

THE GOLD COAST

A Survey of the Gold Coast and
British Togoland, 1919-1946

By F. M. BOURRET

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Almost overnight the Gold Coast, on the great Western bulge of the black continent, was recognized as strategically and economically important to the Allies in World War II. The region has had a fascinating history from the very beginning—it is told here with particular emphasis on the period from post-World War I to post-World War II.

At present there is a tendency in most colonies for political progress to outstrip economic and social development. A lack of equilibrium, brought on by overambitious political plans, often results. This problem as it applies to the Gold Coast is studied in some detail in this book.

Another timely problem dealt with in these pages is the question of how much of indigenous civilization and culture should be preserved and to what degree European attitudes should be encouraged.

At the present time colonial policies in general are subject to much controversy and misunderstanding. A case study such as this, of an individual colony where the day-by-day working out of policy can be seen in detail, is more helpful than a generalized treatment for a clearer understanding of these problems.

This is the first general survey of one of the richest and most promising of all the African colonies. The manuscript was prepared at the Hoover Library at Stanford University, which has one of the finest collections of Gold Coast documents in the United States. The author is currently with the history department at San Francisco College for Women.

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THE GOLD COAST

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1919-1946

By

F. M. BOURRET

*History Department
San Francisco College for Women*

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FOREWORD

The Gold Coast has been in contact with Europe since the beginning of modern times, but modern times in the Gold Coast began only a few generations ago.

A decade before his discovery of America Columbus visited the rocky surf-swept Gold Coast. He helped adventurous Portuguese who built the grim fortress of São Gorge. Other fortresses rose along the Guinea coast to give shelter to traders of half a dozen nations who came to these shores for gold, ivory, and pepper. Later the need for labor in the West Indian and American colonies made trade in human beings more profitable than the luxury goods of the earlier days. For two centuries the slave trade flourished until, in the nineteenth century, the conscience of the Western world decisively aided by changing economic interests first condemned, then outlawed, and finally ended this shameful traffic.

The Gold Coast did not lost contact with the outside world, for it possessed natural resources suited to the requirements of the new industries and the expanded trade of the power age. The demand for palm oil, for example, greatly increased, and the Gold Coast could produce it in large quantities. The most spectacular growth was in the cocoa industry. In 1891 the Gold Coast exported 80 pounds of cocoa; forty years later the export was 300,000 tons.

There has always been a market for gold which, as its name suggests, the Gold Coast possesses. New industrial processes have created a market for industrial diamonds, manganese, and bauxite, which are also found in this territory.

From the first trading ventures down to the beginning of the nineteenth century, Europeans treated the Gold Coast as they treated so many other outlandish places, as a region where profits could be made by exchanging European manufactured goods for more valuable human and natural materials. Traders of several nations engaged in this trade without fighting about sovereignty over the area. Gradually, however, the British established their ascendancy and assumed responsibility for regulating relations between Europeans and Africans.

Since 1874 when Great Britain formally annexed the Gold Coast

as a colony, educational and political institutions have developed in the rhythm of such developments in the empire. In recent years, and especially in the period covered by this monograph, the tempo of development has been tremendously increased.

The Gold Coast has become, first economically, and later politically, a part of the world community. The economic well-being of its people has been linked to the world market and their prosperity depends on the economic health of Western Europe and America. The security of the Gold Coast people is no longer a hazard of war between the Ashanti and Fanti tribes or between Africans and British. The security of the Gold Coast depends, as World War II demonstrated, on peace between Germans and British, Russians and Americans, Japanese and Chinese.

With this dependence on the world community for well-being and security, there has also developed a demand for the right of participation in that community, not as a second-class member, or as the current usage has it, as a nonself-governing territory, but as a self-governing, full-fledged member of the community of nations.

The transition of regions like the Gold Coast—and there are many—from colonial status to independence and self-government, at a time when the security of all regions depends more and more on the recognition of interdependence and the surrender of full sovereignty, is one of the most important and interesting problems of these times.

Dr. Bourret has told with great clarity and sympathy the story of how one nonself-governing territory has moved from dependency toward self-government under the tutelage of the government that has had the most experience in guiding this historical process. The setbacks and the achievements of British imperial policy since World War I are reflected in the story of one of the smaller but most interesting members of the empire. This story is a contribution to our understanding of one of the most significant and complex issues of our generation.

HAROLD H. FISHER

PREFACE

The world's present struggle to achieve a pattern of peace has brought the problem of dependent peoples to the forefront. Many of the nonself-governing areas are in Africa where rapid economic and political changes are drawing the continent, at an ever increasing tempo, into the full current of world activity. The recognition of this development supports the need for a scientific study of those factors which are determining the present progress, not only of Africa as a whole, but of each separate division with its own characteristics and problems. A case study of an individual colony where the day-by-day working out of policy can be seen in detail is often more helpful than theoretical discussions, and avoids the dangers of sweeping generalizations. This book is an attempt to provide such a survey of the Gold Coast. The Dependency is a comparatively small area with only four million inhabitants, but the Gold Coast Africans are an intelligent people who are facing with vigor the basic problem of adjustment to modern conditions. Their territory is one of the richest and most promising of West Africa and it is not unlikely that they will exercise much influence in the future development of the continent.

With the end in view of providing a general picture of recent Gold Coast history, this study traces the political, economic, and social development of the Dependency during the last quarter-century. While the years 1919-1946 mark a definite period of achievement culminating in the 1946 constitution, it has seemed wise, in several instances, to carry the narrative beyond the latter date by including a brief discussion of the 1947 Togoland petition to the United Nations and of the 1948 disturbances in the Gold Coast Colony. As for territorial scope, the survey considers the Gold Coast Colony proper, and in less detail Ashanti, the protectorate of the Northern Territories and the trusteeship of British Togoland, since all four divisions are under the administrative authority of the Gold Coast governor.

The primary sources on which the work is based are the publications of the Gold Coast and British governments and the debates of the Gold Coast Legislative Council. Use has also been made of Gold

Coast newspapers and of the reports of various African societies dedicated to the further development of the country.

I was fortunate in having the manuscript read by several authorities who have had long experience in Gold Coast affairs, either in official capacity or in African political groups. I am most grateful for their criticisms and suggestions and regret that I cannot express my appreciation in a more specific manner.

Throughout the planning and writing of this survey, I have had the encouraging help of Professor Carl Fremont Brand of Stanford University. Professor Harold Fisher, chairman of the Hoover Institute and Library, has read parts of the manuscript and I am indebted to him for the constructive criticism which he has generously given. I also wish to acknowledge the kind assistance of Professor William Bascom of Northwestern University.

The Hoover Library has an excellent collection of Gold Coast documents and, with few exceptions, the materials quoted are from this source. Miss Nina Almond, librarian and consultant in research of this institute, has spared no time or effort to obtain needed materials and to help with bibliographical problems. It is a pleasure to acknowledge the courtesy and devotedness of the Hoover Library and Stanford Library staffs and especially of Mr. Philip McLean, Mrs. Ruth R. Perry, and Miss Minna Stillman. In conclusion, I wish to mention my indebtedness to Mr. Patrick Hulede of Achimota Teacher-Training College in the Gold Coast, whose untiring interest in searching out manuscript material and in collecting African publications has been invaluable to me.

F. M. B.

MENLO PARK, CALIFORNIA
March 25, 1949

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The Gold Coast

CHAPTER I

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

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

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

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

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

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

The population of the Dependency is unevenly distributed, as will be seen in the tabulation⁴ given below, which gives population figures according to the 1931 census.

Gold Coast Colony.....	1,571,362
Ashanti	578,078
Northern Territories	717,275
Togoland	293,671
Total	<u>3,160,386⁴</u>

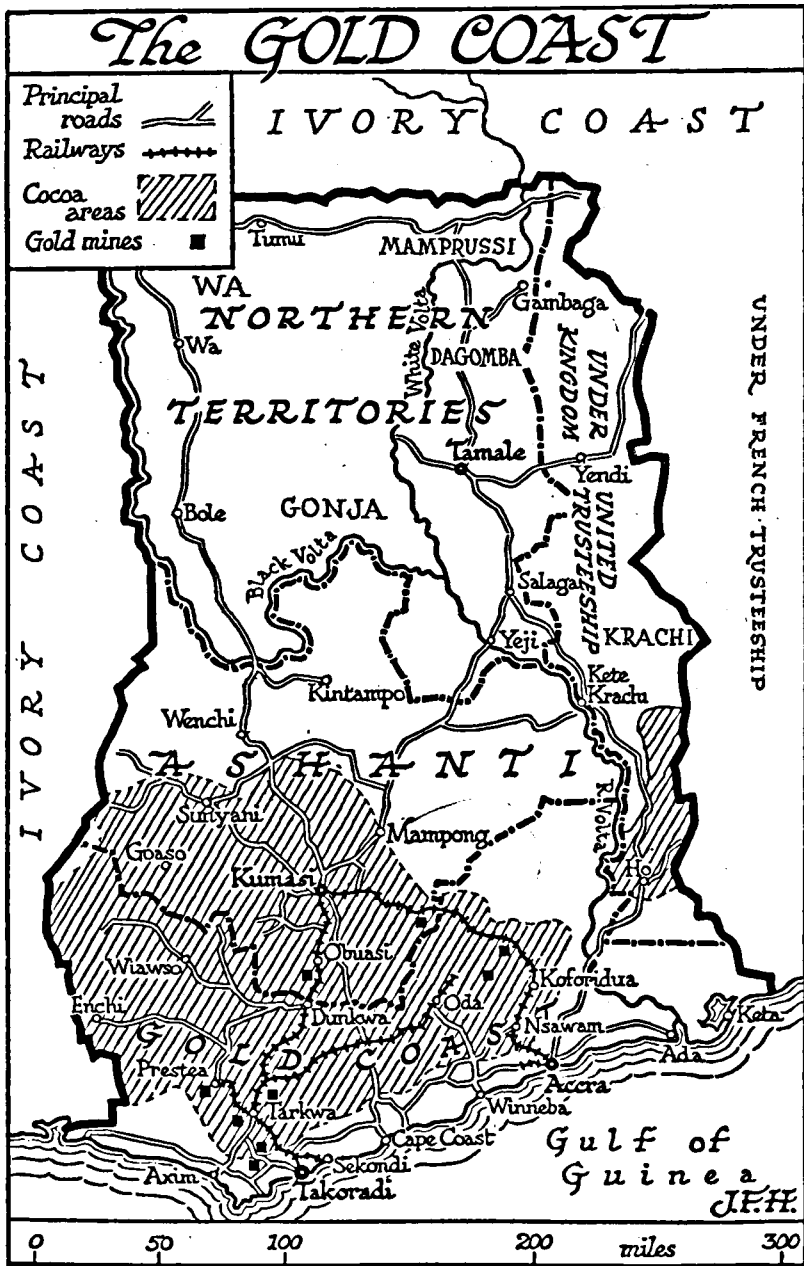
The geographical and economic characteristics of the several divisions of the Dependency are largely responsible for this unequal distribution of population. Physically the entire territory can be divided into four easily recognized areas—the coastal lands, the Ashanti plateau, the plains of the Volta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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Large bauxite deposits were discovered in 1921 in the regions

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The second group to descend upon the Gold Coast were probably members of the Moshi⁹ kingdom to the direct north. By conquest and peaceful penetration, they established themselves as rulers over the original inhabitants of northern and eastern sections of the present Northern Territories and Togoland. They set up several kingdoms, principally the Mamprussi with its capital at Gambaga, and the Dagomba with its capital at Yendi. Most of the principal chiefs were killed, but eventually their rightful heirs were allowed to resume positions of religious authority, while the foreign invaders kept political control. Thus a double set of rulers was established. The holder of the sacerdotal office known as the *tendana* was the priest of the earth god, and as such retained some control over the land and almost as much power as the political head. These people have successfully resisted all Mohammedan invasions and have preserved their original animistic belief, which they share, in its principal tenets, with the other tribes to the south. Though the 1931 census recorded 54,622 Mohammedans for the entire Gold Coast, the majority are so in name only.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER II

THE GOLD COAST YESTERDAY

Sailors and traders of the ancient world had some slight contact with the Gold Coast, but it was the Portuguese who first made it known to Christian Europe.¹ Early in the fifteenth century these hardy seamen, with the inspiration and support of Prince Henry the Navigator, had courageously dared the unknown and ventured down the West African Coast. By 1434 the dreaded waters of Cape Bojador had been passed and exploration begun in earnest. When Henry died twenty-six years later, much of the Guinea littoral was known, and fortifications and trading posts already marked it as a Portuguese monopoly. In 1471 men in the pay of Fernao Gomes, a merchant with a government permit for the trade of the coast south of Sierra Leone, landed on the Gold Coast and obtained from the inhabitants a supply of that precious metal for which the country was later to be named. They called it "Mina," the mine, so great was the quantity of gold that could be purchased, and eventually the site of their first settlement became known as Elmina. During the next decade the export of gold dust and nuggets¹ to the homeland continued. (The fame of the place spread and with it came danger of rivals) In 1482, then, King John II of Portugal sent an expedition under Diego d'Azambuja who was accompanied by Bartholomew Diaz and Christopher Columbus, to build a fort at Elmina as a protection against both natives and possible foreign pirates. São Jorge da Mina, St. George of the Mine, was soon completed—the first of that long line of forts which were eventually to be built by

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The abolition of the slave trade, accordingly, was not favorably received by the African middlemen of the Gold Coast. In order to earn a livelihood some of these men were now forced to turn to agriculture or other occupations. In the following years the value of legitimate exports somewhat increased but not sufficiently to make up entirely for the lost profits of the slave trade, so that the quantity of European imports soon showed a resultant drop. They declined, for example, from over £1,500,000 in 1806 to less than £600,000 in 1810.³ The temptation to evade the British naval patrol soon suggested itself. American and even English slavers, built for speed, and flying the Spanish flag, could sometimes slip past the slower British cruisers. It was not until after the Civil War that the co-operation of the United States government and the use of speedy steam pinnaces finally enabled the British navy to end, once and for all, the white man's activity in the African slave trade.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the meantime, while Ashanti wars were being fought and international boundaries delimited, the Gold Coast Colony itself had been making some progress. This was more marked in the economic field than in the political. An ordinance providing for native government was enacted in 1883.¹² Its main purpose was to safeguard the traditional position of the chiefs; but it had not been conspicuously successful and their authority was steadily diminishing, especially in regard to the educated classes in the coastal towns. The strengthening and modernizing of tribal government and its co-ordination with the functions of the central government remained as one of the major

¹¹ Rattray, *Ashanti*, p. 292; *Ashanti Annual Report*, 1921, pp. 21-29.

¹² *British and Foreign State Papers*, 1882-1883, LXXIV, 605-16.

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

In economic matters more promising conditions obtained. A remarkable increase in prosperity came during the first and second decades of the twentieth century due, in large part, to the sudden development of the cocoa industry. Cacao seedlings were first brought to the Gold Coast in 1857 by the Basel missionaries; but it was a native laborer, returning from work in a plantation in Fernando Po, who really introduced the industry. In 1879 he smuggled in some cocoa pods. The seeds grew successfully and in a few years the first small consignment of cocoa, 121 pounds of beans valued at £6 1s., was exported to Europe. The Africans seemed to have realized the possibilities of such a crop, and cocoa farms spread rather rapidly. With absolutely no European capital and very little government help, the farmers near the coast, and later those in the interior, went ahead with their planting of cocoa trees. The following figures¹⁸ tell the story of the rapid development of the Gold Coast's chief item of export. The tabulation gives the quinquennial average of the cocoa export.

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

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

¹⁸ *Gold Coast Handbook, 1937* (London, 1937), p. 38.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER III

THE GOVERNORSHIP OF SIR GORDON GUGGISBERG, 1919-1927

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

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

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

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

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

The fact that boom conditions characterized the cocoa market in 1919 and in the early months of 1920 helped the new governor to gain the support of his officials and of public opinion for what appeared to many as a daring undertaking. The price of cocoa soared to £80 a ton and even, in some cases, to £120.⁴ The Gold Coast farmers and middlemen enjoyed conditions of a pleasant if unstable prosperity, but they were not to last. By the middle of the year 1920 a depression had forced down world prices, with a resultant sharp decline—not only in the incomes of the Africans but also in the general revenue of the Colony which was so largely dependent on export and import taxes. The government officials had always realized the danger of a one-crop economy,⁵ but the farmers,

² “Governor’s Address to the Legislative Council,” March 1, 1923, *Gold Coast Gazette*, March 17, 1923, p. 349.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was the inefficiency of these loading methods and the crowded conditions on the beaches of the various ports—where thousands of tons of perishable cocoa were sometimes piled during the height of the season—that led the governor to make plans for better shipping facilities. The Gold Coast has no natural harbor, but Takoradi on the western littoral was chosen by consulting engineers as the most suitable location at which to develop one. Preparations were begun in 1921 and, in spite of the business slump and much adverse criticism, the work was continued. It was not opened for commerce until 1928 and further extensions were added later, bringing the total cost up to £3,230,912.¹¹ The harbor is formed by two great breakwaters enclosing an area of 220 acres and containing wharves for cocoa, timber, and manganese export, sufficient storage and loading space, and a petroleum berth equipped with pipe lines from ships to tanks two and a half miles inland. During most of the 1930's the harbor operated at a loss because of the burden of its heavy debt charges and the competition of the cheaper surf-boat ports at Accra and other coastal towns. While this method of financing the undertaking has been subjected to the same type of criticism as that leveled at the railroads, the harbor has since proved itself invaluable in the economic development of the Dependency.

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

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

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

¹¹ *G.C. An. Report, 1928–29*, p. 21.

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

essential to its well-being, was becoming year by year a more serious problem. Originally a belt of dense rain forests had covered the entire southern portion of the Gold Coast, but by the early twentieth century the entire Ho district of Togo, three-fourths of the Eastern Province, and one-third of the Central Province had given way to a savanna type of vegetation. Experts found that deforestation was going on at the rate of 300 square miles a year, and informed the government that it would be necessary to set aside some 40 percent of the remaining area as reserves, if further damage was to be prevented.¹⁸ Because of African opposition to any official action, Guggisberg urged the chiefs to establish reserves themselves, according to the by-law power given them in the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883. As nothing was done in 1924 to carry out his request, he warned them again that he would give them but two years more. At the end of this period only six native reserves totaling 240 square miles had been established, whereas the Forestry Department had declared that 6,000 square miles were necessary. The failure of the chiefs was due to a number of reasons: ignorance of the danger involved in further deforestation, fear that the reserves would become crown lands, unsettled boundary disputes between stools, and the fact that the chiefs of the Central and Eastern Provinces had already alienated lands available for reserves.

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

¹⁸ In 1910 a British expert made a thorough study of the forest situation for the British government. See H. Thompson, *Reports of Gold Coast Forests*, Cd. 4993, 1910. This led the Gold Coast government to pass a law in 1911 authorizing the establishment of reserves. Some of the Africans, however, raised strenuous objections on the grounds that such reserves would be the beginning of official seizure of tribal land. A delegation was sent to London to protest against the legislation and in reply the secretary of state for the colonies appointed a special commissioner, Sir H. C. Belfield, to determine whether there was actual danger to native rights. See *Report on the Legislation Governing the Alienation of Native Lands in the Gold Coast*, Cd. 6278, 1912, and Casely Hayford, *The Truth About the West African Land Question* (London, 1913).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁶ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929-1930, pp. 168, 218.

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁸ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp. 286-87.

CHAPTER IV

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, 1919-1927

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

³ Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 128.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And again he told them that he found this refusal:

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

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

¹⁰ Ribeiro, *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future*, pp. 14-16.

¹¹ *Events, 1920-1926*, p. 13; Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 523.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, VII (1934), 331.

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁹ *British and Foreign State Papers, 1882-1883, LXXIV, 604.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

The growing prosperity of the Colony, with its resultant increase

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

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

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

In May 1925, the new constitution²¹ was granted to the Gold Coast, giving for the first time the right of elected representation. It provided for fifteen official and fourteen unofficial members. Of the unofficial members five were Europeans—three appointed by the governor to represent the banking, shipping, and mercantile interests; one elected by the local chamber of commerce; and one chosen by the chamber of mines. Among the nine African members,

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

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

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

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

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

²² *Events, 1920-1926*, p. 23.

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

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

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

The new Order in Council concerning the new Legislative Council has stirred up a hornets' nest. Part of the people of the Eastern Province, especially the educated, are against it. . . . The Paramount Chiefs of the Eastern Province²⁴ . . . including Nana Ofori Atta and Konor Mate Kole are heartily for it. . . . The political atmosphere is charged.²⁵

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

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

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

²⁵ Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp. 259-60.

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

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

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

To Guggisberg this legislation brought:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁸ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1931-1932, "Governor's Address," p. 288; G.C. *Ann. Report*, 1930, p. 3.

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

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

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

CHAPTER V

THE GOLD COAST COLONY, 1928-1939

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

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

¹ See p. 53 above.

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

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

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

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

Once Mr. Hayford realized that there was a greater future for the provincial councils than for the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, he worked with Nana Sir Ofori Atta for their success. Thus these two great leaders of the educated classes and the chiefs were able to bring about a fusion of the hitherto divided interests. After this conciliation had taken place in the spring of 1929³ the municipal and provincial members usually worked harmoniously together in the legislative council.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Results of the slump in world prosperity were evident as early as 1929, when the price of cocoa dropped suddenly from £50 to £41 a ton, and in 1930 to as low as £20.⁶ By that year, too, the annual revenue of the Dependency was only about two and a half million pounds in contrast to over four million in 1927. This loss of revenue was due to three main causes. Because of lower cocoa prices less was collected from export taxes. Secondly, the import receipts on liquor fell some 50 percent in 1930, due to ordinances which provided for gradual restriction of the importation of geneva and gin. In the third place, the accustomed revenues from the railroads dropped sharply. These reductions led to large budget deficits for the first time since 1924.

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

⁶ *G.C. An. Report, 1930.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1931, p. 385.

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

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

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

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1933, p. 7.

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

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

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

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 56.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

²⁴ *Ibid.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

cent behind the movement and had supported the chiefs' actions. It approved of Hodson's efforts to remain neutral and stated that "we consider that the local government acted throughout with tact and that credit is due to Sir Arnold Hodson and his officers for their handling of a very delicate situation."⁸⁰ It recommended that for the future the government help the producers to combine into some sort of co-operative selling organization of their own, and in conclusion it forthrightly stated that "*in all the circumstances it is our opinion that the Agreements should be finally withdrawn.*"⁸¹

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

One of the outstanding results of the cocoa holdup was that the successful leadership of the chiefs in this affair strengthened the confidence and respect, both of the common people and the educated classes, for their authority. Thenceforward there appears to have been more co-operation between these two groups, though disagreements were sometimes to reappear. After the establishment of the joint provincial council, the chiefs took an ever more active part in the affairs of the Gold Coast as a whole, for these meetings opened their eyes to the general as well as to the purely local aspect of their problems. Among the topics discussed, the question of advanced government positions for Africans was one of those most frequently introduced. Sir Gordon Guggisberg had made definite plans for the gradual increase of Africans in positions usually held only by Europeans. According to this program "the number of Africans holding European appointments should steadily grow from 27 in 1925-26 to 151 in 1935-36."⁸² But the plan had not been carried out, and in 1938 only forty-one Africans were in such positions. This failure to carry out Guggisberg's plan has naturally been most disappointing, both to the educational institutions which have trained the youth of the Gold Coast and to the Africans themselves. The latter have made many complaints,⁸³ and in 1938 the joint provincial council directed Ofori Atta to make another strong representation in the legislative council concerning the matter. The governor, in reply, promised to discuss the problem at the forthcoming conference of colonial gov-

⁸⁰ *Report on Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, 1938, Section 230.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Section 489.

⁸² *Events, 1920-1926*, par. 225; see also chapter iv above.

⁸³ See for example Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, p. 153 ff.; and 1937, p. 97.

ernors⁸⁴ and the next year, 1939, he announced a new policy of government appointments. Plans were being made to establish an intermediate grade of officer. If a man proved competent he would then be given a scholarship for further training in England as a direct preparation for advancement.⁸⁵

The sympathy between the chiefs and the educated classes which was increasing during the late 1930's was evident in the establishment of the Gold Coast Youth Conference. This association was not a society but merely a convention, a calling together from time to time, of the various societies and clubs of the Gold Coast to discuss affairs of common interest to their members. Its aim was not meant to be political but rather to awaken the young people to the economic and social needs of their country.⁸⁶ One of the interesting characteristics of this association was that, while it was organized by Dr. Danquah and other professional men, it also counted many of the most important chiefs among its patrons. In one of its earliest publications it spoke with pride of the excellent work done by the joint provincial council and recognized that this body was in a position to win the co-operation of the various sections of the country and to guide them to united action.

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

Here was an opportunity for that meeting of minds between the two races which was so necessary if co-operative action were to go on. The members planned to meet unofficially from time to time in order to talk over the various problems of the Gold Coast and to suggest possible solutions. The results of these conferences were published and they gave an excellent picture, not only of a certain section of public opinion but also of the friendly spirit which characterized the meetings. The idea of these study groups later spread to Ashanti and a successful conference was held in Kumasi.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1938, pp. 91, 100.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1939, I, 23, 196-97; see also chapter above.

⁸⁶ "Gold Coast Youth Conference; Its Constitution and History," *First Steps Towards a National Fund* (Accra, 1938), pp. 23-24.

⁸⁷ Achimota and Kumasi Discussion Groups, *Towards National Development; Post-War Gold Coast* (Achimota, 1945).

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

The opinions expressed by both the Youth Conference and the Achimota Discussion Group pointed to the need for greater economic and social progress, but a progress based on research and scientific knowledge rather than on spasmodic and un-co-ordinated development. Of these matters something will be said in a later chapter. They also stressed, though from somewhat different viewpoints, the necessity for political growth and increased self-government. Some of the younger and more radical of the Africans made use of every chance to demand immediate and complete autonomy.²⁸ But the older men, especially the chiefs, though they wanted an African majority on the legislative council and other reforms, appeared more willing to wait for a gradual evolution toward independence. Most of the Africans were loyal to the British connection, wishing to remain within the Empire if they could achieve, in the not too distant future, the status of a dominion. As Casely Hayford once remarked,

. . . every son and daughter of the whole territory is well and rightly persuaded that our destiny is linked with Great Britain, and that under her tutelage, we shall succeed in achieving the best of every phase of life. Our quarrels and bickerings are domestic affairs . . . on the larger issues we are agreed, and no one can shake the African's firm belief in the virtues that have made England the model state for the world.²⁹

In reviewing the events of the 1919-1939 period, they seem to

in West Africa, noticed this same friendly spirit. "In no other territory visited was cooperation between the government and missions so close, nor did we anywhere else meet Africans with a greater sense of public service or find such free and natural professional and social contacts between Africans and Europeans." Jackson Davis, *Africa Advancing: A Study of Rural Education and Agriculture in West Africa and the Belgian Congo* (New York, 1945), p. 66.

This movement for discussion groups is particularly valuable since the Gold Coast has not a first-class press. Some of the newspapers are immoderate in tone and the Africans themselves recognize the need for better journalism. Lugard considered that such publications were a serious danger to racial peace. Lugard, *Dual Mandate*, p. 80.

²⁸ For example see N. Azikiwe, *Renascent Africa* (Lagos, 1937). Azikiwe was editor of the *African Morning Post*, a Gold Coast newspaper, during the mid-1930's. He was eventually fined and imprisoned for seditious writings. Later he was acquitted by the West African Court of Appeal and went to Nigeria where he has started a nationalist movement known as Zikism. His writings, which are a plea to the youth of Africa to assert itself and demand complete autonomy, are very popular among many of the younger generation. See also A. A. Nwafor Orizu, *Without Bitterness* (New York, 1944), p. 293.

²⁹ J. W. de Graft Johnson, *Towards Nationhood in West Africa* (London, 1928), p. 79.

fall into two divisions. There was a time of rapid growth from 1919 to 1929 when trade and revenue increased by leaps and bounds and when an equally surprising expansion of communications, public utilities, and social services was therefore possible. At the same time, the government permitted additional African representation on the legislative council and endeavored, by the 1927 Native Administration Ordinance, to strengthen the authority of the traditional chiefs.

The Depression years followed this prosperous period when the drop in revenue, the resultant suffering, the administrative attempt to introduce an income tax and to curtail civil rights by a new sedition policy, all combined to cause unrest in the Gold Coast. With the governorship of Sir Arnold Hodson in 1935, the authorities appeared to take a more sympathetic attitude. The next four years saw some improvement in local government. Certain states inaugurated stool treasuries; the joint provincial council made unified political action possible; and chiefs' leadership in the cocoa holdup strengthened their position. By 1939 the Colony was ready to take advantage of the stimulation to general development which the exigencies of war were to bring to all of West Africa. Before the 1939-1946 years are considered, however, it would be wise to give some attention to the other divisions of the Dependency and to the economic and social progress of the previous period. Only after this survey has been made can the reader appreciate the problems of the Dependency as a whole.

CHAPTER VI

ASHANTI

While the years 1919–1939 saw great development in the Gold Coast Colony itself, the other sections of the Dependency, namely Ashanti, the Northern Territories, and Togoland, were also making good progress. After the powerful Ashanti Confederacy was conquered in the late nineteenth century by the British, the federation was dissolved and its king was deported to the Seychelles. In 1901 the English annexed the territory and entrusted its control to the governor of the Gold Coast. The Order in Council which implemented this change¹ gave the governor authority to provide by ordinance for the administration of justice, the collection of revenue, and for all that was necessary to maintain peace and good government. He was to exercise his authority through a chief commissioner who in turn would be aided by district commissioners and other officers. There was, therefore, no need for either a legislative or an executive council in Ashanti.

In the days of the old confederacy, the various chiefs had owed allegiance to the paramount of the Kumasi, since it was his predecessor, Osei Tutu, who in the eighteenth century had first organized the Ashanti groups on a federal basis.² Since that time, this king had been recognized as head chief in his own state but as Asantehene with reference to the entire country. When in 1896 the British deported King Prempeh, the federal form of government was dissolved and the various units remained isolated, each under the rule of its own chief. But the state of Kumasi had lost its paramount, so that native administration was thrown out of line and much disorder ensued. As a result the British decided in 1905 to replace him by a state council. The eighteen divisional chiefs who would have held this right under the former dynasty and who resented their loss of power, were invited to form a Kumasi Council under the chairman-

¹ *British and Foreign State Papers, 1903–1904*, XCVII, 988. Ordinance for the Administration of Ashanti, 1902, *Laws of the Gold Coast in Force 1936*, chap. 94 (hereafter cited as *Laws, 1936*).

² Robert Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (Oxford, 1929), p. 76.

ship of the chief commissioner.³ Their authority, however, was limited to their own state in contrast to the federal powers they had held before 1896. Gradually the bitterness of the chiefs and people against the conquering power began to disappear, through the willingness of the various commissioners to adapt policy to local needs. Governor Sir Gordon Guggisberg attributed the progress of the Colony to its economic prosperity, to the wisdom of its commissioners, and to the elasticity and common sense of British rule which seemed instinctively to adapt itself to the successive phases in the evolution of the race.⁴

The economic prosperity of which he spoke resulted in great part from the cocoa farms. Shortly after the annexation of Ashanti, this form of agriculture was introduced, especially into the western half where large areas were suitable for it. Rubber and kola also did well in these same districts. As soon as the *Pax Britannica* had assured steady commercial conditions, European and Hausa traders moved into Kumasi which remained the capital of the Colony. In 1903 the railroad connecting it with Sekondi on the coast was completed. Eventually good roads were also built and in 1923 a second railroad was opened, running from Kumasi to Accra. Little by little the capital itself gradually changed from an entirely African town to a well-laid-out European city which in 1938 had a population of over 44,000.

Yet such development came gradually and, during the years 1901–1920, progress must often have seemed slow to the British officials. There were not sufficient funds to provide for all the schools, roads, hospitals, and other social services necessary to transform the forest area into a modern colony. Although Kumasi improved, the rate of development was not evenly distributed throughout the territory and today many sections still remain primitive. The inhabitants in Ashanti were not any more ready to accept direct taxation than those in the Gold Coast, and even the chiefs' levies were most irregular and only grudgingly accepted by the people. It was still the policy of the British Empire to expect each colony to pay for its own improvements, as the idea of a Colonial Development Fund was not to come

³ Sir Francis Fuller, *A Vanished Dynasty* (London, 1921), p. 216. Fuller was chief commissioner in Ashanti from 1902 to 1920 and did much by his sympathy and common sense to help its people adjust themselves to British rule. His book gives an excellent account of these early years. See also the Ashanti Annual Reports.

⁴ *Events, 1920–1926*, p. 234.

for many a year. Ashanti, therefore, had to get along as best it could on local fees and on its share of the import and export taxes of the Dependency.

If there had been more revenue, much of it would probably have been spent on education, for the Ashantis were anxious for an increased number of government schools. In 1925 there were five such institutions, besides twenty-eight assisted schools and some one hundred fifty-eight in the nonassisted class.⁵ Nongovernment institutions were conducted either by missionaries or by Africans.

The first Christian church was built in Kumasi as early as 1841 by a Methodist missionary, but the numerous wars of the nineteenth century naturally prevented almost all missionary activity. Even in the twentieth century progress was slow. Many of the early converts gave up their allegiance to the chiefs and to native customs, which aroused such antagonism that the schools of the missionaries were not well supported. But the Ashanti were eager for education and for the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of the coastal areas, so they clamored for government schools. Eventually the missionaries succeeded in getting converts to remain loyal to their tribes. Christianity then spread more rapidly and by 1925 there were nearly thirty denominational schools. The Methodists opened a training college in 1923 at Kumasi, where they spent some £25,000 on its fireproof building and extensive grounds.

During the world war of 1914–1918, though practically all troops were withdrawn from Ashanti for the Togoland campaigns, the Africans remained thoroughly loyal and contributed generously to Great Britain's war expenses. After the war Ashanti felt, in a limited way, the wave of restlessness and desire for increased freedom which swept over much of colonial Africa. It was particularly evident in a growing rift between the older and younger members of most of the tribes. The young men resented the authority of illiterate chiefs and the levies required to pay for the heavy debts which encumbered many of the Ashanti stools. It was clear that the very existence of African institutions was threatened unless a strong counterbalance could be introduced. As in the Gold Coast Colony, the British officials determined to improve the position of the chiefs by more efficient forms of local government. A new native jurisdiction ordinance would have to be prepared, but it would be necessary

⁵ *Ashanti Annual Report, 1925*. In 1925 only 7,209 children out of a total population of 486,000 were in school.

first to have a thorough knowledge of Ashanti law and customs if the best of the past was to be preserved.

In 1921 an anthropology department was inaugurated by the Gold Coast government under the direction of Captain Robert Rattray, an anthropologist and former commissioner, who had had much experience in Ashanti. It was part of a more general movement, as we have seen, to implement the policy of indirect rule in British Africa. Rattray believed that the people of Ashanti had come to the parting of the ways where there was a choice either of giving up African institutions in favor of European ones or of trying to preserve what was best in their own culture that it might be adapted to modern conditions.⁶ He preferred the latter course and found that the greater majority of the inhabitants shared his views. During the years 1920–1927 he spent much of his time traveling among the various Ashanti tribes, where he won the confidence of the old men and women who were still steeped in the ancient beliefs and practices of their people. He was thus able to make a complete study of their religion, constitution, law, and folklore.⁷ Such material would be helpful to the British officials, to missionaries, and to the Africans themselves.

It was found that the old Ashanti Confederacy, though autocratic in appearance, was “in correct practice democratic to a degree,”⁸ since the chief was dependent on his council, which in turn represented the various divisions of the state. The federation, moreover, had been of great value in that it welded the Ashantis into one nation, restricted the powers and ambitions of great chiefs, and satisfied the West African’s love of a titular head.

Because of this early tradition of united action, it would probably be easier to make a success of indirect rule among the Ashantis than in the Gold Coast. Besides being among the most gifted tribes of West Africa, they had not been misled, as was so often the case on the Gold Coast, by the bad example of slave-trading or unprincipled Europeans. They were therefore simpler and more docile.

⁶ *Report on the Anthropological Department, 1926–1927*, p. 6. See Agnes Donohugh, “Essentials of African Culture,” *Africa*, VIII (July 1935), 329–38, for a good discussion of this problem.

⁷ The results of Rattray’s research can be found in the reports of the anthropological department, and in fuller form in his four books: *Ashanti* (Oxford, 1923); *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford, 1927); *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (Oxford, 1929); *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland* (Oxford, 1932).

⁸ Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, p. 82.

In 1921 an interesting event occurred which showed that most of the Ashantis were still very loyal to their traditions. It will be remembered that the golden stool was their symbol of nationhood; it contained the "sunsum" or soul of the people. Since the fatal British attempt to gain possession of this stool in 1901, the people had kept it carefully hidden. Twenty years later a group of African road builders accidentally came across its hiding place, whereupon several Ashantis, having robbed the stool of its ornaments, sold them for the gold they contained. News of the sacrilege soon crept out and the whole nation was aroused. As a result of Captain Rattray's studies, the British officials understood the gravity of the situation and took a wise course of action. The culprits were arrested and the Kumasi Council of Chiefs allowed to try them in their own local fashion. So serious did they consider the crime that the death penalty was imposed. The British, fearing an internal revolt, later commuted the sentence to perpetual banishment. As for the stool itself, the chief commissioner explained to the natives that the government held no claim to it and that it remained the property of the nation. This action helped to atone for the earlier attempt of a British governor to seize the stool, and it deepened the loyalty of the people.⁹

Shortly afterward the Queen Mother of Mampong, one of the Ashanti states, sent a replica of her own silver stool to Princess Mary of England on the occasion of her wedding.

It may be that the King's child [Princess Mary] has heard of the Golden Stool of Ashanti. That is the Stool which contains the soul of the Ashanti nation. All we women of Ashanti thank the governor exceedingly because he has declared to us that the English will never again ask us to hand over that Stool. This stool we give gladly. It does not contain our soul, as our Golden Stool does, but it contains all the love of us Queen Mothers and of our women. The spirit of this love we have bound to the stool with silver fetters, just as we are accustomed to bind our own spirits to the base of our stools.¹⁰

If the relations between the government officials and the chiefs were improving, this was not the case with reference to the African rulers and the "young men."¹¹ The ever increasing need for a law which would strengthen the position of the chiefs was finally met in

⁹ *Ashanti Annual Report, 1921*, pp. 21-29.

¹⁰ *Report on the Anthropological Department, 1922*, p. 12.

¹¹ The term "young men" is used by the chiefs to refer to the ordinary citizens as distinct from the chiefs and elders.

1924 by the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of that year. This bill set down definite regulations for the legal election and destoolment of chiefs, making them subject to the confirmation of the chief commissioner. It made more definite provision for local courts and included a schedule of a select number of chiefs and subchiefs to whom jurisdiction was granted. The ordinance appears to have been well received, and some of the rulers not included in the schedule began to demand this privilege. The report of the following year states that there was steady improvement in its application, but that it was difficult for the tribunals to function properly without trained registrars who were evidently very scarce in Ashanti. Of 1,667 cases disposed of by native courts that year, only seventy-five were appealed to the district commissioners. Eventually the commissioners were able to train the African clerks in the intricacies of legal procedure, and affairs then went more smoothly, especially as no lawyers were allowed in the tribunals of Ashanti.¹²

Two years later Ordinance 10 of 1927 provided for native treasuries. These were not compulsory but the commissioners encouraged them in districts which were the least unfavorable to sound finance. By 1929 only thirteen areas had taken advantage of the law. One report states that it was difficult for the Africans to see any connection between revenue received and expenditure made. In the next decade, however, the Ashantis began to realize that the publication of stool accounts prevented much corruption. The chiefs were required to open bank accounts whenever possible, and no withdrawals of funds nor contraction of stool debts was allowed without the signature of the district commissioner.

Another step forward came in connection with the city of Kumasi. Since it was the commercial as well as political center of Ashanti, it had been growing rapidly since 1901. The entire area within the city limits was a Crown estate, where the land was rented to the inhabitants. Little was done in the early years to control municipal growth by carefully prepared plans. In 1924, however, a serious plague broke out in the Zongo area, which was the quarters of the Hausa traders. This disaster appears to have hastened the modernization of the city. The next year a public health board was inaugurated with both European and African members, appointed by the

¹² Ordinances 1 and 2 of 1933 eventually allowed lawyers in native courts, but only for certain types of cases. For the annoyance of the Gold Coast lawyers at this restriction see Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1933, p. 84.

chief commissioner, or nominated by the chiefs and chamber of commerce. It was made responsible, under the control of the chief commissioner, for the sanitation and development of the city. Its main source of revenue was the land rents which the government turned over to it for some years, as a grant-in-aid. There were also various fees for licenses and markets, and after 1928 the board levied house rates. An excellent town-planning scheme was prepared, and before the Depression in 1930 almost £1,000,000 had been spent on the commercial section by the government public works department, the public health board, and by private owners.¹³ In 1942 the British restored the Crown lands of Kumasi to the Asantehene, but in such a way as to preserve the rights already granted to other parties. During the war period also, further plans were made for the modernization of Kumasi, which is developing into one of the most attractive cities in West Africa.

Interest in better building spread to the villages and what is known as the Ashanti-type compound was advocated by the government engineers. This is a concrete house built around a plot 60 by 80 feet with a courtyard in the center. Some chiefs co-operated with the authorities by following layout agreements for the correct development of their towns. While the Depression held up much progress, the late 1930's saw a renewal of building activity. Many of the poorer areas still remain, however, with inadequate water supplies and sanitation, and with the most primitive wattle and daub huts. As in the Gold Coast Colony, the advantages of social services have not been evenly distributed.

Among the members of the first Kumasi public health board was the former Asantehene, Prempeh I. He had been exiled in 1896, as we have seen, and the confederacy had been broken up. He was but a youth at the time and had lived ever since with members of his family in the Seychelles Islands, where he had become a Christian and had received some education. In the early 1920's he wrote some of his Ashanti relations that he would like to return, if not as king, at least as a private citizen. The British authorities, impressed by the loyalty and self-control which the Ashanti people had shown during the golden stool incident, decided in 1924 to allow Prempeh to return to Kumasi.¹⁴ The chiefs and the government co-operated in supplying a maintenance fund. A suitable home and 150-acre

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1930, p. 90. Of this sum £320,604 was spent by people of Ashanti.

¹⁴ *Ashanti Annual Report*, 1924, p. 29; *Events*, 1920-1926, p. 234 ff.

plantation were prepared for him, and he was given a place in the municipal government. He remained a private citizen until 1926 when he was again installed as head chief of Kumasi but not as Asantehene. This involved the abolition of the Kumasi Council of Chiefs which had faithfully replaced him since 1905. Prempeh's former subjects were deeply grateful for his return and came in great crowds to welcome him back to Ashanti. When he died in 1932 he was succeeded by his nephew under the title of Nana Osei Tutu Agyeman Prempeh II. About this time investigations by the British authorities revealed that the great majority of the people wanted the restoration of the old confederacy. On January 1, 1935, the Ashanti kingdom was officially recognized, with Prempeh II assuming the ancient title of Otumfuo Asantehene.¹⁵ The great durbar held at Kumasi in honor of the event was a most colorful affair, revealing the beauty and dignity of the pageantry of the Ashanti people. Governor Hodson said later that the perfect order and discipline among the 50,000 African participants was "a proof of national unity and concord."¹⁶

The Asantehene was to be assisted in government by a confederacy council, made up of the paramounts from each division of the country and of the chiefs of the seven Kumasi clans.

In the same year two new ordinances, not directly connected with the restoration of the confederacy, came into effect. Ordinance 1, the Native Authority Ordinance, marked a further advance in introducing into Ashanti the type of indirect rule which had proved successful in both Nigeria and Tanganyika. It gave the governor power

. . . . to declare there shall be a native authority for any specified area and to appoint as such native authority any chief, or other native or any native council or group of native councils. The Ordinance imposes on such native authorities the obligations generally of maintaining order and good government.¹⁷

It will be noticed that the governor may choose to appoint a group of native councils as the native authority in any area. This makes it possible for him to combine the various chiefs of a number of small divisions into one unit of government and thus secure the economy and increased efficiency that comes of co-ordinated social services. If such a combination be made, however, the chiefs con-

¹⁵ *G.C. An. Report, 1934-1935*, p. 76.

¹⁶ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1935, p. 3.

¹⁷ *G.C. An. Report, 1934-1935*, p. 76.

cerned do not thereby lose their individual authority in local matters.

The Ashanti Confederacy Council was named as the supreme native authority for the nation. A second bill, the Native Courts Ordinance, sets up four grades of tribunals. These courts differ in jurisdiction, according to the importance of the chief concerned. The district commissioners exercise supervision over them and can remove cases to their own courts.

The Asantehene presides over a tribunal of first instance for the Kumasi division, and over a court of appeal for the entire confederacy. This latter consists of the head chiefs of the divisions and clans and has: (a) power to hear appeals in land cases from head chiefs' courts; (b) original jurisdiction in land cases between chiefs of different divisions. Appeals from head chiefs' courts, in other matters, go to the government magistrates' courts.

The new ordinances and the changes brought about by the restoration of the confederacy developed on the lines envisaged, with surprisingly little disturbance in the lives of the ordinary people. Under the guidance of the Asantehene, the policy of consolidation was carried forward so that Ashanti began once again to assume something of its old importance as a complete unit. This was particularly evident in 1937, during the cocoa holdup, when the Ashanti people were as solidly united as those of the Gold Coast.

While stool treasuries became more efficient under the new regime, material progress was delayed by the lack of regular taxation. It was not until 1942 that the Ashanti Confederacy adopted a small annual levy for the entire area. One-third of the sum collected goes to the central confederacy and two-thirds to the divisional native authorities for development purposes. In 1944 total revenue was over £100,000 and the Ashanti institutions were rapidly adapting themselves to modern conditions.

Throughout this period the municipal members of the Gold Coast legislative council occasionally asked that Ashanti might be represented on that body.¹⁸ The Colony African press also suggested the union of the two sections. On the occasion of the restoration of King Prempeh one paper said:

The Ashanti and the people of the Gold Coast are cousins . . . they are destined in the order of Providence to become welded together in one national unity and entity.

¹⁸ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, pp. 156, 170; *ibid.*, 1935, pp. 121, 142.

It ought to be a proud thing for Great Britain to help to rear a nation in the Gold Coast and Ashanti which will form the nucleus of the yet greater nation to be, namely, that of British West Africa, with a Parliament of its own, in the way of self-government at some distant date leading up to Dominion Status.¹⁹

Some of the ancient jealousy between the two divisions still remained, however, and political union did not come until the inauguration of the 1946 constitution.

Looking back over this period, many of the advances made by the Ashantis appear remarkable. They had shifted from the warfare or slave trading of the nineteenth century to the cocoa farming of the twentieth. Their confederacy was restored and the rule of their chiefs strengthened, but on a new basis that allowed for adaptations consonant with Christianity and modern progress. As in the Gold Coast Colony, very much remained to be done, especially in the line of a more even distribution of social services and a fuller co-operation between the older and younger members of the community.²⁰ The Ashantis, however, with their more widespread respect for the culture of the past and with their tradition of national unity may perhaps solve these problems more rapidly than will their neighbors to the south.

¹⁹ *Gold Coast Leader*, November 27, 1926, p. 6, quoted in Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, I, 843.

²⁰ Excellent discussions of these problems by both Gold Coast and Ashanti leaders can be found in the published record of the Discussion Conference held in May 1945, at Kumasi. Both the British Chief Commissioner and the Asantehene gave their unofficial support by attending the closing meeting. The editor, an African professor from Achimota, remarks in the foreword that while there were points of difference on controversial subjects, "the general impression was that the people in the Colony and Ashanti are both thinking along the same lines as regards the main problems of National Development." M. A. Ribeiro, ed., *Towards National Development: Post-War Gold Coast* (Achimota, 1945), p. vii.

CHAPTER VII

THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND TOGOLAND

THE PROTECTORATE OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORIES AND NORTH TOGOLAND

The Gold Coast Dependency includes the three great divisions of the coastal Colony, Ashanti, the Protectorate of the Northern Territories, and—for administrative purposes—a fourth area, the mandate of British Togoland, which became a trusteeship in December 1946. Since the history of the Gold Coast Colony and of Ashanti has been considered, this chapter will be concerned with the last two divisions. Because the northern part of Togoland contains sections of tribes who also live in the Protectorate, the League of Nations mandate in 1922 gave the Gold Coast government the right to administer them as a unit. This arrangement satisfied the inhabitants, who had been discontented since the Anglo-German treaty of 1890 had broken up their tribal life. On account of these tribal connections, it has seemed wise to deal with the history and development of the Northern Territories and of north Togoland as a unit.¹ The story of south Togoland will be considered in the second part of this chapter.

The savanna areas in the hinterland of the Gold Coast and of Togoland are occupied by Negroid peoples speaking, for the most part, languages of either the Gur or Gonja groups. In 1931 the population of the Northern Territories was 717,275 and of the mandate, 293,671. Though no recent census has been taken, it was roughly estimated that the 1946 population of the two areas was over 1,000,000 and 400,000 respectively. The inhabitants depend on agriculture or cattle raising for a living. Even today they are in a primitive condition in comparison to the tribes of the Colony and of Ashanti.

¹ The account given in this section has been taken largely from *Northern Territories Annual Report*; *Gold Coast Annual Report*; *Report of the British Mandated Sphere of Togoland*; A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Their Customs, Religion and Folklore* (London, n.d.). The film, *A Mamprussi Village*, which was taken in the Northern Territories gives an excellent picture of the life of these very interesting tribes. British Information Services circulate this film.

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century much of the area between the Guinea coast and the Sudan was being explored by French, British, and German nationals. International rivalry soon developed, and these agents endeavored to secure territory by getting the various chiefs to sign treaties of protection. Into Togoland and into the hinterland of Ashanti during these years, the British government sent representatives to make maps and to secure treaties from the local rulers. Later, military expeditions went north to quell the disturbances which slave raiders from the surrounding areas were causing. In 1897 the British definitely occupied this section, and in 1901 they annexed it as the Protectorate of the Northern Territories.² Meanwhile, boundary treaties had been made on the east with the Germans, who had by this time annexed Togoland, and on the north and west with the French.

For a time the Protectorate was administered in a semimilitary fashion by a chief commissioner and the officers of the second battalion of the Gold Coast regiment, who had both civil and military duties. This measure was necessary because of the unsettled condition of the country, but the disorder caused by foreign slave raiders and by several turbulent tribes of the northwestern section gradually subsided, so that in 1907 it was possible to replace the troops by a constabulary and to put the administration on a purely civil basis.

It became evident, once the British had established order, that the majority of the inhabitants were peaceful, industrious, and law-abiding. They are still primarily an agricultural people, though in some areas cattle raising is possible. They live by family groups in large compounds, which consist of a series of round huts connected by a wall and surrounding a central courtyard where the cattle are kept. There are also shelters for sheep, goats, fowl, and the grain supply. The older children in the family have their own huts, and a wealthy man has one for each of his wives. These buildings are connected with passages as in a maze, but with low walls to separate them. Made of mud, they are waterproofed with a glaze prepared from a mixture of locust bean pods and cow dung, and often painted in bright colors and designs. The average compound houses ten to twenty persons, though before the *Pax Britannica* some were built for over a hundred occupants, who thus sought the protection of numbers. A single narrow entrance with a stout gate is another remnant of less peaceful times.

² *British and Foreign State Papers, 1905-1906, XCIX, 495.*

The compounds are not usually grouped in compact villages but are surrounded by the farm lands of the family. Such land is obtained from the *tendana*, or priest of the earth, in return for an annual tithe, which is generally a basket of grain. These baskets are exchanged in turn for a sheep which is sacrificed to the deity. The title to land is permanent and remains within the family, so that while it may be leased, it is never sold. Land tenure is, accordingly, so much more secure in the Northern Territories than in Ashanti and the Gold Coast that litigation is very rare. Since both the chief and the poor man originally got their land from the *tendana*, the ruler would never dare incur the earth god's anger by seizing the property of his subjects.

In the north and northeastern sections of the Protectorate, the population is very dense, and farms average from only four and one-half to five and one-half acres for a compound, housing ten to fifteen people. Seventy-five percent of the crop is millet and guinea corn. As the dry season lasts for almost half the year, there can be no cultivation at this time, and the farmers must live on stored grain. Thus land is precious and only small sections can be allowed to lie fallow each year.

Large areas of the Protectorate, especially the Gonja state, are infested with tsetse fly, so that danger of trypanosomiasis makes them unsuited for cattle. The soil, moreover, is usually poor and rainfall insufficient, with a resultant low population density. Much of Dagomba, Mamprussi, and Lawra-Tuma, on the other hand, are good cattle and agricultural areas. Scant rainfall is a serious drawback, but geological surveys in recent years have revealed large underground supplies of water. If the revenue is obtainable, wells and pipe lines will change the whole aspect of the Northern Territories.

When the British established the Protectorate, they soon realized that the only hope of economic development lay in the improvement of agriculture and cattle raising. The latter industry would be particularly valuable since the southern areas had to depend almost entirely upon imports for their meat supply. There was also the possibility of mining, if the mineral deposits were to prove sufficiently rich to warrant exploitation.

Agricultural experiment stations, which were soon set up, attempted to improve indigenous methods of farming and to test the possibilities of cotton culture. The extensive development of the latter product was finally given up, for though it grew fairly well in

both the Protectorate and in Togoland, it could not be produced cheaply enough for export.

As for food crops, the government believed that the Northern Territories could eventually supply the southern colonies, where interest in cocoa led the farmers to neglect subsistence agriculture. Besides peanuts, cassava, legumes, and yams, this area could also produce the shea nut which is rich in a fat known as shea butter, or commercially as "karite." Proper care of these trees would ensure an increased supply of nuts which always found a ready market in the south. The essential foundation for trade, however, was a sufficient transport system.⁸ In 1901 the territory had practically nothing but bush trails. Road building, therefore, became one of the earliest activities of the British administration. By 1920, motor trucks began to run between Kumasi and Tamale, the capital of the Protectorate, and eventually throughout the entire area. For a time there was a question of continuing the Kumasi railroad farther north, but it was finally decided that motor transport was less expensive and more practical.

When the British first took over the Northern Territories, they found that what trade did exist was almost entirely in the hands of the foreign Hausa. The native was primarily a farmer and not interested in commerce. Cattle, from nearby French territory and from the Protectorate itself, were driven south and sold in the markets of Kumasi and the Gold Coast. On the return trip the traders brought kola nuts from the Ashanti forests to be sold in the Mohammedan areas to the north, or manufactured articles which, little by little, began to attract the primitive peoples of the Protectorate. Desire for European goods, however, grew very slowly among these simple agriculturalists who have had little contact with the white man, and who have clung more tenaciously than the inhabitants in the south to their ancient customs and superstitions. For the same reason they were not easily persuaded to migrate as seasonal laborers to the mines and cocoa plantations in the Colony and Ashanti. Each year an ever increasing number of unskilled workers came from the surrounding French possessions, and passed through the Protectorate on their way south. As a result, the entire group was sometimes classified as Northern Territories laborers, but of the total only a fairly small percentage actually used to come from that area. It was

⁸ In 1901 it cost £2½ a 60-pound load to transport goods from the Gold Coast to the Northern Territories.

only in the 1930's that almost as many British as French subjects began to take advantage of the higher wage rates of the south.

The contrast between the Africans of the north and those of Ashanti is quite marked. The highly organized tribal government of the latter group, combined with their intellectual capacity, put them in a position to profit by the commercial advantages which came with British rule. The northerners, on the contrary, lived in small, unco-ordinated groups; and their country was poor. As a result they took no interest in commercial possibilities, left all trade to the foreign Hausa, and preferred to maintain their primitive habits. Those who actually did try a season or two in the south often refused to return because they felt little need for money. They disliked the unaccustomed food and underground mine work. They were sometimes unfairly treated and, when they got home, there was always the danger that their farms, women, and cattle would be gone. The tribal elders and the missionaries, moreover, disapproved of the ways of life with which the young men came in contact during their stay in the "more civilized" south.

Before the motor roads were built, the Hausa traders followed the old slave-trading caravan trails which united the Gold Coast with the vast Sudanese plains to the north. Along them each year passed thousands of cattle, sheep, and donkeys, or African porters with their head loads of yams and shea nuts for the coast, or with salt and kola for the north. In the early days caravan tolls supplied the Protectorate's only source of revenue, so that it had to depend in large part on government grants. In 1907 even these were dropped, through fear that such taxation would force the trade into the neighboring French or German colonies. Thereafter revenue was scanty, but the government believed that eventually economic development would come. The labor supply too, once the young men began to go south in considerable numbers, was to be an indispensable factor in the growth of the mining and cocoa industries of Ashanti and the Colony.

Before studying further the material growth of the Protectorate, it would perhaps be wise to consider the manner of local government, because with a primitive agricultural people these two phases of daily life are very closely linked. It was, moreover, only because the British were eventually able to introduce a satisfactory form of indirect rule in the Northern Territories that, in recent years, there has been real co-operation between rulers and people in economic matters. The

story of the gradual development of this indirect rule is probably the most interesting phase in the history of the Dependency.

In 1897 the government found that tribal organization had been all but destroyed by the slave raiding which had been so common in this area. Then, too, the coming of the white man had not helped matters. Eventually, however, the British worked out, in an even more successful manner than in Ashanti, a complete reinstatement of native authority. To understand the problems involved and the methods used, it will be necessary to consider something of the historical background of the Northern Territories.

The story of these peoples was only vaguely known until 1927, when an anthropological investigation was made of this area.⁴ Before this study, it was generally believed that the Protectorate and the surrounding territory had been invaded some four or five centuries earlier by a mass migration from the northeast. The newcomers set up the Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Gonja kingdoms in localities which still bear these names, and forced their language and customs on the original inhabitants. Inquiries among the population led to the conclusion that this account was only partially true. It appeared that instead of whole tribes descending upon the Northern Territories, merely small bands of warriors had come. Because they were better armed than the original inhabitants and possessed a more developed idea of chieftainship, they were able to obtain political power. They were apparently clever enough to realize, however, that their only chance for permanent control lay in identifying themselves as much as possible with the existing customs of the land, which they did. Though the resident peoples were divided into three great language groups, they "possessed a practically uniform religion, a uniform tribal and totemic organization, and an identical political constitution or system of tribal government."⁵ The outstanding feature of the last was a *tendana* or priest-king.

This *tendana* would undoubtedly have evolved into the type of native ruler with whom we are familiar among the Akan; that is, a ruler who was not only high priest and custodian of the land of his tribe and of the ancestral spirits, but one who was also a chief or

⁴ Captain Robert Rattray of the Gold Coast anthropological department, who had already made a study of the people of Ashanti, spent several years in the Northern Territories. He traced the early history, language, constitutions, and customs of the inhabitants. The results of his findings were published in 1932. See Robert Rattray, *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland* (Oxford, 1932), 2 vols.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xi.

king on a territorial basis and whose sanctions were secular and physical rather than spiritual; in other words, what the average European implies when he uses the word "king" or "chief." Here in the north, this natural evolution from the priest-king to the territorial ruler was interrupted by external influences which produced a really remarkable state of affairs.

These external influences were, of course, the coming of strangers from the northeast. The invaders had already developed the idea of a political and secular rule which they took over for themselves, leaving the *tendana* the spiritual leadership and his trusteeship of the land. They married into the tribes among whom they settled, adopted many of their manners and customs, and their descendants came to speak the language of the country. One important change they did make was the shift from a matrilineal to a patrilineal line of succession, so that they could keep the kingship in their own families. In contrast to Ashanti and the Gold Coast these foreign rulers usually appointed their successors, and the elders elected them only when there were several candidates in the princely families who had the right to rule.

As a result of the retention of the *tendana*, there appears, therefore, to have grown up a kind of dual mandate. There was the secular ruler, descended from the leader of the warrior bands, recognized by everyone as a titular head, but rarely interfering with the private life of the masses. All religious concerns continued to be managed and conducted by the former priestly rulers, who now, however, functioned nominally under the territorial chief. The new foreign ruler and the old native *tendana* thus came to work hand in hand, "The people belong to me, the land belongs to the *tendana*," was a statement which such chiefs often made.⁶

The sphere of influence which these soldiers of fortune came to control did not, however, embrace all the Northern Territories, but only the northeast, west, southeast, and southwest. Down the center and radiating from it was a large section where their power was felt so little that the *tendana* kept his original authority. When the white man came in, demanding to see "the king" and expecting to be supplied with water, firewood, and carriers, these old priestly rulers, aristocrats in their way, would remain aloof and thrust forward some unimportant person, often a slave or the descendant of a slave, as the supposed chief. For a while he would act as an intermediary

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xv.

between the *tendana* and the white man, despised by his fellows for being willing to play a false part. Then, backed as they were by the unknowing Europeans, in the course of time many of them began to dig themselves in, confident of a permanent chieftainship. The real ruler, often before he realized just what was happening, gradually found himself becoming of less importance in the eyes of his own people. There were many such petty, unconstitutional, European-made chiefs in the Northern Territories. They were usually efficient rulers, very willing to carry out the suggestions of the district commissioners because they realized their position depended entirely on European support.

It will be apparent from the foregoing discussion that the chiefs of the Northern Territories fell into three groups: (1) A few rare cases where the traditional ruler, the priest-king, still functioned, but in the dual role of secular and spiritual leader, that is, as a chief in the modern sense; (2) those chiefs, originally aliens, whose title to that office dated from long before the advent of the European in these parts; such rulers were, for example, those of Mamprussi, Dagomba, and Gonja; (3) chiefs whose title dated only from the time of European intervention, and was created by it. These were often persons without a vestige of any traditional qualifications to hold such office.⁷

As a result of this investigation, it was suggested that for the reorganization of native administration which the government was contemplating in 1929-1932, the chiefs of the *tendana* class should certainly be retained since they were the true rulers. As for the second category, they too could be kept, as they had succeeded, before the advent of the Europeans, in working out quite an equitable system of government. There had been a tendency for them in recent times, however, to ignore the advice of the council of elders and become autocratic, a condition which is entirely opposed to the fundamentally democratic spirit which underlies the true African constitution of this area. The third category, of European-made rulers, should be required to acknowledge the rightful *tendana* and his hereditary elders as his councilors. When any one of these chiefs died, every effort should be made to reinstate the rightful ruler in his place.

Finally, as a general conclusion of these years of research, it was decided that the Northern Territories could be regarded as "a more or less homogeneous cultural and—to a lesser extent—linguistic

⁷ Rattray, *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, p. xviii.

area, rather than as a mosaic comprising a welter of tongues and divergent customs."⁸ If this were true, it should not be hard to reunite some of the old states and to introduce the idea of native authorities with increased judicial power, stool treasuries, and the right to guide and improve the economic life of their peoples.

Some very definite ordinance would have to be drawn up, however, for the success of such a plan, since during the years 1901–1929 no reorganization of native government had been attempted. When the British first took over the territory, they had merely allowed the chiefs to continue exercising the jurisdiction which they had formerly held. No effort was made to define more exactly its extent, or to recognize native tribunals. As a result of so vague a policy, a process of disintegration began to set in, and even chiefs with a long tradition of rule found it hard to hold their authority. Matters were not helped by the separation of tribes caused by the Anglo-German boundary of 1890, or by the sometimes arbitrary formation of administrative districts within the Protectorate itself.

Mamprussi and Dagomba in the east, and Wa and the Gonjas in the west and southwest, were among the principal areas that had formerly been organized into strong native states by descendants of the early invaders. Even these states, once so firmly knit, were now weakening. At the end of the nineteenth century, when the Germans annexed Togoland, the Nas (paramount chiefs or kings) of Mamprussi and Dagomba had lost considerable portions of their kingdoms. Ever on the lookout for an opportunity to regain these lands, during the world war of 1914–1918 they eagerly supported the Anglo-French invasion of that colony.

As soon as the war broke out in the summer of 1914, British forces from the Gold Coast Dependency and French forces from Dahomey co-operated in an immediate attack upon Togoland. The efficiency of their invasion and the limited strength of the resident German contingent combined to make possible its speedy reduction. By August 7, 1914, the town of Lome was in the hands of the British and by August 26, after several engagements and the destruction of the great German wireless station at Kamina, the acting governor unconditionally surrendered the entire colony to the invading forces.⁹

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁹ *Report of the British Mandated Sphere of Togoland for 1920–21*, p. 4; Charles Lucas, *The Gold Coast and the War* (London, 1920), contains a full account of the occupation of Togoland.

The British and French then divided Togoland on provisional lines, and remained in occupation until the victorious Allied powers could make a decision as to its future status. Before the German annexation of this territory in 1886, some of the tribes had acknowledged the protection of Great Britain. The British reports to the Permanent Mandates Commission stated that the inhabitants appeared more satisfied to return to their rule than to remain under German administration. One story is told, for example, of a Togo chief whose grandfather had buried his Union Jack rather than surrender it when the Germans annexed his land. Upon the return of the English, the old flag was dug up and proudly displayed.¹⁰

In the northern part of Togoland there were several native states that were split by the Anglo-German boundary. Among these the Dagomba kingdom was the largest. Its head chief or "Na" had his capital at Yendi, in German territory. After the British invasion, he signed a treaty acknowledging their sovereignty, and asking that his former state be reunited.¹¹ Mamprussi and a small part of Gonja had likewise been separated by the former frontier.

With this situation in view, it was decided at the Paris Peace Conference that Togoland should be divided in such a way as to reunite these tribes.¹² The Supreme Council, therefore, mandated an area of some 13,000 square miles in the western portion to Great Britain, while the French received the larger and more important eastern section containing 19,960 square miles, having access to the coast at the port of Lome, and containing the railroad which the Germans had built.¹³

¹⁰ *Br. Togo Mandate Report, 1923*, p. 38. See also *Correspondence Relating to the Wishes of the Natives of the German Colonies as to Their Future Government*, cd. 9210, 1918. It is difficult to know if this report of the satisfaction of the natives at a return to British rule were true of all the inhabitants of Togoland. Mary Townsend in her *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire* (New York, 1930) came to the conclusion that German colonial administration was no better and no worse than that of any other power similarly circumstanced.

¹¹ *Correspondence Relating to the Military Operations in Togoland*, cd. 7872, 1915, pp. 31-34.

¹² G. L. Beer, *African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference* (New York, 1923), p. 433.

¹³ The boundary between French and British Togoland was settled by the Milner-Simon Agreement of July 1919. See *Official Journal of the League of Nations*, August 1922, p. 883. Though the British administered the western portion as a mandate from 1919 on, and sent a 1920-1921 report on Togoland to the League of Nations, the actual document of mandate was not confirmed until July 1922. This postponement appears to have been due to difficulties over the boundary and to

The cause of this uneven division was the desire to reunite certain separated tribes in the northern section of Togoland and, for the same reason, the British were allowed, by Section 9 of the mandate, to administer the area as an integral part of the Gold Coast Dependency.¹⁴ If the new boundary joined tribes in the north once again, however, it had the opposite effect in the south where the Anglo-French frontier now split the Ewe-speaking tribes into separate groups. Though there was some agitation among the Africans, and though they sent a petition to the British Government protesting the partition of Eweland, the territory was divided as had already been determined by the Paris Peace Conference.

In the first report on Togoland to the League of Nations, the British pointed out that the acceptance of the mandate would involve additional expense for the Gold Coast. Since the new boundary reunited the northern tribes, however, the government was reconciled to the prospect of a temporary financial liability.¹⁵ It hoped that the mandate would eventually become independent of government grants. Throughout the following years, however, the deficit between revenue and expenditure continued to exist, amounting in 1938, for example, to some £67,000.

Since the mandate was to be administered as a part of the Gold Coast Dependency, the northern section was placed under the chief commissioner of the Northern Territories, while south Togoland was made a district of the eastern province of the Colony. The advantages of a union between so small an area as British Togoland and the well-established government of the Gold Coast were obvious, but the Permanent Mandates Commission had no intention of letting the mandatory power think that the territory thus administered was eventually to drift into annexation. An examination of the minutes of the commission reveals its attitude on this point.¹⁶ It was because of tribal relationships that some two-thirds of the mandate was united with the Northern Territories, while only a small part was left for

a delay in getting the consent of the United States. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, II, 278. For the text of the mandate see *Official Journal of the League of Nations*, August 1922, p. 874.

¹⁴ Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes*, Fifth Session, p. 42.

¹⁵ *British Togo Mandate Report, 1920-1921*, covering despatch by Governor Guggisberg.

¹⁶ See, for example, Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes*, Fifth Session, pp. 17-18, 31, 190.

south Togoland. Until 1932 this northern portion included the following districts:¹⁷

District	Area in Square Miles	Population
Kete-Krachi	3,911	25,244
Eastern Dagomba	4,609	58,929
Eastern Mamprussi	1,528	4,518
Kusasi	385	12,093

As can be seen on the map, Kete-Krachi was the most southerly of these four divisions. It was occupied by several different tribes among whom no previous link had apparently ever existed. The next section, Eastern Dagomba, was only one portion of a large native state which had about half its territory in the Protectorate itself. The capital, Yendi, seat of government for its paramount—the Ya Na—lay in the mandated sphere, which accounted for the paramount's desire that the British occupy Togoland. Cattle raising and agriculture, as in most of this area, were the principal occupations of its people along with some simple crafts such as weaving, rope, leather, and pottery making. North of Dagomba was the Mamprussi district, divided also between Togoland and the Protectorate, although in this case the capital and the bulk of the land lay on the Northern Territories' side of the boundary. In the far northeast corner of the mandate was the Kusasi district which, though small in area, had a population of 12,000 with a density of 137 to the square mile. The tribes of both Eastern Mamprussi and Kusasi had formerly owed allegiance to the Na of the old Mamprussi state, but with the disintegration of native authority during the period 1890–1930, this bond has been greatly loosened.

It will be remembered that such weakening of native constitutions had been noticeable, not only in the mandate, but throughout the entire Northern Territories. It was with a view to re-establishing the former unity by a system of indirect rule that Captain Rattray's study of these tribes had been undertaken. His research enabled the government to ascertain, in most cases, to what paramounts the numerous small divisions had previously owed allegiance. Long experience in the Gold Coast Colony had taught the British the necessity of gaining the full consent of the Africans before any changes were

¹⁷ *British Togo Mandate Report, 1927*, p. 51. During the years 1920–1932, several shifts were made in the arrangement of these districts. The various reports give an account of these changes.

made. With this fact in mind, in 1930-1931 they invited the chiefs, the elders, and their followers to preliminary conferences.¹⁸ At these meetings the Africans and the commissioners talked over disputed points of customary law and endeavored to restore, as far as possible, the original native constitution. The principal aim of the conferences, however, was to persuade the subchiefs once again to acknowledge the authority of the state paramount, from whose jurisdiction they had been free for some thirty years. Force was not applied, but the advantages of union were demonstrated so effectively that, in almost every case, the subchiefs willingly and often enthusiastically joined the reconstituted state. This action, like that of the restored Ashanti Confederacy, was a striking example of the respect which the West African peoples have for their traditional organizations.

As a result of these conferences, the numerous small divisions of the Northern Territories and north Togoland were reunited into several large states. Thus the tribes of the former districts of Kusasi, and East and West Mamprussi, became the single state of Mamprussi under the paramountcy of the Na of Nalerigu. The Ya Na of Yendi restored the hereditary kingdom of his ancestors when he amalgamated all but one of the tribes of Eastern and Western Dagomba into a unified Dagomba state. The one group which did not accept his headship was that of the Nanumbas. These people, however, had never been dependent on the Ya Na and were therefore justified in remaining a separate state.

As for the Kete-Krachi district, it was found that two small tribes on its western boundary had formerly belonged to the great Gonja state of the Protectorate, so they were allowed to reaffirm their allegiance to the head chief of that area. Some of the other tribes of this district had no former connection with the Krachi paramount, so remained independent, but by 1935 a large enough population acknowledged his overlordship to justify his appointment as a native authority. To the reconstituted states of Mamprussi, Dagomba, Gonja, and of a section of Krachi can also be added those of Wa and Lawra-Tumu in the far northwest. In the Northern Territories and the north section of Togoland it was hoped that the process of tribal disintegration had thus been halted.

Once these small divisions were reunited into several strong states,

¹⁸ *G.C. An. Report, 1930*, p. 3. *British Togo Mandate Report, 1930*, pp. 6-10.

there was no reason to delay the establishment of native administrations based on an adequate representation of the aboriginal population. To this end, during the year 1933 three new ordinances were promulgated providing for executive, judicial, and financial reorganization.

The Native Authority Ordinance¹⁹ was very like the one which the government was to provide for Ashanti in 1935 and with which we have gained some acquaintance in a previous chapter. It gave the chief commissioner, with the approval of the governor, the right to appoint any chief or group of chiefs as the native authorities, and placed in their hands the duty and power to provide for good government. In contrast to Ashanti and the Gold Coast, there was to be more stress on the executive than on the judicial. It will be remembered that on the coast especially the chiefs had great difficulty in carrying out such measures as the establishment of forest reserves, the destruction of diseased cocoa trees, and above all the collection of taxes. Their subjects, sometimes under the leadership of educated Africans, often refused obedience. Here in the north the inhabitants were still in a primitive state, and though before the reorganization of 1932 the dependence of subchiefs on paramounts had been insufficient, the common folk still had much respect for authority. The chiefs were therefore able to use the powers given them by the new law to carry out widespread economic and social reforms, especially in the matter of agriculture and cattle raising. A further consideration of this matter will be taken up shortly.

The judicial power of the chiefs was established by the Native Tribunals Ordinance.²⁰ Prior to this time African courts in the north were most inadequate, with a vague jurisdiction and no provision for enforcing decisions except through the district commissioner. The tribal elders settled most cases merely by arbitration. The new law permitted the chief commissioner to establish a tribunal for any native authority area and to define the extent of its civil and criminal jurisdiction. This measure is in marked contrast to the judicial ordinances of Ashanti and the Colony where the amount of jurisdiction is definitely stated. It was probably the intention of the government to leave the commissioner free to go rather slowly in the matter of courts, which had been the cause of much abuse in the south. He would thus be able to watch the development of each state

¹⁹ Ordinance 2 of 1932.

²⁰ Ordinance 1 of 1932.

and assign it as much jurisdiction as he thought it was capable of handling. At any rate, three years later a second judicial ordinance was promulgated which provided for three grades of courts with the extent of jurisdiction definitely stated. Grade A courts, for the higher chiefs, had civil and criminal jurisdiction up to £50 or six months' imprisonment, while Grade C courts were limited to £10 in civil affairs and to £5 or one month's imprisonment in criminal affairs.²¹

The third aspect of the 1932 Native Authority reorganization was financial. Up to this time all revenue had come from indirect taxes such as ferry tolls, market and license fees, and import duties, on the small amount of European goods which reached the north. Prior to 1914 the Germans had collected a direct tax in Togoland, but the British dropped it in favor of indirect taxation. As for the chiefs, they had depended on occasional levies and small court fees for revenue, as well as on the forced labor of their people for the upkeep of roads and other public property. The British believed that in the Northern Territories there could be no true development of local government without regular taxation, any more than there could be in Ashanti or in the Colony. Fortunately there did not exist in the Protectorate the prejudice against it that hampered progress in the south. The government therefore passed in 1932 a Native Treasuries Ordinance²² which gave the chief commissioner the right not only to establish treasuries in all Native Authority areas but also to define the sources of revenue, to provide for specified forms and amounts of taxation, and to regulate the preparation of annual estimates. Here was the first law to introduce direct taxation in any section of the Gold Coast Dependency. The authorities, however, did not immediately apply all its clauses. Treasuries were introduced in the reorganized states and subdivisions, and the people were gradually prepared to acknowledge the need for regular assessments. In 1936, when the effects of the Depression had all but disappeared, the new tax was collected for the first time. To the pleasant surprise of the British, who had not forgotten the recent commotion in the Gold Coast over a like measure, the tax was not only peacefully collected but the actual returns exceeded the estimates. The account in the *Gold Coast Annual Report* of the new legislation is written in a most laudatory manner, and with the evident intention of impressing

²¹ Ordinance 31 of 1935.

²² Ordinance 10 of 1932.

the southern sections with the benefits which had come to the Protectorate from such docile acceptance of government advice.

The Northern Territories have seen the greatest advance in native administration so far recorded in the history of the Gold Coast. Chiefs and councilors have been granted limited powers in the government of their divisions, tribunals have been set up, each under the direct supervision of the District Commissioner and direct taxation has been introduced, the assessment and collection of which is carried out almost entirely by the native authorities, the administrative officers acting in a purely advisory capacity. The introduction and successful operation of this tax is an event of unique historical significance, for not since the later years of the nineteenth century has any form of direct taxation been paid by any section of the people of the Gold Coast. Moreover, the keenness displayed by the Protectorate chiefs and their sense of responsibility have been such that the estimated revenue from the tax was exceeded in every division and there were no instances of abuse, embezzlement or evasion. This result reflects the greatest credit on the native authorities and gives cause for considerable confidence in the future development of the territory.

The revenue, which is administered through properly constituted native treasuries, has been applied to the general welfare of the people in a manner which should act as a great incentive and example to the States in other parts of the Gold Coast. Roads, wells, cattle kraals, dispensaries and sanitary conveniences have been provided in every division, while the chiefs and tribunal members, together with the staff necessary for the various services, have for the first time been paid regular salaries. As a result, the reliability and efficiency of these services have increased to a degree unthought of a few years ago.²⁸

As can be seen from this quotation, the assurance of definite revenue now made possible a real progress in local government. The payment of regular salaries to the chiefs and their officials seems to have had some indirect results of great value, for it both enhanced these officials' position in the eyes of their people and taught them the reality of their powers and responsibilities.

The entire proceeds of this tax were paid directly into the local treasuries; for it was meant not to be something new but merely the commutation to a regular levy of the former customary tribute in labor and in kind. The district commissioners helped the African

²⁸ *G.C. An. Report, 1936*, p. 8. The film, *A Mamprussi Village*, gives most interesting scenes of the collection of this tax and of the budget session which the district commissioner holds with the various chiefs. See p. 87 above, note 1.

officials to make out the rolls of taxpayers and to decide what was the average annual income of each area. A flat rate was assessed on each adult male according to the economic condition of his section. The maximum rate was 7 shillings (later scaled down to 5 shillings) and the minimum 1 shilling, except in a few divisions where it was found wiser to apportion a lump sum to each family group and let the elders determine what individuals could pay.²⁴

As a result, both of the tax and of a more systematic collection of market fees, etc., the revenue of the native administrations increased from £860 in 1933 to £98,000 in 1946.²⁵ The district commissioners supervised the drawing up of the annual estimates which were regularly published in the *Gold Coast Gazette*. These statements were given in great detail and a study of them reveals, perhaps better than anything else, the gradual progress which the native administrations made. Expenditures for such items as market buildings, sanitary structures, model farms, and dispensaries began to appear. This is all the more surprising when one considers that in 1934 there were only seven or eight primary schools in the entire area and that, except in the towns, the inhabitants were still living under the most primitive conditions.

A question naturally occurs to the reader of these reports, however, as to how the Africans of so poor a section were able to pay any tax at all. The answer can be found in the fact that the economic growth of this area was steadily going on, due largely to government efforts to improve both the agricultural and cattle-raising industries.

In 1922 the veterinarian department at Tamale, administrative center of the Northern Territories, began work on breeding livestock and poultry with a view to improving the poor native strains. At the same time a strict quarantine was imposed on imported cattle, and attempts made to stamp out the rinderpest epidemics which had annually been destroying some 20 percent of the cattle herds. The department soon realized that the only hope for eradicating the plague was the immunization of all the stock of the Protectorate. Though it seemed an almost impossible task, in view of the ignorance of the African owners, an up-to-date laboratory with piped water and electricity—the first to be used in the Northern Territories—was opened in 1932 at Pong Tamale by means of a grant from the British Colonial Development Fund. Here antirinderpest serum was prepared and young Africans were taught to administer it. Within two

²⁴ Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 586.

²⁵ *G.C. An. Report, 1946*, p. 127.

years the entire stock of the area was immunized and the illiterate inhabitants were won over to appreciate its necessity.²⁶

With the danger of rinderpest out of the way, the laboratory turned its attention to a study of the tsetse fly and trypanosomiasis problem. This proved a far more difficult task, because about half of the area of the Protectorate was fly-infested. Five years of experimentation at Pong Tamale showed that the complete clearance of a district required far more than the conventional removal of the primary breeding foci. An antitsetse campaign, concerned with both human and animal trypanosomiasis, was begun in 1935 but it would be a long and expensive process,²⁷ especially as the recession of the forest in the southern cocoa areas was leaving ever increasing bush regions open to infection.

Once the cattle were freed from rinderpest, the animal husbandry department was able to turn its attention to better breeding. The same government grant which built the Pong Tamale laboratory also financed experimental farms where trials were made until satisfactory types of cows, pigs, and poultry had been obtained. In 1926 a tariff was levied on all cattle imported from French territory, and the funds thus obtained paid the running expenses of the department. One of its aims was to provide a model farm where young Africans could be trained in modern husbandry and where the various chiefs and elders of the Protectorate could see the actual result of combined scientific agriculture and livestock raising. It was hoped that eventually each chief would have his own model farm with a communal breeding bull which would thus form the nucleus of an area of improved husbandry. The whole economic future of the Protectorate depended, to a large extent, on the success of this plan. Great efforts to carry it out were made at the beginning of the 1930's and the annual reports thereafter contain the encouraging story of its implementation.

Because the political reorganization of 1932 had enlarged and strengthened the various units of local government, and because the new tax had given them a regular source of revenue, the head chiefs

²⁶ *G.C. An. Report, 1930*, p. 28 ff.

²⁷ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1936, p. 13; *G.C. An. Report, 1934*, p. 14. In 1944 a "Tsetse Fly and Trypanosomiasis Committee" was set up by the secretary of state for the colonies in order to co-ordinate the work of the entire empire. Bush clearance in the Gold Coast continued during the war and some hundreds of square miles have been freed for human habitation and cattle breeding. British Information Services, *Weekly War Notes*, December 21, 1944, p. 33.

were able to set up model farms as suggested by the government. By the end of the 'thirties, twenty such centers were completed with substantial stone buildings and stocked with the improved types of cattle which the Pong Tamale station had developed. The central government gave two-thirds and the Native Authority one-third of the funds necessary for their support. The farms were managed by tribal elders aided by young men who had been educated at the Pong Tamale center or on the model farms connected with each of the Northern Territories' primary schools. Each head chief planned gradually to increase the development of his area by encouraging the subchiefs to open up smaller centers in their own divisions.

As cattle raising is impossible in the forested areas of Ashanti and the Gold Coast, the Dependency must rely almost entirely on the Protectorate or on foreign import for its meat supply. There is a small area east of Accra which is also a cattle center, but it cannot begin to fulfill the needs of the peoples on the coast. With a practically unlimited market, then, a bright future faces this industry in the Northern Territories. If the tsetse fly regions can be cleared and sufficient water supplies developed, the day may come when the present large import of French cattle and canned meats will give place to a wholly domestic production.

Along with the economic progress of the 1930 decade, some social development was also taking place. This can be seen in the steady though slow increase of interest in education, health, and Christianity.

The first school in the Northern Territories was a primary one opened in 1909 by the government at Tamale. In 1925 Governor Guggisberg published a memorandum on education for the Protectorate.²⁸ He advocated that the government keep a strict control so that no inferior schools be opened, as had happened in the south. He wanted all teachers trained at Achimota and supervision exercised from that institution. Very little, however, was done to carry out this policy. Probably the Depression interfered with development, but in 1930 there were only five government primary schools and two technical schools in the area.

After the establishment of stronger local rule in 1932, the government turned all its educational institutions over to the Native Authority, except for the agricultural center and a middle school

²⁸ *British Togo Mandate Report, 1926, Appendix E.*

(standards IV-VII) which it later established at Tamale. By 1946 there were seventeen Native Authority primary schools, entirely financed by local funds except for the teachers' salaries which were assumed by the government. The majority of these institutions were for boarders only, where the boys were housed by groups in African-type compounds. The discipline was usually organized on civic lines with chiefs, subchiefs, and elders chosen from the student body to share responsibility and thus obtain valuable experience for the future. Much stress was laid on crafts and each institution had a well-run farm for the purpose of demonstration and practice as well as for food production.

Aside from these few schools, the Protectorate and the northern section of Togoland had no others except for five institutions conducted by Catholic missionaries. The White Fathers, a society founded for the evangelization of Mohammedans and Negroes in Africa, had entered this area in 1906 and had established themselves in the far northern section with a center at Navrongo. Gradually they spread toward the northwestern corner, founding missions, schools, and dispensaries. When Principal Fraser of Achimota toured the Protectorate as government educational inspector, he found the White Fathers' institutions the best in the area, because of the strong link they had established between school and village life.²⁹ This link is particularly necessary in the Northern Territories, where education must be closely bound up with native life if the danger of a detribalized educated African, wholly out of sympathy with his fellows, is to be avoided.

The only other missionary effort made in this area was that of the Methodists who settled in 1913 at Tamale, the capital of the Protectorate. They withdrew, however, in 1920 and have not since returned. In the mandated sphere there are several other missions, but they will be considered in connection with the southern section of Togoland. The Africans of the Northern Territories are deeply attached to their animistic faith, and Christianity makes very slow progress. In recent years, however, there has been something of a mass movement toward conversion among the Dagatis, one of the more industrious and intelligent tribes of the Lawra-Tumu area.³⁰

As for health and sanitation, the Northern Territories, like Ashanti and the Gold Coast, have not received an evenly shared de-

²⁹ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, "Governor's Address," p. 51.

³⁰ Donald Attwater, *The White Fathers in Africa* (London, 1937), p. 59.

velopment and very much remains to be done. There are several small hospitals, leper and sleeping-sickness camps, and some sixteen dispensaries, most of which are supported by Native Authority funds. Yaws, guinea worm, and other diseases are very widespread in the entire area, but until sufficient water supplies are obtained so that better sanitation and a larger food supply can be introduced, this condition will probably remain. The chiefs are beginning to realize the need of improvement and to set aside fair sums for this purpose in their annual estimates.⁸¹ It is really too big a task for them, however, and needs the help of the central government or the Colonial Welfare Fund on a large enough scale to clear up all the tsetse-fly areas, to build sufficient health centers, and to develop an adequate water supply.

Before leaving the subject of the Protectorate, it is encouraging to review the consequences which followed from the 1932 reorganization of native institutions on the lines of indirect rule. These northern chiefs seem to possess a keen civic sense and the increased responsibility given them by the Native Authority Ordinances has brought out the best that is in them. The peasant population, too, has benefited by the change. They feel a sense of pride and ownership in experimental farms, schools, and dispensaries which are managed by their own rulers rather than by alien officials. Throughout the reports the statement is often repeated that the revival of rule through indigenous institutions has caused a return of mental activity and an interest in the work of government which did not exist previously. When Nana Sir Ofori Atta and other Gold Coast chiefs visited the Northern Territories in 1937, they were astonished at the social progress which this section, so much poorer in natural resources than the coastal colony, had made.

The following year all the chiefs and most of the subchiefs of the Protectorate and north Togoland met at the capital for a conference on the general needs of their people. It was the first meeting of its kind ever to be held, but it was most successful in helping each ruler to shift his viewpoint from the confines of his own division to the larger problems of the entire area. Though it takes us somewhat ahead of our general narrative, it is encouraging to note here that in 1946 a Northern Territories Council, representative of all the

⁸¹ In the Mamprussi State Estimates for 1938-1939, for example, over £4,000 are set aside for medical, sanitary, and water supply development out of a total expenditure of £17,915. See *British Togo Mandate Report, 1938*, Appendix III.

chiefs, was established. In due time the Protectorate can expect to share in the central government of the entire Dependency by sending delegates to the legislative council.

SOUTH TOGOLAND

In turning from the Northern Territories of the Dependency to south Togoland, one comes to a section which in many ways is not unlike the Gold Coast Colony itself. In the division of the mandated sphere an area of 2,607 square miles, or about one-fifth of the whole, is known as the Southern Section or the Ho District, and is connected for administrative purposes with the eastern province of the Colony. Even though so small, this portion contains nearly one-half of the mandate population—128,377 in 1938—and is richer in natural resources than the larger northern part.

Generally speaking, Togoland is hilly and picturesque. A mountain range, commencing near Accra in the Gold Coast, runs in a northeasterly direction, cuts across south Togoland, and continues along the Anglo-French boundary into the Krachi district. A second and smaller range parallels the Volta River in the western part of south Togoland. Forested areas, suitable for cocoa growing, are found in these two mountainous regions and provide the inhabitants with their greatest single source of wealth. The rest of this Ho District is covered with scrub or park lands which gradually give place to savanna types of vegetation as the Northern Territories are approached.

The Volta River runs along the western boundary of Togoland for some distance, but eventually flows into purely Gold Coast territory until it reaches its outlet in the Gulf of Guinea. The southern boundary of British Togoland stops abruptly some thirty miles inland from the coast, while the far eastern corner of the Gold Coast Colony juts over into this area, forming what is known as the Volta triangle and cutting off the British mandated sphere from any access to the sea. For this reason it has been necessary to connect Togoland by a road system with the Gold Coast ports of Accra and Ada on the west, and with the French port of Lome on the east.

The climate in the southern section, like that of the Colony, is so tropical and humid as to make it an undesirable area for European settlers. The river valleys and forest areas are quite fertile, but for the rest the soil is poor and rainfall uncertain, so that some sections are entirely uninhabited. Besides cocoa, cotton, and tobacco some

fruits and vegetables can be grown. The district is therefore a predominantly agricultural area, as cattle raising is impossible and the iron, gold, chromite, bauxite, and limestone deposits are not well situated for transportation facilities. A few of the inhabitants engage in handicrafts but such production is entirely for local use. As a result of an intensive campaign for road building during the 1920's, trade has been much stimulated. Meat, flour, textiles, an occasional motor car or truck, and some building materials are imported through the Gold Coast, while an annually increasing amount of cocoa and other foodstuffs leaves the country by British ports on the west and the French one on the east.

The inhabitants of southern Togoland form, in the main, one linguistic group—the Ewe—which is made up of a number of petty tribes with more or less similar customs, but at different stages of development. These peoples are believed to have come originally from Yorubaland in southwestern Nigeria.⁸² They migrated in waves westward, probably in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries and built up settlements at Tado near the River Mono and at Notsie, now in French Togoland. As the settlement at Notsie grew, groups of Ewes traveled farther west, fanning out to south, west, and north-west—that is, to the coastal lagoons, to the Volta River area, and to the uplands of the north. Other peoples from different areas also made their permanent homes among the Ewes.

Broadly speaking, therefore, the land of the Ewe people lies between the Mono River on the east and the Volta on the west, extending northward from the Gulf of Guinea as far as the uplands of central Togoland. In this area of nearly ten thousand square miles there are close to a million inhabitants. At the present time these Ewe-speaking people are divided between British and French Togoland, while some can also be found in the southeast section of the Gold Coast Colony.

The early Ewe settlements were few and far between, but in the course of time the original villages and their offshoots increased in population and ultimately various politically independent local states came into being. These divisions vary from 50 to 300 square miles and from 500 to 50,000 inhabitants. Poor communications and the stretches of unexplored lands between the states account for the small size of these units. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,

⁸² *Ewe News-Letter*, No. 1 (May 1945).

moreover, there was considerable disorganization in the country resulting from quarrels over fishing and trading rights, slave raids, the Ashanti invasion of northern Eweland, and the various expeditions undertaken by the Europeans to pacify the country. Such disorders left their mark on the inhabitants so that when the Germans came they did not find such large or well-organized political units as, for example, existed among the Ashantis. In 1884 the Germans annexed Togoland as a protectorate, and in the following years concluded boundary agreements with their French and British neighbors. During their thirty years of occupation, they made thorough and careful preparation to develop the economic resources of the colony in conjunction with the needs of the homeland. Roads were built and plantations and forest reserves begun. The Germans apparently hoped to develop the cotton-growing industry sufficiently to make themselves independent of imports from America. Most of the good cotton land was in French Togoland, however, and production has not been particularly successful in the British area.

The Germans appear to have governed Togo largely by direct rule, and no effort was made to amalgamate the tribal divisions. About 1908, however, the colonial office in Berlin initiated a policy of preserving and utilizing native institutions. Though self-government, to the extent that it has been developed by British indirect rule, was probably never intended, the chiefs were given a very limited jurisdiction and some responsibility for maintaining law and order.³³ Direct taxation in the form of a head tax (6 marks annually) was imposed, so that for some years Togoland was the only self-supporting German colony.

After the British took possession of the western part of the country in 1914, they dropped this head tax in favor of indirect taxation which was more to the satisfaction of the population. But they retained most of the German laws during the war period and in some cases for several years thereafter.

In 1923 a royal order-in-council finally made definite provision for the government of the mandate.³⁴ It divided the area into northern and southern sections, placing it under the authority of

³³ Mary Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1914*, p. 278. In contrast to Townsend's account of the German policy, the British reports state that they made mere figureheads of the chiefs. *British Togo Mandate Report, 1920*, p. 9.

³⁴ *British Togo Mandate Report, 1923*, Appendix J.

the governor of the Gold Coast in accordance with Section 9 of the mandate treaty which stated:

This area shall be administered in accordance with the laws of the Mandatory as an integral part of his territory

The Mandatory shall therefore be at liberty to apply his laws to the territory subject to the mandate with such modifications as may be required by local conditions.⁸⁵

Thereafter the ordinances of the Gold Coast Colony were applied to southern Togoland, while those for the Northern Territories were promulgated in northern Togoland, unless unsuitable or contrary to the conditions of the mandate.

In 1924 an administration ordinance⁸⁶ provided for some simple forms of local government. Because of the numerous tribal divisions and the backwardness of the people in civic matters, the British decided that it was too soon to attempt advanced forms of indirect rule. The ordinance therefore retained most of the earlier German arrangements. The native courts had only civil jurisdiction, while the chiefs were limited to fines of £5 and the subchiefs to £2½. They had no authority to enforce decisions, which power was left to the district commissioner.

Since this same ordinance provided that southern Togoland be united with the eastern province of the Gold Coast, there was no need for chief commissioners. The five districts of the mandate—Ho in the south and four others in the north—were managed by district commissioners responsible to their respective superiors in the Dependency itself. The commissioner of the Ho area had his own court with jurisdiction up to £100 for both civil and criminal cases, but any matter beyond this had to go to Gold Coast courts.

This method of administration remained in force in south Togoland until the early 1930's. About that time, the government was endeavoring, as we have seen, to strengthen the African institutions in the various sections of the Dependency by an amalgamation of small tribal groups and by an introduction, wherever possible, of fuller indirect rule. In the mandated sphere the same type of policy was carried out. But in the southern section, unfortunately, there were no remains of large native states as in Ashanti and the Northern Territories on which to build. A common language and customs

⁸⁵ *Official Journal of the League of Nations*, August 1922, p. 880.

⁸⁶ Ordinance 1 of 1924.

were the only bonds which united the 68 independent divisions which existed before 1932. The British therefore encouraged the various rulers to form larger states by acknowledging the headship of some acceptable chief within their own area. If unification took place efficient treasuries and native courts could be set up and the chiefs could pool their slender resources for the establishment of schools, dispensaries, agricultural experiment stations, and other much needed benefits for their people.

Following this plan of the British officials, by 1939 all but 15 of the 68 divisions had amalgamated into four larger states. Though the Ewes recognized the value of such unification, some of them believed that these independent units should have formed confederacies rather than becoming merely subdivisions of enlarged native states. While this difference of opinion has caused some political unrest, the new states have, nevertheless, made real progress during recent years.⁸⁷

Once the amalgamation had begun to take place, it was possible to introduce some of the advantages of indirect rule, and accordingly an administrative ordinance⁸⁸ was promulgated in 1932 which provided for the strengthening of local institutions. On general lines it was not unlike those which have already been studied in connection with the Dependency. It gave the governor the usual right to declare chiefs, councils, or natives as the local authority in any given area with the power and duty to provide for order and good government. Both divisional and state councils were recognized and allowed to investigate political and constitutional disputes within their own areas. An individual might appeal from the divisional to the state council in such affairs and then to the governor, whose decision was final. The state council, since it was made up of the chiefs of the various divisions under the presidency of the paramount, could make by-laws on matters pertaining to the general good of the area, such as establishing state treasuries, for example.⁸⁹ The head chief, as an individual, however, had no executive authority over the entire state as had those in the Gold Coast. Such power remained in the hands of the divisional chiefs since they were to remain independent

⁸⁷ There is a full discussion of this political problem in the *Ewe News-Letter*, No. 13 (May 1946).

⁸⁸ Ordinance 1 of 1932. This ordinance combines the administrative and judicial clauses which are usually treated in separate ordinances in the Dependency.

⁸⁹ It is interesting to note that in the Northern Territories there are no by-laws, for the chief commissioner issues the orders of this type.

in local matters. Their only obligation was to accept his presidency of the state council and, when registering their election as chiefs, to submit their names through him for the necessary government confirmation.

These clauses cover the administrative sections of the ordinance. Part IV had to do with judicial matters and gave the governor power to establish tribunals in any Native Authority area under the supervision of the district officers. This general provision was implemented the following year by a governor's order⁴⁰ which set up courts in each division of the four new states and on certain defined matters up to £25 gave them both civil and criminal jurisdiction. Appeals lay from the chief's to the paramount's tribunal and hence through the Gold Coast courts all the way up to the Privy Council in London if necessary. The order also provided for a president, other than the paramount, in cases in which the head chief's interests were concerned.⁴¹ It is to be noted that these courts were only established in divisions which belonged to the new states and not in the independent areas. The government hoped to encourage further amalgamation with this bait of increased jurisdiction. Divisions in which the new ordinance did not apply had to be content with the very limited powers granted by the old German law and with dependence on the district commissioner for enforcing all judgments.

The 1932 ordinance made no provision for local revenue beyond granting the divisions the general right to set up stool treasuries and collect taxes. The government hoped that each state would establish a central treasury and levy a regular tax as was done in the Northern Territories, but in south Togoland great difficulties stood in the way. In the first place, the states were artificial creations and the individual divisions felt they would derive little benefit from pooling their funds. Secondly, the Africans were willing to accept occasional levies but they saw no need for regular taxes. Because in past years the central government had financed a water supply and markets in the capital city of Ho, they now expected the same thing to be done in other areas. Finally, the Gold Coast Colony had no direct taxation at that time and seemed to have developed very well

⁴⁰ Governor's Order No. 2 of 1933. See *British Togo Mandate Report, 1933*, Appendix III.

⁴¹ Land cases, as in the Gold Coast, went—not to the head chief's court—but to the state council which was considered a fairer tribunal for such matters.

without it.⁴² In the face of such prejudice regular revenue could not easily be obtained and, indeed, in several instances the people threatened chiefs with destoolment if they insisted on forcing the issue. By 1939, then, only two state treasuries had been set up and no attempts made to collect taxes.

Besides the political changes of these years, there was some parallel growth on social and economic lines. In the mandated sphere there are no government schools and in the southern section education is entirely in the hands of missionaries, who are assisted by government funds whenever their institutions reach the required standards. During the German occupancy, Lutheran and Catholic mission societies had established some excellent primary and technical schools. The former group had also succeeded in translating the Bible into the Ewe language and had done a fine piece of work. When the British entered the territory, all German missionaries were deported. From 1916 to 1923, the government conducted the Bremen Society (Lutheran) schools. Scottish Presbyterians then took over these institutions and were later aided by some of the former German missionaries who were allowed to return. Eventually a Ewe Presbyterian Church, made up largely of African clergymen and almost entirely supported by local funds, developed from the efforts of the early missionaries.

A Catholic institution working in the Gold Coast—the Society for African Missions—took over the German Catholic schools, and later two orders of religious women began to teach and to do medical work among the inhabitants of the mandate.

The Gold Coast Education Ordinance of 1927 was also applied in south Togoland, requiring a reorganization of all assisted schools on a more efficient basis. Both Catholic and Presbyterian schools made great efforts to raise their standards, so that in 1938 there were eighty-three assisted and thirty-seven nonassisted schools. The assisted schools received a government grant of £11,336, together with some funds from the native authorities. Out of a population of 128,377, nearly 6,000 boys and 1,500 girls were attending school. Red Cross and Boy Scout associations were established in some centers, and Ewe boys and girls occasionally went to Achimota or missionary colleges for higher education.⁴³

Medical work was carried on by both the government and the

⁴² *British Togo Mandate Report, 1937*, pp. 6 ff.; Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 479.

⁴³ *British Togo Mandate Report, 1938*, pp. 47–49.

missions. This is a field in which there is still much room for improvement, and the Permanent Mandates Commission, on several occasions, expressed the opinion that more medical officers were needed. The British representative answered that one doctor for every 60,000 natives was a better proportion than was to be found in the Gold Coast, and no increase in the medical staff was made.⁴⁴ Leprosy and hookworm as well as the other usual tropical diseases were widespread. As in the Dependency the infant mortality rate was always over 100 deaths to every 1,000 births.⁴⁵ The only answer to the problem seemed to be a larger revenue, or further grants from the English or Gold Coast governments.

There was some economic development during the years 1920–1939, resulting especially from an increased production of cocoa which rose from 3,542 tons in 1923 to 12,316 in 1938. Coffee holds second place on the export list with a value of £4,722, but as trade is largely local there are no other important items. Revenue in 1938 only amounted to £28,375 (largely from import and export duties), whereas expenditure was £95,904. This meant a government grant of £67,529 was necessary to balance the budget. Such grants have been paid annually from Gold Coast funds, since the mandate was first assumed.⁴⁶ But even with this aid, the mandate is not spending sufficient money, according to modern standards, on necessary social services. In 1938, for example, the amounts budgeted were as follows:⁴⁷ education, £12,147; agriculture, £6,718; public health, £13,997; public works, £9,658.

It is evident from the fact that the mandated sphere was not self-supporting during the 1919–1939 period that it had not made

⁴⁴ Permanent Mandates Commission, *Minutes*, 5th Session, p. 40; 28th Session, pp. 73 and 91; 31st Session, p. 107.

⁴⁵ *British Togo Mandate Report*, 1928, p. 42, states that infant mortality rate was probably as high as 400 and the 1927 report, p. 47, declares that perhaps 70 percent die before reaching the age of five in the far northern Kusasi area.

See Robert Kuczynski, *The Cameroons and Togoland: A Demographic Study* (New York, 1939), under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, pp. 525–45. This demographer has made a scientific study of population in four West African mandates. He found that though several tropical diseases, especially sleeping sickness and leprosy, are on the increase in British Togoland, the government has not taken sufficient steps to combat them. Expenditure for medical care is only about 6d. per head in Togo, as compared with 2s. in the Gold Coast.

⁴⁶ *British Togo Mandate Report*, 1938, Appendix XIII. However, it should be pointed out that Togo expenses always include a share in the general administrative costs of the Gold Coast central government. This share is decided on the basis of population and is therefore not very great.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

as much economic progress as had the Gold Coast itself. Because of the differences in area, natural resources, population, tribal organization, and political background, it is almost impossible to justly compare the two areas. There are some factors, however, which may help to explain the slower rate of development.

In the first place, British Togoland had neither the rich mineral resources nor as large a cocoa-growing area as had the Gold Coast. While some exporting was done, it was less profitable than it should have been, since the mandate is separated by artificial frontiers from access to the coast. The railroad, built by the Germans to serve the entire Togoland area, is now in the French section. In the western part of the mandate transportation was also an expensive item since the nearest ports were in the Colony proper. In addition, the division of the Togoland tribes into so many small groups made economic and social development difficult—unless, of course, British policy had been one of direct and paternalistic rule. Even though some amalgamation took place during this twenty-year period, lack of a unified or national outlook—due in large part to widespread illiteracy—still hampered all forms of progress.

A further and perhaps more fundamental reason for the slower development, was the fact that Togoland was a mandate rather than a British colony. It is natural that both governments and private individuals should prefer to spend their money in territories which belong to the metropolitan power, and whose future is therefore more secure than that of an area under international control. In the 1930's there was a section of public opinion in England which advocated a surrender of the mandates because they did not pay. A member of Parliament, for example, voiced the opinion in the House of Commons that "so long as you have large areas of territory which have no certain future, you cannot attract capital and you cannot have any development plan."⁴⁸ Looking at the progress of British Togoland during the 1919–1939 period, then, it appears clear that the mandate, just because it was under international supervision, did not fare any better than the Colony. On the contrary, it seems to have come out less well in some instances, principally as a result of the British hesitancy to invest in a territory whose future status was uncertain.

While the 1939–1946 period has not yet been considered in connection with the Dependency as a whole, it will be helpful, perhaps,

⁴⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 402, col. 434.

to go somewhat ahead of the main narrative in order to complete the account of the Togoland mandate and of its transfer, after the second world war, to the status of a trust territory.

The war years brought few changes to the mandated area beyond the acceleration of economic life which was common to all of West Africa. Toward the end of the period, however, the Ewes began to realize that the time for some sort of change in the League of Nations system was drawing near. With the organization of a new form of international supervision, the problem of the mandated areas would probably come up for discussion. With this possibility in view, leaders in all three sections of Eweland, that is in the Gold Coast Colony as well as in the British and French mandates, began to plan for the possible realization of their long-hoped-for dream of a united Eweland.

In the spring of 1945 Daniel Ahmeling Chapman, a Ewe from the British sphere who had had the advantage of an Oxford education and who was on the Achimota College staff, began to publish a monthly newsletter designed to acquaint his fellow tribesmen with the present situation and to prepare them "to play a more effective part in the affairs of our country and in shaping its future."⁴⁹ The movement thus started aimed at increasing co-operation between the various states and at a more progressive system of native administration as well as at the eventual unification of separated tribes. During the ensuing months, while the United Nations was meeting at the San Francisco conference, Ewe leaders continued to urge the people to give the movement their full support.

In June 1945, the charter of the new international organization as drafted at the San Francisco conference, was finally signed. Chapters 12 and 13 of this document made provision for the establishment of an international trusteeship system. This system could be applied by means of trusteeship agreements to mandated areas, as well as to other categories of territories. It did not differ greatly from the former mandate system since individual states could continue to administer the trust territories under the general supervision of the Trusteeship Council. This council had no more power than the Permanent Mandates Commission except that it could visit the respective trust territories at the times agreed upon by the administering authority, and could receive petitions directly from these territories. One notable feature, however, is the inclusion of a gen-

⁴⁹ *The Ewe News-Letter*, No. 1 (May 1945).

eral declaration of principles for the administration of all dependencies, mentioning among others, the following aim:

To promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the Trust Territories, and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate to the particular circumstances of each territory and its peoples and the freely expressed wishes of the people concerned, and as may be provided by the terms of each trusteeship agreement⁵⁰

During the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in January 1946, Great Britain took the initiative in putting the new provisions into practical execution by placing her mandated territories of Tanganyika, the Cameroons, and Togoland under the trusteeship system. The following October the British government filed a draft of the terms of trusteeship with the Secretary General of the United Nations for presentation during the ensuing session of the General Assembly.⁵¹ At the same time the French government also presented a trusteeship agreement for the former mandate of French Togoland. In spite of the Ewes' desire for the unification of the territory, the new agreements thus provided for a continuation of the old divisions. Both drafts were accepted by the General Assembly in December 1946. The first meeting of the Trusteeship Council did not take place until March 1947.

During these trusteeship discussions by the various members of the United Nations, the Ewes themselves continued to work for the unification of their territory. Throughout this period efforts were made by Ewe leaders to get the British and French governments and the United Nations to agree to a single trust territory under one administering authority rather than a continuation of the former Anglo-French division. On December 31, 1945, a group of Africans from all three sections of Eweland had published a resolution including in part the following clauses:

⁵⁰ *Charter of the United Nations*, chap. xii, "International Trusteeship System," Article 76.

⁵¹ The original draft for the British Togoland trust can be found in *Togoland and the Cameroons under United Kingdom Mandate*, July 1946, Cmd. 6863. The second draft is given in *Territories in Africa under United Kingdom Mandate* (revised texts), October 1946, Cmd. 6935. The final text is in United Nations Trusteeship Document T/8, March 25, 1947. *Trusteeship Agreements; Texts of the Eight Trusteeship Agreements Approved by the General Assembly at the Sixty-second Meeting of Its First Session, 13 December, 1946.*

We deeply deplore the partition of our country as this constitutes a very serious barrier to our social, economic, educational and political progress as a people, and we therefore do hereby resolve: (a) that all the international frontiers cutting across Eweland be removed and all Eweland brought under a single administration; (b) that the whole of Eweland become a Trust Territory; (c) that Great Britain be invited to become the Administering Authority in Eweland.⁵²

It will be noticed that this resolution contains a clause asking that Great Britain be invited to become the administering authority. While the Ewes had not been entirely satisfied with British rule, most of them appear to have preferred it to French colonial methods. During the spring of 1946, another statement known as the *Ewe Convention* was drawn up and signed by 45 chiefs or local leaders from the three sections of Eweland.⁵³ This second document, while asking that Eweland be united under a single administration, does not suggest any definite power as the administering authority. Though Ewe petitions were received by the Secretary General of the United Nations, they were not considered during the 1946 session.⁵⁴ As has already been pointed out, the trust agreements providing for a continuation of the former Anglo-French division were approved by the General Assembly in December 1946.

In spite of the fact that the new trust agreements have been sanctioned, the Ewes have not discontinued their efforts for unification.⁵⁵ One clause of the British agreement, however, already makes provision for a step in that direction. Section *b* of Article 5 of this document states that the administering authority may constitute the territory in a customs, fiscal, or administrative union or federation

⁵² *Ewe News-Letter*, No. 9, January 1946.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, No. 17, September 1946.

⁵⁴ United Nations Document, T/5, records petitions received by the Secretary General on May 29, 1946, etc.

⁵⁵ Though later developments of the Ewe situation carry us beyond the period of this survey, it is interesting to note that during the first session of the new Trusteeship Council in April 1947, the All-Ewe Conference sent a cablegram to the United Nations protesting the Anglo-French division. See United Nations Document, T/Pet. 6/1. In December 1947, the Trusteeship Council heard an oral statement from Sylvanus E. Olympio, representative of the All-Ewe Conference, again asking for unification. His petition was not granted, but the Trusteeship Council adopted a resolution approving certain measures which would help to overcome difficulties resulting from the division of the Ewe people. The Council also decided that its first visiting mission to Togoland would devote special attention to this problem. See United Nations Document, T/91 and *United Nations Weekly Bulletin*, December 16, 1947.

with adjacent territory under his control. This clause will make possible the union of all British-governed Ewes into one administrative district—whether in the Gold Coast proper or in the trust area—and will do away with the arbitrary boundaries which have hitherto had a cramping effect on the organization and development of these divisions. While the change applies only to the British sphere and does not eliminate the greater barrier of the Anglo-French frontier, it nevertheless is an advance toward the eventual union of all Eweland.

CHAPTER VIII

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

The history and political development of the four divisions of the Gold Coast Dependency from 1919 to 1939 have now been considered. It is evident that even in the latter year marked differences in the manner and rate of progress still existed. There were the Northern Territories with a subsistence economy, with insufficient communications to the south, and with social and political circumstances not much beyond those of the more primitive sections of Africa, although reunited native states and an apparently successful form of indirect rule promised much for the future. Then there was Ashanti with its long tradition of war and of federal action which has given this section a homogeneous character and has led to a happy restoration of the former confederacy and to a surprisingly rapid adaptation to Western civilization. In contrast to both the Northern Territories and to Ashanti, in 1939 the coastal area remained divided into numerous petty states with at least three big linguistic groups. Due to the rapid development of the cocoa industry it had reached a more advanced economic status than the rest of the Dependency, with the resultant growth of a moneyed middle class interested in commerce, and with an educated professional group often politically minded and determined to obtain a speedy increase in self-government. The bulk of the population, however, remained living in rural areas under the traditional rule of their chiefs. Certain differences in viewpoint and interests consequently grew up between the rural and urban areas. In recent years the government, recognizing the mistakes of its early *laissez faire* policy, has attempted to draw together the rulers of the various divisions through the joint provincial council and to co-ordinate and harmonize the aims of conservative and progressive groups.

A fourth section of the Dependency—the mandated sphere of British Togoland—was itself divided in two parts, that of the north sharing the characteristics of the Protectorate while the south had the same type of problems, though in a less acute form, as the Gold Coast Colony itself.

With this picture of the various departments of the Dependency in mind, it will be possible to consider the development which took place from 1919 to 1939 in economic and social matters. Since an interrelation of the four divisions often exists in these fields, they will be treated, as far as possible, from the standpoint of the whole, rather than as separate units.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economic history¹ of the Gold Coast, since its first contacts with Europeans, can be divided into three main periods, though the characteristics of each occasionally overlap one another. During the first period (sixteenth–eighteenth centuries) various European nations carried on the lucrative business of slave trading until the British outlawed it in 1807, and English companies, encouraged by humanitarian groups, tried to replace it with a “legitimate commerce” of such native products as palm oil, gold dust, and timber. In return for these exports the Gold Coast received firearms, rum, tobacco, beads, and cotton textiles. This “trader’s era” lasted until the mid-nineteenth century when parliament finally decided to take control of the coastal settlements, and thus inaugurated the third or Crown colony period, during which the Gold Coast was considered to be of economic value, since: (1) it could produce tropical commodities in demand in the English market; (2) it possessed considerable mineral deposits of gold and—as was later discovered—diamonds, manganese, and bauxite; (3) it could provide an expanding market for British manufactured goods, especially cotton textiles.

The administration, during this last period, had the aim of encouraging exports and imports, and to this end the *Pax Britannica* was imposed on the entire Dependency, adequate government systems set up, and means of transportation developed. The system was not a difficult one to inaugurate, for the Gold Coast possessed great natural wealth; crops, especially cacao which was introduced

¹ There is no economic history of the Gold Coast although certain phases of its development have been treated in empire surveys or in separate monographs. See, for example, W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, II, *Problems of Economic Policy 1918–1939*, Part 2 (New York, 1942); Hailey, *African Survey*; Hinden, *Plan for Africa*. See also the publications of the Achimota Discussion Groups for the best expression of native opinion on economic as well as political and social affairs. The annual reports and the legislative council debates also give details concerning economic and social development.

in the 1890's, were easily grown, and world markets were constantly expanding. The years between the opening of the century and the great Depression were marked by what has been aptly called "a leap to prosperity." The export and import duties, especially those on cocoa, provided sufficient revenue to finance the administration and, for the time being at least, direct taxation seemed unnecessary. As has been seen, Governor Guggisberg used this increased revenue, as well as government loans, to finance his Ten Year Plan which brought to the Gold Coast an enlarged transportation system and new educational, medical, and other public services. With the coming of the slump in world trade in the 1930's, however, the danger of an economy based on export goods was brought home to all; especially since the country was depending for its purchase of imported goods almost entirely on the proceeds of one main agricultural crop, which was extremely subject to world price fluctuations. By 1931 revenue dropped from the high 1927 level of over £4,000,000 to about half that amount. Fortunately for the Colony, the world premium on gold stimulated the mining industry, and the resultant increase of revenue from the gold export tax helped the administration, along with its policy of stringent economy, to weather the trade slump. As a result of this experience, the government made some attempts to foster more varied types of agriculture, but with only moderate success. The cattle and timber industries were also stimulated, but though farsseeing African leaders asked for the introduction of local industries, the administration did not, at that time, adopt a policy of official encouragement of manufacturing. It was to take the changed conditions and the challenge to Britain's colonial policy of the 1939-1945 war years finally to procure strong governmental support of a more balanced economy.

Not only the Gold Coast administration but that of the entire colonial empire has been criticized for concentrating during the prewar epoch on political development to the neglect of economic and social progress. As one author puts it, this achievement in popular government and indirect rule has been very great.

But it will be jeopardized unless the Native Administrations and the European officials who give them guidance show themselves capable of solving the more pressing economic problems and thereby delivering those tangible goods which the people increasingly demand—better education, improved health, and the prospect of liberation from the ancient curse of abject poverty. Until quite recently, officials and writers have

not paid sufficient attention to these matters. Anthropology has been the fashionable study, and it has been encouraged by intelligent administrators because of the help it can give them in improving the mechanism of indirect rule. This is all to the good. The partnership between anthropologists and administrators is a happy one. But it is a pity that the economists have not also been called in.²

But there were some signs during the latter part of the 1930's, that both the colonial office in London and the administration in the Gold Coast were taking an increased interest in the economic life of the Dependency. In 1929 the first Colonial Development Fund was established, and about the same time a special section was organized by the secretary of state for the colonies to study and advise him on the economic problems of the empire. Though this policy did not come to full flowering until after 1939, a new attitude was just beginning to appear, during the prewar years, toward social and economic matters in the various departments of the Gold Coast administration.

In turning from this over-all picture of the economic situation in the Dependency to the separate elements which made it up, the most basic one of agriculture will be considered first. During the nineteenth century it presents the story of a varied production for export purposes which gradually gave way to an unhealthy concentration on the single, easily grown, and highly popular cacao crop, until the 1930 drop in prices brought both the government and the Africans to the realization of their dangerous position and of the necessity for a more balanced development.

With the transfer in 1807 from slave trading to legitimate commerce, the Gold Coast began to export palm oil and kernels, a little wild rubber, timber, and gold dust, while there was also a considerable trade in kola nuts with the Mohammedan interior. In the nineteenth century the amount of these exports gradually increased, especially as there was a growing demand in Europe for all types of vegetable oils. It was found that the scrublands along the coast were suitable to coconuts, and a trade in copra, the dried meat of the kernels, was also developed.

Such was the situation in 1879 when an African laborer from the plantations of Fernando Po, an island off the coast of West Africa, returned to the Gold Coast with smuggled cocoa pods. The story has already been told how from this romantic beginning the

² Hancock, *Problems of Economic Policy, 1918-1939*, p. 265.

Gold Coast developed an industry which was contributing, by 1925, nearly 44 percent of the total world cocoa exports. Probably the most interesting fact of all is that this amazing achievement was accomplished entirely by African farmers, with little help from the government beyond the provision of the necessary transportation system.

Throughout the colonial empire the British faced, during these years, the choice of allowing European capital to develop the plantation system or of protecting the native cultivator. In West Africa, the decision was almost always in favor of indigenous owners, even though Lord Leverhulme of the Unilevers Company and other British financiers prophesied that scientific large-scale producers would eventually monopolize the market and drive out the local agriculturalists. The cocoa industry, though it is certainly not as efficiently run as it could be, is nevertheless an example of African ability and of the possibility of developing large-scale export crops from small native farms. There are estimated to be some 300,000 such farms in the Dependency (though no exact survey has ever been made), usually four to five acres in size and averaging about one-ton output per farm.

The industry grew rapidly, as the establishment of a farm requires little more than the clearing of the forest and the planting of trees. But in contrast to the growers of South America and the West Indies the African farmers neglected drainage, forking, pruning, disease control, and the provision of sufficient shade trees. In the early years of the industry's growth the government made little effort to guide it or to introduce better methods of husbandry.

With a rapidly expanding market in Europe and America during the first quarter of the twentieth century, success came easily to the Gold Coast farmers. The following figures^a give a picture of these forward leaps:

Period	Five Year Average by Tons
1891-1895	5
1896-1900	230
1901-1905	3,172
1906-1910	14,784
1911-1915	51,819
1916-1920	106,072
1921-1925	186,329
1926-1930	218,895
1931-1934	236,088

^a *Gold Coast Handbook*, 1937, p. 38.

In spite of the rapid development, however, the situation of the cocoa farmer was not as favorable as at first appears. The finances of the industry were poorly organized, or rather not organized at all, with the result that the majority of the cocoa growers were deeply in debt to moneylenders with little hope of ever being able to clear their accounts. These moneylenders were mainly brokers for the European firms. They were given money by the firms to advance to the farmers as a guarantee that the forthcoming season's crop would be supplied to the particular firm in question. The farmer got into debt if, owing to bad weather, disease, or price fluctuations, he was unable to make good the advance received. In some cases, of course, individuals got into debt through extravagant funeral observances, litigation expenses, or other causes.*

One cause of this financial difficulty has also been the changing character of land tenure which the cocoa industry itself brought about. West African practice has always been one of tribal ownership of land under the protection of the chief. In the beginning each farmer was a peasant cultivator who worked a few acres of soil with the aid of his family and, if he wished to expand his cocoa holdings, no objections were raised as there was plenty of land for all. With the expansion of industry, however, hired labor from the Northern Territories or the neighboring French colonies was also employed, which led to nonworking absentee owners, who left the farms to managers relying entirely on paid labor. At the same time the land was increasing in value. Such a set of circumstances put the chiefs in a position to enrich themselves by selling their tribal lands, a practice hitherto unknown and contrary to customary native law. Accordingly, in the cocoa areas individual ownership began to replace the former communal right of occupancy. As unscrupulous local authorities often sold and resold the same acreage to different buyers, and as lack of surveys made definite boundaries impossible, endless disputes and costly litigation over land titles soon resulted. A further outcome was that land was no longer there for the taking, and an impoverished farmer could not help himself by expanded production.

With these new conditions, the need for cash has increased. The farmer had to buy land, pay wages to his hired laborers, and support

* One of the agricultural officers of the Gold Coast has made a survey of a typical cocoa village. See W. R. Beckett, *Akokoaso: A Survey of a Gold Coast Village* (London, 1943).

his family, for in many cases the older practice of growing local subsistence crops was so neglected that partial reliance on canned goods from England became increasingly common. If a farmer fell in debt he would usually turn to the African moneylender and borrow on his coming crop or, if necessary, mortgage his farm on the basis of a long-term loan. Due to lack of clear titles to land, the banks would not lend with the farm as security, nor was any government credit agency set up, so the moneylenders and cocoa brokers had their way and charged interest rates which were seldom less than 50 percent. The whole system of uncertain land title, of obtaining advances on crops, of ever increasing debts with no way of repaying them, has not only thrown the cocoa industry into a state of confusion and disrupted the land system of the Colony but has also had grave consequences of both political and social import. The sale of tribal lands, their rental to nontribal strangers, or their unjust control by influential families of the district, have often deprived the common folk of their share. As far as native authority is concerned the new system has also created difficulty. Nontribal Africans who buy or rent land sometimes refuse to give allegiance to the local chief or to pay their share in taxes. The migratory laborers from the north, moreover, have no chief to protect them in matters of just wages and are sometimes discriminated against in the local tribunals.

In addition to the unstable financial foundation of the cocoa industry and its resultant evils, there were many technical problems. Due to ignorance of scientific agriculture or to discouragement over low prices, the farmers often used negligent methods in both caring for the trees and preparing the cocoa for market. Proper care of the soil, pruning, drainage, manuring, pest control, and shade trees were neglected. Once the pods were ripe they were often so carelessly fermented and dried that diseased and moldy beans resulted. In the end, Gold Coast cocoa, being rated on the world market as of inferior quality, consequently brought lower prices. In order to protect the quality of the Colony's exports,⁵ in 1927 the government introduced a system of voluntary inspection, and seven years later made it compulsory. This legislation, along with the 1937 scheme for government grading, has somewhat improved matters.

Added to these difficulties of finance, organization, and technique, a further one was to be found in the marketing of the product. As

⁵ In one year the United States Department of Agriculture rejected 26,274 bags of cocoa out of a probable 400,000,000. Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1930, p. 21.

has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, almost the entire crop was purchased by thirteen European firms. From time to time the Africans united in holdups against the price agreements of these companies, some of which control also the bulk of imports and the retailing stores of West Africa. After the most serious and prolonged boycott—that of 1937–1938—a parliamentary committee investigated the entire cocoa situation, and not only reported against the buyers' pool but also recommended that marketing should be completely reorganized and, under government supervision, entrusted to a co-operative association of African farmers.⁶ Though the governor appointed a committee to prepare for such an organization, the war prevented its formation and the administration has since controlled all marketing of cocoa.

The well-being of the cocoa industry was also threatened, during the 1930's, by the rapid increase of cocoa diseases. The agricultural department made some attempts to get the Africans to apply methods of plant sanitation and pest control but results were insufficient. Moreover, the basic causes of the diseases had not been discovered. Visiting agriculturists warned the government of the grave danger to the entire industry and in 1936 a colonial office expert finally spoke sharply. "The Gold Coast," he reported, "with the largest cocoa industry in the world, is still contented with the present and is taking no steps to safeguard the future."⁷ Two years later, at long last, a research station was set up at New Tafo. During the war this center did intensive work on the cocoa diseases but the further account will be considered in a later chapter.

Looking back over the early story of the cocoa development, one cannot but regret that it was not properly organized from its very beginning. Here was a peasant industry which might have led to a fairly even distribution of wealth among the lower classes. In West Africa the British have wisely held to the policy of safeguarding the land for the native rather than allowing European-controlled plantations, but such a method cannot succeed unless the Africans are taught scientific techniques and are aided by the government to organize the marketing of the crop on the most modern lines. For the educated Africans of the coastal areas, this can best be done by agricultural co-operatives, while for the more primitive peoples of

⁶ *Report on Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, 1938, Sections 511–45; see chap. v above.

⁷ F. A. Stockdale, *Report . . . on His Visit to Nigeria, Gold Coast and Sierra Leone, Oct., 1935–Feb., 1936*, p. 6, quoted by Hancock, *Economic Policy*, p. 250.

the interior, demonstration farms under the control of the Native Authorities is the wiser method. Unfortunately, until the 1930's no such policy was inaugurated. At that time the task of developing co-operatives was given into the hands of the Department of Agriculture. Its officers have since put much energy and enthusiasm into aiding the Africans to establish such associations, not only for cocoa farmers but for other producers as well.⁸ In 1931 an ordinance⁹ legalized them and by 1938 the following types¹⁰ had been organized:

Types	Number	Members	Paid up Share Capital
Cocoa producers	371	9,399	£28,298
Copra producers	11	541	632
Fruit (banana) producers	20	348	1,022
Citrus producers	4	464	765
Coffee producers	1	72	110
Total	407	10,824	£30,829

The 371 cocoa co-operatives, however, sold but 9,405 tons of cocoa in 1938, and though all lots were of high purity they commanded only the small price premium of some 6d. per load. This reward was scarcely worth the extra effort which co-operative action requires of the untrained African. For this reason the Nowell Commission of 1937 recommended a Cocoa Farmers' Association to represent all the producers, and to sell on their behalf the entire crop of the Gold Coast.¹¹

Another view advanced is that the whole cocoa problem is too complicated to be left in the hands of the Native Authorities who, owing to the laissez faire attitude of the government in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, have not received sufficient training in administration to cope with the situation.¹²

On the fundamental question of native business morality, some observers have pointed out that the Gold Coast African first learned commercial methods from hardened European slave traders. Some of the Africans are not professing Christians, and a few appear to

⁸ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1937, pp. 23 and 60; *ibid.*, 1938, p. 107. See also Claude Strickland, *Cooperation for Africa* (Oxford, 1933); Hancock, *op. cit.*, pp. 226 ff.; Jackson Davis, *Africa Advancing*, pp. 122-28. For an expression of favorable African opinion on co-operatives, see K. Sunkersette Obu, "Economic Planning for National Development," Achimota and Kumasi Discussion Groups, *Towards National Development* (Achimota, 1945), pp. 48-49.

⁹ No. 4 of 1931.

¹⁰ *G.C. An. Report*, 1938, p. 28.

¹¹ *Report on Cocoa*, Cmd. 5845, Sections 511-45.

¹² MacMillan, *Europe and West Africa*, pp. 80 ff.

have no very high standard of business practice, being wholly material in outlook and interested only in financial gain.¹³ The Africans themselves are beginning to recognize this weakness. One of the Gold Coast intelligentsia speaking to the Achimota Discussion Group, for example, pointed out that "Africans have often been known to be ruthless in dealing with other Africans" and that the future "need will be greater business integrity and high moral purpose without which neither Europeans nor Africans, whose privilege it will be to remake Africa, can succeed."¹⁴ Another African, a member of the legislative council, with a frankness not usually found in such addresses, warned the Gold Coast Youth Conference: "Dishonesty keeps the country back from uniting together to carry on any trade, business, or anything that will place the people of this country on a good financial standing."¹⁵ Though unfair business practices are by no means universal, the problem is a serious one and leaves much for the press, schools, and missions of the Dependency to accomplish.

Before leaving this discussion of agricultural development and its related problems, something should be said of the recent attempts which the government has made to introduce a more balanced production. As has been seen, in the first quarter of this century palm oil and local food crops were increasingly neglected for the easier and more profitable business of cocoa growing. With the Depression, however, the low price for cocoa and the general financial condition led the farmers to cultivate subsistence crops both for themselves and the local market. At the same time, especially on derelict cocoa farms, the Department of Agriculture encouraged an increased and more efficient production of palm-oil products. The former wild-rubber industry, which since 1919 had been steadily decreasing, was also revived; while experiments were made in bringing new tropical products to the Gold Coast. In 1934 the production of bananas for export was begun and three years later 59,000 bunches were exported.¹⁶ The industry is a demanding one, however, and the farmers prefer the easier cocoa culture. Citrus fruits have been

¹³ MacMillan, *Europe and West Africa*, p. 84.

¹⁴ M. Duwuona, "Towards a New Social Economy," *Pointers to Progress: the Gold Coast in the Next Five Years*, ed. by C. Shaw (Achimota, 1942), pp. 61-62.

¹⁵ Kojo Thompson, "Whither Are We Drifting in Society?" Gold Coast Youth Conference, *Are We to Sit Down?* (Accra, 1942), p. 3.

¹⁶ *G.C. An. Report, 1937*, p. 29; E. Worthington, *Science in Africa; A Review of Scientific Research Relating to Tropical and Southern Africa* (Oxford, 1938), p. 367.

somewhat more satisfactory. In 1934, likewise, grapefruit orchards were begun and the government set up a trial cannery, while in 1938 a European firm established a lime juice plant, and £26,959 worth of lime products were exported. Since the coconut is the only crop which does well on the sandy beaches, the peasants of these districts often combine the production of copra with their ordinary fishing trade. By 1938 some 2,000 tons a year were produced but the industry is capable of further expansion.

Small quantities of rice and tobacco are also grown for local consumption, while kola does well in the forest areas and finds a good market in the Mohammedan Sudan. The farmers of the Northern Territories and parts of Togoland produce maize, millet, yams, and peanuts, not only for their own use but for the markets of Ashanti and the Colony. The Protectorate has also quantities of unexploited shea nut trees, whose fruit contains a solid fat suitable for food. The Department of Agriculture maintains a shea reserve near Yendi, where trials with the effects of cultivation on wild trees since 1932 have resulted in a marked increase of yield.

These efforts of the administration to broaden the base of Gold Coast agriculture have bettered the situation, but they have not been sufficient. The African leaders are not unconscious of the problem and one section of the 1934 petition to the colonial office referred to this point:

In regard to banana, the cotton plant, limes, etc., the Government has indeed made certain installments towards improving or popularizing their culture, but the moneys voted for these have been niggardly, or otherwise they are expended in the wrong direction by employing local European officers in the Agricultural Department with no special business experience in these markets other than the academic training for their culture. We ask that a special commissioner with a business experience be sent out to the coast to find a way of adding to the wealth of the country in addition to the cocoa they now cultivate.¹⁷

Of course the fault is not wholly that of the government, as this criticism might lead one to suppose. The Department of Agriculture has made repeated attempts, as has been seen, to encourage other crops, but there probably will be little improvement until the illiterate farmer has been properly trained in more scientific methods. Governors and other public officials have pointed out the danger, not only

¹⁷ Sessional Papers No. 11 of 1934, *Papers Relating to the Petition of the Delegation from the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti* (Accra, 1934), p. 49.

of a one-crop economy, but also of the malnutrition which is so widespread in the Dependency.¹⁸ Since the early 1930's the League of Nations, the International Labor Office, the British colonial office, and other organizations have shown much interest in the nutrition of dependent peoples. Food surveys were made and malnutrition was found to be the predisposing cause of most of the African diseases, as well as of the low disease resistance so common among the inhabitants. In 1939 the Committee on Nutrition for the Colonial Empire published the results of its survey. The section on the Gold Coast reports:

Broadly speaking, the diet is deficient in those animal and vegetable foodstuffs which provide fat, good protein, vitamins and mineral matter. It is believed, but not proved, that the calcium content of the diet is poor. The protein content is generally very low. This is especially noticeable in the miner's diet. There is also a definite deficiency of vitamin C in the diet of many of the poorer classes

Food deficiency is a predisposing factor in many local disease conditions. Tuberculosis, the pneumonias and bronchitis are very prevalent and together account for 30 per cent of all registered male deaths. Over 70 per cent of persons in the coast town of Saltpond gave evidence of tubercle infection There seems to be a close relationship between undernutrition and the incidence of leprosy in certain areas.¹⁹

It is evident from this report that the people of the Gold Coast have need of a more balanced diet. The earlier discussion of the cattle industry in the Northern Territories showed its possibilities of further development, but much reorganization of the marketing technique is necessary if the cattle are not to be lost in transit and if a lower price and wider distribution are to bring meat supplies within the orbit of the lower classes.

In like manner, if health standards are to be raised, a more varied diet of fresh fruits and vegetables is obligatory. Practically every type of vegetable and many tropical fruits can be grown in the Dependency. In past years between £1,000,000 and £2,000,000 have been spent, out of total import trade of only some £8,000,000, on all manner of foodstuffs from abroad, including canned fish and

¹⁸ See, for example, Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1930, "Governor's Address," p. 39.

¹⁹ *Nutrition in the Colonial Empire*, Part II, Cmd. 6051, 1939, pp. 35-36. *West Africa*, May 25, 1946, p. 463, states that a nutrition survey conducted by the Gold Coast government itself, during the late 1930's, has been suppressed by the colonial office in London.

meat, flour, dried milk, and vegetable oils. If only the food economy of the Dependency were properly organized, the inhabitants could save much money for more necessary imports; they could build up local trade and above all they could better their health by proper diet.²⁰

Closely connected with the agricultural problems of the Gold Coast are those concerning land tenure and forest reserves. As for the land question and the litigation that has grown up around it, one colonial official has called it "the curse of the country" and rightly so, for probably no single issue causes more trouble for the government, Europeans, and Africans, than this "exasperating uncertainty" as to who holds title to the land.²¹

In the early days of British occupation, the government made no attempt to prevent alienation of tribal land to foreigners until, in the 1890's, European mining prospectors began a veritable rush for concessions. In ignorance, chiefs were easily persuaded to alienate their peoples' lands, even though it was not allowed by tribal law. In order to protect the heritage of the Africans, in 1894 the government attempted to vest all waste and forest lands in the Crown to be administered for the common good. When this bill aroused much opposition, in 1897 a second ordinance was planned which would recognize the rights of the occupants as against the chiefs. The African leaders again offered such strong resistance that the matter was dropped, and in 1900 the government merely passed an ordinance which required that all concessions be validated by the Supreme Court of the Gold Coast. The bill, however, was inadequate to protect the peoples' communal rights from the disregard of the chiefs, and by 1939 over 11,000 square miles of tribal lands had been alienated either to Africans or to Europeans.²²

The gradual shift from communal to individual ownership has further complicated the land situation. As insufficient surveys have been made, it is impossible to grant titles. In addition, the practice of individual ownership is as yet recognized in only certain parts of

²⁰ The Africans of the Gold Coast are beginning to realize the need for a more balanced diet. The Achimota Discussion Group often touches on this point. See, for example, C. Shaw (editor), *Pointers to Progress*, pp. 50-54, 64-72.

²¹ Hailey, *African Survey*, chapter xi, part 2.

²² Alienation to Europeans is almost entirely for mining purposes. Such alienation does not give the concession holder any land ownership but merely the right to develop mines. A few attempts were made in the past at European agricultural plantations but they were not sufficiently successful to warrant continuance.

the Dependency. The Africans, furthermore, keep up continued litigation over cocoa farms, so that controversies supposedly settled are being constantly reopened. All these factors combine to make the issue one of great confusion.

Probably, as Lord Hailey suggests, the immediate aim should be registration of documents and the final goal—not freehold—but occupancy title which would thus create a just balance between the rights of the individual and the oversight which the community should exercise over the land.²³

The same factors which have complicated the land situation have also made it difficult for the government to set aside sufficient forest reserves. The early history of this problem has already been discussed, so that it will be sufficient to indicate only the later developments.²⁴ By 1938 some 5,659 out of the 30,012 square miles of forest zone had been either constituted or approved as reserves. The Forestry Department declared that 6,500 square miles are the minimum essential to protect cocoa areas and water supplies; but this is far from the ideal, and large gaps in the forest zone where the dry harmattan can blow through have been so heavily farmed that even this recommended minimum is impossible. If water, soil, and forest conservation are to be properly handled and the very promising timber industry fully developed, there must be more African co-operation and an increased forestry personnel.

Besides agricultural and forest products, the third great natural resource of the Gold Coast lies in its mineral wealth. European traders exported gold from the very earliest days of their occupation, and in more recent years the survey department has discovered large quantities of bauxite, manganese, and diamonds, as well as lesser deposits of lime, granite, coal, and even oil. In the late nineteenth century European capital began developing mines and by the end of the 'thirties some very remarkable progress had been made, as the following export figures for 1937 will reveal:²⁵

²³ Hailey, *op. cit.* In 1944 the government appointed the Havers Commission to study the land-litigation problem. Its report recommended the establishment of a boundary commission, land registration, short-term loans to indebted farmers, and simpler court procedure for land cases. A second commission was appointed in 1946 to prepare plans for implementing the recommendations made concerning debts. *Report of the Commission of Enquiry in the Litigation in the Gold Coast and Indebtedness Caused Thereby* (Gold Coast, 1945).

²⁴ See p. 35 above. *G.C. An. Report*, 1938, p. 26; Hancock, *Economic Policy*, pp. 251–53.

²⁵ *G.C. An. Report*, 1937, p. 50. The bauxite deposits were not mined until the 1940's.

Mineral	Quantity	Value
Gold	557,764 fine ounces	£3,910,757
Diamonds	1,577,661 carats	648,057
Manganese	527,036 tons	1,025,091
Total		£5,583,905

The Gold Coast now ranks as the second largest producer in the world for diamonds, and as the third largest for manganese. Its bauxite deposits, estimated at some 229,000,000 tons, are among the largest known to exist, though the lack of hydroelectric power has not yet allowed for much exploitation.²⁶ The gold mine of the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation at Obuasi is one of the richest in the world. It is not surprising, then, that the Africans have often represented to the government that some of the profits of these rich mines should be kept in the Dependency. As was seen in the discussion of the land problem, in 1894 the British administration failed in its effort to gain control of mining concessions. As a result, ignorant chiefs often granted rights to European companies for very low annual rents, and with no provision for royalties. In more recent years the chiefs have begun to realize their mistake, and have been asking that the Concessions Ordinance be changed so as to ensure a percentage of profits to the landowners. This the government has refused to do, on the grounds that such a measure would jeopardize further development. When the Africans in the legislative council asked for compulsory royalties, Governor Hodson stated:

. . . . I feel sure it would be a shortsighted and extremely harmful policy for the Government to interfere in a matter of this sort, because capital is very sensitive and it might have the effect of driving it away to other parts of the world²⁷

In spite of exports amounting to as high as £5,583,905 in a single year, the mines remained until 1944 with no levy on their exports other than insignificant rents to the chiefs and a slight tax to the government. All income tax was paid within England itself. Since the wages which the mining companies paid to African labor only amounted during these years to an annual sum of between £900,000 and £1,000,000, and since the highest yearly limit of taxation was £400,000, it is evident that the bulk of mining profits went to Europe

²⁶ A. William Postel, *Mineral Resources of Africa*, p. 35.

²⁷ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1939, Issue No. 1, p. 74.

rather than remaining within the Gold Coast.²⁸ The following excerpt gives an example of African opinion on this subject:

It should be the duty of a trustee government to see that the exploitation of minerals, while giving reasonable profits to shareholders, must contribute substantially to the increase of the revenue of the country in which the minerals are exploited. The large dividends paid by mining companies in recent years, show that they could shoulder more taxation without normal enterprise being discouraged, particularly when it is remembered that conditions of taxation and mining prospects in rival countries like South Africa and Australia are not as favourable as those in the Gold Coast.²⁹

The Africans were dissatisfied, not only with the amount of mining profits kept within the Gold Coast, but also with the whole economic setup as well. The loss of revenue which had accompanied the Depression trade slump made them realize the insecurity of dependence on an export economy. In the petition which in 1934 Nana Sir Ofori Atta and other Gold Coast leaders presented to the colonial office, their criticism of economic as well as political matters was expressed. During the legislative debates of these years, too, they often came back on the necessity of a more balanced system based on local manufacturers and a wider domestic commerce.³⁰ They believed no successful plan of direct taxation could be introduced until the Dependency's wealth remained within the country itself, and was more evenly divided among the bulk of the population to be taxed. To this end they suggested both an increased dependence on domestic foods and the gradual development of secondary industries, for it was estimated that a million pounds worth of goods imported every year, such as soap, edible oils, and certain building materials, could be produced locally. The Youth Conference in 1938, for example, passed the following resolution:

Be it resolved . . . by the Youth Conference assembled at Cape Coast that the system of trade and commerce obtaining in the country by which its natural wealth is exploited mostly for the benefit of the foreigner at the expense of the native is dangerous to the economic sta-

²⁸ The Gold Coast government charged mining companies a 5 percent royalty on profits. In addition, since 1934 there was an export tax on gold of 15 percent of the gold premium; and a 6¼ percent ad valorem tax on diamonds. See *Gold Coast Handbook, 1937*, p. 343.

²⁹ M. Dowuona, "Economic and Social Development of the Gold Coast," Achimota Discussion Group, *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future*, p. 26.

³⁰ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1935, p. 135; 1936, p. 115.

bility and permanence of the people of this country and that this Conference recommends that the matter be brought to the notice and attention of the Natural Rulers with a view to their taking suitable action to equate the said unbalanced conditions by means of a national fund and other means appropriate for the purpose.⁸¹

The remarks of the members of the legislative council came more bluntly to the point, and they openly expressed the opinion that it was the fear of harming British industry that deterred the government from allowing manufacturing to develop.

Now, Your Excellency, as industries are the mainstay of any country, I desire to emphasize the necessity of fostering native industries such as soap, salt, tobacco, sugar, rice, pottery, cloth-weaving, fishing, and palm-oil with a view to establishing good internal trade in this country. Why should crafts that have held the people from time immemorial be made to give way for a foreign cargo? Home weaving with all its beauty, for example, make way for Manchester and Japanese goods? Now the Department of Agriculture has often been severely criticized because of the failure of that Department to help the country in creating new industries . . . are we to understand, Sir, that our Agricultural Department is incapable of helping us to produce locally the articles mentioned in the notice? Surely they are capable, unless, in order to protect the European trade, it is not intended to help us to develop economically. It may be contested that this is a misconception, but I say, Sir, that this is what really exists in the minds of the people of this country . . .⁸²

In spite of this agitation, nothing was done during the period under consideration and it was not until the war years that the administration made any attempts to encourage local manufacture.

Looking back at the economic development of the Gold Coast during the period 1919–1939, it is clear that the first part up to 1929 was marked by great prosperity and rapid expansion with the increased revenue from customs duties. Guggisberg began and almost completed his Ten Year Plan for new railroads, for a harbor at Takoradi, and for additional schools and hospitals. His successors in the governorship had the less pleasant task of pulling the Dependency through the second half of the period, 1929–1939, when revenue dropped sharply and all development had to be curtailed. During these years both the administration and the Africans had to face the

⁸¹ Gold Coast Youth Conference, *First Steps Towards a National Fund* (Accra, 1938), p. 10.

⁸² Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1939, p. 155.

fact that a one-crop export economy was unwise, and they endeavored to develop the cattle industry in the Northern Territories and to introduce new food crops for both domestic and export use. The Africans believed, too, that local manufacturing and commerce were also necessary but, in spite of their increasing demands, the government took no definite steps toward such a policy except in so far as the encouragement of co-operatives, wider education, and more diverse agriculture can be considered as a preparation for a broader economic system.

Though the administration can perhaps be justly criticized during this period for not having made sufficient efforts to develop the economic life of the Gold Coast, it is only fair to point out that there is another side to the question. British policy in West Africa has usually held that native ownership of the land is to be preferred to the European plantation system. While the latter method may ensure a faster production, a system of peasant agriculture is assuredly better because it preserves home life, leads to the social development of the people in a natural environment, and favors an eventual prosperity which has a more solid foundation than one built on the artificial and often harmful plantation system. In the Gold Coast the African still owns his land and, though he has much to learn of more efficient farming and marketing methods, his economic future is far more secure than it would have been if rapid development had been bought at the price of widespread European exploitation. Of course, in the long run his prosperity will depend on the world market and for this reason he must keep up with scientific methods if he is to successfully compete with modern production. British policy holds that the native can be so guided that new techniques will demand, not the destruction of community life, but merely its adaptation to changed needs. Already the Gold Coast government has begun to help the Africans toward such an adaptation and, if it has been needlessly slow, it at least has the merit of having preserved the fundamental right of native ownership of the land.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As the missionaries have been responsible, not only for the religious activity, but also for much of the educational and welfare work in the Gold Coast, it is perhaps wise to begin an account of social development with a brief survey of their history.

The earliest missionaries to the Gold Coast were Franciscan friars

who came in the fifteenth century along with the Portuguese traders. Little of their work remained, however, after Portugal withdrew from the territory. During the following centuries, except for a few Anglicans in the 1700's, almost no missionaries made attempts to introduce Christianity on this slave-trading coast. It was not until the nineteenth century that permanent missions were finally established. Of these the first and the largest, begun in 1835, was that of the Wesleyans. At the cost of great self-sacrifice, for thirty-two missionaries either died or completely lost their health in the first ten years, they established a strong center at Cape Coast. Eventually other groups followed, paying the same heavy price in loss of lives: in 1843 the Basel Society from Switzerland; in 1847 the German Bremen Society to the Trans-Volta area; in 1881 the Catholics to Elmina; in 1898 an American Negro group—the African Methodist-Episcopal Zion Mission; in 1906 the Anglicans; and during World War I Presbyterians from Scotland to replace the deported German missionaries.⁸³ Gradually each of these groups spread out from its original center and worked to Christianize and build up an African clergy in the Gold Coast. Most of them founded schools as well as churches, and until 1882 education was entirely in their hands. Even today there are comparatively few government schools, and most of the work is done by religious institutions, aided by grants from public funds if they reach the required standard. Some idea of their position in 1937 can be gained from the following statistics:⁸⁴

⁸³ *Gold Coast Handbook, 1937*, pp. 25-26.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28. The Methodist Church is strongly established in the Central and Western Provinces and in Ashanti. In 1931 it had forty-four African ministers and 427 catechists. It operates a good training college at Kumasi, a secondary school at Cape Coast, and many primary institutions. See J. Cooksey and A. McLeish, *Religion and Civilization in West Africa* (London, 1931), pp. 138-39, and "Gold Coast Methodism; The First Hundred Years, 1835-1935," *Africa*, VIII (1935), 239-40.

The Basel Mission was confined to the Eastern Province where it early developed strong vocational training and has provided the Dependency with some of its best craftsmen. The Bremen Mission worked in the Colony and in South Togoland. During the 1914-1918 war, and again in 1939, the Scottish Presbyterians took over the work of these German missionaries. A native Ewe Presbyterian Church has since developed. It has ninety-two schools in Togoland. In the Colony proper and in Ashanti there are many excellent Scottish Presbyterian schools. *British Togo Mandate Report, 1938*, p. 47; *Gold Coast Handbook, 1937*, p. 112.

The Catholic Missions of the Central and Western Provinces, Ashanti, and Togoland are directed by the Society of African Missions with the help of two orders of nuns who do both educational and child welfare work. The Accra Vicariate was established in the Eastern Province in 1939 by the American branch of the

THE GOLD COAST

Denomination	Estimated Number of Followers	Number of Churches or Chapels
English Church Mission	24,000	270
Methodist Mission Society	125,225	767
Presbyterian Church of the Gold Coast	58,454	286
Baptist Church Mission	6,000	54
Roman Catholics:		
Colony-Ashanti	106,453	696
Lower Volta	36,383	191
Northern Territories	24,200	24
Ewe Presbyterian Church	27,000	137
Salvation Army	6,386	160
African Methodist-Episcopalian Zion Church..	7,064	87

The missionaries' work in the Gold Coast has not been easy. In the beginning, the climate and disease which had caused the country to be called the "white man's grave" led to early deaths among these missionaries, sometimes within a few months of their arrival. Then many of the chiefs and elders opposed the spread of Christianity on the grounds that it weakened their subjects' allegiance to native custom and authority. Perhaps the most difficult problem of all, however, has been the absorption of so many Africans in material affairs. The rapid increase of wealth during the early part of the century accentuated this tendency. The reports of the various missionaries refer to the ease with which converts slip back into pagan ways, and to the lack of "carry-over" of Christian principles from the church to the home, to social life, and to the business world.⁸⁵ In spite of these great difficulties missions have done much for the Gold Coast, not only in purely religious matters but in their general civilizing influence as well. At the present time, many of these groups are self-supporting. Some missions have only made a start at an African clergy; while others, especially the Methodist and Ewe Presbyterian, already have a majority of African ministers. This training in responsibility has had its effect on political life, for many Gold

Society of the Divine Word. The White Fathers have been in the Northern Territories since 1906. In 1939 there were 117 priests, 57 sisters, and 182 schools and 12 dispensaries for the entire Dependency. *Report of the Vicariates of the Gold Coast, 1939.*

The Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel first sent missionaries to the Gold Coast in 1752 but their work had eventually to be given up. The Anglicans returned in 1906 and have since opened secondary and primary schools in various parts of the Colony and Ashanti. The Bishop resides at Accra. Cooksey and McLeish, *Religion and Civilization in West Africa*, p. 143.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 135-37; Horn, "The Achievements of the Missions," Achimota Discussion Group, *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future*, p. 40.

Coast leaders received their first experience in leadership in the councils of the missions. The Methodists can well be proud of Dr. James Kwegyir Aggrey, the man who did so much for the establishment of Achimota and who, perhaps more than any other man in the Gold Coast, furthered interracial understanding and co-operation.

Other results of missionary activity have been the rooting out of repulsive pagan customs, the encouragement of vernacular languages, and the establishment of friendly contacts with other countries through the parent churches, which has helped to broaden the African's outlook and to ennoble relationships between the white man and the black. In more recent years, too, the missions have increasingly understood the necessity of basing education as far as possible on African culture, and of integrating the life of school, mission, and community. As a result the best missions have achieved a position of marked influence among the Africans.

While the mission schools alone bore the burden of educational work during the greater part of the nineteenth century, the government began to take some responsibility in the matter, when in 1882 an ordinance was passed which provided for a board of education, official inspection, and grants-in-aid for satisfactory institutions. In the following years the administration established a few schools, and in 1909 it opened a technical institute and a normal training college at Accra. When Sir Gordon Guggisberg took over the governorship of the Gold Coast in 1919, there were nineteen government schools, 194 assisted mission schools, and some 400 unassisted ones, often of inferior quality. The budget of that year set aside £54,442 for educational purposes.⁸⁶ Guggisberg, who was keenly interested in education, did not consider this enough; he believed it to be the "keystone of progress," and as such he gave it the first place in his plans for the development of the Gold Coast. The set of sixteen principles which he worked out as the basis for a higher educational standard included, among other things, provision for more fully qualified teachers, agricultural and technical as well as literary subjects in the curriculum, organized games, equal opportunities for girls as well as boys, and above all, religious and character training as the foundation of the whole system. With these aims in view, the

⁸⁶ *Report on the Department of Education, 1919*, Appendix D. The Gold Coast annual reports as well as the reports on the Department of Education are the best references on this subject. See also *Gold Coast Education Committee Report, 1937-1941* (Accra, 1941).

government passed an ordinance in 1925 requiring higher qualifications of nonassisted schools and their staffs if they wished to remain in existence; while at the same time it announced its intention of establishing a new secondary and normal school which would provide the best that both African and European culture had to offer. This latter plan eventually developed, under Guggisberg's enthusiastic guidance, into the world-famous Prince of Wales College at Achimota.

The new education ordinance went into effect in 1927, with the result that some 150 "bush schools" were closed during the following years. This action led to much criticism on the part of some missionary bodies as well as the Africans, who could not understand why institutions should be closed when, in spite of the increasing demand for education, only one child in ten could be accommodated.⁸⁷ By 1930 it was evident that the 1925 plan had probably been too drastic. Because the existing normal institutions of the Dependency could not satisfy the demand for teachers, it was impossible to open more schools of the approved standard. The government therefore decided to allow a two-year instead of a four-year course for rural teachers, and to encourage the establishment of more training centers by grants-in-aid. Consequently the missions were able to expand so that by 1938 the Gold Coast had seven normal institutions.

As for Achimota College, Guggisberg originally planned to have it include only secondary and college departments, but the Reverend Alexander Fraser, the Anglican minister who was its first principal, insisted on both kindergarten and primary departments so that pupils could be trained from their earliest years to the high standard he wished to develop in the school.

The aim and first beginnings of Achimota were charmingly explained to an English radio audience in the fall of 1925 by Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey, the first assistant vice-principal of the college, who was more responsible than anyone else for interpreting the new institution to his fellow Africans and for obtaining their support.

The greatest recent step forward in the co-operation between white and black, for the good of Africa, has come through the vision of Sir Gordon Guggisberg, Governor of the Gold Coast. He rightly believed that the great need of the movement was an educational institution which could meet the highest and broadest needs of Africans, and one where

⁸⁷ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, pp. 168, 172, 218.

the leaders of the race would receive not only the best "head" education, but an education of the "heart" and "hand" also.

The Gold Coast Government has therefore devoted half a million pounds to the foundation of the Prince of Wales' College, Achimota, which, I believe, is the most significant thing in the whole of Africa today.

With some fifty teachers selected from the five Continents of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, and Australia and with accommodations for about eight hundred students, it will be the aim of Achimota to correct the mistakes which have been made in the educational system of Africa. It will take the African boy and girl at the age of six, and carry them through the kindergarten to the University courses. It will give to the African, not only professional training, but also technical courses that will teach both boys and girls the dignity of labour.

With the coming of Western civilization African boys and girls tended to cut loose from tribal ties. In many instances the educated became neither Western nor African, losing the best in both and often imbibing the worst of both.

The importance of the Gold Coast Government's experiment at Achimota is that it will retain and improve the best things in Africa and couple them with the best things Western. The pupils in this Government College will be trained to be Christian citizens, each one a part of the body politic to whom much has been given, and from whom much will be expected. . . . "Christianity" will not be taught but a truly Christian spirit will be fostered, and the necessity of co-operation between white and black instilled. In the harmony of the world, as in the harmony of an organ or a piano, the black and the white keys are both essential.

Achimota is destined to influence not only the Gold Coast, but directly and indirectly the entire African Continent. And Africa is grateful for this daring and far-reaching experiment towards the true emancipation of her manhood and womanhood.⁸⁸

The new building was dedicated by the Prince of Wales in 1925 and a few classes were begun the next year, but the school was only completed in 1931 at the cost of £617,000. The institution is situated near the small town of Achimota, some seven miles inland from Accra. Its extensive campus is attractively laid out with a large administration block, numerous residential units, a hospital, museum, printing press, swimming tank, demonstration farm, and model na-

⁸⁸ M. Sampson, "James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey," *Gold Coast Men of Affairs*, pp. 64-66. See also *Report on Achimota College, 1926-1927*, and Smith, *Aggrey of Africa*, pp. 225-45 and *passim*, for Aggrey's own account of the joys and trials connected with the beginnings of Achimota.

tive village for employees. Neither trouble nor expense seems to have been spared in obtaining an up-to-date plant and modern equipment.

The staff usually includes about forty Europeans and sixty Africans, though some of the latter are for clerical rather than teaching purposes. Achimota is said to have a faculty ranking with the finest to be found in any comparable institution in England or America. Most of its masters have Cambridge or Oxford degrees and were chosen because of their interest in this type of work.

In 1930 the college ceased to be a government institution by the creation of the Achimota Council,³⁹ a body made up of European and African members who have entire control of the institution. It continues, however, to receive an annual government grant⁴⁰ of £48,000, and the staff pensions are also a charge on Dependency funds. The administration believed that the college would be less open to political attack and would more easily gain the full confidence of the Africans if it became, as far as possible, a private institution. The interests of the government are safeguarded by a quinquennial inspection and by the appointment of official members to the council.

The curriculum included, until changes were made in the 1940's, the usual primary and secondary subjects, a commercial course, a one-year agricultural course, four years of teacher training, and a college department in which the students took intermediate courses to prepare for the external examination of the University of London in arts, science, economics, and engineering, and for the first medical examination. (These intermediate courses were somewhat like those of the American junior college.) The only college degree given was the B.S. in the fields of civil and mechanical engineering.

Classes are taught in the more important vernaculars as well as in English. Every attempt is made to give the students a well-balanced training with courses in handicrafts, farm work, and domestic science, as well as in the literary subjects. The native history and customs of the Gold Coast are held in high honor, and the students are expected to take part in practice-teaching classes, first aid, sanitation, and agricultural demonstrations in near-by villages. Within the institution itself, discipline is largely on the lines of the English public schools, and the administration encourages the pupils to develop habits of self-reliance and co-operation. There are both Catho-

³⁹ Ordinance 10 of 1930; Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929-1930, p. 49.

⁴⁰ The grant was increased during the war to £54,000 and in 1946 to £64,000.

lic and Protestant resident chaplains, and the principal has always been a Protestant minister. A Christian atmosphere is said to pervade the school.

In 1938 there were 679 pupils enrolled at Achimota, 232 of whom were girls. They were divided into the following departments:⁴¹

Kindergarten	60	Training college {boys	86
Lower primary	90	{girls	66
Upper primary	143	University	32
Secondary	180	Special courses	22

The government made one of its official inspections in 1938, and reported that the aims of Achimota "are being in a great measure fulfilled," adding: "The educational scheme presents itself, on a general view, as an ordered sequence from the lowest almost to the highest levels, conducted with notable ability and devotion on the part of the tutors, and with a high degree of industry in the pupils."⁴²

In spite of much successful work, however, Achimota has not been without its critics. In the beginning many Africans disapproved of the expense involved and of its coeducational policy. Since then, especially during the Depression years, there have not always been enough suitable positions for the Achimota graduates, and in 1935 the Africans therefore asked that more stress be put on agricultural training. Some of the missionary groups, too, have doubted the wisdom of primary and secondary departments. They believe that Achimota would be more closely integrated with the educational life of the Colony if its students had received their early education in the regular schools of the Dependency, only going to the college for higher studies. As it is, many feel that Achimota is too isolated from the educational life of the Gold Coast, and that if some of the large sums spent there had been used to raise the general level of all secondary institutions it would have resulted in benefits to a wider group of students.⁴³

In recent years local opinion has grown more favorable to Achimota, and its increasing popularity is proved by the hundreds of students who apply for the few vacancies annually available. A

⁴¹ *G.C. An. Report, 1938*, p. 81. The film *Achimota*, distributed by the British Information Services, gives an excellent picture of the work of this institution.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ K. Horn, "The Future of Education in the Gold Coast," Achimota Discussion Group, *Quo Vadimus or Gold Coast Future*, p. 44; Cooksey and McLeish, *Religion and Civilization in West Africa*, p. 130.

splendid opportunity lies before this great institution—one of the finest in all Africa—for it is on its graduates that the future of the Gold Coast will in large part depend. As Governor Slater once remarked of Sir Gordon Guggisberg: "My predecessor's decision to create Achimota was an act of magnificent faith in the ultimate capacity of the African to govern himself."⁴⁴

In turning from Achimota to the educational situation in general, we find that during the years following Guggisberg's governorship, development was slowed up by lack of revenue resulting from the economic crisis. In 1938 there were only 24 government schools, 424 assisted, and about 457 unassisted institutions in the Gold Coast—some 905 in all. Of these the primary schools were providing education for 90,000 children. Though this was a good record for African colonies in general, it represented only about 15 percent of the school population of the Dependency. At the rate of progress then prevailing, universal primary education would not be possible until the end of the century.⁴⁵ The money set aside for all educational purposes, including Achimota, in the 1938 budget was £270,000, which was 9.34 percent of the total expenditure and about £3 to £4 for each child.⁴⁶ This is the highest expenditure of any African colony except Zanzibar, but it is unfortunate that these benefits are unevenly distributed. In some of the more prosperous areas of the Gold Coast nearly 30 percent of the children may receive an education, while in the Northern Territories, for example, only 1,000 attend school out of an estimated child population of nearly 200,000.⁴⁷

In order to provide for a more rapid development of educational facilities, in recent years the government has given encouragement to schools supported by the local administrations. This appears to be a wise policy, for if indirect rule is really to work and if schools are to give an education which will fit the child for a future in his own community, they must be as closely integrated with tribal life as possible.⁴⁸ Almost all the problems which now face the Gold Coast, whether of a political, economic, or social nature, could be solved,

⁴⁴ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1929, "Governor's Address," p. 51.

⁴⁵ *G.C. An. Report*, 1938, pp. 72 ff.

⁴⁶ *Report on the Finances and Accounts of the Gold Coast for the Year 1938-1939*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Hinden, *Plan for Africa*, p. 184.

⁴⁸ For an excellent discussion of this problem see E. Hussey, "The Role of Education in Assisting the People of Africa to Adjust Themselves to the Changing Conditions Due to European Contacts," *Europe and West Africa*, pp. 119 ff.

in large part at least, by a wise system of education which would combine what is most suitable in Christian civilization with the best of the rich heritage of African life and culture. Such has been the policy of the British administration and of the mission schools, which has held that if growth has gone on more slowly than would be desirable, it has at least had the tremendous advantage of being based on a solid and enduring foundation.

Turning from educational problems to those of health and sanitation, we find a much less hopeful situation. As vital statistics are only kept in the larger towns and even these are not always reliable, it is impossible to obtain any entirely accurate picture of the physical conditions of the population. The reports of the 1931 census, however, and of the medical department, do give some light on the situation. The infant mortality rate in 1931 was estimated to be 170 per thousand for the entire Dependency.⁴⁹ Although it is usually lower in the towns, it has been reported to go as high as 400 per thousand in the Kusasi area of north Togoland. The 1931 census also estimated that 40 percent of the children of the Dependency die before reaching puberty. These figures, along with reports of almost universal malaria, widespread social disease, increasing incidence of tuberculosis and leprosy, as well as very serious malnutrition and poor housing conditions, combine to give evidence of a population rather generally handicapped by undernourishment and disease.⁵⁰ Such conditions are, of course, characteristic of many African colonies, but nevertheless in some areas, especially the Belgian Congo, great improvements have been made on these lines.⁵¹

The Gold Coast Medical Department, with its medical, public health, laboratory, and sleeping sickness sections, is putting up a good fight, but it is handicapped by the usual barriers of insufficient staff and revenue, and also by the ignorance and superstition of the population. Most of the diseases which it has to combat are the result of bad sanitation and impure water, along with the weakened condition of the people resulting from malnutrition. The parliamentary report of the survey of nutrition made in 1938 in the entire colonial empire stated that "food deficiency is a predisposing factor"⁵² of much dis-

⁴⁹ Cardinall, *The Gold Coast, 1931*, p. 219.

⁵⁰ Summaries of the health situation are given in the annual reports, in Hailey, *African Survey*, and in *Nutrition in the Colonial Empire*, Cmd. 6051, 1939, pp. 35-38.

⁵¹ Hailey, *African Survey*, pp. 1178-80.

⁵² *Nutrition in the Colonial Empire*, p. 36.

ease in the Gold Coast. Health education is therefore of prime necessity, and increased efforts are being made by the government and the Red Cross through the schools and the radio.

For actual medical care, the Gold Coast in 1939 had thirty-eight African hospitals, including Korle Bu in Accra which was built at the cost of £254,000, and which is the best in West Africa. The Basel Mission conducts a well-equipped hospital in Ashanti, and the Roman Catholic missions have a number of medical and infant welfare stations. There are also village dispensaries in the charge of African nurses trained and employed by the government. Some of the Native Authorities have recently established their own dispensaries, as a result of the growing appreciation for proper medical care.

Labor conditions present another area in which further improvements could be made. A labor department was established in 1938 under the guidance of a trained expert from England, and it began by making an intensive study of the problems involved. By 1939 a labor exchange had been opened, and it was preparing legislation in such matters as juvenile employment, trade unionism, workmen's compensations, conciliation methods, and collective bargaining.⁵³

Looking back over the Dependency's economic and social development it is evident that the Gold Coast made great progress during the period just considered. The establishment of the *Pax Britannica* and of a settled administration made a full development of natural resources possible, and brought with it an increase of revenue and trade which was ten times greater than it had been in 1900. At the same time, this survey has also revealed that expansion did not take place in the same ratio throughout the territory and if the larger towns and coastal areas greatly benefited, the less prosperous sections did not receive their just share of the improvements. Development, moreover, was not always guided in the wisest channels as the chaotic conditions in the cocoa industry and the unbalanced character of the general economic situation clearly show. Besides the economic needs there were grave problems in the fields of education, public health, and social services yet to be solved. But in spite of these

⁵³ *G.C. An. Report, 1938-1939*, p. 66. See also the excellent summary of labor conditions in the Gold Coast given by Major G. St. J. Orde-Browne, *Labour Conditions in West Africa*, Cmd. 6277, 1941, pp. 87-113. There is also a very good survey of labor and other social problems for colonies in general in International Labor Office, *Social Policy in Dependent Territories* (Montreal, 1944).

defects, the positive contribution of the British administration was great, as a comparison of the Gold Coast with such independent but less advanced states as Liberia and Ethiopia makes evident.⁵⁴ A strong colonial power can protect the economic interests of a comparatively backward area, in the complicated and highly competitive situation which characterizes world trade today; it can provide capital for public utilities, and can give stability and continuity to clearly defined plans for a well-ordered development. This the British administration has done in the past and, although the support has sometimes been insufficient or unwisely directed, the result of the whole appears heavily balanced in the favor of the Africans of the Gold Coast.

⁵⁴ The following are comparative statistics for the Gold Coast and Liberia in 1936 (£ = \$4.00):

	Gold Coast	Liberia
Population	3,618,376	ca. 1-1,500,000
Area (sq. mi.)	91,000	43,000
Revenue	\$15,098,984	\$770,414
Expenditure	\$15,667,968	\$708,443
Schools	ca. 905	161
Pupil attendance	90,000	10,000

Statistics for the Gold Coast were taken from the annual reports and for Liberia from the *Statesman's Year Book*, 1940.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOLD COAST IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

When the second World War broke out in the fall of 1939, West Africa did not appear to be vitally affected. Until Dunkirk, the four British colonies were largely spectators, but from then on they were drawn ever more fully into the arena of battle. Britain had begun the war counting on the control of the Mediterranean. When Italy joined the Nazi camp, this life line to the Far East was blocked and the ports and airfields of West Africa suddenly became of vital strategic importance. Then the fall of France not only prevented the use of North African air bases but also flanked the four British colonies with potential enemy territory. Finally, the Japanese seizure of the great Asiatic supply sources forced Britain and the United States to set a new value on the mineral and agricultural wealth of West Africa.

Almost overnight this great western bulge of the black continent was recognized as of strategic and economic importance to the Allies. As a result of the stimulus which was thus given to the whole life of the area, the war became for West Africa one of the most outstanding instruments of material progress which it had yet known. Under its impact, harbors and internal communications were developed, dozens of first-class airfields were built, a greater West African Frontier Force was recruited and trained for foreign service, and vital raw materials for export were increasingly produced, while at the same time local self-sufficiency was advanced to a degree which gave great hope for the economic future of the area. In all this West African activity, the Gold Coast was to play a major part and to share fully in the development thus achieved.

The outbreak of the war did not find the Gold Coast totally unprepared. Already in 1936 the uncertainty of international affairs had led Governor Hodson to create a volunteer naval force to assist in the defense of home waters, and early in 1939 to reorganize the Gold Coast Regiment and to provide for a motor corps unit. He had also developed a radio broadcasting system which was to prove

invaluable as a means of spreading information and of gaining the Africans' fullest co-operation in the years of struggle which lay ahead.

With the declaration of war, the Africans immediately came forward with avowals of loyalty and promises of support so that, in his Christmas message of 1939, the governor could congratulate them on their cheerful and willing collaboration in the sacrifices which had been asked of them.¹ While this attachment to the Allied cause was probably motivated in part by fear of Nazi domination, there is no reason to doubt the African's sincere loyalty to the British connection. In the dark days after Dunkirk the Gold Coast could easily have revolted, and yet there was no evidence, even among the most radical, of any desire to throw off the British rule.² On the contrary, testimonies of devotion to the empire abounded. One chief encouraged his people to greater production of needed war materials with the words:³

Our fathers . . . told us to be loyal to the British flag, for it was the British people who . . . put a stop to the African scourge—the slave trade. We ourselves have learned to respect the British people for their justice, fair play and wise administration, as compared to other European powers.

And Captain Balfour, the British cabinet minister resident in West Africa during the latter part of the war, found:⁴

In the 80,000 square miles of Gold Coast territory, there is a smaller police force to keep law and order than is thought necessary to guard and patrol one single white man's camp and aerodrome. Is this a sign of a people longing to throw off the yoke of their rulers or proof of a peaceful people working in harmony with those holding authority in their land?

Though the Africans' loyalty was sincere, it did not always prevent complaints when the cost of the war effort began to be felt in the Colony itself. The illiterate peasants, for example, often found it hard to understand the complex system of controls required by modern warfare.

¹ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1939, II, 3.

² M. Fortes, "Impact of the War on British West Africa," *International Affairs*, XXI (1945), 210; Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 111-13.

³ *African World*, February 1, 1941, p. 95.

⁴ *Ibid.*, June 6, 1945.

After the bombardment of England began, the Africans were deeply impressed by the sufferings and heroism of the British people. They responded generously to war drives, subscribing £340,715 in voluntary gifts, £205,000 in war-saving certificates, and £815,000 in interest-free loans.⁵ Among the various patriotic drives, none appealed to the Gold Coast Africans more than the "Spitfire" fund. Their contributions having financed two R.A.F. units known as the Gold Coast Bomber and Fighter Squadrons, their proud sponsors followed the exploits of these units with interest and a lively sense of satisfaction.

The Dependency's aid to the war effort, however, was not confined to financial contributions. Gold Coast Africans volunteered both for home defense and for service abroad. After the fall of France in the summer of 1940, the four British colonies were surrounded by Vichy territory. Eventually all French West Africa came under Free French control, but in the meantime local forces had to be increased. Before the war a Gold Coast Naval Volunteer Force had been organized which was to prove invaluable in keeping coastal waters free from mines. Later, home guard and civil defense units were formed, since the Royal West African Frontier Force—the R.W.A.F.F.—would be needed for foreign service. This frontier force was an outgrowth of the early military units organized in the nineteenth century by European trading companies, and later by the British government, for the maintenance of law and order on the Guinea Coast. In 1901 the West African Frontier Force—the title "Royal" was added in 1928—came into being as a combination of the local regiments of the four British colonies, and continued to be officered by men seconded from the British Army. Its work was twofold: to maintain internal security against the various warring tribes and to defend the colonial frontiers. As such it has been a civilizing force in the life of West Africa.

During World War I, the Gold Coast sent its regiment for active service in Togoland, the Cameroons, and later in East Africa. These troops fought so splendidly in the latter area that General Smuts, under whose command they were, sent the following cable: "If you have any more troops like the Gold Coast Regiment, send them at once."⁶ In 1940 the R.W.A.F.F. was again called upon for foreign service. Along with troops from both South and East Africa, it

⁵ British Information Services, *West Africa and the War*, 1945.

⁶ Quoted in *Gold Coast Bulletin*, September 25, 1946.

fought in Kenya, Italian Somaliland, and Abyssinia. The Gold Coast Brigade distinguished itself for courage in these campaigns.

Once this section of East Africa was in Allied hands, the military authorities recalled the R.W.A.F.F. to West Africa for enlargement and complete reorganization. In order to provide for a larger Gold Coast unit in the force, a Compulsory Service Ordinance was laid before the legislative council in 1941.⁷ This law was not intended to establish conscription throughout the Dependency, but was only to be applied to those areas where recruiting brought insufficient numbers. The bill caused some criticism, especially in the coastal areas where the inhabitants argued that their political status as a nonself-governing colony did not warrant such action. The African members of the legislative council finally accepted the ordinance, asking, however, that compulsion be used slowly and that a representative of the local native administration be appointed to the recruiting committee of each state. The provincial council of the Central Province took the opportunity, in giving its assent, to ask for increased self-government by passing the resolution that:⁸ "the true status of this country will be recognized and proper place given the Chiefs and their people in the administration of the country."

During 1941-1943 the R.W.A.F.F. was entirely reorganized so as to include a completely self-contained expeditionary force. Apart from the divisional troops, 76 different types of units, including artillery, technical, and medical sections, were prepared for action in India and Burma. While the prewar strength of the entire West African force had been only about 6,000 to 7,000, it was now increased to 176,000. There were 1,600 commissioned and noncommissioned officers, principally from the British Army, though Africans were eligible to both types of promotion. By 1945 several Gold Coast soldiers had been thus advanced, among whom was Major Seth Anthony who had been trained at Sandhurst Military College and who was the first West African to receive the King's Commission.

In June 1943, the 81st Division of the R.W.A.F.F. left for Burma, to be followed shortly by the 82d Division. Both these units contained Gold Coast troops. It was the largest colonial army in the history of the British Empire ever to serve as an expeditionary force. Most of these troops fought in the Arakan province of south-

⁷ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1941, II, 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

western Burma, a mountainous jungle area in the control of the Japanese, and one of the most difficult fighting terrains in the world. Because of its inaccessibility, the men had to be supplied for many months entirely from the air. Yet these young Africans, accustomed as they were to tropical conditions, remained among the fittest of the jungle troops. In one campaign the West Africans, leaving all motor transport behind, carried their equipment on their heads, just as the head loads of cocoa were carried at home. This enabled them to be extremely mobile, so that, often catching the Japanese off their guard, they were constantly able to cut their communication lines. The R.W.A.F.F. came out of the war, not only with a record of courage and initiative in battle, but also with a reputation for persistent cheerfulness in the most trying circumstances.⁹

In addition to the R.W.A.F.F., Gold Coast men also joined the R.A.F. when, in 1941, that section of the services decided to accept African recruits. The regular British Army and the Royal Navy, however, remained closed to them. In all, the Gold Coast gave over 65,000 men to the various services during the war.

The withdrawal of nearly 70,000 young men from a colony whose total population was under 4,000,000 did, of course, affect the economic and social life of the Dependency. Something of a labor shortage was felt at a time when increased agricultural production was vitally necessary, and the illiterate peasants found it hard to understand why their sons were needed for service abroad. The necessity of gaining full African co-operation, not only for recruiting but for every phase of the war effort, made some means of widespread propaganda essential. Consequently, in 1939 a Department of Information was established. Broadcasting facilities were already available for its use since Governor Hodson, in 1935, had installed the station ZOY at Accra. Since that time smaller stations have gradually been established throughout the Dependency, and both British programs and local ones, in the various African languages, have been broadcast. In addition to the radio the Information Department made wide use of mobile motion-picture units which could go to rural areas for the showing of war and educational films. The department also published an illustrated weekly newspaper, *The Empire at War*, which has since been continued under the title, *Gold Coast Bul-*

⁹ For accounts of the R.W.A.F.F. see E. E. Saben-Clare, "African Forces in the Far East," *African Affairs*, XXIV (1945), 151-56; *Gold Coast Bulletin*, December 5, 1945, and September 25, 1946.

letin. Little by little, local information centers began to appear in out-of-the-way corners of the Dependency, where an educated member of the community would gather together war pictures and posters and read *The Empire at War* to his illiterate neighbors. Another means employed for the dissemination of correct information was the weekly news conference which the governor inaugurated for the editors of Accra. In 1943 the representatives of various local newspapers were given an opportunity to study the empire's war effort at closer range, when the British Council, a British government agency, invited eight West African editors, including two from the Gold Coast, for a fortnight's visit in England. Colonel Oliver Stanley, the secretary of state for the colonies, and other colonial officials received the delegation. Its members visited Parliament and the Royal Air Force, and saw much of London's wartime life. They met representatives of the British and overseas press and were given facilities to broadcast home to West Africa.

The British Council—which has as one of its purposes the fostering of cultural contacts in the United Kingdom, the empire, and foreign countries—having made in 1941 a survey of West Africa's needs, set up a central agency in the Gold Coast and local centers in the other British colonies. It opened a library and reading room in Accra, sponsored lectures, art courses, and other adult educational schemes for both Europeans and Africans, and inaugurated a librarians' course, the first ever given in West Africa. While the council's work was essentially of a peacetime nature, these cultural contacts between the two races were of great value in building up that sense of empire solidarity so essential to co-operative war action.¹⁰

With the fall of France, the strategic importance of West Africa increased, and her ports and airfields became essential in the race to get planes and supplies to the British forces in North Africa and in the Middle East. Moreover, the Nazis were using French ports as submarine bases and were planning to link Dakar with North Africa by completing the Sahara Railroad. Then on December 8, 1941, the United States entered the war, and before the month was out, Churchill and Roosevelt had decided on the North African invasion. West Africa was now more fully involved than ever in the great Allied war effort.

¹⁰ *British Council Report, 1943-44; 1944-45.*

One of its most urgent tasks was to increase transportation facilities, especially for the air service. The Allies had decided to open an African air transport for the ferrying of military planes and supplies to North Africa and the Middle East. Pan American World Airways System was asked to develop this service, an assignment which President Roosevelt described as of an "importance which cannot be overestimated."¹¹ Important links in this African life line were established in Liberia, Nigeria, and on the Gold Coast. At the great port and airfield of Takoradi, the R.A.F. assembled the American and British pursuit planes which were landed there by freighter. Since it was found necessary to close all the Gold Coast surf ports, Takoradi harbor had not only to handle the regular exports and imports, but, in addition, the heavy cargoes occasioned by the R.A.F. and American bases and by the Gold Coast troop movements. It was therefore essential to increase the harbor and airfield facilities.

Large military installations were also added to the existing airfield at Accra, and when in 1941 the United States Army Air Force was established there, the air base was enlarged and became an important link in the chain of air communications between the United States and the Near East. During the peak years of 1942 and early 1943, as many as 200 to 300 American planes stopped daily at Accra for checking and refueling, on their way north or east. A large number of installations for the Army and Pan American personnel, for aircraft maintenance, administration, and communications, had to be provided. United States technicians, Gold Coast government contractors, and African artisans all worked together to build up at Accra a large and up-to-date air base. These constructions were later sold to the British government.

All this activity, as well as the immediate preparation for the North African invasion, brought the local governments of the four British colonies in contact with American, British, and Free French military and civil officials. London, in the face of the need for some co-ordinating agency for the British interests on the coast, appointed a Cabinet minister to be resident in West Africa. The selection was Lord Swinton, the former Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, whose previous ministerial experience as secretary of state for the colonies, secretary of state for air, and president of the board of trade, made him admirably fitted for the post. His great task was to ensure the co-oper-

¹¹ *Brief History of the Pan American Airways' Service to Africa*, Exhibit No. PA-10, p. 6. See also *West Africa*, September 7, 1946, p. 820.

ation of the British military and civil services in West Africa. In a radio address made on his arrival in July 1942 he stated: "I have come here with one single aim: to help everyone engaged in the war effort. We have a great effort to make, but we have great resources."¹² To carry out this aim he immediately set up the West African War Council, which included the governors of the four British colonies and the commanders in West Africa of the army, navy, and air force. Since the outbreak of the war the governors had been meeting from time to time to discuss intercolonial problems resulting from the conflict. The new council, however, had wider scope and power in that it represented both civil and military administration and that its head, a cabinet minister, could decide many problems on the spot without recourse to London.

Since the Gold Coast was the most centrally located of the four colonies, Lord Swinton made his headquarters at Achimota College.¹³ From there he co-ordinated every phase of war activity, both strategic and economic, working not only with British authorities but with the American, Free French, and Belgian as well. By air he made constant trips throughout West and North Africa and the Belgian Congo, traveling over 50,000 miles during one year. He became, as one African editor put it, "the minister who sees for himself."¹⁴ The success of this co-operation between both British and non-British territories demonstrated clearly that some sort of voluntary regional association would be valuable for peacetime development of West Africa in the postwar period.

Lord Swinton remained in West Africa as resident minister for about two years until the fall of 1944, when he was replaced by Captain Harold Balfour. While his activities during the early part of this period were principally concerned with strategic matters, he also worked at stimulating increased agricultural and mineral production. After the expulsion of the Germans and Italians from North Africa in 1943, he was freed of many military burdens and therefore was able to devote himself more completely to economic matters. Japanese successes in the Far East had cut off, as has been seen, the contact of the Allies with the natural resources of Burma, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies, and had set a higher value on those of

¹² British Information Services, *West Africa and the War*, 1945, p. 11.

¹³ Many of the college buildings were used by the government during the war while the students lodged in temporary quarters.

¹⁴ British Information Services, *West Africa and the War*.

West Africa. War needs demanded maximum production of such vital materials as minerals, rubber, and vegetable oils. The whole area, moreover, had to achieve greater self-sufficiency in foodstuffs since military establishments often concentrated population within urban areas, and since shipping space for imported goods was scarce.

While Swinton was in a position to integrate the economic life of West Africa, it should not be supposed that before his arrival nothing had been done by the local governors to put their colonies on a war basis. In the Gold Coast, Governor Hodson, guided by the Dependency's experience of decreased revenue in World War I, cut all unnecessary items from the budget and raised import and export taxes. During this earlier war, lack of shipping space had greatly curtailed cocoa exports. Not only had the Dependency's revenue suffered as a result, but the cocoa farms had been seriously neglected and, the farmers' incomes being lessened, the whole economic and social life of the Gold Coast had been affected. This time the British government, in an effort to preserve normal conditions, decided to buy the entire cocoa produce of the Gold Coast and Nigeria for the duration of the war period. In the fall of 1939, with this end in view, a Cocoa Control Board under the Ministry of Food was set up in London. It agreed to buy all cocoa offered, at a minimum price which would be declared at the beginning of each new season. As it would have been impossible, on such short notice, to provide government buying agents, the board decided to license the commercial firms in each colony to buy cocoa in its name. Quotas were accordingly allocated to each company or trader on the basis of prewar performance. The agents were to buy the cocoa at the various trading centers, to grade, bag, and ship it to the ports; they were allowed expenses and a profit margin in accord with an agreed schedule. The control board sold the cocoa to overseas buyers, usually to government agencies, such as the British Ministry of Food and the United States Commercial Corporation.¹⁵

While the African farmers were grateful for a guaranteed market, they objected to the quota system and to the membership of the control board. According to the quota system, there were two types of buyers—B buyers, usually Africans who had dealt with only small quantities of cocoa in the prewar period, and A buyers, the big European firms who could now act directly as agents of the Board.

¹⁵ *Report on Cocoa Control in West Africa, 1939-1943 and Statement on Future Policy*, Cmd. 6554.

The A and B system was devised to permit the control to work with as small a personnel as possible, but since it gave the African or B shippers a right to buy only 11.8 percent of the crop while the A shippers were entitled to 88.2 or 250,000 tons, it caused much local criticism. New dealers, moreover, were excluded from the industry. There were complaints also regarding the personnel of the board, chiefly because John Cadbury was its chairman and his firm had been included in the so-called "cocoa pool" of 1937. The Africans believed that the new government board was merely a tool of their old enemies, the traditional firms, who two years before had tried to enforce the buying agreement that had been responsible for the economic boycott of that year.¹⁶ One African member of the legislative council expressed the general attitude when he said:¹⁷

. . . . the farmers are firmly of the opinion that the pool which existed a few years ago came to this Colony in a frock coat suit and it is the same pool which has [now] come through the back door dressed in a double-breasted suit.

As dissatisfaction with the cocoa policy continued, the African members presented a resolution against the existing arrangements at the 1940 spring session of the legislative council. Their criticisms may have somewhat influenced London for, though the quota system was not changed, the British government transferred the control board from the Ministry of Food to the colonial office and gave it a chairman who had no connection with the cocoa industry; it became known as the West African Cocoa Control Board, with a permanent secretary residing in one of the colonies so that he might be more closely in touch with local conditions.

The big exporting firms who held the majority of the cocoa-buying licenses were also, it will be remembered, the major importers to the Gold Coast. Most of these companies belonged to the Association of West African Merchants, the AWAM, as it was popularly called. Since shipping space was limited during the war, the Gold Coast government put imports as well as the cocoa exports on a quota basis according to the principle of past performance. Such a policy, of course, gave the majority of licenses to the AWAM group and this, too, became a source of irritation to the African traders. As supplies of imported goods became increasingly scarce, the local

¹⁶ See chapter v.

¹⁷ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1939, III, 70.

merchant found his share dwindling to almost nothing, and with it any hope of widening his business activities during the war period. It is probable, however, that if the government had not used the existing European companies with their strong commercial organization the efficient handling of both exports and imports would have broken down. This is especially true of cocoa, which requires large storage facilities while awaiting shipment. The whole problem of cocoa marketing is a vital one to Gold Coast economy, and the experience of wartime controls was to have a marked influence on postwar policy, as will be seen in a later chapter.

It has already been pointed out that Governor Hodson, fearing a long war with heavy expenses and a probable reduction of revenue, had initiated a financial policy of thrift. While he planned to give priority to war expenses and to maintain public services as near a prewar level as possible, he believed that development projects should be delayed until the coming of peace. In the fall of 1941, his extended term of office having been completed, he was replaced in the administration of the Gold Coast by Sir Alan Burns. The new governor shifted from Hodson's cautious financial policy to a somewhat bolder one. The acceleration of West Africa's economic life following the Japanese conquests helped to make this possible. A more fundamental reason may be found in the changed attitude which Great Britain was adopting at this time toward her colonial possessions. As this subject will be fully considered in chapter x, it is sufficient to state here that in 1940, Parliament passed a law providing that free grants up to £5,000,000 a year should be made to the dependent empire, in order to stimulate economic and social development. Each colony was to draw up its own plan for progress, and supplement its share of the imperial grant by funds from local revenue. After his first tour of the Dependency, Governor Burns decided not to wait until after the war to initiate the Gold Coast scheme, but to begin the most urgent requirements immediately. With this end in view he determined to introduce an income tax.¹⁸ Every previous attempt at direct taxation had aroused violent opposition from all sections of the Colony.¹⁹ This time, however, the announcement was received with less opposition and approved by the more thoughtful sections of public opinion. The poor man was not affected, as the lower income ranges would be exempt. The rates for those actually taxed were very moderate, being the lowest, with one exception, in the

¹⁸ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, I, 7.

¹⁹ See chapter v.

entire British Empire. Of the expected tax yield of £800,000, moreover, 70 per cent would come from non-African sources, since commercial companies which had previously been taxed only in the United Kingdom would now have to pay to the Gold Coast treasury five shillings out of every pound of profit.²⁰

But the finances for Gold Coast development schemes were to come not only from the new income tax and from British grants, but from the general colony revenue as well. The West African drive for maximum production urged on by Lord Swinton helped to increase this revenue by stimulating Gold Coast output. Later, speaking of this drive, the West African resident minister said:²¹

When the Japanese over-ran the Far East, products which we and our Allies had been accustomed to draw from there had to be replaced . . . for example the fat ration at home—so important for health—depended now on West Africa as never before. More groundnuts, more palm oil, and more palm kernels had to be produced—far more than in the best boom years of peace.

And again note that this production had to come, not from great estates but from the little holdings of millions of Africans. . . . Then there was the demand for rubber, again not from great plantations, but largely from trees scattered over thousands of miles of forest. Timber was needed as never before, both in the Colonies and for export. Cocoa . . . was still needed . . . The development of mineral resources attained a new importance and urgency—tin from Nigeria, manganese and bauxite from the Gold Coast . . .

In response to Lord Swinton's appeal for these raw materials the Gold Coast made greater efforts for production. The output of the large manganese mine at Nsuta was increased. Farther north, valuable bauxite deposits lay untouched for lack of cheap transportation to the coastal ports. The government now built the Dunkwa-Awaso spur to the main line of the Gold Coast railroad and started mining operations. The timber industry, a comparatively small one in pre-war days, was rapidly built up. Other essentials mentioned by Lord Swinton were rubber and vegetable oils. In the summer of 1942 the West African Cocoa Board became the West African Produce Board, widening the scope of its activities to include these needed materials as well. It took upon itself the task of stimulating production and co-ordinating buying and shipping processes in the

²⁰ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, II, 29 ff.

²¹ Quoted in *West Africa and the War*, p. 7.

British, Free French, and Belgian colonies. Since forced quotas are against the tenets of British colonial policy, the Board used the bait of higher prices as its principal method of encouraging the African farmers to increased output. In the Gold Coast this policy resulted in a quickening of the palm oil, copra, and rubber industries. One chief, for example, aroused enthusiasm in his state by offering a silver cup and a new robe to the headman of whichever division should produce the greatest quantity of palm kernels. School children, as well as their elders, joined in Swinton's treasure hunt for rubber which had to be tapped, not in great plantations but from isolated trees scattered over large forest areas. New products, such as kapok for life buoys, practically untouched in the Gold Coast before, were also gathered together in answer to war needs.

Closely allied to the great effort for the export of raw materials, was the endeavor to build up economic self-sufficiency. In order to save shipping space, both the Africans and the Europeans had to depend on local production for food supplies and, to a large extent, for clothing, household goods, and building materials as well. With regard to food, the situation was aggravated by the presence in the urban areas of large numbers of Allied army, navy, and air force personnel. In the Gold Coast the Department of Agriculture encouraged an increase in vegetable farming, cattle raising, and poultry keeping. New types of vegetables, notably the potato and the soya bean, were successfully introduced. Pig breeding and a government bacon factory, established for the needs of the armed forces, meant the start of a new industry which had a good future before it. Prior to the war it had been the agricultural department's aim to interest the cocoa producer in mixed farming, as a counterbalance to the Dependency's dangerous one-crop economy, so these new departures were all to the good. The situation also called for the development of several local industries, particularly those connected with building materials. Besides the lumber industry, satisfactory brick and tile factories were established. On the whole, great possibilities of post-war expansion were foreshadowed by these developments, both in local industry and in a balanced agricultural production. Speaking of the latter, Lord Swinton said:²²

. . . we've done a great deal to improve the lot of the farmer. He will always be the backbone of the country. We've given him firm prices. We've organised seed distribution. We've established collecting stations

²² *West Africa and the War*, p. 8.

at the most convenient points. We have encouraged improved quality and better processes. We have developed alternative crops—like rice and vegetables. We are encouraging co-operation wherever we go. And in all the Africans themselves in the Native Administration are playing a great part, and they're getting increased experience and responsibility all the time.

While the war effort greatly stimulated the economic life of the Gold Coast, it also led to inflationary tendencies. The concentration of European and African population in the urban areas, along with a shortage of imported goods, meant sharp price rises. With the appearance of a black market, the government supply department tried to keep prices within limits, but not always successfully. Government controls could not work as efficiently in the Gold Coast as in Britain, owing to primitive conditions in outlying areas, and to the lack of widespread commercial and retail institutions through which rationing could properly function. The cost of living rose 50 to 75 percent in some of the coastal areas and, to a lesser extent, throughout the Dependency. To meet this new situation the government set up, not only price controls, but also a cost-of-living commission to determine, from time to time, the amount of salary bonuses necessary for government employees. In general, wage rates increased, but certain sections of the population continued to suffer considerably from the high prices and from scarcity of goods.

If the war affected the economic life of the Gold Coast, it also made its influence felt in the political field as well. The Africans believed that their loyal support of the British Empire cause should bring them further political powers, and the demand for increased self-government, which had been growing during the 1930's, was now intensified. In certain fields the government met these demands during the war period itself, but the major changes did not come until after the peace. As a full treatment of this matter will be given in chapter x, it is sufficient to state here that in 1942 the political offices of the central government of the Dependency were finally opened to the Africans by the appointment of two of them as assistant district commissioners. In the same year, for the first time, the governor appointed Africans to his executive council.

Then, in 1943, new municipal ordinances permitted African majorities on the various town councils. Local government was also strengthened by laws which gave increased powers to the chiefs and provided for a more efficient administration. The biggest ad-

vance, a new constitution providing for an African majority on the legislative council, while promised in 1944 did not come into force until 1946.

Looking at the results of the war period as a whole, the estimate of the future will probably be that the Gold Coast gained more than it suffered.²⁸ The greatest loss has been in the casualties resulting from the Far Eastern campaigns, but even these were not large. Among the men serving in the army a large proportion had the opportunity of learning technical and clerical skills which will prove of immense value for the Gold Coast's peacetime development. For the Africans who remained at home, wartime staff shortages gave some opportunities for administrative positions in government and commercial fields. The need for raw materials and for local self-sufficiency expanded production, stimulated local industries, and led to a more balanced agricultural output. In physical equipment the Dependency has made vast gains through the wartime construction of large and up-to-date airfields, the development of Takoradi harbor, and the erection of buildings and other installations which were undertaken for military purposes but which have since become the property of the Gold Coast government.

To the quickening process brought about by the war in certain phases of economic and political development, can also be added the psychological effect which wider contacts with world affairs has had upon the West Africans. This influence, of course, made itself felt more in the urban and coastal areas and among the soldiers who served overseas than in the rural districts of the hinterland. The increased opportunities for technical and administrative training gave the Africans powers which resulted in a deeper self-confidence and determination to take more active part in their country's development. The presence of large groups of Allied service personnel in the Gold Coast, the visits of officials from the United Kingdom, the efforts of the information department and the British Council to acquaint the people, not only with the facts of the war, but with the idealism which lay behind it, all tended to increase a sense of empire solidarity and to widen the Africans' world outlook as well. The end of the war found the Gold Coast ready and impatient to make great advances in the peace era ahead.

²⁸ The results of the war on British West Africa are very ably discussed in an article by M. Fortes, an anthropologist who spent some time in this area during the war years. See "Impact of the War on British West Africa," *International Affairs*, XXI (1945), 206-19.

CHAPTER X

THE GOLD COAST AND THE NEW CONCEPT OF EMPIRE

World War II, as has been seen, had a marked influence on Gold Coast development. The increased activity caused by the conflict, however, was not the only factor which affected the Dependency at this time. Throughout all the colonies, a new concept of empire, but recently put forward by British statesmen, was quickening economic and social forces to a fuller life. The explanation of this attitude can be found largely in Britain's own economic needs, although the old nineteenth century altruism has always remained an influence in determining colonial policy.

Ever since the first World War, Britain's dominant position in overseas trade has been gradually weakened. A second World War and its economic repercussions in world markets forced the United Kingdom to look to the colonies for possible aid in her new need. The reasons for this are evident. England, since it is incapable of producing sufficient food for its large urban population, must depend on imports from abroad. To help balance these heavy imports, it has to export large quantities of manufactured goods to areas which are sufficiently prosperous to pay for them. But colonies which are not efficient producers, because their soil is poor, or their transportation systems undeveloped, or their peoples too primitive to use modern agricultural methods, are not in a position to buy very considerable amounts of British goods. If they are to become good markets these backward areas must be helped to develop a prosperous economic life.

When British trade began to fall off during the great Depression, Parliament took its first step toward a new policy of developing the colonial empire. By the Colonial Development Act of 1929 it agreed to give financial aid for certain capital expenditures which would "promote commerce with, or industry in the United Kingdom."¹ But this was just a timid beginning, nor did it depart from the old principle "that a colony should only have those services which it can afford to maintain out of its resources."² During the next decade it

¹ *Colonial Development and Welfare, Statement of Policy*, Cmd. 6175, 1940.

² *Ibid.*

became increasingly evident that these backward areas needed, not loans, but free grants, enabling them to undertake comprehensive plans of development and welfare. In 1940, Parliament accepted this new principle of free aid to the dependencies when it passed the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, authorizing an annual expenditure of up to five million pounds, over a ten-year period, for development and welfare. A yearly grant up to half a million pounds also provided for research into the important problems of the dependencies. According to the Parliamentary statement made at the time:³

. . . if full and balanced development is to be obtained, and if colonial governments are to be placed in a position to maintain administrative, technical, and social services at proper standards, some assistance from outside is necessary at this stage.

This assistance was, of course, only a fraction of what the desired colonial development would require. It was not meant, however, to provide permanent support, but merely to prime the pump, to stimulate local effort, so that eventually the dependencies, through increased productivity, could stand alone.

By the end of World War II the United Kingdom found its economic resources strained to the uttermost and its foreign trade badly out of balance, with essential imports far outweighing the possibility of export. Tariff barriers, foreign exchange problems, and the generally unsettled postwar conditions had lessened the number of prewar customers, so that markets in the colonial empire were more important to British overseas trade than ever before. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in 1945 Parliament passed a third Colonial Development and Welfare Act,⁴ increasing the amount to be spent in the empire in the next ten years to £120,000,000. Since much of the Far Eastern territory is no longer part of the British colonial empire, the African dependencies now hold a place of major importance and will therefore receive a large percent of this financial aid. West Africa is to have £30,000,000, while the Gold Coast's share is £3,500,000.

Economic progress is not the only aim of the London colonial office, however. The political development of the dependent peoples,

³ *Colonial Development and Welfare, Statement of Policy.*

⁴ *Colonial Development and Welfare Bill, House of Commons Sessional Papers, 1944-45, Bill No. 16.*

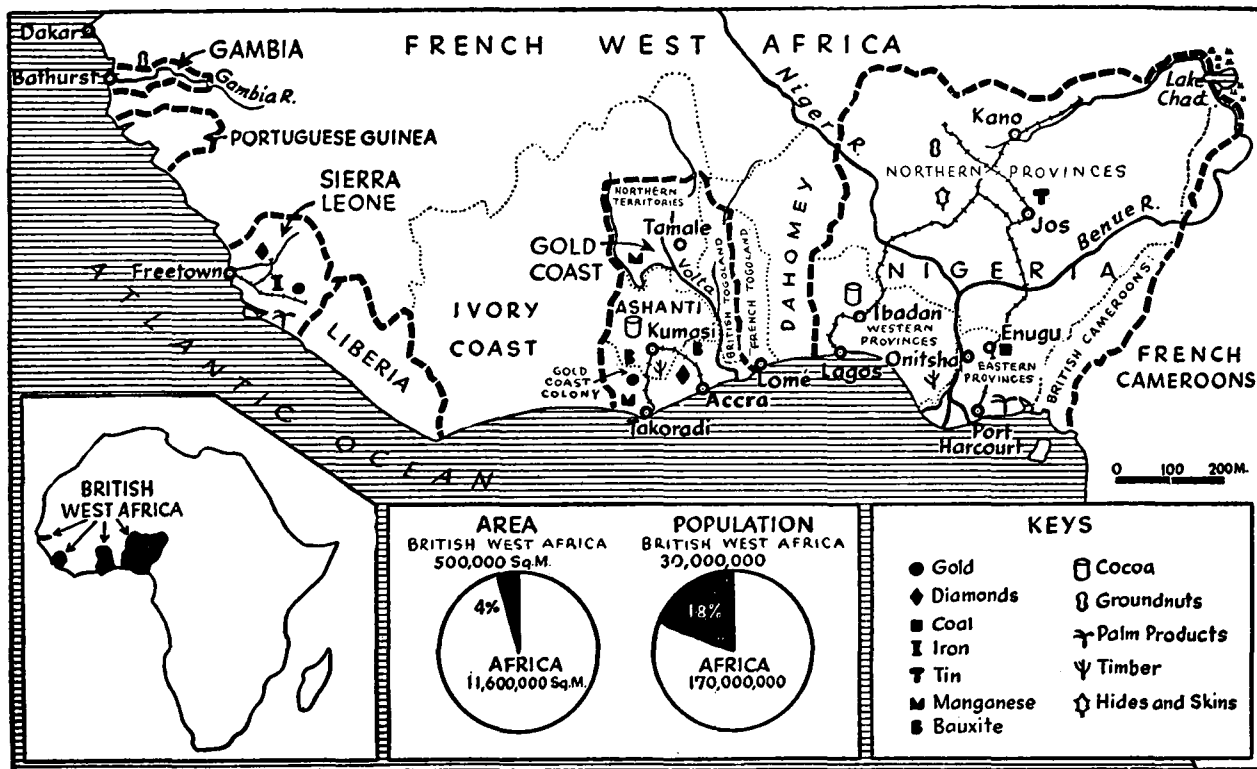
so that they can eventually govern themselves, has always been an avowed aim of British policy. The humanitarianism which inspired the anti-slavery and missionary efforts of the past is still a living force, demanding that the backward races be aided in their progress to political and economic maturity. Besides these idealistic motives, it is just good sense to realize that nonself-governing peoples will be a hindrance rather than a help toward a peaceful world if their legitimate political aspirations are not realized. In Britain's new concept of empire, an acceleration of constitutional as well as economic and social development, has therefore been included.

In addition to new developments of Britain's own colonial policy there have also been recent changes of world opinion as a whole toward the dependent areas. During the war years especially much discussion went on concerning this point, and few schemes for postwar Utopias failed to mention the problem of the billion backward peoples. Some planners suggested international control of all nonself-governing areas, but this solution found little favor among experienced administrators. Many believe that it would be unwise to break down the mutually advantageous relationships which often exist between experienced colonial powers and their dependencies. After much discussion at the San Francisco Conference, the United Nations finally agreed on aims and objectives to be adopted for the development of nonself-governing areas. Except for trusteeships, which have already been considered in connection with British Togoland, colonial territories were to remain under national rather than international control. The members of the United Nations who are responsible for their administration however:⁵

. . . . recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost, within the system of international peace and security established by the present Charter, the well-being of the inhabitants of these territories.

The administering powers agree further to promote political, social, economic, and educational advancement, and to develop self-government. They undertake to transmit regularly to the Secretary-General information relating to conditions in their dependent areas. With reference to constructive measures of colonial development

⁵ *Charter of the United Nations*, chapter xi, "Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories," Article 73.



GRAPHIC ASSOCIATES

The four colonies of British West Africa

the powers also agree "to encourage research, and to co-operate with one another and . . . with specialized international bodies with a view to the practical achievement of the social, economic and scientific purposes set forth in this article."⁶

In connection with this last point, the co-operation of the various colonial powers with one another for the practical achievement of their colonial purposes, the term "regionalism" had come into use. It refers to the voluntary collaboration of all those concerned with a definite area, not only the administering powers but also other states having major economic or strategic interests therein.⁷ The Allies had learned by actual experience during the war years how valuable such regional co-operation could be. In West Africa, for example, Lord Swinton, the British resident minister, with the assistance of his own and of Free French and Belgian officials, had been able to co-ordinate the strategic and economic activities of the whole area toward an efficient prosecution of the war effort.

In view of the successful collaboration which the West African resident minister had achieved, there were some who suggested an amalgamation of all four British colonies into a single unit. Neither Lord Swinton nor the local officials nor the majority of the Africans favored this plan.⁸ The various territories are not only widely separated but differ in language, traditions, and outlook. Those most closely concerned believed that regional collaboration would be sufficient.⁹ Such association would make possible common purposes and methods for the establishment of better communications and health services, for the solution of agricultural and commercial problems, and for the general economic and social development of the entire West African territory. In the fall of 1945 when the Labour Party came into power, the government decided to continue the

⁶ *Charter of the United Nations*.

⁷ In 1943 the Colonial Secretary, Colonel Oliver Stanley, announced in the House of Commons that the British government had accepted the policy of voluntary regional collaboration. *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, CCCXCI, 142-43.

⁸ *African World*, October 7, 1944, p. 2; March 3, 1945, p. 134. A. A. Nwafor Orizu, *Without Bitterness: Western Nations in Post-War Africa* (New York, 1944), pp. 234-40; *West Africa*, January 26, 1946, p. 57.

⁹ Although the union of the four British West African colonies would probably not be desirable, there would be many advantages in a federation of the entire West African area. The various linguistic groups could retain local autonomy but unite within a federal framework as a sort of United States of West Africa. Such a union would solve many political and economic problems. See Derwent Whittlesley, "Reshaping the Map of West Africa," *Geographical Aspects of International Relations* (Chicago, 1938).

policy of regionalism, replacing the resident minister, however, by a West African council composed of the four British governors and presided over by the secretary of state for the colonies, or some other official from the colonial office. This council was to meet in the Gold Coast, as the most central of the colonies, several times a year for the purpose of discussing problems common to the entire area. A permanent secretariat would provide continuity. The new body convened for the first time in January 1946. Such regional affairs as the development of civil aviation, the demobilization of servicemen, and means for combating cocoa diseases were among the topics discussed.¹⁰ Certain permanent organizations have already been set up on a regional rather than a colonial basis, such as the West African Institute of Industries, Arts and Social Science; the West African Cocoa Research Institute; and the West African Air Transport Authority, whose purpose is to develop an intercolonial air service. There is evidence that this new type of regional organization is more efficient than the purely local institutions for fields where collaboration is possible, and it is very probable that it will be used increasingly for the development of this area.

West African regional association has not been confined to the British colonies only, but as suggested in the United Nations Charter, it has developed into international collaboration as well. In the winter of 1946, for example, an Anglo-French medical conference with observers from the Belgian, Portuguese, and Liberian territories of West Africa, was held in Accra¹¹ where arrangements were made for a system of practical co-operation in public health and medical work, especially by mutual efforts against diseases common to border areas. Whenever helpful, research facilities are to be pooled, and technical personnel exchanged. A more far-reaching factor in this new intercolonial co-operation is the liaison which has recently been arranged among the Belgian, French, and British colonial services, by which experiences can be shared and colonial officers exchanged for training courses in the other countries concerned.

The new concept of empire which was influencing both British colonial policy, as evidenced in the Colonial Development Act, and the international attitude, as seen in the United Nations Charter,

¹⁰ *Gold Coast Observer*, February 1, 1946; *Gold Coast Bulletin*, January 30, 1946.

¹¹ British Information Services, *The British Colonial Empire in 1946*, p. 5; *Gold Coast Bulletin*, December 4, 1946; *The Economist*, May 24, 1947.

had results, of course, in the actual administration of the dependent areas themselves. In the Gold Coast the efforts to apply new policy begin very definitely with the administration of Governor Sir Alan Burns. Sir Alan was appointed to succeed Governor Hodson in the fall of 1941 but several months' stay in Nigeria as its acting governor delayed his full assumption of executive responsibility until the following year. From the very beginning the Africans were impressed by the character and determination of this man whose administration was to prove one of the most beneficial which the Gold Coast has ever known. While Britain's new colonial policy and the progress incident to the war set the stage for marked Gold Coast development, Governor Burns's broad outlook, his steady purpose, and his confidence in the Gold Coast African's splendid qualities were in no small degree responsible for the achievements of the 1942-1947 period.

As a result of his first tour through the Dependency, Sir Alan Burns, in spite of wartime difficulties, made definite plans for prompt attention to the Gold Coast's most urgent problems. His first budget address to the legislative council¹² in February 1943 won an enthusiastic response from the Africans. The native press declared it "the first address of action by a determined and pushful governor since the palmy days of Guggisberg," and "that here at last is a Governor after our own hearts."¹³

During the six years of his administration Sir Alan Burns worked persistently at plans which would make effective this early expressed aim for the development of the Gold Coast. At the fall session of the legislative council he explained his first schemes for the Colony's most urgent needs in the fields of education and health.¹⁴ The next year he issued a sessional paper outlining a general five-year development plan which covered practically every phase of the social and economic life of the Gold Coast.¹⁵ At that time the Colonial Development Act provided only for a £5,000,000 annual grant to be divided among all the areas of the dependent empire. This first Gold Coast plan, then, asked for but limited aid from the British treasury. It envisaged a total expenditure of about £5,000,000 to

¹² Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, I.

¹³ *Gold Coast Observer*, March 12, 1942.

¹⁴ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, II, 7 ff.; *Development Schemes*, Sessional Paper No. 1, 1943.

¹⁵ *General Plan for the Development of the Gold Coast*, Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1944. Hereafter cited as *1944 Development Plan*.

be paid for, except for the imperial grant of £1,000,000, from the Dependency's surplus funds.

By 1946, however, improved financial conditions permitted a more ambitious plan, this time on a ten-year basis and involving the expenditure of over £10,000,000. By the second Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945, the Gold Coast was to receive a grant of three and a half million pounds. During the war, moreover, local revenue had expanded, owing to increased economic production and to the introduction of an income tax. By 1946 the Gold Coast reserves amounted to over £7,000,000, while annual revenue was averaging between five and six million pounds.¹⁶ This sound financial situation, though due in part to the impossibility of large development works during the war period, allowed for a progressive postwar policy. No detailed schemes for the ten-year plan were published during this period, though its general lines were indicated. Governor Burns believed that the new legislative council, which would be elected under the 1946 constitution, should not be committed ahead of time to completely prepared development projects. General proposals for financing the plan were made, however, and they showed the trend which the Dependency was following. They were as follows: ¹⁷ £3,500,000 from the Colonial Development Fund; £4,000,000 from a government loan; £2,500,000 to £3,000,000 from Gold Coast reserve funds.

Much of the development envisaged by the first five-year plan was to have been carried out immediately, but wartime shortages of both staff and materials held up many projects and continued to do so even in the postwar period. Nevertheless, one can indicate the general lines of development provided for, and describe those schemes in which it was possible to make a beginning.

The 1944 plan states that one of the most urgent Gold Coast needs was for rehousing, especially in the larger towns where war-time activities led to a concentration of population. In Accra, rehousing schemes were begun in 1939 after the earthquake of that year had damaged many homes. In 1943 a four-year plan involving an expenditure of £800,000 was begun for the towns of Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi. This scheme called for the erection of very inexpensive but well-built houses made to a great extent of local

¹⁶ "Financial Balance Sheet of the Gold Coast for August, 1946," *Gold Coast Gazette*, February 8, 1947.

¹⁷ Governor's Address to the Legislative Council, March 12, 1946.

materials. Closely connected with this effort was a town-planning scheme. In 1943 a British architect, Maxwell Fry, was appointed to the resident minister's staff in order to supervise modern town planning in all four British colonies. He prepared blueprints for the future development of Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi. In addition to his work, a general Town and Country Planning Board, with both European and African members was inaugurated. Provision for local boards was also made so that both village development and rehousing schemes could be under the guidance of trained experts.

The use of local building materials in these rehousing schemes brings up the question of Gold Coast industry. It will be remembered that during the 1930's there had been much complaint among the Africans because the Dependency's one-sided export economy was not balanced by the introduction of domestic industry.¹⁸ There was an annual import of something like a million pounds worth of goods which probably could have been produced locally.

During the war imports were scarce and for the first time the government undertook to encourage industries. In 1943 a £127,000 grant from the Colonial Development Fund financed the establishment of the West African Institute of Industries, Arts and Social Science. Its purpose was:

. . . . to conduct research and experiment in secondary industries and the training of Africans for management of these industries, together with the connected sociological and economic investigations necessary for determining the conditions in which local industries can be developed.¹⁹

While the Institute was intended for all the British West African colonies, it was centered, as were the other intercolonial offices, in the Gold Coast. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Mr. Herman Meyerowitz, investigations were made concerning the revival or modernization of native crafts and the possible establishment of new industries. The Institute fostered among other things tile, brick, and pottery manufacturing in the Gold Coast, and cotton-textile weaving in Togoland. Though the death of Meyerowitz in 1945 brought the Institute to a standstill, it may be revived eventually in one of the future West African universities.

Another war development was that of the Gold Coast timber

¹⁸ See chapter viii.

¹⁹ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1943, II, 3; Ordinance 13 of 1944.

industry. Both local building and export demands stimulated production. By 1946 export had increased to over four million cubic feet of timber, with the promise of further expansion as soon as sufficient transport, harbor and shipping facilities are available.²⁰

These timber, brick, and tile industries are helping to stimulate local building trades and furniture manufacture. The example of a model estate recently constructed in Kumasi to house 760 persons can be cited. The homes are built largely of domestic materials at half the normal import cost and on assembly lines created on the spot.²¹ The fishing and fruit-canning industries have also received government encouragement. There are possibilities and a very real need for the further development of these established industries as well as of new ones. For this purpose the government inaugurated in 1945 an Industrial Development Board. Referring to it in his 1946 address to the legislative council, Governor Burns said that the board was "in a position to consider applications for assistance (plant, technical advice or finance) that any industrial enterprise may present" and that it was "the Government's policy to develop local African manufacturing industries."²²

In spite of official support, however, African industry has a long way yet to go. There is need both for large amounts of capital and for men trained in modern technological and commercial practices. The Africans feel, moreover, that they have little chance of success if they are not protected from the competition of the powerful European import firms. It is clear that there is place for both European imports and local products and that, given the proper technical aid, government encouragement, and a fuller use of co-operative societies, a sound foundation for secondary industries can be laid.

The general development scheme included plans for strengthening existing co-operative societies and for spreading this movement throughout the Dependency. To this end a Department of Co-operation was set up in 1944 and an experienced officer appointed as Registrar of Co-operative Societies. The government proposed to convert the existing marketing societies into general-purpose co-operatives "for thrift, credit, purchase and sale, and generally for rural development."²³ In urban areas both thrift and consumers' co-

²⁰ *G.C. An. Report, 1946*, Appendix 1. ²¹ *African Affairs*, XLV (1946), 4.

²² Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 12, 1946; *Gold Coast Bulletin*, January 22, 1947.

²³ *1944 Development Plan*, Section 10.

operatives were encouraged, as well as local processing societies for both urban and rural sections. The British believe that through such united action, the Africans can build up strong organizations which will stimulate local development and put them in a position to compete with well-established European firms. This movement, while successful in certain areas—Kumasi, for example, has a co-operative union which includes forty-two affiliated societies—has not been understood by the illiterate peasants, and many Africans do not yet appreciate its possibilities for furthering economic stability.

Another section of the development plans called for an increase in the activities of the Labour Department. It will be recalled that the Gold Coast had established in 1938 the first Labour Department of any West African colony;²⁴ the department, which includes four European and six African officials, strongly supports the movement for trade unionism and collective bargaining. Since the passing of the Trade Union Ordinance of 1941, nineteen unions have been registered with a membership of approximately 10,000, and this is in spite of the fact that it is difficult to develop unionism in a colonial area where educated leadership among the workers is often lacking. The department's policy is not to rush registration but rather to wait until the members are educated in the principles of unionism and until the association is sufficiently representative of all the members. These two movements for co-operative societies and trade unionism may help to prevent the economic and social abuses which so often develop along with modern industrialism.

Plans for rural as well as urban improvements are also being made, principally through modernized agricultural and stock-raising methods and better marketing facilities.²⁵ Shortage of staff which has been especially acute in the agricultural department, has hindered the implementation of many of the schemes, the more so as these officers have also been burdened with the gigantic task of clearing diseased cocoa areas. These delays are particularly unfortunate in view of the fact that the Gold Coast's future depends far more on agricultural than on industrial development. A definite and far-seeing agricultural plan must be carried through if, as the Africans love to put it, the goose which lays the golden eggs is to be saved.

²⁴ Ordinance 13 of 1941; British Information Services, *Some Facts About Labour in the British Colonial Empire*, March 1947.

²⁵ 1944 *Development Plan*, Sections 12-18; Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 144; *Report on the Department of Agriculture*, 1945-1946.

The most serious of the Dependency's agricultural problems is that of cocoa, both as to production and to marketing. During the war all marketing, as has been seen, was in the hands of the West African Produce Control Board. While the Africans appreciated the government's guarantee to buy the entire crop, there had been much criticism of the low price paid and of the buying system which allocated the majority of licenses to European firms. In 1944 the British government presented a command paper to Parliament outlining plans for the new organization which would control cocoa marketing in the postwar period.²⁶ The scheme, which did not greatly differ from that of the war period except that the board would be under the colonial rather than the British government, envisaged the establishment of machinery in the Gold Coast and Nigeria to purchase the entire cocoa crop, to prescribe prices to be paid to producers, and to be responsible for sales. Its main objective was to protect the African producers from the unfair competition and fluctuating prices which had characterized the prewar market and, by encouraging co-operative practice among the producers, to press on with the task of fitting the cocoa farmer to assume marketing responsibilities as soon as possible. This new plan met with much criticism from American and British chocolate manufacturers and from some African traders who stood to lose the profits of their prewar activities as middlemen between local producers and European countries.²⁷ Because of the widespread dissatisfaction over the cocoa white paper, the colonial office made a study of the criticisms and of alternative proposals submitted by interested persons and organizations. In November 1946 it submitted a second report to Parliament²⁸ which stated that the 1944 marketing plan would be retained since none of the alternative proposals offered so good a chance of stabilizing the cocoa industry as did the original one. The report included the plan by which local marketing boards would be set up in October 1947 in both the Gold Coast and Nigeria. The scheme for the Gold Coast Board, which was to be submitted to the legislative council in the March 1947 session, provided for:

²⁶ *Report on Cocoa Control in West Africa, 1939-1943 and Statement of Future Policy*, Cmd. 6554, 1944.

²⁷ See, for example: *The Economist*, March 24, 1945; *Empire Journal of the Fabian Colonial Bureau*, VIII (May-June, 1945), 5-8; *New York Journal of Commerce*, November 1, 1944.

²⁸ *Statement on Future Marketing of West African Cocoa*, Cmd. 6950, 1946.

A Board of 10 members comprising four persons to be nominated by the Governor of whom one would be nominated to be Chairman and would possess a casting as well as an original vote; two representatives of the producers to be nominated by the Governor on the recommendations respectively of the Joint Provincial Council of the Colony and the Ashanti Confederacy Council; two members to be nominated respectively by the Joint Provincial Council and the Ashanti Confederacy Council; one member to be nominated by the Chambers of Commerce in the Gold Coast; and one member to be nominated by cocoa manufacturers with buying establishments in the Gold Coast.²⁹

This report which was not published till November 1946 was in general well received by the Gold Coast Africans. The joint provincial council and other leaders realize the need of some sort of control to prevent a return to the "insane competition" of the prewar period. There was opposition, however, toward loading the board with government appointees, and attempts during the 1947 legislative council discussion of the bill to increase African representation, were anticipated.³⁰

The British policy of cocoa-marketing control has been criticized both on the grounds that it may constitute an international trade barrier and that the Board has made excessive profits. In answer to the first charge the 1946 government report includes the statement that these marketing proposals

aim neither at the creation of State monopolies nor at the exercise by the West African cocoa producing territories of a dominating influence in the world cocoa market.³¹

The paper further points out that while a producer-operated scheme would probably solve the present marketing difficulties, nevertheless it is "impracticable to expect the African cocoa-farmer to operate such a scheme unaided at the present."³² One American writer speaks

²⁹ *Op. cit.*, cmd. 6950, p. 5.

³⁰ Criticism of the control policy has continued in both England and the United States. During the war the United States government set a ceiling price of 9 cents a pound on raw cocoa beans. The West African Control Board sold all cocoa for British manufacturers to the Ministry of Food who retailed it in turn at the same price as prevailed in the United States. The Ministry of Food continued this policy after October 1946, when the cessation of the O.P.A. sent American cocoa prices rising to about 20 cents a pound. For recent discussions of this problem see, for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 437, cols. 1640-1675; *World Report*, January 28, 1947; *Reports of the New York Cocoa Exchange*, 1946-1947.

³¹ *Op. cit.*, cmd. 6950, p. 4.

³² *Ibid.*

of this cocoa-marketing problem as a field in which two principles of colonial trusteeship appear in conflict, namely, that of granting equal access to world raw materials and that of protecting natives from exploitation.⁸³ Given the great inequality of resources between the African producers and European buyers, this is perhaps a case in which some degree of official control is justified.

Another criticism against the cocoa control board is concerned with its accumulated profits⁸⁴ which amounted to over £20,000,000 by 1946. Since the West African Produce Control Board, as constituted from 1939–1946, was a British rather than a Gold Coast government agency, this is not the place to consider in detail the history of its policy. Two facts directly connected with the Gold Coast producer, however, should be pointed out in connection with this surplus. Though the price paid during the war to the African farmer was fairly low, it was often as high and sometimes higher than that received during the 1933–1939 period. Moreover, the producer was certainly better off with the government purchase guarantee than he would have been if the marketing control had not been set up. In addition, the profits of the board are to be used for the benefit of the African cocoa farmer. The greater part of this accumulated surplus is to serve as an equalization fund to cushion fluctuations of the world market price of cocoa and to maintain a steady purchase policy. Some of the profits will also be allocated for other purposes of general benefit to the producers and to the industry, "such as research, disease eradication and rehabilitation, the amelioration of indebtedness, the encouragement of co-operation and the provision of other amenities and facilities to producers."⁸⁵

In addition to these marketing problems, the production problem caused by the disease, swollen shoot, has also to be considered. The virus causing this disease had affected, according to 1946 estimates, over 100,000 acres, with the result that whereas formerly the Gold Coast crop totaled 250,000 to 300,000 tons it was then reduced to less than 190,000 tons with a consequent annual loss of from £5,000,000 to £6,000,000. In 1938 the agricultural department opened a research station at New Tafo to study the cause and possible remedies of swollen shoot and other prevalent cocoa diseases. Six

⁸³ Keith Hutchison, *Rival Partners; America and Britain in the Postwar World* (New York, 1946), pp. 168–69.

⁸⁴ *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 437, col. 1666.

⁸⁵ *Op. cit.*, cmd. 6950, p. 6.

years later the station was taken over by the West African Cocoa Research Institute, an intercolonial agency supported by imperial funds, with an enlarged staff of technical experts entirely devoted to the urgent problem of saving the West African cocoa industry.⁸⁶ Since the scientists at New Tafo had not yet discovered by 1946 a remedy against the disease, the Gold Coast government decided to proceed with the drastic measure of cutting out all affected trees. While the Institute is still endeavoring to find a preventive for the disease, it is also directing its research at the long-term aspects of rehabilitation by experimenting with various soils and by seeking for strains of cocoa resistant to the disease.

Many of the African producers, having become discouraged by the prospects of the industry, do not want to replant the farms. In the fall of 1946 the urgency of the situation led the government to establish a cocoa survey section in the agricultural department which would be responsible for the prosecution of a campaign for control and replanting of devastated areas. Only decisive action can now save this industry to which the rapid economic development of the Gold Coast can in large measure be attributed.

To conclude the economic provisions of the Gold Coast development plan, mention should also be made of the schemes for increased roads, harbor and air service facilities, for geological research, for the expansion of water supplies and electric plants. Most of these projects, however, have been either partially or completely held up by current shortages. Preliminary surveys have also been made by a South African firm for a projected aluminum plant to be established near the bauxite deposits of the Volta area. Such a project, if it materializes, will include the development of hydroelectric power on the Volta, and of a port, at its outlet on the Gulf of Guinea.

These general plans also make provision for extended social services, especially in the fields of health and education. As there is an urgent need for increased hospital facilities, a 500-bed central hospital for Ashanti and the Northern Territories is to be established at Kumasi as soon as building materials and equipment are available. Accra already has an excellent central hospital, and the large new hospital in the Takoradi-Sekondi area which was used by the military during the war has been returned to the local authorities. In addition, the plan calls for fourteen more district hospitals,

⁸⁶ West African Cocoa Research Institute, *Annual Report, April 1944-March 1945*; *Gold Coast Bulletin*, November 20, 1946.

for a mental hospital constructed on modern lines to replace the present unsatisfactory one, for financial aid to proposed missionary leper settlements, for the establishment of a school medical service, and for both curative and preventive campaigns against diseases prevalent on the Gold Coast. As both medical and nursing staffs are prerequisites of such expansion, the plan envisages increased government medical scholarships and the provision of training schools for nurses. Malnutrition being widespread in the Dependency, plans were also made in conjunction with other departments concerned for the extension of the fishing and livestock industries and for a trial at dairying.

Of all the phases of Gold Coast development, none is probably more important than that of education. The 1944 plan, following a report submitted by the 1937-1941 educational survey committee,⁸⁷ proposed in general to expand primary and secondary school facilities, to provide for more teacher-training colleges, and to develop a system for increasing adult literacy. In addition to the help given by the Colonial Development Fund, the Gold Coast government augmented grants both for capital works and for recurrent expenditure,⁸⁸ the latter increasing from £216,072 in 1940 to over £500,000 in 1946. In the primary field there was great need for expansion as only about 15 percent of the Dependency's children were actually in school.⁸⁹ In order to encourage the Africans in this matter, the government recently began to give financial assistance to satisfactory Native Administration schools. This policy has been successful and there are now some excellent schools of this type. Increased aid was also given to secondary schools, and plans made for more teacher-training colleges. During this period the government opened a training school in Tamale to prepare inhabitants of the Northern Territories as teachers for their own schools. The government also inaugurated not only a Central Education Committee but also district committees composed of both African and European members whose aim was to encourage educational expansion. A most friendly spirit of co-operation has marked the work of the European missionaries, the Africans, and the government officials on these boards.

In order to increase adult literacy the governor appointed a com-

⁸⁷ *Gold Coast Education Committee Report, 1937-1941* (Accra, 1941).

⁸⁸ Governor's Address to Gold Coast Teachers' Union, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, January 29, 1947.

⁸⁹ *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655.

mittee to make plans according to the Laubach mass education system which is being successfully applied in many parts of the British Empire.⁴⁰ With the same end in view, mobile moving picture units were sent into rural districts to show educational films. In 1946 a library was opened in Accra from which it is planned to send out small traveling lending libraries to these same country areas.

The 1944 plan made no provision for expansion of higher education, since in the preceding year the British government had appointed a commission to study the whole question of college and university education in West Africa. This body, generally known as the Elliot Commission, included in its membership educationists, members of Parliament, and Africans from the three colonies of Sierra Leone, Nigeria, and the Gold Coast. Having made a survey of West Africa it prepared a general report which appeared in 1945 and which stated that "the extension of higher education, and of university development, in West Africa, is urgent."⁴¹ Since the members of the commission, however, were divided in their opinion as to the methods to be employed for realizing this purpose, the report included one statement signed by the majority of the members and another by the minority group. The majority report advocated that the existing colleges in Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and Nigeria should be developed to university standing, whereas the minority report favored the concentration of resources, for some years at least, on a single West African university to be located in Nigeria. Mr. Korsah, the Gold Coast African member of the commission, signed the majority report (as did the other African members), and in this he was fully supported by local public opinion. When the secretary of state for colonial affairs announced his preference for the minority report, the people of the Gold Coast became more determined than ever that the full development of Achimota to the rank of a university college should not be hindered in favor of a general West African university. Discussions as to the merits of the two reports continued both in the United Kingdom and in the colonies concerned. In August 1946 Governor Burns appointed a committee which included some of the Gold Coast's most distinguished leaders to study the whole question of the colony's higher education. In the following October, Dr. Frederick Nanka-Bruce, one of the members, outlined the general findings of the committee in a radio address to the Gold Coast

⁴⁰ Colonial Office, No. 186, *Mass Education in African Society* (London, 1944).

⁴¹ *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655.

public.⁴² He stated that the committee believed the Gold Coast should eventually have its own university college on a site separate from Achimota, which would remain a secondary school. Owing to construction difficulties, however, it would be necessary to use the Achimota buildings until new ones would be available. In the meantime, the intermediate courses at Achimota should be developed to a degree level as quickly as possible. As for the college courses for which Achimota had no facilities, such as medicine, agriculture, and forestry, local students should avail themselves of those given in Nigeria until the Gold Coast institution was further developed. He concluded by reminding his audience that plans must be practical, since it was urgently necessary to provide trained African men and women to carry out the big tasks of development which lie ahead of this country.⁴³

The address was well received by the Gold Coast public which was prepared to bear the greater part of the expense involved in developing Achimota to a degree level. This strong and united public opinion was largely instrumental in influencing the secretary of state for the colonies finally to give his consent,⁴⁴ early in 1947, for the establishment of a Gold Coast university college.

While this new institution is gradually getting under way, there is urgent need for highly trained African men and women to carry out the Dependency's development plans. To meet this need, the government, with the aid of imperial funds, has greatly increased the number of scholarships for professional and technical training in British universities. In 1946, besides many privately supported scholars, there were over one hundred Gold Coast students in the United Kingdom holding government scholarships for such subjects as medicine, education, and science.⁴⁵

The progress made by the Gold Coast during the 1939-1946 period was not confined to social and economic development only, but included marked advances in the political field as well. The most important of these was the step which finally realized the Colony's long cherished hope for an African majority on the legislative council. The new constitution of 1946 gave the Gold Coast the signal honor of being the first African dependency to reach this stage of political development. Before discussing this matter, however, the improvements in local and municipal government should be consid-

⁴² *Gold Coast Bulletin*, October 23, 1946.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 1947.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

ered. It was this less spectacular but more fundamental progress which made the great achievement of the new constitution possible. During the years 1939–1946 the government passed several new laws which were designed to increase the efficiency of the native administrations. The first of these was the 1939 treasury ordinance which encouraged the various states to inaugurate a system of direct local taxation and to place their finances on a sounder basis, so that social and economic improvements might be undertaken. Though response was rather slow in the beginning, by 1946 practically all the native administrations had set up modernized treasuries and were spending, together with the municipalities, over £850,000 a year. Besides the treasury bill, there was need for other ordinances which would be concerned with the problem of the African courts and with the whole field of local government, since the 1927 Native Administration bill had by now become antiquated. Consequently, in 1943, Governor Burns appointed a committee including such outstanding African leaders as Nana Sir Ofori Atta and the former legislative councilor, Mr. Kobina Korsah, to study the field in preparation for this legislation.

The government hoped that it would be possible to work out new laws which, while being agreeable to the chiefs and the people, would also provide solutions to the many problems of the Native Administrations. These problems have already been considered at some length,⁴⁶ but it will be remembered that one of the fundamental difficulties arose from the dissatisfaction of the educated classes, especially the younger men, with the inefficiency of local government. More modern methods were needed in the administrative, the financial, and the judicial fields. The 1939 law had already provided for better treasuries; the 1944 Courts Ordinance was planned to improve the tribunals, and the 1944 Native Authority Ordinance was to take care of the more general problems of administrative practice. Leaving the Courts Ordinance for later consideration, we may first give some attention to the various objectives of the Native Authority Ordinance. Its most important clause is probably that which declares that the governor may name as the Native Authority in a specified area any one of the following categories:⁴⁷ any chief and native council, any native council, any group of native councils, any group of chiefs and native councils; and he could, moreover, "direct

⁴⁶ See chapters iv and v.

⁴⁷ Ordinance 21 of 1944, Clause 3.

that any Native Authority shall be subordinate in such manner as he may deem fit to any other Native Authority."

The reason for this very detailed item is that it left the governor free, in case of a prolonged stool dispute or of other disorders, to provide for local government by appointing a native council or group of councils, to be responsible for administration until a chief was elected. It further permitted him to group a number of chiefs into one Native Authority where the state divisions were so small that social and economic improvements could not be undertaken practically without a central treasury. As the Colony area of the Dependency included sixty-three different states, which in turn had many subdivisions, the wisdom of some sort of federation was evident. Many of the Africans criticized this clause until it was explained that no grouping would subordinate one paramount chief to another and that none of the federated chiefs would lose domestic control in their own areas. The ordinance, in addition, goes into much detail concerning the various problems of local government but it can be said in general that, while it strengthened the chiefs by giving them increased administrative powers, it also put the governor in a better position than he had formerly been to prevent abuses.

The bill, according to custom, was first submitted to the joint provincial council so that the chiefs might have an opportunity of discussing it among themselves and of explaining it to their subjects before it was laid before the legislative council. The chiefs, while suggesting several amendments, accepted the bill in principle, but some of the educated class, supported by sections of the African press, opposed the ordinance, principally on the grounds that it gave the governor too much authority, that the new powers of the chiefs were against customary law, and that they did not contribute to self-government.⁴⁸ During the legislative council session the municipal members argued strongly against the bill. This disagreement is an evidence that the intelligentsia still fear that the traditional ruler, strengthened by European backing, may become autocratic or subservient to government officials.

After the arguments had gone on for some time, Governor Burns finally intervened, pointing out the inconsistency of those who wanted to see the country develop and yet who objected to giving the chiefs the power to do it.

⁴⁸ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, II, 19 ff.

If the people of this country want to keep their Chiefs and their native customary laws as museum pieces, to be put under glass cases to be looked at, then I believe this legislation is unnecessary, but if we want to make some progress in the Colony and want to see that progress maintained, then I think it is necessary to give the Chiefs power to deal with modern conditions I am most anxious to see the Native Administrations take their full share in the government of this country because I believe that indirect rule by Government through the Native Authorities is the best training ground for the self-government which we are aiming at. . . . I am anxious to give Native Administrations as much power and responsibility as possible, but I am most certainly not going to give this power and responsibility unless some power remains with me to see that they carry out their duties properly.⁴⁹

The bill was then passed, in spite of the objections made by the three municipal delegates, as the Native Authority Ordinance of 1944, and went into effect along with the native courts bill on April 1, 1945. As a result of these three bills concerning native administration, treasuries, and courts, local government began to show considerable improvement. There was a vital interest in providing public utilities and in establishing native administration schools. For many years the chiefs had been asking for a share of central government funds for financing their local development programs. Now that the governor had more control over the native administration, he announced in the spring council session of 1945 that government grants would now be made to native states. The total grant to be made to each Native Authority is not to exceed the amount collected by that authority in direct taxation in the preceding financial year or spent by that authority on approved development works from its own resources, whichever is the lesser. This new arrangement is acting as a spur to increasing the revenue of the various Native Authorities.

Governor Burns's speeches, made after the passing of these new laws, often expressed his satisfaction for the improvements which had been made in local government. He spoke in 1946 of the benefits which resulted from the amalgamation of small states into larger units.

The single large native authority resulting from such a confederacy is infinitely stronger and more useful to the people than a number of small native authorities could possibly have been.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 1946; *G.C. An. Report*, 1946, pp. 98-99, 127.

On the same occasion he reported that the judiciary ordinance had also proved successful. This bill⁵¹ did much to remove the abuses which had often been connected with the former African tribunals. It wisely disassociated the paramount chiefs, as they had asked, from the judicial function, and provided that each Native Authority should recommend to the governor a number of competent persons from which a judicial panel could be formed. The new courts thus established were graded A, B, C, D; the more important ones having increased jurisdiction. No state was allowed one of these courts unless its finances were regulated by an approved native treasury system which could then prevent the old practice of exorbitant court fees. Regulations, which gave a judicial adviser powers of review and a certain amount of control and which raised the standards for registrars, greatly helped to improve the efficiency of the whole courts system. By 1946, a total of 279 tribunals of the former type had been replaced by 148 modernized courts.

The governor also praised the native administrations for having encouraged the educated members of their states, especially the younger ones, to take part in local government. He said in the same address quoted above:

I am a great believer in the value of Native Administrations and I feel that these administrations are strengthening themselves very greatly by introducing into their Councils and Finance and other committees a number of the younger and progressive elements of the population Such a step strengthens—not weakens—a State Council. It gives these better educated persons, apart from the traditional rulers, an opportunity for more direct participation in the administration of their country and it provides a useful outlet for the constructive energies of responsible men who might otherwise take up an attitude of irresponsible opposition to the traditions of native administration.⁵²

It is evident from this quotation that Governor Burns considered the collaboration of the ruling and educated classes in local government to be of the greatest importance. He said on another occasion that he was convinced that the whole future of the country depended mainly on two things "the better education of the people and efficient Local Government by Native Authorities and Municipalities."⁵³

⁵¹ Ordinance 22 of 1944. For a government report on the native tribunals see *Native Tribunals Committee of Enquiry*, Gold Coast, 1945.

⁵² Governor's Address to Legislative Council, 1946.

⁵³ Governor's Address to Gold Coast Teachers' Union, January 1946.

While native local government, or indirect rule as it is sometimes called, certainly made remarkable progress during the 1939-1946 period, all its difficulties have not yet been solved, and some of these have only been intensified by war developments. The strength of indirect rule, as has been pointed out in an earlier chapter, lies in its ability to prevent native disintegration on the one hand, and a too slavish imitation of Western institutions on the other. There is a danger, however, and this is becoming increasingly evident, that native administrations may not progress rapidly enough to satisfy the educated elements, or the returned soldiers whose overseas service has widened their outlook and made them unwilling to go back to the primitive conditions found in some of the rural areas.

Another criticism has been leveled at some of the older members of the British administrative service, particularly the district commissioners, for sometimes tending to support the chiefs against the educated classes and for looking with suspicion on the ambitions of the more progressive elements. As a result, the intelligentsia fear any close co-operation between the chiefs and the government. This attitude is but one phase of a certain distrust with which many Africans now view the European, and which is fast becoming one of the major problems of colonial governments in Africa.⁶⁴

In addition to the improvements of the native administrations in rural areas, the municipalities have also made some advance. In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that Governor Guggisberg had planned in 1924 to introduce town councils with an elected majority of African members. The fear of increased rates evinced by the poorer classes, and the conflict of interests between the native states and the urban areas, raised so much opposition that the scheme failed to go through. By the 1940's, the municipalities seemed more politically mature, with the result that town councils having elected majorities were set up during the war period in Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, and Sekondi-Takoradi. When it came to elections, however, response was disappointing as only a fraction of the electorate used their voting privilege. In some of the towns, the councilors have had the courage to insist on high enough rates to make progress possible,

⁶⁴ For a discussion of this problem see Colonial Office, No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948* (London, 1948); W. H. MacMillan, *Europe and West Africa; Some Problems and Adjustments*; Vernon McKay, "British Rule in West Africa," *Foreign Policy Report*, June 1948.

but in others the old opposition has continued, so that, as late as 1946, the governor found it necessary to point out that there could be no true self-government if the people refused to accept its obligations as well as its privileges.⁵⁵ This situation makes it clear why Sir Alan Burns included efficient municipal government as one of the factors on which the future of the Gold Coast most fully depends.

This chapter has so far been concerned with the economic and social progress and with the improvements in native administration which characterized the 1939-1946 period. The development of self-government in the central administration of the Gold Coast remains to be discussed. Some reference has already been made to the Africans' ambition for an ever increasing political control which, according to British colonial policy, would normally lead to an elected African majority on the legislative council and thence to responsible government and dominion status. The gradual maturing of the people, as well as the quickening effect which wartime activity always exerts, resulted in repeated demands for this fuller share of political power. The Africans took every occasion to remind the British of this very understandable ambition as, for example, when the legislative council accepted the income tax and the compulsory service ordinance, and again at the 1944 centennial celebration of the Bond Treaty when the following resolution was presented to the government:

We the paramount chiefs of the Gold Coast on the occasion of the Centenary of the Bond of 1844, signed between us and the Government of Great Britain do hereby express our sense of appreciation and gratitude for the British connection and do hereby move a Vote of Confidence in the present Administration of the Gold Coast and express our good wishes for closer and more beneficent cooperation, between the Government and the people of this country, hopefully looking forward immediately to a more effective voice in the affairs of the community⁵⁶

In many ways the Gold Coast was ready for some increase in self-government, for the economic, social, and political development which marked the recent years had contributed to maturing the Dependency's leaders, to increasing a national viewpoint, and to awakening a civic sense in some sections of the population. Much has al-

⁵⁵ Governor's Address to Legislative Council, March 12, 1946.

⁵⁶ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 111-12; see also *ibid.*, 1940, I, 157; 1943, I, 130; 1943, II, 37 ff.

ready been said to show that the most beneficial factor in political growth was probably the co-operation of the chiefs and the educated classes. Though it has often been necessary to speak of these traditional rulers and the intelligentsia as if they belonged to two different groups, it must be remembered that in reality they are all members of the same upper class, with many of their interests in common. In the early 1920's the majority of the chiefs were still uneducated, bound by custom within the limits of their tiny states and taking no part in the life or government of the Colony as a whole. The intelligentsia, distressed at this provincial outlook, believed that the future of the Gold Coast depended on a rapid change to Western methods of government. This difference of opinion sometimes led to disagreements between the two groups. But gradually during the quarter of a century with which this survey is concerned, the system of provincial councils united the chiefs, gave them something of a national viewpoint and, by means of the 1925 constitution, a fuller share in the central government. At the same time the number of educated chiefs increased, and the intelligentsia, finally realizing that indigenous institutions were capable of modernization, began to co-operate in the functions of local government. In more recent years there have been continued antagonisms, it is true, between certain individual chiefs and urban leaders, but these are not indicative of a cleavage between the chiefly and urban classes as such.

In addition to this fusion among the members of the upper class, there was also a movement toward state federation and toward increased collaboration between the Colony and Ashanti which gave evidence that the Dependency's political patchwork was beginning to change toward a pattern of national unity. Also, the efforts of the British officials, especially of those two outstanding governors, Sir Gordon Guggisberg and Sir Alan Burns, have had much to do with this co-operation of groups and of states. Among the paramount chiefs themselves, no one did more toward encouraging the unification of forces within the Gold Coast than Nana Sir Ofori Atta.

Born in 1881, Ofori Atta attended school at the Basel Mission of Akrapong where he studied for the ministry. Giving up this career he worked as a solicitor's clerk and later as a government clerk until he became secretary to his uncle, the *omanhene* of Akim Abuakwa. In 1912 at the age of thirty-two he was himself elected paramount chief of this same state, the largest and one of the wealthiest in the Gold Coast Colony. Three years later he became a member of the

legislative council, a position which he held until his death in 1943. In 1927 he was knighted, one of the first African chiefs to receive this honor.

Nana Sir Ofori Atta, early recognizing the danger to Gold Coast development if the chiefs remained illiterate and provincial-minded, determined to help them in widening their outlook and modernizing their administrative methods. He encouraged the various rulers in the Eastern Province to confer on interstate problems, a practice which was later adopted by the government in the very successful provincial council movement. In order to raise the standards of local government, he took the major part in collaboration with the governor—in preparing the 1927 and 1944 native administration ordinances. As to his attitude toward the British, he was one of the outstanding advocates of co-operation, believing that the country's best interests lay, not in independent statehood, but in gradual progress toward complete self-government within the framework of the empire. In this connection it should be remarked, however, that Dr. James Aggrey was probably the greatest exponent of such co-operation that the Gold Coast has ever known and that his spirit still dominates the country.

Throughout the early part of his long public career Nana Ofori Atta opposed the intelligentsia on the issue of the West African National Congress, the 1925 constitution, and the native administration ordinance. After Hayford's reconciliation with him in 1929, the municipal and provincial members of the council worked together under the leadership of these two great men. But Nana Sir Ofori Atta's forceful and domineering personality, and the belief, in some quarters, that he was merely a tool of the British administration won for him many enemies. Toward the end of his career and especially after his death, however, the majority of the country realized that his policies had often been for the best interests of the Gold Coast. A passage from the resolution passed by the joint provincial council at the time of his death declared:⁵⁷

Be it resolved:

That as a great thinker and legislator the late Nana Sir Ofori Atta moulded the political thought of his generation to a large degree and left behind him monuments of astute statesmanship, spirit of initiative and devotion to duty

⁵⁷ See, for example, chapters iv and v and the Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1936, p. 81. For a full account of the important part which Ofori Atta took in the political life of the Gold Coast see Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, pp. 68-70 and *passim*.

That the Provincial Council System is an evidence of his creative energy and vision and that it is no exaggeration to say that his passage to "Banso" [the next world] represents a national loss which leaves a gap in the social and political structure which will be difficult to fill.⁵⁸ During the legislative council session following his death many eulogies were paid to him, including Governor Burns's tribute that "in him Africa has lost a great leader, the people of his state have lost a great chief and I have lost a friend and adviser for whom I had the greatest respect."⁵⁹

It is evident from the preceding account that by the 1940's, the Gold Coast had undergone much political development. There is another side of the picture, however, revealing that in certain aspects of the Dependency's life much yet remained to be accomplished. Thus, political advance was more rapid than that achieved in the practical aspects of native administration. While the new ordinances of 1939 and 1944 provided excellent plans for improved local government in general, and for the treasuries and the courts in particular, nevertheless, they had not been fully implemented, especially in certain less progressive sections of the country. Economic and social development remained very uneven in character, with the coastal regions and South Ashanti far ahead of the more northern areas. Moreover, since the bulk of the common people was still illiterate and civic training was therefore difficult, political representation of all classes was not yet possible. While the federation movement had made some headway, it had not been approved throughout the whole area. The urban population, too, lacked interest in the franchise and was often unwilling to accept adequate taxation.

As for the relations between the Africans and the British officials, the provincial council system has helped to build up much mutual understanding and collaboration between the government and the chiefs.⁶⁰ With the intelligentsia, however, such a bond has not yet been formed. The British realize this and see the necessity of being more sympathetic with the ambitions of the educated classes, of giving them a greater share in the central administration, and of encouraging them to take a fuller part in local government as well.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, I, 48.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ See Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, p. 182 and *passim*, for a discussion of this problem.

⁶¹ See, for example, the suggestions of Mr. Creech-Jones, secretary of state for the colonies, in *African Affairs*, XLV (1946), 130, and *Empire*, IX (December 1946), 1-2.

In connection with administrative positions, the inhabitants themselves have often asked for a fuller Africanization of the higher branches of civil service. In some fields, such as those of education, medicine, and the judiciary, a few positions of authority had been given to Africans prior to the war, but the so-called political or administrative service, made up of provincial and district commissioners, still remained closed to them. In 1942, the colonial office finally opened this branch by appointing as assistant district commissioners two young Achimota graduates who had later taken their degrees at Oxford and Cambridge. Further assignments have since been made. Because of staff shortages during the war there were also increased opportunities in other fields for both technical and administrative positions.

Another phase of this same civil service question was that of salaries. For many years Africans holding junior posts have complained of insufficient remuneration. This whole problem, owing to increased prices and other difficulties, had become so urgent by 1945 that, in spite of wartime pressures, the colonial office appointed the Gold Coast chief justice, Sir Walter Harragin, as chairman of a West African civil service investigation. The Harragin report, completed in 1946, remarks that "the service generally is in an unhappy state" and suggests a permanent civil service commission in each of the four British territories.⁸² It asks for a basic salary high enough to attract the right kind of African to the civil service, recommending a minimum of £400 for all administrative and technical positions. It suggests, furthermore, promotion on merit alone, and increased salaries for junior posts.

A further point in this same connection is the widespread dissatisfaction over the fact that no Africans have yet been appointed as heads of government departments. When this problem was recently discussed in the legislative council, Sir Alan Burns remarked that the administration had increased scholarship grants with a view to training Africans for further responsibility but that "the matter does not rest entirely with Government."⁸³ The inference is that higher appointments depend on character and the ability to lead, as well as on technical training.

A further increase in political power came in 1942 when the

⁸² *Report of the Commission on the Civil Service of British West Africa*, Colonial Office, No. 209 (London, 1946).

⁸³ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1945, I, 105 and 133.

governor, for the first time, appointed Africans—Nana Sir Ofori Atta and Mr. K. A. Korsah—as members of his executive council. This was a distinct advance, for the governor meets this advisory body weekly and is under obligation to consult it in the conduct of administrative business.

Of all the steps toward political autonomy taken by the Gold Coast during the past quarter of a century, however, the most outstanding has been the new constitution of 1946, with its provision for a clear African majority on the legislative council, and for a legislative union between the Colony and Ashanti. Demands for the first of these changes became increasingly common after the outbreak of the war. When the secretary of state for the colonies visited the Gold Coast in 1943, he was presented with a plan for a new constitution, signed by representatives of the joint provincial council, of the Ashanti Confederacy council, and of the various municipalities.

For some years, especially after the Ashanti-Colony collaboration in the cocoa holdup of 1937, leaders in both territories had considered the possibility of some sort of political union. The ancient rivalry which had marked the relations of certain groups of these two areas in earlier centuries was by now almost, if not entirely, forgotten. Ashanti had made rapid economic and social progress during recent years and its political organization, after the 1935 restoration of the confederacy,⁶⁴ was far more closely knit than that of the sixty-three Colony states. In 1942, the Gold Coast provincial council suggested to the Ashanti Confederacy council that the two bodies exchange minutes of their meetings as a means of further collaboration but it was not until 1943, shortly before the colonial secretary's visit, that the Ashantis agreed to definite collaboration by signing the petition for the new constitution in which they asked for representation on the Gold Coast legislative council.

The Asantehene's (king of Ashanti Confederacy) reply to the Gold Coast proposal for further collaboration, while speaking of the past enmities, is very determined in its plea for future unity:

This is not the first time that we have realized or been made to realize the need for co-operation between Ashanti and the Colony. . . . if we were to trace out what has been the chief obstruction to our coming together, we would find out that it is selfishness. Selfishness, which is the outcome of a narrow and conservative way of thinking, has kept us poles apart from one another to our own disadvantage, and it is the same

⁶⁴ See chapter vi.

evil that will, if we are not careful, undermine the move that we are now contemplating. There has been lurking in the breasts of some of you in the Colony the fear that if you fall in with Ashanti, we shall seek to dominate you I would like you to dispel any such uncalled for fears for the days of our imperialistic aspirations are past and forgotten. What we aim at now is not that sort of federation which in the past we tried to force on you with the aid of the sword; but one into which we all of us, of our own accord, shall freely enter. It is to be a federation based not on subjection but on love. . . . Henceforth, let our watchword be UNITY If in the past we waged war against one another; let us today seek a rapprochement.⁶⁵

This willingness of the Colony and Ashanti for political collaboration was probably not without its effect in influencing the British to grant increased self-government to the Gold Coast. While the colonial secretary did not agree to the plan put forward in the 1943 memorandum, a second one was eventually worked out between Governor Burns and the representatives of the Colony and Ashanti. To this new proposal the colonial office gave substantial consent, seven out of the nine petitions having been granted.⁶⁶ These powers included, in the first place, an unofficial African majority on the legislative council. The Gold Coast thus had the signal honor of being the first territory in colonial Africa, outside the areas of white settlement, to make this constitutional advance. The new council was to have thirty-one members divided as follows: the President, who is the Governor; six official members, the Colonial Secretary of the Gold Coast, the Chief Commissioner of the Gold Coast Colony, the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, the Attorney General, and the Financial Secretary; eighteen elected members, nine members elected by the joint provincial council, four members elected by the Ashanti Confederacy council, and five members elected by municipalities—two from Accra, one from Kumasi, one from Cape Coast, and one from Sekondi-Takoradi; and six nominated members. Extraordinary members may be appointed from time to time to give advice on technical matters, but they have no vote. Since the Governor also

⁶⁵ Asantehene's reply to joint provincial council representatives. Quoted in *Gold Coast Observer*, October 15, 1943.

⁶⁶ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, II, 85. For discussions in Parliament of the Gold Coast constitution, see *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th ser., Commons, Vol. 405, cols. 1161-1163; Lords, Vol. 134, cols. 465-471.

has no vote, this leaves eighteen elected African members as against twelve nominated members—a clear elected African majority.

The new law, as can be seen, has provided for a political link between the Colony and Ashanti by including representatives from the Confederacy in the legislative council. It will be noticed that neither the Northern Territories nor Togoland have direct representation. As for the former area, it was considered not yet sufficiently developed for such a step. This primitive section has made rapid advances in recent years, however, and the establishment of the first Northern Territories Council of Chiefs in December 1946 points the way to an eventual share in the central government. The mandated area, it will be recalled, is divided into two sections, North Togoland being administered as a unit with the Northern Territories and South Togoland with the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast Colony.

To return to the question of the new constitution, it must be made clear that while the African majority is a great step forward, it does not mean complete self-government. The governor, as Sir Alan Burns pointed out, still keeps his

. . . . reserve powers which would permit him to over-ride a decision of the Legislative Council in the interests of public order, public faith or good government ; any such action by the Governor would be subject to revocation by the Secretary of State except in the case of a bill which would be subject to disallowance by His Majesty.⁶⁷

By control of the official majority under the old constitution, the governor had possessed powers greater than these reserve powers, as do all British colonial governors. They are not fully abrogated until a colony reaches the stage of complete responsible government.

Under the new law, some changes were also to be made in the administrative divisions of the Colony. There are only two provinces, an eastern and a western, instead of three as formerly. The old office of secretary for native affairs has been discontinued in favor of one chief commissioner for the entire Colony with headquarters at Cape Coast.

The two requests concerning the new constitution, which were refused by the colonial office, had to do with the executive council and a standing committee in the legislative council. The Africans had asked that at least two members of the executive council always

⁶⁷ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1944, II, 86.

be chosen from among the elected members of the legislative body. While this demand was rejected as a matter of right, the governor was left free to do it if he wished. Governor Burns actually appointed three elected members to his executive council.

As for a legislative council standing committee, the colonial office refused this on the grounds that it would usurp the functions of several already existent bodies, that is, the joint provincial and Ashanti councils, the executive council, and the financial committee of the legislative council. In reference to the British rejection of a standing committee, the local press remarked that the municipal members were not represented on the first two bodies, that the executive council was bound to secrecy, and that the financial committee gave its approval only in reference to matters which had already been determined upon, in their general lines at least.⁶⁸

The new constitution was well received, on the whole, by the African press. While some were disappointed that a greater step toward responsible government had not been made, the majority took a realistic attitude with regard to the reserve powers, acknowledging that the new constitution was as much as could be reasonably expected. One editor remarked that the Gold Coast realizes that "political growth without method and consolidation will in the end lead to catastrophe."⁶⁹ The editorial comment in the *Gold Coast Observer* is also significant:

The new Constitution, said the Governor, represents "a very considerable political advance." So considerable it is possible that even some of our own people, even some of our own leaders, may not quite fully realize its august and portentous proportions. It were not as if a father had told his growing son: "Now you know how to wash your hands, come and sit at the table with me!" . . . Far from it. It were as if a father had told his son: "My dear son: here is the key to my estate, or the family estate. Take it and manage it. I only reserve to myself power to correct and check you if I suspect you are going wrong."⁷⁰

Although Governor Burns announced the plan of the new constitution in October 1944, it did not actually go into effect until over

⁶⁸ *Gold Coast Observer*, October 13, 1944.

⁶⁹ R. Wuta-Ofei, "An African View of the New Gold Coast Constitution," *African World*, May 1946, p. 36.

⁷⁰ *Gold Coast Observer*, August 9, 1946. But for an adverse criticism by the same paper in a much earlier issue, see January 5, 1945.

a year later. He had hoped it would be ready for promulgation in 1945 but a serious staff shortage in the colonial office held up the drafts. After the new law was finally promulgated on March 29, 1946,⁷¹ the elections for the new council were held in June. The electoral returns showed the collaboration of the chiefs and the intelligentsia in that the joint provincial council gave two of its precious nine places to nonchiefs, while the Ashanti Confederacy council gave three of its four places to nonchiefs. Among the municipal representatives, all but the Kumasi delegate had been members of the former legislative council at some time or other. The governor nominated three Europeans and three Africans so that when the new council met for its first session on July 23, 1946, its members included ten Europeans and twenty-one Africans.

The formal opening of the first session of the new legislative council was, of course, a landmark in the history of the Gold Coast. The council chamber presented a striking picture on that July morning when the governor read the king's personal message to the new members, assembled for the first time. Standing against a blue and white background surmounted by the royal coat of arms were the governor and his official staff in full dress uniform. Before them, the Europeans and the African municipal members in their trimly cut business suits made a somber contrast to the gorgeous regalia of the chiefs. All combined in a pageantry whose clear-cut variations were suggestive of both the indigenous and the Western cultures which have been so influential in the Gold Coast's rapid development.

In his inaugural address, Sir Alan Burns reminded the council that the new constitution represented a very considerable political advance:

. . . . which affords an opportunity for the Gold Coast people to prove to the world that they have deserved the confidence placed in them, and are fitted to make still further steps forward on the road of democracy.⁷²

In addition, he stressed the fact that it was not his constitution, but "OUR Constitution which we have worked out together and agreed upon." In speaking of the elected majority he pointed out that there

⁷¹ The constitution was published in the *Gold Coast Gazette*, March 23, 1946, supplement. The texts of both the 1925 and 1946 constitutions are reproduced in Wight, *Gold Coast Legislative Council*, Appendixes 1 and 2.

⁷² Governor's Inaugural Address to Legislative Council, July 23, 1946. Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1946, II, 4-10.

should be no question of its becoming a permanent Parliamentary Opposition, taking an uncompromising attitude toward all government measures.

. . . . such an attitude, which would drive the Governor to use his reserve powers, would most certainly kill any chance of a successful working of the constitution, and equally surely kill any hope of further political advance

It is for you to work with the officials, helping them by your advice and constructive criticism, and refraining from the cheap tactics of demagogues.

Sir Alan Burns concluded with the hope that the Gold Coast would make of the new constitution a triumphant success. Following the governor's address, the council members passed as a unanimous resolution a message to the King assuring him:

. . . . of their deep sense of responsibility and of their determination fully to justify the trust placed in them, and desire to reaffirm their unswerving loyalty and that of all the peoples of the Gold Coast to His Majesty's Person and Throne.⁷³

The days following this inaugural session were marked by national rejoicing, especially in Accra to which the Asantehene and hundreds of his followers had come for the event. On this occasion the natural hospitality and kindly spirit of the Gold Coast people were strikingly evident, leading one newcomer to remark, "I have never been in such a happy and friendly country."⁷⁴

Commenting on this remark in a radio address given several weeks later,⁷⁵ one member of the African intelligentsia agreed that while the Gold Coast did possess these qualities, it needed to develop them further still. The Dependency had come to a most critical stage of its growth and a spirit of co-operation was more necessary than ever before. If the political atmosphere were to be poisoned at this stage by factional quarrels, it would be difficult to regain the harmony essential to balanced government. Not only must the members of the legislative council avoid sectionalism and frame laws for the good of the entire Dependency, but the civil service, the municipal government, and the Native Authorities must all work toward that

⁷³ Legislative Council, *Debates*, 1946, II, 31.

⁷⁴ Kenneth Bradley, "Gold Coast Impressions," *Blackwood's*, CCLXI (1947), 1-9.

⁷⁵ M. Dowuona, "Personal Reflections," *Gold Coast Bulletin*, August 28, 1946.

efficiency and integrity which alone could give reality to the promise of the new constitution.

The instrument of government described in the paragraphs above has not, of course, solved all the problems of the Gold Coast. As a matter of fact, since these paragraphs were written events have occurred which illustrate, in the first place, the seriousness of the problems which a constitution does not solve, and, secondly, the way in which the forces of reform and revolution used this situation for obtaining more far-reaching changes than the constitution gave. In order to complete the picture of this phase of Gold Coast development, it seems wise to give a summary of these events even though a detailed account would be outside the scope of this book.

In August 1947 a new political organization known as the United Gold Coast Convention was formed under the leadership of Dr. Danquah. Its acknowledged purpose was self-government for the people of the Gold Coast at the earliest possible opportunity. Believing that the former organizations such as the Youth Conference had failed because they were too limited in scope, the leaders of the new movement planned to obtain the support of all classes and sections of the Dependency.

Throughout the fall and winter of 1947-1948 there was some unrest in the Gold Coast, resulting in part from unsettled world conditions and in part from problems peculiar to the Dependency. Among these latter were the grievances of the cocoa farmers; the dissatisfaction of unemployed ex-servicemen; and the suffering caused by the scarcity and extremely high prices of imported goods. The Africans, convinced that the European importing firms were largely responsible for the inflation, decided to discontinue the purchase of these goods. Late in January 1948, therefore, one of the chiefs organized a boycott campaign. It continued throughout February, but it worked great hardship on the population, was difficult to maintain, and added to the tension already resulting from the more general postwar difficulties. The boycott was ended when the Accra Chamber of Commerce agreed to reduce prices, and on February 28 retail buying was resumed.

On the same day ex-servicemen held a parade for which they had governmental permission on condition that it followed a prescribed route. The marchers, however, refused to observe these conditions and attempted to continue forcing their way to Government House

at Christianborg. When the marchers held to their purpose the police were ordered to fire. Several men were killed or wounded before the parade could be turned back.

In the meantime, other disorders had broken out in the business district of Accra. The crowds, dissatisfied with the new prices resulting from the boycott agreement, and incited by agitators, began to riot and to loot and burn European- and Asiatic-owned stores. These disturbances continued through February 28 and 29 and later spread to other Gold Coast areas. In all, 29 persons were killed, 266 injured, and the property damage, not including houses, amounted to £2,000,000.⁷⁶

Later developments proved that there was a connection between these disorders and the activities of the United Gold Coast Convention. The leaders of the nationalist movement evidently hoped to take advantage of the unrest caused by the boycott to further their own political ends, and to force the British to grant a greater degree of self-government to the Gold Coast.⁷⁷

The chiefs, the Accra Town Council, and many local groups expressed their total disapproval of these lawless disturbances and supported the measures taken by the government to restore order.⁷⁸

As the root causes of the February riots were evidently far from simple, Governor of the Gold Coast Sir Gerald Creasy⁷⁹ made arrangements with the colonial secretary for a thorough investigation by an independent commission from the United Kingdom. This commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. A. K. Watson, a former commissioner of the High Court of Justice, was given very wide terms of reference to investigate the underlying reasons for the dis-

⁷⁶ Colonial Office, No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948* (London, 1948), Appendix 8. *African Affairs* (April 1948), p. 70 n. See also *Brief Narrative of Events from the 17th February, 1948 to the 13th of March, 1948*, printed by the authority of the Gold Coast governor (Accra, Government Printing Department, 1948).

⁷⁷ See for example, Dr. Danquah's address to the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast on March 1, 1948, where he tells them that "the hour of liberation has struck." *West African Monitor*, March 5, 1948.

⁷⁸ The Accra Town Council passed a resolution of disapproval of the disturbances, which contained the following statement in support of the government. "We declare our most profound belief in the policy of the Gold Coast Government which seeks the self-government of this country in due course through proper constitutional channels." See *Gold Coast Bulletin* (March 20, 1948), p. 3; *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, Commons, Vol. 448, col. 1217.

⁷⁹ Governor Sir Alan Burns's term of office ended in August 1947. His successor, Sir Gerald Creasy, assumed the governorship in January 1948.

turbances and to make recommendations on any matters arising from its enquiry. The commission remained in the Gold Coast for about a month and not only conducted hearings on the events directly connected with the riots, but also looked into the general problems of the country. Its findings, often referred to as the Watson Report, were released in August 1948. The British colonial office simultaneously published a statement along with this document in which it gave some general explanations of British colonial policy and commented upon the findings of the report.⁸⁰

The Watson Report begins by stating that the most serious problem in the Gold Coast is the suspicion which surrounds government activity of any sort. The underlying causes for the disturbances are not only political but economic and social as well, and they are frequently interrelated. The remedy for the distrust with which the African views the European lies in an attack on all three causes. Only by far-reaching and positive action in each field can this unreasonable suspicion be remedied. Among the separate reasons listed are the frustration of the educated classes because of insufficient opportunities for government participation, and the need for further industrial development and for wider educational facilities. The section dealing with recommendations for the future, advances the opinion that the 1946 constitution was outmoded at birth and suggests a more rapid westernization of Gold Coast government. It would lessen the power of the chiefs and set up an enlarged legislative assembly and an executive council of nine, including five African ministers charged with departments and responsible to the legislature.

The report has since been criticized on the grounds that the members of the commission had no experience of colonial affairs; that they interviewed principally the educated classes of the community without giving due consideration to rural areas; and that they relied for advice on those who caused the riots.⁸¹

In the statement issued by the British government as a commentary on the Watson Report, it is pointed out that the reader might infer from the extent of recommendations made by the commission that the Gold Coast government had been slow in granting reforms.

⁸⁰ Colonial Office, No. 231, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948*. Colonial Office, No. 232, *Statement by His Majesty's Government on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Gold Coast, 1948* (London, 1948).

⁸¹ See for example, *Parliamentary Debates*, 5th series, Commons, Vol. 456, cols. 1259-1277.

It answers, however, that the commissioners received representations chiefly from the more advanced sections anxious to push political reforms, and that in many cases the suggestions are in line with a policy already being pursued in the Dependency.

The government agrees with the principles underlying the report's recommendations for constitutional reform, since it is pledged to advance self-government in the Gold Coast as rapidly as good government permits. Local government, nevertheless, must be strengthened and the parliamentary system must evolve through the legislative council. It does not accept the commission's criticism that the 1946 constitution was outdated at birth, and emphasizes the fact that this law was framed in consultation with the Gold Coast people, was welcomed by the local press, and provided for a notable increase in self-government. It is not satisfied that the commissioners, during their short stay in the Gold Coast, were able to assess accurately public opinion with regard to the chiefs and it is convinced that, through the modernization of the Native Authorities, the chiefs have an essential and beneficial part to play in the development of the Gold Coast. As far as any changes in the 1946 constitution are concerned, it considers that the commission's proposals should first be studied by a local committee fully representative of the people before any alteration is made.

These recent disturbances show, then, that the hopes placed in the 1946 constitution have not been fully realized. They are an evidence, too, that an increase in self-government does not necessarily solve all problems and that there must be comparable progress in the economic and social as well as in the political fields, if a balanced development is to take place.

With these facts in mind, one may look back over the quarter-century with which this survey has been concerned and draw conclusions which are applicable, not only to the Gold Coast, but, in some degree, to the general colonial situation as well. In the economic field the Gold Coast made great advances as a result of its rich natural resources, though the export trade has been stressed to the detriment of both subsistence agriculture and local industry. The lessons of the Depression, the war stimulus, and the Colonial Development Act, have since helped to turn the Gold Coast toward a more normal economic growth. The fact remains, however, that material well-being, though greater than in most African colonies,

has not reached a sufficiently high standard, nor has it been able to keep up with the political progress demanded by the educated classes.

In the social field a similar disproportion obtains. The basic services of education and health, to cite outstanding examples, reach only a small percentage of the population. The time lag between the political and the socioeconomic phases of development is unfortunate, because there can be no lasting form of self-government unless it be based on the solid ground of general social and economic well-being. Future progress, to be real, must be more evenly spread than has been the case in the past. The needs of the rural groups must be considered as well as those of the urban classes. Primary schools and means of mass education are as important to national advance as are institutions of higher learning. The extension of a wise system of education will increase the peasant's ability to use more scientific agricultural methods, will break down the unhealthful practices which are hampering physical well-being, and above all will further develop those spiritual qualities of social and civic responsibility and of high moral purpose which are so essential to true self-government.

With such a strong economic and social basis, local government in both the villages and the coastal cities should improve in quality and in the extent to which all classes co-operate for its success. The British policy of Native Authorities has preserved the African character of these local administrations while, at the same time, it has endeavored to guide them toward modernization by fostering sound financial and judicial systems, by encouraging the better educated classes to share in them, and by enabling the chiefs to collaborate in provincial councils. Such improvement in local government and in the political education of the people is essential if responsible self-government is to be firmly established and is to represent fairly all classes of society.

In the very encouraging progress which the Gold Coast has already made, the value of co-operation between indigenous peoples and a metropolitan power is abundantly clear. The outstanding qualities of the Gold Coast Africans, together with the guidance and stability given by the British administration, have made this development possible. Such progress is advancing the Dependency to a position where it can stand alone, having achieved a form of democracy which is not an artificial imposition from without, but an indigenous growth from the roots of its own African traditions and culture.

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