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ANNUAL REPORT ON KABBA PROVINCE
FOR THE YEAR 1949.
BY T. E. LEECHWORTH, B.Sc., ACTING RESIDENT.

PART I - PROVINCIAL SUMMARY.

Although the river rose to a lower maximum than it did last year, from 3' 4" on May 16th. to 32' 6" on October the 16th, as against 3' 9" on April 11th 1948 to 34' 8" on October 2nd, the rains were generally better. They started somewhat later than usual but lasted on until the beginning of November. The figures were slightly above the average generally but Kabba was a little below. This last suffered somewhat as the yam crop germinated badly owing to the delay in the onset of the rain. The abnormally long continuance through September and October has led to some damage of the small cocoa crop harvested in Kabba Division. Reports from neighbouring areas in the Western Provinces suggest that an all round decrease of 10% over previous years figures might be expected. Figures for the grading of cocoa show that for the first eleven months of 1949 219 tons were graded as against 379 for the corresponding period in 1948. The shortfall may well be more than was at first suggested as likely.

2. Elsewhere it has been a successful farming year and in Igala Division the yam crop has been good, as has the guinea corn which has had ample time to ripen in the extended rainy season. In Koton Karifi the season has been a good one and prices there for foodstuffs show a downward tendency. The same cannot be said for the rest of the Province where a good season gives increased scope for export of foodstuffs to the cocoa growing areas of the west and towards Kugbu, from Igala Division. To this extent food prices are subject to control by influences acting from outside the Province. It is not impossible that a smaller cocoa crop may not eventually have an effect in lowering prices, though it will probably not be for some time to come.

3. Apart from cocoa other cash crops show a tendency to rise. Beniseed produced to the firms totalled nearly 600 tons against less than 300 last year. Custor seed is grown mostly in Kabba Division and over 170 tons of it was produced and sold for export. Five bags of sunflower seeds were distributed amongst the farmers and plots were seen in a number of places, this crop is only in its infancy and it will be interesting to see whether

it becomes popular/

it becomes popular. There was little change in the cotton crop and much of the cotton produced is used for local weaving, for which Okene is well known. About 2,000 of ungraded "Bemue" cotton was purchased. The figures for the grading of palm kernels also show a rise, from 1022 tons to 1786 tons for the first eleven months of the year. The only grading station to show a decrease was Ajakuta on the Niger east of Okene where the figure dropped by 20 tons from 117 tons for the previous period. In spite of high purchases the firms generally report a noticeable decrease in sales of imported goods, of which there are adequate supplies of most items, at a price; cloth is plentiful. Soap and matches abound, as do lamps but cycles are still not so numerous as could be desired. There has been no trouble over taxation and money is still easy. Nevertheless there do seem to be some signs that things may not be so easy in days to come, though it must be admitted that there is little to show to-day that to-morrow may be harder.

4. Population statistics continue to show the same steady rise and the lack of epidemics and of wide-spread serious illness continues to encourage the tendency. The empty land formerly existing between the Lokoja - Kabba and the Lokoja - Okene roads takes a larger farming population, and boundaries which were previously of little interest are now in dispute. If civil (native) court fees are any index of prosperity Igbirra Division must be one of the most prosperous in the country. With a population of about 140,000 over £5,000 was taken in 1948-49. Figures for a comparable population in Keffi and Nasarawa Emirates are a little over £100.

5. The staff position has shown a decided improvement though naturally there is a great dearth of staff of the middle seniority of eight to twelve years service. Apart from the Resident and his relief there have normally only been two District Officers in the Province, the remaining staff being Cadets in their first tours. Koton Karifi has been regularly toured again, greatly to its benefit and officers have been stationed both in Dekina and Ankpa for the greater part of the year. For the last five months of the year the Resident was in charge of Igbirra Division with a Cadet in residence there. The situation in Okene shows little change from that recorded in the past, and circumstances being what they are, this is likely to remain so.

6. The unsatisfactory relations between Ogori and the Central Administration in Igbirra continued though proposals to remedy the situation are being made. A tentative move was made by another area, Magongo, to associate itself with Ogori and their expressed desire to remove to the Western Provinces. This request was by no means unanimous. As reported last year it was feared that the celebration of the 'kuti' festival by the Igbirras living in Ogori might provoke trouble. A squad of police attended but all passed off quietly. This year's festival was scheduled for a date in November and cancelled, then for December 31st and again postponed. Though not in 1949 it may be recorded that the festival was held on January 5th 1950 with no untoward results. The Wakilin Atta attended with some Native Administration Police and order was maintained without any outside assistance, which is a matter for some pleasure.

7. The administration of Lokoja Town tended again to be conducted in the same spirit of petty intrigue and sordid self seeking by some of those who should be concerned with the general progress of the town rather than their own private interests. To the factions and tribes previously noted there have been added politically minded bodies such as the Northern Nigeria Congress whose activities may have added interest to the scene but not help to local administration. For some three or four months before the end of the year there had been jealousy on the part of one of the more prominent Council members that eventually necessitated his removal from the Council for general non-co-operation and lack of confidence from the other members.

8. In Igala Division the year was generally uneventful and was one of good crops, both food and cash. The division has undoubtedly benefited from the fact that there have been administrative officers stationed at both Bekina and Ankpa for the greater part of the year and continuity at Idah as well. With the abandonment of Ataneguma as the proposed headquarters of the Native Administration Idah will need a good deal of replanning. Northern Igala will benefit from the proposed Senior Primary (Boys) School that is scheduled to be built there.

9. In Kebba Division the late onset of the rains resulted in poor germination of the yam crop and the food situation there is the least favourable in the province, though not really unsatisfactory. As mentioned before

nearness to the/

nearness to the cocoa growing areas of the Western Provinces has tended to divert labour which is fairly highly paid by the cocoa farmers. In Yagba the customary chieftaincy disputes have not been lacking. The appointment of a new Chief in the Ejuku area of East Yagba led to controversy which is now settling down. The Egbe chieftaincy dispute, which is to come before the supreme Court, has yet to be settled. There has been difficulty over representation by the Crown but the papers in this case have now all been sent to Ibadan and it is hoped that a decision may not be too long delayed.

10. Development work has at last begun to move and with two Engineers and two Inspectors of Works in the Province there is something to show on the ground and promise of more to come in the future. The important bridge over the Kampa River on the Kabba - Ilorin road through Issulu and Egbe is approaching completion, all the piers are finished, the side girders are in position and the placing of the centre span girders is awaited. These were found to be slightly too long on arrival. At the moment work is delayed owing to fresh funds being awaited. The remainder of the road will be useable as soon as the bridge is complete. Ninety per cent of this work is being paid for from development funds under Road 53 with a ten per cent contribution by Yagba Native Administration. In Igala Division work continues on the riverside link road between Stobe and Ejule. This is a 50% grant scheme.

11. In Kabba itself the District Officer's house is now complete and occupied. The old divisional office is now altered and repaired to provide a much needed rest house. Staff quarters for the divisional clerks are also being made. The new Post Office, Type 'B' with its staff quarters is complete except for detail work and finishing touches.

12. The new Okene Post Office and Postmaster's quarters are approaching completion and interior fittings and decoration are the main items remaining. The Mosque, which is being built xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx on the lines of the Kano mosque though naturally a far more modest affair, has its outer walls and the minaret finished. The work proceeds slowly. Three temporary houses for education staff have been completed during the year and are in

occupation. The visit of a town planning officer is awaited, probably early in the New Year of 1950 and it will then be possible to proceed with the long desired Okene town plan. At the same time the revision of the Government Residential Area will be undertaken. A site board for the proposed hospital was held at the end of the year and a site East of the town end near the educational institutions has been recommended. This awaits approval. The water supply system continues to function satisfactorily and extensions towards Gaminona, lower down the valley on the road towards Iokoja, await supplies of pipes and materials.

13. Lokoja provided a welcome contrast to previous years of unfulfilled hopes with work proceeding steadily on the Marine staff quarters of which there will be over sixty when the programme is finished and which is now over two thirds complete. By the end of the year the new Residency had most of the roof on and internal wood-work was being fitted. It is unlikely that it will be ready for occupation until well on in 1950. The first of the A 3 quarters was up to wallplate level and the site for the second was cleared at the end of the year. A further six similar quarters are planned to be built in 1950-51 as the first instalment of the new Lokoja Government station. The site is West of the present Government Residential Area on the lower slopes of Patti Hill. Tentative plans for the development of the present area have been made and the visit of the town planning officer is expected early in 1950. A site for the new Hospital has been chosen and approved, the present Residency area and the Residency building will itself form a part of the Hospital. The siting of the actual buildings was done by the Northern Area Architect and comes up for approval.

14. There has been little serious crime recorded during the year. One case from Koton Karifi was pending at the end of the year in which a husband attacked and severely wounded his wife with a machet during a matrimonial squabble.

15. With the welcome increase in administrative staff, which was noted above, the checking of Native Court work has been made easier and has undoubtedly

benefited the less efficient Courts. Igbirra Division maintained its position as by far the most litigious area of the Province and reviews show an increase again on previous years, and result in an undue diversion of time and energy by the administrative staff, to the detriment of other activities which might be more beneficial to the community as a whole. Local politics are also apt to intrude to the detriment of court work.

16. The Magistrate, Benin, visits the province every two months or so and there appears to be an increasing amount of work for him and the two or three barristers who normally travel with the Court. Most of this work originates in and around Lokoja and Igbirra Division, with a smaller amount from Kabba Division. Only a small amount of Magisterial work was performed by Administrative Officer with judicial powers.

17. The year has seen the full working of the Education Ordinance with an increase in the financial assistance provided to voluntary institutions which provide such a large proportion of the educational facilities of the Province. As before many of the best teachers and all the key men came from the southern Provinces. The most educationally conscious part of the Province is in Kabba and Igbirra Divisions and there education is almost a projection of the western Provinces system.

18. There were four Divisional Education Committees approved during the year and they held eight sittings. These committees have undoubtedly been of great assistance in bringing together on common ground various parties to education and giving an opportunity for the Provincial Education Officer to explain aspects of Government education policy which would otherwise not be adequately explained. They do very good work also in going through applications for the setting up of new schools.

19. The Okene Elementary Training Centre functioned throughout the year sharing its buildings with the Middle School as before. It has been supplying about twenty-five trained men per year at a cost of about £27 per head, which cannot be reckoned excessive. Conditions of training, such as pocket money etc., may not be thought to be as favourable as those in a corresponding Government institution but it is interesting to note that over 300 persons have been

applying for admission/

applying for admission each year. Higher staff still remains a difficulty and during the year three left for further training and for a time the situation was very difficult, as before temporary staff were found from the Southern Provinces.

20. Expatriate staff have begun to arrive in Okene and at the end of the year there were two newly recruited education officers teaching in the classes and it is expected that a Provincial (Lady) Education Officer will be in the Province in the fairly near future. A very considerable expansion of the higher primary education is planned and a number of sites have been picked already. At Okene a Government Elementary Training Centre (Men's) is to be built and a site has been selected below Okene on the road towards Lokoja. Kabba is to receive two institutions, a Girls' Senior Primary School and a Women's Elementary Training Centre both of which it is proposed to put about two miles east of Kabba on the road towards Lokoja. They will be sufficiently removed from the town to keep the scholastic atmosphere but the staff will be within reasonable distance of company. The share proposed for Igala Division is a Boy's Senior Primary School to be established at Dekina.

21. One of the outstanding events of the year was a meeting held in Lokoja to discuss the revision of the Constitution. After the Divisional Meetings it was decided to restrict the Provincial Meeting to a total of thirty members consisting of eleven chiefs who were native authorities, four divisional members and a further fifteen to be selected from the various areas and unions and societies of the province. In the end only twenty-nine members sat as the Yagba Unions were unable to reach agreement. The meetings held over three days were open to the public who took considerable interest. There was not unanimity and some minority proposals were hotly condemned by the remainder, such as a proposed Central Region which was suggested by some members from Kabba, Yagba and Ogori. The Yagba and Ogori members supported an alternative scheme for transfer of their areas to the west but this was not approved by the majority. An Igbirra Union suggestion was for the splitting of the North into a Northern and Central area on lines somewhat similar to the proposed Central Provinces. Direct election to the Houses of Assembly was favoured, with members for each division and for other 'interests'.

The Meeting also/

The meeting also favoured election to the Legislative Council from the ranks of the House of Assembly and not direct election. The majority of these decisions were embodied in resolutions made at the end of the meeting. The Wakilin Atta later attended the Regional Conference.

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ANNUAL REPORT ON KABBA PROVINCE, 1949.PART II - PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS.

22. Areas and Boundaries. There have been no changes in the Provincial boundaries and no boundary incidents. The area of the Province remains as before at 10,953 square miles. A demarcation of the described boundary between Kabba and Igbirra Divisions is pending and it is hoped to carry it out this dry season.

23. Population. The steady rise of recent years has continued and generally appears to average some 3 to 4 per cent. There have been no epidemics or shortages of food that would have tended to check it. Divisional population figures for 1948 and 1949 (indigenous) are shown below :-

<u>Division.</u>	<u>1948</u>	<u>1949.</u>
Igbirra	144,106	150,820
Igala	284,223	294,118
Koton Karifi	29,848	30,950
Kabba	93,221	97,486
Total	<u>551,398</u>	<u>583,374</u>

In Igbirra division the excess of females over males, approximately 29,000 men to 45,000 women is most marked and has persisted for very many years, the number of children, 70,000 is also very marked and borne out by the numbers met by any visitor to the area. There are few large towns in the Province, Okene, with its scattered wards over the hill sides, exceeds 35,000 and Lokoja has now nearly 13,800 which is an increase of over 130 on the previous year. Kabba, Egbe and Idah touch about 6,000 with 2,000 each or so in Koton Karifi and Abugi.

24. Administrative Staff. Mr. H.C.Gill, Resident, was in charge of the Province from January 1st to October 3rd 1949 and handed over to Mr. T.E.Letchworth, Senior District Officer, on October 4th who was in charge until the end of the year. The following Administrative Officers served in the Province during the year :-

Mr. T.F.G.Hopkins	District Officer
Mr. D.H.E.Vesey	-do-
Mr. H.F.Pedraza	-do-
Mr. V.L.Cornish	-do-

Mr. F.G. Rogers	Cadet
Mr. R.G. Adams	--do--
Mr. M.H. Orde	--do--
Mr. T.M.B. Sharp	--do--
Mr. S.W. Morgan	--do--
Mr. W.G.C. Ferris	--do--
Mr. K.A. Vorley	--do--

The average strength was 9.8 as against an authorised strength of 11. The percentage of time spent on tour was 28 per cent. The proportion of junior officers or cadets was high and for the whole year the Resident was in charge of Koton Karifi Division which was toured by a Cadet and for the second half of the year Igbirra Division as well, where a junior officer was similarly stationed.

25. Clerical Staff. After long years of service Mr. J.S.K. Jibogu went on leave in April preparatory to a well earned retirement and his place was taken by Mr. V.O. Osammor, Chief Clerk, who remained in charge of the office until the end of the year. At the very end of the year he was joined by Mr. J.E. Obazeh, Assistant Chief Clerk. The authorised strength is 13 and during the year an average of 13 was actually on duty, but as before a First Class Clerk was permanently diverted to the Local Treasury, Lokoja, and one Second Class Clerk was transferred to the Treasury and has not yet been replaced. The diversion of a First Class Clerk to the Local Treasury reduced the staff available at Headquarters and did tend to reduce the efficiency of the office. One temporary clerk received an appointment to the permanent staff during the year and two Clerical Assistants applied for similar appointments.

26. Visits. A much appreciated visit was that of Mr. (now Sir Christopher) Cox, C.M.G., the Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State who was at Okene from the 1st to 3rd of April. Okene is in a part of the Province which is particularly interested in Education and where educational work is increasing steadily, it was therefore a particularly pleasing choice for a visit.

27. Ex-Service Activities. The main centre continues to be in Igala Division where a Registration Clerk is retained and has given help in dealing with pensioners both inside and outside of Idah, the Divisional Headquarters.

Lokoja has a number of ex-servicemen distributed amongst the Government Departments and who have settled down well to peace time work. The province is not a recruiting area with a tradition of military service.

PART III - NATIVE ADMINISTRATION AND
DEPARTMENTAL ACTIVITIES.

28. Central Administration. There were no changes during the year. In Igala attention was paid to the work of the Central Council and in the same manner, as circumstances allowed, in Igbirra Division. Constitutional activities draw increasingly on the time of these Chiefs, particularly in the case of the Atta of Igbirra who has been frequently absent from his area attending the House of Assembly, the House of Chiefs, conferences in connection with the revision of the Constitution of Nigeria and Finance Committees. These tendencies underline the need for decentralisation of Native Administration work in the headquarters.

29. Proposals for a slight modification of the advisory council of the Chief of Koton Karifi, to include elements previously not represented, were approved towards the end of the year.

30. District and Village Administration. One District Head was removed from office in Igala Division and an experienced District Head from a small District took his place, a replacement being appointed. The Bassa Komo Districts have benefited by the presence, for the whole year, of a touring officer based on Dekina and the area has not so been toured for several years. Of the nineteen Igala District Heads it is interesting to note that nine of them are literate in Hausa and two from that number, also, in English.

31. After some disagreement a group head for the Egain group has been chosen in Igbirra Division. Other events in this Division have been chronicled in an earlier part of this report. In Kabba the East and West Yagba Native

Administrations functioned reasonably well and proposals for members of the Advisory Councils, assisting the Chiefs-in-Council, have been made.

32. Medical. In Kabba Division two new dispensaries were opened during the year at Agbaja and Ife Yagba. This is a very popular service and more is needed but funds in this Division are stretched to the limit and even with grant assistance further extensions may well be difficult, even assuming adequate supervision. The Qua Iboe Mission in Igala Division has opened a leper settlement at Ochadam on the new Etobe to Ejule road and has dealt with over a hundred patients. There are in addition about thirty lepers from Igala Division in Itu. At the moment the Mission Medical Officer attends weekly to give injections but in due course will, it is hoped, have a house and hospital at the site. Elsewhere development is mainly still in the planning stage. The Oyi River Settlement is in the process of taking out a Certificate of Occupancy to cover the whole of the area which they are using in Kabba division.

33. Education. As previously noted there has been much extension during the year in educational work and the introduction of the new grants system has put a great deal of work onto the Education Department in an area where so much is done by the voluntary agencies. Some details to show the changes in the last ten years provide an interesting contrast.

	<u>Pupils</u> <u>N.A.</u>	<u>Pupils</u> <u>Mission</u>	<u>Schools</u> <u>N.A.</u>	<u>Schools</u> <u>Mission</u>	<u>Grants</u> <u>in Aid</u>	<u>Assisted</u> <u>Schools.</u>
1939	380	3,365	7	74	£234	5
1949	2,348	10,858	38	91	£17,500	91

Of the Native Administration Schools nine were opened during the year. The operation of the new Ordinance has improved the quality of the teachers who are being brought in by the Mission Schools from the Southern provinces.

Entry to the Middle School at Okene is still a source of much work to the Department and this year there were about two hundred applicants who sat for an entrance examination. The output of Middle IV boys is about ten a year, this may appear low but there are numbers who leave from Middle II or III for further education. As before there were no failures in the Middle IV examination. Two of the teachers

have left for higher education, Mallam Abdurahman for a Government scholarship in England and Mr. Ukpaby for Tuskegee. Two students are at Ibadan University.

34. Native Courts. In Igala Division there was a decrease in the number of civil and criminal cases, from 6,718 to 5,739 but an increase in revenue from £3,133 to £3,721. In Igbirra Division the steady increase in cases and revenue continued, particularly in civil cases which rose from 3,563 to 3,992 and revenue from fees and fines together from £6,050 to £6,596. 132 cases went on review to the District Officer, nearly all after the Appeal Court had heard the case. Its work has not been very satisfactory. Litigation is however one of the more popular pastimes in the Division and there are always large crowds outside the Courts.

35. Agriculture. The Province still continues to rank as a kind of no-man's land between the Ilorin and the Benue systems, between which it is fairly justly divided in an agricultural sense. In Igala the accent is on palm products and yams as in the East and in Kabba and Igbirra the outlook is more of the Ilorin and Western Provinces system. In Igala about a ton each of sunflower and soya bean seeds were distributed for experimental planting, so far the sunflower seeds appear to be more successful than the soya beans but it is too early to say yet how it will fare. Two Native Administration hand oil presses have been bought and one of them taken over by a local trader. Four compost assistants tour on demonstration. In Igbirra Division demonstration plots for showing the use of manure have been kept up, success is hard to estimate but a minor mixed farming system has been approved and advances for the purchase of cattle to produce manure have been approved. It is hoped to start the scheme with ten farmers each to have two beasts. The dairy continued to function satisfactorily. Sunflower seeds were also distributed in Kabba Division and the keeping of cattle for manure purposes was pushed forward. The dairy was fitted with a refrigerator and nearly three times the amount of milk purchased last year was bought in 1949.

36. Forestry. Following several years of stagnation a Forestry Officer was posted to the Province in April 1948. He was transferred in November, 1949 with the promise of some one to take his place the following month. So far nothing has materialised. There is much varied work needed

to be done./

to be done. In Igala Division the conservation of the forests, in Kabba Division exploitation of reserves where a private owner is hoping to install a modern saw mill with the assistance of the Northern Region Development Loans Board, in Okene where re-forestation on the bare hills is so much needed, and where firewood is such a problem.

37. Housing and Social welfare. There is little change to be recorded during 1949 in the state of housing and of welfare in the Province. The sixty odd quarters for Marine Department staff in Lokoja are progressing and a full half are now occupied. There are no assisted schemes in the area. Corrugated sheeting is becoming available again, at a price, and the more wealthy citizens in places such as Kabba and Okene are reverting to its use. It is at least weather-proof and fire-proof. Expense and the lack of dressers prohibits the use of stone for building and even the Public Works and Native Administration works departments find it cheaper and quicker to build in cement blocks.

Plans for part of Okene town have been submitted to the Town Planning Officer but there is no doubt that any comprehensive plan for that town will be a work of the first magnitude. Similarly a plan for Lokoja is being worked out. The Government Residential Area has had its plan approved, the new residency is approaching completion with one A 3 house and a second one has been laid out. Sites for the 1950 - 51 building programme have been laid out and plots remain to be chosen for the individual houses.

Moving juvenile delinquents do not provide the problem that is seen further north and parental control is adequate, so far it may probably be said that there is no real juvenile delinquency problem. On the other hand Kabba division emigration to the Lagos area and the tendency in Igbirra to the loosening of the marriage and family ties is not helpful.

PART IV - GENERAL.

38. On the whole it has been a year of high prices, higher in many cases than in the previous year, and of very substantial material prosperity. Igala produced good harvests as did Igbirra Division, Kabba was not so satisfactory where an otherwise more or less adequate rainfall was spoilt by its arrival too late for proper germination of the yam crop. Lorry loads of food stuff go out to the cocoa areas of the West and to the Enugu area. In Igala palm kernels to a total of about 9,000 tons have been purchased, an increase of a third over 1948. Palm oil is now being purchased, from 22 tons in 1948 to over 200 tons in 1949 with no increase in the local price or any scarcity, the reverse has in fact been the case. The only sufferer is the fixed salary man or the non-farmer non-trader. In spite of this the firms report that, as a whole, there is somewhat less demand for trade goods than previously.

The very great Government help that is being given to the Province is perhaps obscured by the fact that most of it is in the form of grants through Native Treasuries and it is therefore not obvious to all that it is Government money that is being used. In Kabba Division Government grant expenditure totalled over two thirds of the expenditure of the two Treasuries of Kabba Division. A study of the figures given earlier for Education is also revealing.

Administratively the staff position has improved and with the junior staff gaining further experience matters should improve yet more. The clerical staff are still somewhat below strength with one senior man in the Treasury and a preponderance of inexperienced clerks.

P.C. Isama.