternative to the Commission's proposal in Section V (i) of paragraph 122 of the Report, they suggest that no formal arrangements should be laid down in the first instance for the approval of appointments by the Legislative Council or for the resignation of African members, but that it should be accepted that the Governor would consult with the unofficial members of the Legislative Council before appointing African members and equally that an African member who lost the confidence of the Legislative Council should resign.

The Commission recommend in Section V (4) of paragraph\* 122 that the Executive Council should cease to be advisory, but His Majesty's Government suggest that, during the formative period of the building up of the new system, it would be preferable to retain the formal arrangement in the Constitution under which it is advisory to the Governor. At the same time the Executive Council would be the body where all major questions of policy would be discussed and as such the foundation from which a cabinet system would ultimately be developed. All members of the Executive Council should be entitled to initiate subjects for discussion and the existing Constitution should be altered accordingly. Consideration should be given to alternative arrangements for the disposal of purely formal business at present coming before the Executive Council, whether by the setting up of a sub-committee of the Council or of some other suitable body or by the delegation of this class of business to the appropriate member of the Council. His Majesty's Government would suggest that the title of Minister proposed by the Commission would not be appropriate at this stage of political development and that it would be more suitable to use the term Member of the Executive Council.

His Majesty's Government agree with the Commission that each member should be served by a Secretary or Under-Secretary drawn from the Civil Service. In addition they would suggest that in appropriate cases deputy members might be appointed from the African unofficial members of the Legislative Council to enable them to gain practical experience of administration.

The discussion of the new constitutional arrangements and the subsequent drafting of the Constitution will necessarily take time, and the re-organisation of the central administrative machine of government will be complicated. In order that there may be no delay in this latter process the Governor has suggested that, subject to the approval of the Legislative Council, the member system should be introduced and two African members given responsibility on the Executive Council for groups of departments without awaiting the discussion of the Constitution generally. Subject to local agreement, His Majesty's Government would be prepared cordially to accept this proposal.

### **The Governor**

His Majesty's Government entirely agree with the Commission that the Governor should continue to exercise all the powers granted to him by the existing Constitution including the reserve powers. They would emphasise the importance of ensuring that all officers of government, from the Governor downwards, have the necessary executive powers if they are to play the part required of them in assisting the people of the Gold Coast in the forward process of political, economic and social development.

In paragraph 100 of the Report the Commission recommend that their proposals should be adopted for a period of ten years, at the end of which the constitutional position should be reviewed in the light of the experience gained. While appreciating the intention of this recommendation, His Majesty's Government feel that it is not possible to lay down in advance the pace of political development. While, therefore, they would hope that the new arrangements to be worked out by the local committee would stand for a sufficient period to give political stability to the Gold Coast, they would not wish to lay down precisely the period within which further political advance would not be open to consideration.

## CHAPTER VI: AFRICANISATION

The Commission have recognised that it is the settled policy of the Gold Coast Government to encourage to the maximum possible extent the entry of Africans into the higher branches of the public service. His Majesty's Government are glad to note the Commission's opinion that there has been no lack of good faith in recent years in promoting this policy.

In paragraphs 135-6 of the Report the establishment of an Appointments Board is recommended. The Gold Coast Government decided last year to set up a Public Services Commission and a Secretary for the Civil Service has been appointed. The Commission will be established by statute, but until the legislation can be enacted an administrative organisation is to be set up. The composition of the Commission, which will include Africans, is not yet determined. It is already an established rule that it must be shown to the satisfaction of the Governor that no suitable African is available before an overseas candidate is appointed to any post. The new Commission and the Gold Coast Government will continue to observe this important principle.

His Majesty's Government regard the recommendations in paragraphs 138 and 140, relating to the membership by civil servants of political organisations, as too drastic for acceptance. The extent to which a public servant may engage himself in politics is laid down not only by established custom but by rule; in particular, Colonial Regulations Numbers 57 and 58 restrict the right of publication and of interview. Subject to these rules, membership of a political organisation other than of a subversive nature should not be denied to him.

## CHAPTER VII: PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Gold Coast Government are aware of the importance of a fully effective system of public relations and have already taken steps to reorganise the Public Relations Department.

## CHAPTER VIII: IMMIGRATION

The question of further control on immigration was raised by the Gold Coast Government at the beginning of the year, and an amendment to the law in the Gold Coast is being introduced with the object of protecting the interests of the local inhabitants without discrimination against intending immigrants on grounds of race.

## CHAPTER IX: THE BOYCOTT

The Commission criticise the Gold Coast Government on three grounds:—

- (1) more robust use of their powers at an earlier stage would have prevented the boycott (paragraph 166);
- (2) when the boycott had been instituted the Government remained inactive (paragraph 171);
- (3) the announcement of the terms of settlement was so framed as to lead to public disappointment (paragraph 175).

As regards (1) the Gold Coast Government had fully examined the possibilities of control and had investigated procedure in the United Kingdom. Price control of the cheaper grades of cloth, such as shirtings and bafts, had been imposed; and as is mentioned later in the Report (paragraph 229), a committee on price control was in session before the boycott developed; but as the Commission themselves recognise, conditions in the Gold Coast made any comprehensive scheme of rationing or control impracticable.

The charge of inactivity after the boycott had set in is unjustified, and it is necessary to rebut in the strongest terms the suggestion in paragraph 171 of the Report that the Gold Coast Government were in any way influenced by expectation that the boycott would prove abortive because of the inability of Africans to combine. The Government were aware that imports of textiles were increasing to an extent which would restore competition. Consumer resistance to high prices, provided it was orderly, was not regarded as an unhealthy sign, as it would tend to break the black market which had developed from conditions of short supply. Nor is it correct to imply that the Government remained inactive from the beginning of the boycott on January 26th until negotiations for a settlement were begun on February 11th; during this period the Government had been in touch with all parties in order to bring them together. The alternative of intervention by wholesale requisition was neither practicable as an improvised emergency measure nor likely to ensure a smoother flow of goods at lower prices.

The official announcement of the agreement, which was deliberately brief, was drafted in accordance with the advice of the organiser of the boycott, Nii Bonne III, and representatives of the Joint Provincial Council and the Chamber of Commerce. Its publication was followed by an amplified statement which was broadcast by Nii Bonne himself. No simple statement of the price reductions to be expected was possible because the textile market in the Gold Coast is highly complex and importing firms had been operating in individual lines on margins much lower than the maximum of 75 per cent. previously authorised. Hence the price reductions varied widely from one variety of cloth to another.

## CHAPTER X: SUPPLIES, PRICES AND DISTRIBUTION

### Supplies

In discussing high prices and difficulties of supply in the Gold Coast the Commission draw attention to the underlying cause of these, the shortage of imported manufactured goods and foodstuffs. They recognise that during and ever since the war these shortages have been common to all countries depending largely upon imports. Nevertheless, they consider that, in the economic circumstances of the Gold Coast, the only speedy way of mitigating the difficulties to which they draw attention is to increase the supply of essential imports.

In surveying the position in the Gold Coast since the war the Commission made use of no import statistics later than for the year 1946. In paragraph 183 they show that in that year certain imports were at a materially lower level than before the war. Statistics which have since been published show that, although a number of shortages persisted, the total imports into the Gold Coast in 1947 were in value approximately 70 per cent. greater than in the previous year, as shown in the following table:—

<i>From</i>	<i>1946</i>	<i>1947</i>
	<i>£ million</i>	<i>£ million</i>
United Kingdom .. .. .	8·2	11·0
Other British countries .. .. .	1·5	2·3
United States of America .. .. .	1·2	3·0
Other foreign countries .. .. .	1·5	4·8
	<hr/> 12·4	<hr/> 21·1

The Commission refer specifically to imports in 1946 of certain foodstuffs. The following figures show that, among the foodstuffs mentioned, some considerable increases in supplies were secured in 1947, the year following that to which the Commission referred.

Between 1946 and 1947

flour imports went up from	101,000 to 131,000 cwts.
canned meat went up from	1,600 to 14,300 cwts.
canned fish went up from	3,700 to 22,000 cwts.
condensed milk went up from	10,400 to 14,000 cwts.

Many of these foodstuffs are scarce throughout the world and are, or were at the relevant times, subject to international or some other form of allocation between all the many claimants for them. Consistent efforts have been made to arrange as large supplies of these goods for the Gold Coast as possible. The following figures show the increased allocations which it has been possible to make to the Gold Coast for 1948 compared with last year.

	1947	1948
Sugar .. .. .	4,180 tons	5,750 tons
Frozen meat .. .. .	Nil	120 tons
Butter .. .. .	84 tons	140 tons
Cheese .. .. .	19 tons	50 tons
Margarine .. .. .	Nil	35 tons
Lard .. .. .	25½ tons	50 tons

The imported supplies of other essential goods such as textiles also show every sign of being considerably better this year. The United Kingdom has been able to ship more cotton textiles; her exports to the Gold Coast in the first five months of 1948 totalled £1,602,000 compared with £565,000 in the corresponding period of 1947. There are also better supplies of cotton textiles from some other countries. The total United Kingdom exports to the Gold Coast in the first four months of 1948 were £5,256,000 compared with £2,613,000 in the first four months of 1947.

Thus, although it is no more possible in the Gold Coast than in any other country to bring to consumers at present all the goods that they would like to buy, the improvement which has already taken place will undoubtedly reduce some of the pressure towards inflated prices to which the Commission drew attention. This will, however, be offset to some extent if there is any increase in the price paid to the producer for cocoa.

### Prices and Distribution

In paragraphs 190 to 248 of the Report the Commission have dealt at length with the reasons for the rise in prices during the war and post-war periods and the difficulties and defects in the system of distribution of imported goods. Paragraph 225 and the following paragraph discuss various suggestions for reducing the prices of essential goods which were made to the Commission. The first suggestion is that purchasing power might be absorbed by increased taxation or increased savings. The opinion expressed in paragraph 226 that further increases in direct taxation on a progressive basis could be undertaken without fear of the accusation that the Gold Coast is overtaxed will be brought to the notice of the local committee which deals with fiscal matters. The possibility of raising local loans to which the Commission refer in paragraph 227 has been considered in the past, but responsible opinion has advised that there was little hope of success. The suggestion will, however, be further considered. The Commission's views on the control of prices as expressed in paragraphs 228-230 will be brought to the notice of the Committee on Price Control, which is now sitting, and will be considered in the light of that Committee's report when made.

The suggestion that a system of rationing the consumer might be introduced has been examined in paragraphs 232-237 of the Report and is rejected by the Commission. The Gold Coast Government will, however, examine the suggestion in paragraph 238 that larger quantities of certain essentials should be released in the country areas. The Commission go on to emphasise that the whole selling system in the Gold Coast needs reorganisation and suggest that more Africans should participate in the import trade and that the present

multiplicity of petty traders should be replaced by a more specialised and firmly established retail trade. On the first of these points some figures of African participation in the import trade are quoted in paragraph 211 of the Report. The following figures illustrate more fully how the share of Africans in this trade is increasing :—

Commodity	PERCENTAGE OF IMPORT TRADE BY AFRICANS			
	<i>No. of Africans participating on past performance basis prior to abolition in 1947</i>	<i>Percentage of total trade</i>	<i>No. of Africans participating in 1948 allocation</i>	<i>Percentage of trade</i>
Sugar .. .. .	37	1·9	575	18·7
Fish, preserved .. .. .	9	2·9	9	11·0
Fish, canned .. .. .	4	3·5	276	22·4
Meat, preserved .. .. .	41	8·2	267	20·8
Corned beef .. .. .	7	1·0	185	14·4
Other canned meat .. .. .	7	1·0	242	19·6
Butter .. .. .	3	0·4	7	6·9
Cheese .. .. .	6	4·2	5	5·2
Lard .. .. .	1	1·4	132	26·8
Unmanufactured tobacco	65	6·7	323	30·6

(For canned fish all African applications were granted in full.)

On the second suggestion of the Commission it has long been recognised in the Gold Coast that the multiplicity of petty traders is an undesirable system of retail trade ; but as the Commission realise, it is so closely linked with long-standing social custom that there is no quick means of doing away with the system. The process of change must be gradual.

In paragraph 242 the Commission consider and reject the possibility of establishing a chain of Government-sponsored stores, and this accords with the conclusions reached by the Gold Coast Government. The Commission finally turn in paragraph 244 to the necessity for encouraging the growth of consumers' co-operatives both in the towns and in the country.

His Majesty's Government and the Gold Coast Government are fully in agreement with the recommendation of the Commission for the development of consumers' co-operatives ; indeed, the Gold Coast Government had already under consideration plans to this effect. It is considered that the consumers' co-operative movement has a most important part to play in securing the more orderly distribution of goods and in providing a larger place for Africans in the economic life of the country. A scheme is now being worked out for the early and rapid development of consumers' co-operatives throughout the country and an African has recently been appointed to the superscale post of Deputy Registrar of Co-operative Societies with special responsibility for consumers' co-operatives.

## CHAPTER XI: TRADING DISCRIMINATION

The Commission's suggestion in paragraph 258 has already been met. A new Committee on allocation of rail space has been set up under the chairmanship of the General Manager of the Gold Coast Railway, and has associated with it representatives of African timber interests. This Committee takes into account the considerations mentioned in paragraph 258 of the Report.

## CHAPTER XII: CUTTING OUT OF COCOA TREES

His Majesty's Government are glad to note that the Commission endorse, subject to certain criticisms of detail, the steps which have been taken by the Gold Coast Government to deal with the menace of swollen shoot disease of cocoa. The Commission's recommendation (paragraph 273) for a further scientific inquiry into the methods of dealing with this disease does not seem to be entirely consistent with their analysis of the causes of resistance to the cutting out campaign as being largely political. His Majesty's Government

nevertheless, with the agreement of the Gold Coast Government, accept it and have already made a start to implement it. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has been asked to submit a list of experts of international repute from which it is proposed to select a small team to make an early investigation on the spot. In choosing members of this team special attention will be paid to experience in virus diseases of tree crops elsewhere in the world. It is hoped that the team will be able to visit West Africa and make its report during the latter part of this year. Meanwhile the Gold Coast Government intend, in accordance with the further recommendation of the Commission (paragraph 276), to repeat the strong exhortations made in January to African political leaders to co-operate in overcoming hostility to the cutting out campaign. The importance of an early resumption of cutting out cannot be exaggerated. To allow the disease to take its course would be, as the Commission say, to sit back and watch the ebb of the country's life blood. Neither the Government nor the people of the Gold Coast can allow that to happen.

In order to help in the early resumption of the cutting out campaign over the widest possible area, His Majesty's Government have asked the Gold Coast Government to consider adopting the modified procedures recommended by the Commission (paragraph 273 (1) to (6)), in so far as these have not already been adopted or proved to be impracticable. The proposal that adequate notice should be given to farmers of a visit by the Department of Agriculture's representative has, indeed, already been accepted upon the recommendation of the Beeton Committee.\* The adoption of the policy of marking diseased trees before cutting out and of serving orders on farmers to cut out within a particular period or (subject to the right to appeal) to pay Government for the task is likely to encounter serious practical difficulties in the present conditions of the cocoa industry. This will, therefore, require further detailed examination, as will also the Commission's recommendations that rehabilitation grants should be substantially increased and that a bonus should be paid to farmers who can show that their farms are free from diseased trees.

The Commission recommend (paragraph 274) that cutting out, when it is resumed, should begin in Ashanti. His Majesty's Government consider that a decision on this recommendation will have to be deferred until the effectiveness of the other recommendations in removing political objections to the cutting out campaign has been demonstrated. The exact area in which cutting out is resumed will depend upon the local circumstances, political as well as agricultural, at the time when the campaign is again put under way.

### CHAPTER XIII: COCOA MARKETING BOARD

His Majesty's Government note the Commission's general approval of the existing arrangements for cocoa marketing and in particular their recommendation (paragraphs 279 and 286) that there should, at this stage, be no change in the existing constitution of the Cocoa Marketing Board.

As regards the use of the Board's accumulated funds His Majesty's Government support the view that, subject always to an adequate stabilisation reserve being maintained, money should be made available from these funds for the general benefit of the cocoa farmer. That was, indeed, the purpose of the arrangements embodied in the legislation setting up the Cocoa Board, and the Board has already given a considerable amount of thought to this problem. It has, in addition to earmarking £16 million for stabilisation reserve and a further £8½ million for working capital, agreed to provide up to £3 million for rehabilitation grants and £150,000 for a soil survey. It has also agreed to pay

\* This was a committee of enquiry to review legislation for the treatment of the swollen shoot disease of cocoa, and was appointed in September, 1947.

£690,000 towards the cost of stabilising the finances of the West African Cocoa Research Institute, and will shortly be asked by Government to vote £100,000 for an aerial photographic survey of the cocoa areas. Without allowing, therefore, for any additional expenditure on rehabilitation grants which acceptance of the Commission's earlier recommendations may involve, the Board has already made commitments for over £28½ million of its reserve funds or roughly double the total sum which was placed at its disposal by His Majesty's Government at the beginning of the present cocoa season. Additional funds should of course, accrue from the proceeds of the marketing of this year's crop which can be expected to leave an unallocated balance in hand. The Gold Coast Government have already under preparation a scheme, to be financed from the Board's surplus funds, for economic development of the cocoa areas. This covers not only educational facilities such as the Commission recommend, but also improved communications, village water supplies and medical services.

So far as concerns the investment of surplus funds, the Board is already empowered to use its balances in this way and the Gold Coast Government are now considering various development projects for which the Board might be invited to provide loan capital on appropriate terms. The various suggestions made by the Commission have been noted.

The Commission recommend (paragraph 292), as a means of relieving cocoa farmers' indebtedness, the establishment of a Cocoa Farmers' Bank. The Gold Coast Government have for some time been engaged on working out a scheme to provide agricultural credit, not only for the cocoa industry, but also for all farming operations; and their plans, which are now taking definite shape, include provision for setting up a bank, to be known as the Agricultural Bank, which will, it is hoped, be largely financed by the Cocoa Marketing Board and will assume responsibility for redeeming proven mortgages as well as for providing credit for bona fide agricultural purposes. The draft scheme has already been before the Joint Provincial Council and the Ashanti Confederacy Council. The detailed suggestions made by the Commission on rates of interest and repayments and on the regulation of cocoa sales will be taken into account in giving the scheme its final form.

His Majesty's Government endorse the recommendation in paragraph 297 that full publicity should be given to such of the Commission's proposals relating to the cocoa industry as may be accepted and the Gold Coast Government will make arrangements accordingly.

#### **CHAPTER XIV : INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

His Majesty's Government are entirely in agreement with the suggestion that secondary industries should be developed.

As the Commission say, an Industrial Development Corporation, with African representation on the Board, has been brought into being under an Ordinance enacted in 1947 and has held its first meeting and considered certain schemes which have been put before it. The suggestions of the Commission will be remitted to it for study.

#### **Recovery and Treatment of Gold**

The difficulties which goldsmiths have hitherto encountered are largely on account of the formalities required in order to prevent abuses. A scheme is now being devised to facilitate the supply of gold to goldsmiths through the Banks.

#### **CHAPTER XV : AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

His Majesty's Government note the Commission's general criticism that too little attention has been paid in the past to agricultural development in the Gold Coast and that the activities of the Department of Agriculture have been

restricted by lack of staff, buildings and experimental stations. As will be seen from the comments which follow on the Commission's various recommendations, steps are already being taken to expand the Department's operations.

One of the Commission's main points (paragraph 328) is that a more intensive search should be made for possible substitutes for cocoa as a cash crop. The reason for the past concentration on cocoa is not far to seek. Until the spread of swollen shoot began to threaten the very existence of the industry cocoa was the cash crop best suited to the condition of a large part of the Colony and Ashanti. It grew well in natural forests without excessive work on cultivation; it was for the most part harvested by family labour; and in spite of low prices in the 1930's it provided a steady source of income to supplement subsistence crops grown on the farm. There was therefore little incentive to change to other forms of agriculture. Experiments were in fact made with alternative crops, such as rubber, coffee, coconuts, cotton, sisal, bananas and citrus, but none except citrus made much headway because none was as profitable as cocoa. It is now, however, vital that the search for new crops which will provide attractive alternatives to cocoa should be intensified and plans are being laid accordingly. One important new line of development (to which the Commission made no reference) is in mechanised agriculture, the potentialities of which, as compared with continued reliance on the hoe, are thought to be very great. In this connection the recommendations of the West African Oilseeds Mission for mechanised cultivation in Ashanti and the Northern Territories of groundnuts and other food crops are being urgently followed up, and suggestions for pilot schemes in both areas are now before the Colonial Development Corporation. The report of a specialist team which studied possible cotton developments earlier this year is now before the Gold Coast Government, and the report of a Rice Mission which has just returned from West Africa is expected shortly.

Linked with the recommendation about finding substitutes for cocoa the Commission urge a great intensification of effort to improve the yield and quality of home grown foodstuffs, and express the view that work on food crops should take precedence over—or at least rank on a par with—any further developments on export crops. There is in fact no evidence of any lack of foodstuffs in the Gold Coast except for seasonal shortages in the Northern Territories, and His Majesty's Government consider that the main fault with the people's food supply is not in its quantity but in its quality, for it is deficient in proteins, particularly animal protein. While therefore it will be the policy of the Gold Coast Government to push ahead with work on the breeding and selecting of staple foodcrops such as cassava, maize, rice, yams, guinea corn and millet (in which important progress has already been made), special stress will be laid on schemes to improve the supply of meat and to develop the local fishing industry.

The remaining recommendations of the Commission in this chapter deal with the organisation of the Department of Agriculture and with facilities for agricultural research and agricultural education (paragraphs 329 to 331). The Gold Coast Government will consider implementing these recommendations as quickly as staffing and other difficulties permit. The extent to which these difficulties must necessarily slow up development, not only in the Gold Coast but elsewhere in the Colonial Empire, must not be overlooked. There has already been some decentralisation of the Gold Coast Department of Agriculture by the appointment of three Assistant Directors of Agriculture for the Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories. But further decentralisation and the establishment of closer contacts with the farming community must await the recruitment of the full complement of agricultural officers. The plans already approved for central experimental stations with research laboratories in all three areas of the Territory may likewise be held up for lack of staff as well as of laboratory equipment and building materials. The need for increased demonstration work which the Commission underline is fully realised, but this again is dependent

upon an improvement in the present staff position of the Department of Agriculture.

On the question of agricultural education, where room for improvement undoubtedly exists, the Gold Coast Government have already made plans to increase the number of agricultural scholarships and an Agricultural Appointments Board is to be established. It is hoped in this way to provide a steady increase in the number of Africans offering for posts in the Department of Agriculture.

## **CHAPTER XVI: LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT**

The only recommendations in this Chapter are those in paragraph 357 referring to the registration of unemployed. A scheme for the registration of labour generally, not only the unemployed, was drawn up in 1947, and the initial measures to give effect to it have already been taken. Its development should make it practicable to adopt the Commission's recommendations, but it must be realised that the extension of the existing organisation will necessarily take time.

## **CHAPTER XVII: EDUCATION**

The Education Department of the Gold Coast is working on a programme drawn up by a fully representative Committee which gave close consideration over a long period (1937-1941) to the educational needs of the Territory. This programme was devised to meet the ever-increasing popular demand for educational development. It was considered in detail at the time and endorsed by the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Education.

The recommendations of the Commission for an expansion of technical education are broadly in line with existing policy and are welcomed both by His Majesty's Government and the Gold Coast Government. Plans had already been made for a very considerable expansion of technical and vocational education. If it appears that insufficient provision has been made for this type of education in the past, this has not been due to any lack of appreciation of its importance; but there has been a tendency on the part of local opinion to attach greater importance to the more academic branches of education. The value of technical education is now much more widely appreciated locally and, in spite of the existing limitations imposed by shortage of staff and materials, the Gold Coast Government intend to press forward actively with their plans for increasing technical education facilities.

If, as recommended in paragraph 377 (1), a greater emphasis were to be placed on senior primary and secondary education, this could only be done at the expense of children who are at present denied junior primary schooling. The present policy of the Gold Coast Government, again based on popular demand, is to extend junior primary schooling over as wide an area of the Territory as possible. While every effort is being made to increase the quantity of secondary education, it is essential at the same time to improve its quality; with both ends in view, the draft 10-year plan provides for four new secondary boarding schools and for a generous scheme of scholarships to produce properly qualified staffs for all post-primary institutions.

The Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies is at present considering the form of secondary education of the "modern" type in Colonial Territories, and their advice will be available in due course to the Gold Coast Government. Until the provision of such schooling on lines suitable to the needs of the Gold Coast is devised it will no doubt be necessary to retain the Standard VII year, which the Gold Coast Government regard as basic to a secondary modern course. The abolition of this year would not in fact release teachers who would be qualified without further training to teach in secondary schools.

As existing educational policy in the Gold Coast is based on the recommendations of a representative local Committee, His Majesty's Government consider

that the recommendations of the Commission should in the first instance be referred to the Central Advisory Committee of Education in the Gold Coast, which is fully representative of local experience in educational matters.

## CHAPTER XVIII: HOUSING

The Gold Coast Government have plans for further improvements to housing in Accra and elsewhere, and are anxious to put them into effect as rapidly as possible, but His Majesty's Government are unable to advise acceptance without reservation of the Commission's suggestion that this work should be regarded as an outright priority. It is for the Gold Coast Government to decide from time to time, after review of prevailing conditions and the progress of their development and welfare plans as a whole, what services shall have the prior call on their available resources in the immediate future. Shortage of staff, materials and equipment have impeded the improvement of housing conditions up to the present in the Gold Coast as elsewhere, but as these difficulties are overcome the tempo will be accelerated.

## CHAPTER XIX: LAW REFORM

### Land Tenure

The Gold Coast Government have long recognised the need for security of tenure, for the protection of tribal lands from alienation, for some form of registration of titles and for the settlement of tribal and private boundaries. The subject is a highly technical one and must be handled with the utmost care since in the Gold Coast, as in other parts of Africa, the public is intensely suspicious of any action taken by the Government with regard to land. Much attention has been given to the whole subject by the Gold Coast Government and recommendations on boundaries and registration of titles were made by Mr. C. R. Havers, K.C., in 1945.

The alienation of land in rural areas to non-Africans has been regulated by the Concessions Ordinance since 1900. Alienation of property in urban areas by Africans to non-Africans—mostly Syrians—has recently been causing concern to many people locally. The Joint Provincial Council of the Colony has asked that steps be taken to restrict such grants and the Gold Coast Government have given instructions for the necessary legislation to be prepared. The recommendations of the Commission in paragraph 395 with regard to the control of alienation will be considered by the Gold Coast Government; but it must be pointed out that all customary alienation would have in any case to be excluded from them, and not merely customary alienation for periods not exceeding fourteen years as the Commission recommend, since customary alienation is not limited to any term of years. Nor would it be possible for the consideration money for land alienated to be paid into a Land Court fund, as the Commission recommend in paragraph 395 (3), since this forms an essential part of Local Authority revenue.

The Lands Division of the Supreme Court was established in 1945. Hitherto it has been found impracticable to assign special judges to land cases and all judges have been appointed to exercise jurisdiction in the Lands Division. The Chief Justice will be asked to consider the possibility of assigning one or more judges specifically to land work.

The Commission recommend in paragraph 395 (7) that there should be no appeal from the decision of the Land Court, but the right of appeal on points of law to the West African Court of Appeal would presumably have to be retained. It would not be possible for the Land Court to have exclusive jurisdiction over all land disputes without imposing an impossibly heavy burden on it. It will, however, continue to deal with appeals from Native Courts in land cases and with cases involving non-Africans or raising questions of English law.

In accordance with the recommendations in the Havers Report of 1945 the Gold Coast Government hope to present proposals to the Legislative Council for the settlement and registration of land titles not only in towns but in the country also ; the process will necessarily take a long time to complete. A draft Ordinance for the settlement of territorial boundaries has already been prepared ; this would be a necessary preliminary to the registration of private land titles. As regards survey a general topographical framework already exists, but much cadastral work will be required.

### **Native Courts**

The whole subject of Native Courts was considered in 1943, as the Commission say, by a local committee with a majority of African members. Effect was given to the many recommendations of this committee by the Native Courts (Colony) Ordinance of 1944, and a Judicial Adviser for the Colony was subsequently appointed to supervise the workings of the Native Courts ; an overhaul of the corresponding legislation for Ashanti is now in progress. Native Courts in the Colony alone decide some 50,000 cases a year and it would clearly be impossible immediately to secure the services of sufficient magistrates to deal with all the cases arising in the Gold Coast even if that were desirable as the Commission suggest ; but development along the general lines envisaged by the Commission is the present policy. The 1944 Ordinance provides that a Court is constituted of three or five members drawn from a nominated panel of suitably experienced Africans and, of those sitting members, one acts as President. The Ordinance was specifically devised so as to make it possible for a Native Authority to appoint a permanent President and any such appointment would be welcomed by the Gold Coast Government, especially if the person proposed were a qualified lawyer.

*Crown Copyright Reserved*

LONDON  
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE

To be purchased directly from H.M. Stationery Office at the following addresses:

York House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 13a Castle Street, Edinburgh, 2;

39-41 King Street, Manchester, 2; 1 St. Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff;

Tower Lane, Bristol, 1; 80 Chichester Street, Belfast

OR THROUGH ANY BOOKSELLER

1948

Price 6d. net

