

KABBA PROVINCE ANNUAL REPORT, 1947

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ANNUAL REPORT ON AGRICULTURE
FOR THE YEAR 1947
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PART I. PROVINCIAL SUMMARY.

Osoba Province is predominately agricultural and on the whole 1947 was a good year for the farmer.

2. In the riverain areas of Igala Division and in parts of Koton Karifi Division unusually heavy rainfall and abnormal flooding resulted in the destruction of rice fields, but the succeeding fishing season was unusually good. In parts of Igbirra Division rain caused damage to coconuts and cotton, but generally speaking rainfall was abundant and evenly distributed, crops did well and an exportable surplus was available for export to the north and western Provinces. The heavy drain of foodstuffs from Igala Division to the South, where high prices are obtainable, had its effect on local market prices and suggestions were made from time to time for the re-imposition of restrictions on the export of foodstuffs from the Province. The policy has been, however, to interfere with inter-dial trade as little as possible. Propaganda has again been necessary, particularly in south-east Igala, to restrain farmers from selling more foodstuffs than they can afford, but there can be no complaint of food shortage in the Province during 1947, and if local shortages have occurred it has been the fault of the local community concerned. Local food reserves were again available in most areas.

3. Export crops have also done well. In Igala Division the higher price offered for cotton resulted in a very appreciable increase being bought by firms. The bulk of the Igbirra crop, as usual, was sold locally for the weaving industry. The increased buying price of

monopolized resulted in a greatly increased tonnage being sold to firms compared with 1946 and increases are reported in the buying of groundnuts, shea nuts, cocco and castor seed. Palm kernel production was somewhat below that of 1946. The decrease being attributed in Igala Division to lack of consumer goods and increased profits to be made from food crops.

4. There has, therefore, been no lack of money in circulation. With the exception of Koton Karifi where tax rates were revised, and Kabba Division where, except in Aworo District, the women's income tax was abolished at the wish of the people and the rate per adult male proportionately increased, tax rates remained the same as last year. This was due principally to previous bad harvests and the lower rates prevailing in neighbouring areas of the Eastern and Western Provinces. The increases in salaries and wage rates resulting from the Harregin and Miller reports caused general satisfaction but some disappointment was expressed by Native Administration staff at the delay in payment of arrears.

5. Shortage of consumer goods has continued, although improvement was noticed in the supply of cottons and general goods at the end of the year, and considerable dissatisfaction has been caused by the virtual monopoly exercised by favoured classes. In theory articles in short supply such as kerosene and textiles are reserved primarily for those who bring in produce. In fact, however, a very small proportion is sold direct to the producer, the bulk finding its way into the hands of middlemen, personal friends of the seller or Southern traders who have the capital and can afford to buy the less popular articles as well. The people find it difficult to understand that it is not within the power of the native authority or administrative officers to enforce a change in these

methods of trading.

6. The long term economic prospects continue to be somewhat depressing. The Province, so far as one can see, is likely to remain an agricultural one and the necessity for improved farming methods suitable for the Middle Belt becomes more and more a matter of urgency. It is discouraging, therefore, to have to report once again that no agricultural, Veterinary or Forestry Officer has been posted to the Province during the year. Although the Ossaera-Egain road has now been completed the Settlement Scheme has again hung fire owing to lack of technical assistance.

7. In the absence of technical staff little real development has been possible. "Development" as it is generally understood means the provision by Government of hospitals, secondary schools, pipe borne water supplies and so on. Although none of these blessings has yet materialised as the result of the Development Plan, the people of Kabba at any rate - usually the most vociferous and frustrated - have seen that they are not forgotten. Considerable progress has been made in the construction of minor bridges and culverts on the Isanlu-Egbe road under the supervision of a Development Officer, and the long awaited construction of the Kempe bridge has begun. In Kabba itself preliminary work has been undertaken on the Post Office and Postmaster's quarters which, with a new house for the District Officer and District Officer's will, it is hoped, be completed in 1948. In Igbirra Division a new layout of Okene Town and Government Residential Area has been prepared and site plans have been approved for the Okene Post Office and Government clerks quarters for which the release of funds is expected shortly. After years of disappointment on the part of local Mohammedans a start has been made on the construction of the Okene

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mosque which is being financed from voluntary subscrip-
tions. Work on the new headquarters of Igala Division
has been confined to the erection of temporary buildings,
a survey of the area and the preparation of a layout of
the new Town.

8. The vexed question whether Lokoja shall or shall
not remain the headquarters of the Province has at long
last been settled. Provincial Headquarters are to remain,
and the site for the Government Residential Area recommend-
ed by the Board appointed by His Honour last year has been
finally approved. The projected move of the Government
Station will thus afford to Lokoja the room for expansion
it so sorely needs, and at the same time provide Govern-
ment Officials with decent housing in exchange for the
ancient and dilapidated quarters they have occupied, so
long. Meanwhile the expansion of the Marine Department
is already under way. A new Transport Shed has been
erected in the Dockyard, a new Platers shed is in process
of erection, the Slipway is nearing completion and work
has begun on the Dockyard revampment. A site plan has been
approved for new quarters to house the large number of
employees to be transferred from the Marine Department at
Forcados and preliminary clearing work has begun. Consi-
deration is now being given to the new layout of Lokoja
Town.

9. The position with regard to Administrative staff
has improved since 1946, when at one period it was
reduced to two, but staff is still below strength. For
nearly two years the Province has been without a substan-
tive Resident, and sickness, invaliding and one resignation
during the year have thrown additional burdens on officers
already overworked. It has not been possible to select in
the essential minimum of three officers in Igala Division,
and for many months the Koton Korifi Division has been

without

without a Divisional Officer.

10. The consequent neglect of Koton Karifi Division and Bassa Komo District (together comprising nine Native Authority areas) has, once again, been unfortunate but unavoidable. Although no progress can be reported from Kups, Kakanda, Ergan and the Bassa Komo clan areas the year has passed without incident. Further progress has been made with the new layout of Koton Karifi Town, much of which was destroyed by fire in 1946 and the new dispensary is nearing completion. The absence of a Divisional Officer made it difficult to deal with a succession of farming and fishing disputes between the riverain peoples of Koton Karifi and Bassa Komo, and last year a substantial sum of money was collected in the Koton Karifi Native Treasury amounting to over £300. It says a good deal for Native Administration in these areas that administration has gone on as smoothly as it has. The most notable event has been the visit to Koton Karifi of His Honour the Chief Commissioner (Sir John Patterson, K.B.E., C.M.G.) who presented Oluwole Iga with his Staff of Office in 1947.

11. His Honour also visited Igala Division and formally installed Amo Oboni, Ata'Oala, before a large gathering at Ayangba. Amo Oboni was appointed Ata'Oala in 1946. Since his appointment and the reorganisation of the Council (membership of which is no longer a sinecure of the Ata'Oala but depends on merit) a very different atmosphere prevails throughout the Division. The central administration may be said to have worked well. Minor misunderstandings have occurred owing to Councillors being not too sure of their position vis-a-vis members of the corresponding Government Departments, but it is felt that these difficulties would not have arisen had Government Departmental Officers been able to spend more time in the Division. The Council is still at the "running in" stage and difficulties

will

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will doubtless be smoothed away as individuals gain in confidence. The general feeling of conservatism a few years ago has been displaced by a general urge to go ahead, which is apparent not only at the centre but in the Districts, where the demand for Education is increasing and community effort has resulted in the opening of schools and making of new roads.

12. With a few exceptions District administration is still backward, but progress has been made in those areas where District Heads, selected on merit, have adapted themselves to local conditions and by tact and integrity gained the confidence of the traditional elements. Most of the court cases indicating weakness in administration have emanated from the comparatively remote Districts which cannot be toured properly with the Administrative staff available, and it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the success or failure of the present regime in Igala will depend upon the amount of administrative supervision it can be given. The influence of the 'old guard' is still a factor in the progress of the work. Divisional Headquarters are transferred from Idah to Atanogoma the better.

13. In Kabba Division there is still a marked contrast between administration in the Districts where Native Authorities are independent Chiefs and administration in Native Authority areas which are run by Councils. The Ijumu Council is still disappointingly incompetent as a Native Authority - everybody's business being nobody's and the three component groups continuing to regard themselves as independent units - while the continued inefficiency of the Yagba Central Council made reorganisation inevitable. This was carried through during the year. Yagba District is no longer administered by the Native Authority as before, viz. the Yagba Central Council.

Yagba groups, each of which has been constituted a Native Authority area, and the two Native Authorities act in association. This reorganisation was in accord with the wishes of the people, the only dissentient voice being that of individuals of Kopa, who objected, not to the system, but to the choice of District Head. It is too early yet to assess the benefit or otherwise of this administrative change; much will depend upon the character and integrity of the individual office holders and the ability of the small villages to overcome their petty jealousies.

14. Igbirra Division was for long periods in 1946 without a resident Administrative Officer and in consequence many matters of importance received scant attention. The position improved in 1947. Igbirra social customs, mainly concerning marriage and divorce, continue to present an obstacle to progress but the position would appear to be less acute than formerly. The number of divorce cases has fallen by over 2000 compared with those of last year, a decrease attributed mainly to the Marriage and Divorce Rules introduced by the Native Authority in 1946. The decision made two years ago to abolish lavish burial ceremonies would also seem to have had beneficial results. Much of the money thus saved annually - estimated at equivalent to the cost of building improved houses - is now devoted to building improved houses.

15. An attempt has been made to broaden the Atta's Council by appointing members from the Ogori, Magongo and Ajaokuta areas hitherto unrepresented. It was hoped that the appointment of these members would assist in establishing closer relations between the Districts and the central administration, but in the case of Ogori relations between the Native Authority and the Ogori people continue to be strained and the separatist movement has been revived.

Three District Heads have been relieved of their duties as members of the Atta's Court to enable them to devote more attention to their own courts and to District administration, which has been neglected in the past owing to their multifarious judicial duties.

16. The Lokoja Town Council was dissolved in May and a new Council appointed. The Village Head, Adams, died in June after a long illness and was succeeded by Dauck Mieux, the unanimous choice of the Council. The policy of encouraging this sub-Native Authority area to run its own affairs as far as possible without the interference of the Igbirra Native Authority has resulted in smoother administration and the work of the new Village Head and Council has not been unduly affected.

17. Native Treasurers have done a good year's work, with the exception of the Koton Karifi Native Treasurer who was convicted of fraud. Increases in salaries and wages rates of Native Administration personnel and the payment of staff and resulted in heavy expenditure increases. The financial position, however, is reasonably good in the smaller Native Treasuries owing to the system of codified grants and draws in the case of Igala and in some the latter Native Administration being incapable of helping itself or usefully expanding development funds without supervision.

18. There has been remarkably little serious crime during the year. One murder was reported in Igala Division and the alleged murderer was arrested and committed for trial. The murder in question of an old woman of Ego in Kabba Division caused considerable stir locally as it was popularly supposed to have been committed by a secret society. This is still under investigation. In Igala Division, where most of the convictions for criminal offences

offences are for stealing, there has been a noticeable reduction in the number of criminal cases. This has been attributed to a growing sense of responsibility on the part of village heads.

19. The work of Native Courts is checked as closely as the staff position permits and continues fair to good. There is, however, considerable room for improvement in the Ijumu, Yagba and Igbirra courts. The improvement in the work of Igala courts mentioned in the Annual Report for 1946, has been maintained but the number of reviews by Administrative Officers in this Division is higher than last year. The increase is due as much to the mentality of the applicants, who are more concerned with winning their case than obtaining a just decision, as to any flaw in the original judgment. It can fairly be said that the people stand a reasonable chance of obtaining justice in the Native Courts and are fully aware of their rights of appeal. On the other hand, adverse comment has been made on the amount of delay which invariably attend proceedings in the Magistrate's Court and the Supreme Court, on the great distances which parties frequently have to travel because their cases are not heard on the spot, and on the heavy costs to which an unsuspecting party may find himself liable.

20. Mining activities have been on approximately the same scale as last year. Labour employed in mining has been in the neighbourhood of 300-400, many of whom are local people working for a few weeks only during the year. Gold and tin are still being mined and illicit traffic in gold has caused some concern. A Beacon Inspector has been stationed at Igbe which will shortly become a sub-station of the Central Inspectorate of the Mines Department.

education in Koton Karifi Division is limited, the people

being

being Northern in outlook and appearing to set little value on schooling. Elsewhere there is a rage for literacy. The main development in rural education has been in Igala Division where two new schools have been opened and twelve literacy classes, which may in time be replaced by full elementary schools. Mission education has enjoyed a fair share of assistance from central funds this year but it is early yet to see how this will affect the efficiency of the schools. The first result appears to have been for Chazon members who previously maintained the schools to withdraw their financial support, leaving the schools little better off than before. The standard of mission schools is in many cases low and children from the Southern Provinces who have failed to gain admission into their own schools are readily accepted. The need in Zabu Division is for more trained teachers both for the Mission and the Community schools, and Missions are now taking a greater interest in the Okene Elementary Training Centre and sending suitable men for training. The Elementary Training Centre has had a satisfactory year, 10 of the 25 in the top class passing the Certificate examination. The tone of Igbara schools leaves room for improvement. Most of the staff are trained but their efforts are limited to the minimum required by the syllabus. The Middle School started the year with the pupils taking exception to the new headmaster. The top class was dismissed and discipline tightened up, and the staff has since been joined by an ex-C.M. of the Royal West African Frontier Force.

22. As in many other schools the main interest of the pupils is in book learning. They will sit about all day studying Geometry and Algebra, firmly convinced that within their pages will be found the open sesame

to untold wealth and happiness, but they will play games, attend cinema shows, get up concerts and so on, only because they are ordered to do so and because failure to comply might result in dismissal.

and the House of Chiefs aroused little interest locally except in literate circles. Disappointment was felt in Kabba Division, which is usually more vocal than other parts of the Province, that no Kabba representative was elected to either House, whereas Igala Division provides a member of each and Igbirra Division a member of the House of Chiefs, the Atta, who is also a member of the Legislative Council. Once again the opinion was expressed locally that Kabba Division would do better in the Western Provinces where chances of representation would be greater and there would be no language difficulties. Visits by the Provincial member to his Constituency have, however, done something to allay the suspicion of neglect, and these visits and the appearance in print of proceedings have helped to keep interest at any rate on the part of the more vocal elements. The Province as a whole, however, is not as yet sufficiently politically conscious to realise the full importance of the Constitutional changes which have taken place.

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA, 1947.

PART II. PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS.

24. Area and boundaries. There have been no

boundary incidents worthy of note. The area of the Province remains at 10,953 square miles.

25. Population. The population figures for 1947 show a total of 550,634 for the Province compared with 543,273 in 1946 and 493,564 in 1945. Increases are confined to Ibadan and Igbirra Divisions.

There has been a slight decrease in the number of adult males and females in Kibba Division, where the tendency continues for young men to wander off to the larger towns of Nigeria in search of employment.

In the Kibba half of the Division the presence of children dropped for adult population. Figures for Kibba District Division indicate that the adult population is practically stationary while the number of children has decreased.

This is probably due to a poor census as the Division has been inadequately supervised owing to shortage of staff.

26. Administrative Staff. Mr. T. Farley Smith, Senior District Officer, was in charge of the Province from 23rd September, 1946 to 23rd January, when he was relieved by Mr. H.C. Gill, Senior District Officer, who remained in charge throughout the year. The following

Administrative Officers also served in the Province:

Mr. F.P. Brandt Senior District Officer

Capt. C.G. McKenzie District Officer.

- V. L. G. Hopkins District Officer.
- D. H. Veasy
- A. Russell
- H. J. Scott
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- Major A. G. Green
- Major R. H. Hornor
- ...

27. The average strength of J. I. and J. II. over the period of the month of April 1950. The development of the province has been in the province, and of their duties under the public work department.

28. Provincial Staff, H. J. G. Gilbert, Chief Clerk, in charge of the provincial office

over. As usual, the provincial staff has provided a list of clerks for full time duty as provincial Treasurer, Lokoja. Average duty strength was 12.

29. Visits. His Honour the Chief Commissioner, Sir John Patterson, K.C.M.G., C.S.I., visited the province from April 30th to May 10th. His Honour met the Lokoja Village Head and the Chief of Lokoja in Lokoja, and the Chiefs of Kofa, Kofa Kofa, Kofa and Kofa at their respective headquarters. His Honour presented the Chief of Kofa with his Second Class Staff of Office and formally

Addressed a large gathering.

30. Hospitality

30. REEMPLOYMENT OF EX-SERVICEMEN. Most of the ex-soldiers in this Province are Igalas. Many ex-servicemen have not, of course, found the employment they want, but the majority have settled down remarkably well and resumed their former occupations of farming and trading. In Lokoja the number registered has risen to 267 and the percentage of unemployed has declined from 36% to 33%. Most of these are illiterate and do not qualify for semi-skilled departmental employment. It is estimated that casual employment absorbs 25% of these and still others are on the local building programme gets under way.

PART III. NATIVE ADMINISTRATION AND
DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES.

31. Medical. The health of the Province has been normal and no epidemics have been reported. Smallpox vaccination campaigns have been active throughout the year. The hospitals at Lokoja and Idah have been well patronised and the efforts of both Medical Officers greatly appreciated by the Public. Once again no Nursing Sister was posted to the Province during the year, but Lokoja was fortunate in securing the services of a temporary nursing sister for several months. There is a great and vocal demand for the extension of health and medical services throughout the Province. Refresher courses have been provided for Native Authority dispensary attendants, more of whom have been entrusted with the giving of injections, the demand for which continues unabated.

32. The Sudan Interior Mission Leper Settlement at Oyi River, which was adversely reported on in 1946,

is now more satisfactory. The settlement, which is supervised by a mission doctor, his wife and a nurse, is financially dependent on contributions from the Mission and Native Authorities, but recently received a generous grant from Government. Lepers number approximately 1000 of whom one fifth are unable to support themselves by farming. One of the objects of the Mission is to make the settlement self supporting so far as food is concerned and a mixed farming scheme is in course of preparation. The work of the Mission is greatly appreciated locally.

33. Housing and social welfare. The Province contains a variety of Tribes and types of housing. The chief building materials are still mud and thatch. Most progress is to be found West of the Niger, in the outlook of the people is towards the western Province. Here, considerable interest is taken in building improved houses affording better ventilation built of mud blocks are met with not infrequently and, as in the larger towns in other parts of the Province, carpenter made doors and windows are popular and corrugated iron for roofing is in great demand. Elsewhere types vary from the grass shelters of the Fula to the primitive mud walls of the Hausa to the Yoruba-style houses and the anticy and huts of the Igbo. Better built houses in the Hausa style are found in Karamba-Kupa-Kyzen and the Northern type of round hut is Koton Karifi.

34. Native Authority Sanitary and Building Rules apply to the more important towns and villages throughout the Province and advantage is taken of new layouts to encourage improved building. A new layout is in course

... being planned at Monrovia, but no departments
of health division. No program has yet been made
Division owing to lack of technical assistance.

29. The matter of the hospitals now discussed
is still regarded as a matter for the family con-
cerned but provision is made from Native Authority
funds for the maintenance of paupers attending hos-
pitals. Juvenile delinquency is negligible and such
cases as occur are invariably dealt with separately by
courts and not prisons.

PART IV. GENERAL.

30. The underlying demand for social and econo-
mic development, particularly in health division and
the rest of the provinces west of the Niger where
the outlook of the people is towards the western
provinces, is equalled only by the sense of frus-
tration as yet another year goes by with little or
nothing to show for the extensive development plans
repeatedly discussed. The great need of Sierra
Leone is technical staff. This has not been
forthcoming, and although good reasons exist for
the lack of it, the people do not naturally see

it as a further instance of neglect on the part of
government. With this frustrated urge to do some-
thing to ease slight of progress which has in
fact been made. Self help in health has been respon-
sible for the opening of schools and the raising of
funds, but inputs have been planned and planned

present is noticeable in the revenue increasing. From
 the year 1940 until the year 1943 the revenue has had a good
 return. Administration may be said to have been the
 main factor in the increase in revenue. The
 class of the new offices, were arranged in the
 building of the new post offices and there were
 welcome signs of an increase in administrative staff.
 The only evidence with the signs have expressed that
 part to the new office staff - which will result in
 a general increase in 1943.

See See p. 36 of 1943