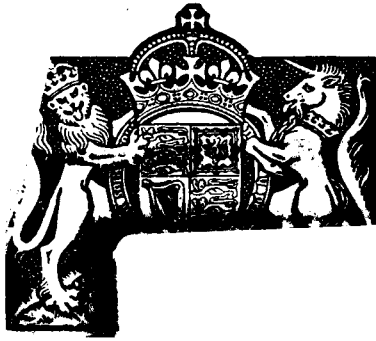


LABOUR CONDITIONS  
IN WEST-AFRICA



# LABOUR CONDITIONS IN WEST AFRICA

REPORT BY

Major G. St. J. Orde Browne, O.B.E.

(Labour Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.)

*Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament  
by Command of His Majesty  
May, 1941*

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Colonial Office,  
London, S.W. 1.

July, 1940.

The Right Honourable LORD LLOYD OF DOLOBRAN, G.C.S.I.,  
G.C.I.E., D.S.O.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to present herewith my report on labour conditions in West Africa.

*Terms of reference.*—I was instructed to investigate and report upon labour conditions in Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra Leone and the Gambia.

*Extent of investigation.*—I left England on the 2nd of November, 1939, and arrived at Lagos on the 18th of November. I departed from Freetown on the 17th of April, 1940, arriving in England on the 2nd of May. I append a detailed itinerary of my travels. While in West Africa I covered approximately 1,750 miles by rail, 3,250 miles by road, 1,610 miles by water and 2,100 miles by air; existing conditions rendered the planning of journeys somewhat difficult, the Gambia in particular being served very irregularly.

*Form of report.*—I present my report in sections; firstly a general report on matters common to all four West African territories, and subsequently, special reports on each of the Dependencies with reference to the particular circumstances obtaining there.

*Acknowledgment.*—I wish to express my appreciation of the help afforded me in my investigation both by the Governments concerned and also by such bodies as the local Chambers of Mines, Commerce, etc., missionary societies, and numerous members of the general public whose help went far to facilitate my task. I carried out my investigations in an informal manner and interviews were not in public; I thus had the advantage of a considerable amount of confidential information.

I desire to record my appreciation of the constant help accorded me in planning and carrying out my tour.

I was accompanied throughout by Mr. C. S. Roberts of the Colonial Office staff who was of great assistance to me in the collection of material and the compilation of my report.

I have, etc.,

G. ST. J. ORDE BROWNE,

Labour Adviser.

## ITINERARY.

1939.		
November	2nd.	Left England.
	18th.	Arrived Lagos (Nigeria).
	25th.	To Cotonou (French Dahomey).
	26th.	To Buca (Cameroons under British Mandate).
December	3rd.	To Kumba.
	5th.	To Mbonge.
	6th.	To Ndian.
	8th.	To Mbonge.
	9th.	To Kumba.
	12th.	To Duala (Cameroons under French Mandate)
	13th.	To Lagos (Nigeria).
	15th.	To Minna.
	19th.	To Kaduna.
	20th.	To Zaria.
	21st.	To Kano.
	23rd.	To Jos.
1940.		
January	7th.	To Enugu.
	11th.	To Onitsha.
	12th.	To Sapele.
	13th.	To Benin.
	16th.	To Akure.
	19th.	To Ibadan.
	21st.	To Lagos.
	31st.	Left Lagos.
February	2nd.	Arrived Takoradi (Gold Coast; and proceeded to Sekondi.
	7th.	To Tarkwa.
	10th.	To Prestes.
	12th.	To Bibiani.
	14th.	To Kumasi.
	19th.	To Obuasi.
	24th.	To Kumasi.
	26th.	To Accra.
March	8th.	To Cape Coast.
	11th.	To Takoradi.
	13th.	Left Takoradi.
	17th.	Arrived Freetown (Sierra Leone).
	19th.	To Marampa.
	21st.	To Makeni.
	22nd.	To Bo.
	24th.	To Konema.
	25th.	To Yengema.
	27th.	To Bo.
	28th.	To Njala.
	30th.	To Freetown.
April	5th.	To Bathurst (Gambia).
	11th.	To Freetown (Sierra Leone).
	17th.	Left Freetown.
May	2nd.	Arrived in England.

## APPENDIX I.

Year.	Revenue and Expenditure.		Expenditure.
	Revenue.		
		£	£
1936	...	261,004	259,000
1937	...	286,104	343,323
1938	...	166,794	263,199
1939	...	136,146 (a)	218,776 (a)
1940	...	131,000 (a)	204,174 (a)

(a) Estimated.

Annual deficits met by appropriation from Reserve.

## APPENDIX II.

*Agricultural summary :*

The Gambia is almost entirely dependent upon groundnut cultivation which forms the staple export crop. The tonnage and value of groundnuts exported from the Colony during 1938 and the four previous years were as follows :—

Year.	Tons (decorticated and undecorticated).		Value.
		£	£
1934	...	71,919	387,345
1935	...	45,110	368,887
1936	...	49,654	427,317
1937	...	67,084	653,589
1938	...	46,981	246,691

## Other exports during 1938 :—

Palm kernels	...	681 tons, value £1,698.
Skins	...	824 cwt., value £1,845.
Hides	...	12,973 lb., value £4,535.
Beeswax	...	49,331 lb., value £262.

It is estimated that there are usually about 35,000 head of cattle in the Colony and Protectorate.

## APPENDIX III.

*Rates of Pay prevailing in Chief Occupations.*

Accountants	...	£8 to £30 per mensem.
Bakers	...	£1 to £4 per mensem.
Blacksmiths	...	1s. to 8s. per diem.
Bookkeepers	...	£7 to £22 per mensem.
Carpenters	...	3s. to 5s. per diem.
Cashiers	...	£8 to £28 per mensem.
Clerks	...	£2 to £25 per mensem.
Cooks	...	25s. to £4 per mensem.
Domestic Servants	...	20s. to 40s. per mensem.
Drivers (Motor and Engine)	...	32s. to £3 per mensem.
Engineers	...	£4 to £9 per mensem.
Gardeners	...	24s. to 35s. per mensem.
Labourers	...	9d. to 1s. 6d. per diem.
Labourers (Headmen)	...	£2 to £6 per mensem.
Mechanics	...	£3 to £6 per mensem.
Messengers	...	24s. to £4 per mensem.
Painters	...	2s. 6d. to 5s. per diem.
Sailors	...	£1 to £2 per mensem.
Shop Assistants	...	1s. 6d. per diem.
Tailors	...	1s. per diem.
Typists	...	£5 to £10 per mensem.

## APPENDIX III.—continued.

<i>Occupation.</i>	<i>Average daily rates of pay.</i>
<i>Seafarers and Waterfront Labour.*</i>	
Headmen ... ..	4s.
Second Headmen ... ..	3s. 3d.
Launch Drivers and Coxswains ... ..	3s. 2d.
Laundrymen ... ..	2s. 9d.
Passenger Cooks' ... ..	3s.
Crew Cooks ... ..	2s. 3d.
Gangwaymen... ..	2s. 3d.
Winchmen ... ..	2s. 3d.
Greasers ... ..	5s.
Trimmers ... ..	4s. 6d.
Wipers ... ..	4s. 6d.
Head Stokers... ..	6s.
Tally Clerks ... ..	4s.
Carpenters ... ..	3s. 6d.
Deck Hands ... ..	2s. to 2s. 3d.
Lightermen ... ..	1s. 4d. to 1s. 8d.
Chief Engineers ... ..	4s.
Second Engineers ... ..	3s. 6d.
Boiler Cleaners ... ..	2s.
Firemen ... ..	3s. to 5s.

\* The figures of average rates of pay have been compiled from statements of seamen's organisations, in the absence of any officially published information.

## APPENDIX IV.

CLERICAL APPOINTMENTS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE AS AT  
2ND JANUARY, 1940.

<i>Salary scales :</i> First Grade ... ..	£260 x £10—£360.
Second Grade ... ..	£160 x £10—£230.
Third Grade ... ..	£50 x £8—£82 ; £100 x £9—£136.
Probationer ... ..	£36.

*Total number of Clerks in Government Service :* 118.

*Total of salaries :* £15,731 per annum.

*Average salary (all grades) :* £133.

*Distribution amongst Departments :*

<i>Department.</i>	<i>1st. Grade.</i>	<i>2nd Grade.</i>	<i>3rd Grade.</i>	<i>Probationers.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Receiver General's ... ..	2(a)	4	32	5	43
Marine ... ..	—	3	14	1	18
Public Works ... ..	2(b)	1	11	2	16
Secretariat ... ..	1	3	4	—	8
Audit ... ..	—	1	5	—	6
Medical and Health Services	—	1	4	1	6
Judicial and Legal ... ..	—	1	3(c)	1	5
Provincial Administration ... ..	—	1	3	1	5
Legal ... ..	—	1	2	—	3
Land and Survey ... ..	1	—	1	—	2
Governor's Office ... ..	—	—	1	—	1
Agricultural ... ..	—	—	1	—	1
Education ... ..	—	—	1	—	1
Meteorological ... ..	—	—	—	1	1
Police ... ..	—	1	—	—	1
Royal West African Frontier Force ... ..	—	—	1	—	1
<b>Totals</b> ... ..	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>118</b>

(a) 1 Postmaster and 1 Accounting Assistant.

(b) Includes 1 Accounting Assistant.

(c) Includes the Bathurst Beadle and Sheriff's Bailiff.