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KENYA

X. 323

DATE

11 JAN 1926

GOVERNOR GRIGG 1618

5th DECEMBER 1925

CIRCULATION

EFFECT OF DROUGHT ON THE AGRICULTURAL CROPS

U.S. of S.

M. Stanley

U.S. of S.

U.S. of S.

Secretary of State

Submits report by the Director of Agriculture upon the incidence of the drought and an estimate of its probable effect upon the trade for the ensuing year. Observes as to the variations of conditions throughout the Colony and states as to the yield of crops in the various districts.

Previous Paper

MINUTES

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15 JAN 1926

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X. 15510/29

KENYA

No. 15



GOVERNMENT HOUSE
NAIROBI,
KENYA

X. 323
11 JAN 1926

December, 1925.

Sir,

Schedule.

I have the honour to inform you that owing to the failure of the long rains this year and the possibility of a failure in the short rains (which has happily not eventuated) the crop prospects for 1926 were a matter of some anxiety to me on my arrival in Kenya, and I directed the Director of Agriculture to submit a report on the incidence of the drought and an estimate of its probable effect upon the trade of the ensuing year.

I attach a schedule giving particulars of the rainfall records covering the different areas, together with meteorological notes by the Statistical Officer, and invite your attention to the last column of these notes.

The Director of Agriculture reports that the farming year of 1925 has been very variable throughout the Colony and Protectorate. The deficiency of rainfall for the first 9 months of the year was most marked, but the shortage has been more serious in its effects /

T. HONOURABLE
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DOWNING STREET, LONDON, S.W.1

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effects than the figures disclose, as the incidence of the rainfall has been unfavourable to crop production in several districts. From January to March the rainfall was generally abnormally high, but it fell out of season to benefit crops, and the long rains of April to June fell far short of the average in most districts.

Broadly, the position is that within the ten mile coastal belt conditions are rather above normal in respect of crop yields. Behind that area and extending through the Midlands to the Highlands as far as the Elgeyo Escarpment the main crops are on the whole much below the average and in some cases have entirely failed.

In the pastoral area covering the Rift Valley and Kinangop, stock have suffered from the drought, and the output of dairy produce has been seriously affected. There, as in the Masai Reserve, stock are not in a fit condition for slaughter purposes.

In the climatic zone covering the Uasin Gishu Plateau and the Transzoia the season has been a good one and production is above the normal.

4. The same variation of conditions obtained in the native reserves, but while notably in North and Central Kavirondo and in Kikuyu surplus production for purposes of sale is probably less than in the previous season shortage of food is only reported in a part of the Lumbwa Reserve, Kamasia Reserve, and the hinterland of the coast. In April and May steps were taken under the Native Foodstuffs Ordinance 1922 to prohibit the export of native grown foodstuffs from the Kavirondo districts and also from the Lamu, Tana River, and Malindi Districts. It was, however, found possible to remove these restrictions in July and November respectively/

3.

respectively though in August export was prohibited ~~for~~ ^{from} the Digo District.

5. I was advised that unless the short rains failed and that failure was succeeded by a repetition of this season's experience in respect of the "long" rains there was no ^{Season} need for apprehension in regard to food supplies in the Native Reserves. There is, moreover, so large a surplus of production, particularly of maize in the European areas, that a shortage of food within the Colony as a whole need not be contemplated and the experience of 1918, when food had to be imported for native consumption, is not likely to be repeated. I am glad to be able to state that the "short" rains have now apparently broken satisfactorily in all parts of the country.

6. Taking the main crops, the indications are a heavy decrease in the coffee crop together with loss in quality both due to inadequate rainfall.

The export of maize is not likely to fall far short of last season's output, indeed with the good rains now falling there may be a slight increase. The increase in area, together with the good crops in the Usin Gishu Plateau and Trans Nzola districts, now provided with railway communications, should make up the deficiency in the crop yield throughout the Kakuru maize belt and the short fall in the Kikuyu-Fort Hall Districts. Sisal production is not appreciably affected by the weather conditions prevailing and is likely to show a further and continued increase.

Pulse crops and oil seeds have not suffered much and are likely to be about normal. Cotton is reported to be a light crop on the whole on account of insufficient rain and in some cases for the same reason has failed. Chiefly

on /

on account of drought conditions, and, in one district in particular, of the incidence of rust, the Wheat crop is likely to be below normal in respect of yield, but the increase in area may make up that deficiency. It should be noted that the year of ~~market~~ marketing of crops does not coincide with the period of harvesting. There is overlapping from one year to the next.

7. The compilation of the Agricultural Census for the year ended 30th June, 1925, is not yet quite completed, but the following figures are approximately correct and show the percentage increase of land under the four chief crops on European holdings as compared with the previous year:-

Maize	10 per cent increase
Wheat	8 " " "
Coffee	7 " " "
Sisal	17 " " "

Development continues but the rapid rate of increase of the previous few years has not been maintained, except in the case of Sisal. Broadly, the increase in area is no more than sufficient to make up the deficiency due to lower average yields of Maize and Wheat and in the case of Coffee the shortfall is likely to be heavy.

As regards the economic position consideration must be given to the reduced values of export products. In 1924 and early in 1925 values were abnormally high on overseas markets for nearly all Kenya's products. The general tendency is for the prices of primary products to fall, e.g., during recent months coffee prices have dropped 15 to 20 per cent. Apart from the tonnage of produce exported it is seen that the rate of increase in the value of exports in previous years is not likely to be maintained in 1925 and 1926, and, in the opinion of the Director of

Agriculture, it is doubtful whether the value of Agricultural Exports for 1926 will exceed that of 1924 and 1925.

9. The present position is, however, less discouraging than might have been expected and owing to this Colony's powers of rapid recuperation it is not unreasonable to anticipate that the general trade in 1926 will, in any case, not fall below the level of preceding years. Owing to the absence of definite crop estimates it is, however, difficult accurately to forecast the position. I am now taking steps to secure the preparation of these estimates through the Administrative and Agricultural officers.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Edward King

G O V E R N O R.

Agriculture, it is doubtful whether the value of Agricultural Exports for 1926 will exceed that of 1924 and 1925.

9. The present position is, however, less discouraging than might have been expected and owing to this Colony's powers of rapid recuperation it is not unreasonable to anticipate that the general trade in 1926 will, in any case, not fall below the level of preceding years. Owing to the absence of definite crop estimates it is, however, difficult accurately to forecast the position. I am now taking steps to secure the preparation of these estimates through the Administrative and Agricultural officers.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

Edward Gigg

GOVERNOR,

A REPORT ON

RAINFALL DISTRIBUTION OVER A PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS
(JANUARY SEPTEMBER, 1925) IN THE COLONY AND
PROTECTORATE OF KENYA, AND ITS GENERAL EFFECT ON
PRODUCTION.

For the purposes of this Report the Colony may be divided into six Belts i.e.,

Coast (Protectorate)

Midland (extending from the hinterland of the Coast Belt to an approximate point - Makindu)

Upland (that settled area extending from Kni-N.W. to the Rift Valley)

Highland (the settled areas 5000' and upwards extending from Nakuru to Lumbwa and north to Mount Elgon.

Lowland (that area in proximity to Lake Victoria. Kavirondo N.C.e.S.)

Arid (Norther Frontier Province)

Generally

The rainfall of the Colony for the period - January. September, 1925 has been abnormal.

The year started phenomenally.

January, with a low normal expectancy furnished excessive rainfall without exception throughout the country.

Forecasts, based on moderate "Grass Rains" in March were upset by heavy deficiency of rain in April-June throughout the Uplands & Highlands, and continued erratic precipitation created a serious "crop outlook".

Overdue rains have now prevailed generally and crop prospects are brighter in most Districts than were earlier anticipated.

Areas detailed (vide appendix).

Coast (Mombasa)

A total deficit of 2.67 ins is recorded to September.

Abnormal rain fell in January followed by 4 months

deficiency. Excess in June & July tended to rebalance, and crop prospects are normal.

Midland

Yei.

Slight variation from normal expectations, resulting in a nine months deficit of 1.53 inches need create no anxiety in Districts principally devoted to the cultivation of Fibre.

Doland

Machakos & Hairobi.

have suffered severely through practical failure of the "Heavy Rains" and crop prospects in the near future are poor.

Fort Hall & Nyeri.

Partial failure of the Heavy Rains has affected the Coffee Crop, and young plantations have suffered severely, but recent moderate rains have improved the general outlook, which may now be stated as fair.

Naiyasha.

Subnormal rainfall is recorded in six out of nine months (January. September).

Excess rains was recorded in January, and slight excess in February and June, but these were totally insufficient to save a Bad Year for both Stock and Crops.

Highland.

Nakuru. Rumuruti.

Excess rainfall was experienced in January and March followed by six months deficiency (total deficit January. September 9.54 ins).

Eccentric and unreliable climatic conditions in this area, principally grain producing, have ^{helped} resulted in considerable loss of energy and seed, but recent rains have gone far to assure moderate production over replanted and late planted areas.

Plateau.

Plains.

The rainfall over this area during the period under review may be described as of "poor distribution" rather than "deficient".

Rain recorded recently has assured an average, if not slightly excess production.

Kericho.

Subnormal precipitation is shown with a total deficit of 6.79 ins in 9 months.

Ruling climatic conditions in this area are extremely regular, and in spite of the above small deficit in an area of relatively high rainfall average production may be generally assumed.

Lowland.Kisumu, Kisii & Kakamega.

The rainfall over this area indicates that in common with all parts of the Colony unusual climatic conditions and variable rain distribution have occurred during the period under review.

AFISNorthern Frontier.

Rainfall records for six months only are to hand, the general prevailing conditions over this period are however most consistent with those experienced in the Settled areas S.W. of Marsabit.

Conclusion.

To date the Nairobi area has been the greatest sufferer from continued lack of appreciable rain during 1925, and a natural impression may be formed by the dweller in the Capital that drought is prevalent throughout Kenya. This opinion must be qualified however, and while it is obvious that 1925 will not attain annual average figures (a late fulfilment of the "Light rains may qualify this opinion locally) it can generally be stated that "poor distribution"

poor distribution

rather than an extreme "deficient rainfall" if the principal factor affecting the production of 1925.

L. CARPENTER.

STATISTICAL OFFICER.

K. Y. S. S. P. 1925.

OFFICE LONDON

STATION RECEIPTS, MONTHLY, EXCESS DEFICIENCY.

RECORDED IN INCHES.

TITLE	January				February				March				April				May				June			
	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.
<u>LOWLAND AREA</u>																								
Umba	1.75	1.81	3.94		0.61	0.74		0.13	0.64	2.48		1.84	0.57	8.13		7.62	6.56	12.80		6.24	5.88	4.23	1.65	
Yoi	7.12	1.57	5.55		0.45	1.61		1.16	3.18	2.46	0.72		0.00	3.61		3.61	6.10	1.46		1.36	0.0	0.71		0.21
<u>HIGHLAND AREA</u>																								
Machakos	6.97	1.60	5.37		2.56	2.40	0.16		3.84	5.26		1.40	2.70	8.47		5.77	1.37	2.86		1.49	0.00	0.68		0.68
Mairobi	4.26	1.32	2.94		2.26	2.36		0.10	4.98	5.12		0.24	2.48	9.01		6.53	1.83	5.72		3.89	0.52	1.61		1.11
Fort Hall	3.10	1.24	1.86		0.75	1.09		1.14	5.60	5.05	0.55		4.79	12.75		7.96	5.09	6.53		1.44	2.18	1.73	0.45	
Eyeri	3.44	1.31	2.13		0.93	1.75		0.82	3.97	2.65	1.32		1.43	8.43		7.00	4.27	7.28		3.01	0.98	1.46		0.41
Maiyasha	3.52	0.89	2.63		1.56	1.41	0.15		2.87	3.12		0.25	0.94	5.49		5.25	1.81	3.84		2.05	2.92	2.84	0.08	
Makuru	2.03	0.46	1.57		1.27	1.99		0.72	5.09	2.15	2.95		1.26	6.13		4.87	1.12	5.22		4.10	1.17	2.18		1.01
Mumuruti	1.59	0.43	1.16		0.62	0.99		0.37	3.76	2.00	1.76		0.54	4.50		3.66	1.30	2.46		1.16	4.69	5.10		0.41
Mldoret	2.02	0.68	4.34		0.41	2.17		1.76	4.23	2.96	1.27		0.12	4.71		4.59	6.41	5.19	1.22		2.47	3.32		0.85
Kitale	2.42	0.04	2.38		0.10	3.35		3.25	5.73	2.80	3.23		3.77	5.55		1.78	5.29	7.00		1.71	6.11	6.36		0.23
Fericho	7.88	2.30	5.58		0.20	4.42		4.22	7.11	5.94	1.17		2.68	10.27		7.59	9.92	8.89	1.03					
<u>WATER LOGGED AREA</u>																								
Kisumu	4.81	1.96	2.85		1.08	3.54		2.46	8.52	5.44	3.08		2.55	7.41		4.86	7.15	5.45	1.70		2.43	3.97		1.54
Kisii	5.47	2.32	3.15		2.38	4.82		2.41	6.28	6.23	0.05		4.56	9.91		5.38	10.64	8.28	2.36		6.22	6.44		0.22
Kakamega	5.53	2.25	3.28		0.42	4.29		1.87	10.62	5.08	5.54		4.21	9.95		8.74	12.52	9.50	3.03		6.18	7.25		1.10
<u>MASAI DIVISION</u>																								
Murabit	10.26	1.62	7.64		2.90	3.61		0.71	3.26	4.28		1.02	0.42	5.34		4.91	1.44	4.16		2.72	1.65	1.7	0.58	
Murabit	3.28	0.33	2.95		0.11	1.59		1.48	1.67	2.65		0.99	1.65	5.83		4.18	1.25	4.43		3.18	0.25	0.17	1.1	

KENYA RAINFALL, 1925.

STATION PRECIPITATION AVERAGE FALL, EXCESS OR DEFICIENCY.

RECORDED IN INCHES.

STATION	January				February				March				April				May				June					
	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.	Total.	Ave.	E.	D.		
<u>COST COAST AREA</u>																										
Mombasa.	4.75	0.81	3.94		0.61.	0.74.		0.13.	0.64	2.48.		1.84	0.57	8.19		7.62	6.56	12.80		6.24.		5.88	4.23	1.65		
<u>MIDLAND AREA</u>																										
Voi	7.12	1.57	5.55		0.45.	1.61.		1.18.	3.18.	2.46.	0.72.		0.00	3.61		3.61	0.10	1.46		1.36		0.00	0.21		0.21	
<u>HIGHLAND AREA</u>																										
MERRIKO	5.97	1.60	5.37		2.56	2.40	0.16		3.84	5.24		1.40	2.70	8.47		5.77	1.37	2.86		1.49		0.00	0.68		0.68	
Nairobi	4.26	1.32	2.94		2.26	2.36		0.10	4.88	5.12		0.24	2.48	9.01		6.55	1.85	5.78		3.89		0.52	1.66		1.66	
Port Bell	3.10	1.84	1.86		0.75	1.89		1.14	5.60	2.05	0.55		4.72	12.75		7.94	8.09	6.53		1.44		2.18	1.73	0.45		
Eyeri	3.44	1.31	2.13		0.93	1.75		0.82	3.97	2.65	1.32		1.43	8.43		7.00	4.27	7.28		3.01		0.98	1.46		0.44	
Maiyasha	3.52	0.99	2.63		1.56	1.41	0.15		2.87	3.12		0.25	0.24	5.49		5.25	1.81	3.86		2.08		2.92	2.84	0.08		
Sakuru	2.03	3.45	1.87		1.27	1.99		0.72	5.09	2.15	2.93		1.26	6.13		4.87	1.12	5.22		4.10		2.00	3.88		1.88	
Rumuruti	1.59	0.43	1.16		0.62	0.99		0.37	3.75	2.00	1.76		0.54	4.20		2.66	1.30	2.46		1.16		1.17	2.18		1.01	
Eldoret	5.02	0.68	4.34		0.41	2.17		1.76	4.23	2.96	1.27		0.12	4.71		4.59	6.41	5.19	1.22			4.69	5.10		0.41	
Kitale	2.42	0.04	2.38		0.10	3.35		3.25	5.73	2.80	3.23		3.77	5.55		1.78	5.29	7.00		1.71		2.47	3.32		0.85	
Kericho	7.88	2.30	5.58		0.20	4.42		4.22	7.11	5.94	1.17		2.68	10.27		7.59	9.92	8.89	1.03			6.11	6.36		0.25	
<u>LAKE DISTRICT AREA</u>																										
Kisumu	4.81	1.96	2.85		1.08	2.54		2.46	8.52	5.44	3.08		8.55	7.41		4.86	7.15	5.48	1.70			2.43	3.97		1.54	
Kisii	5.47	2.32	3.15		2.38	4.82		2.44	6.28	5.23	0.05		4.56	9.91		5.38	10.64	8.22	2.36			6.22	6.44		0.22	
Kakamega	5.53	2.25	3.28		2.42	4.29		1.87	10.62	5.08	5.54		4.21	9.95		5.74	12.52	9.50	2.03			6.16	7.25		1.10	
<u>MASAI PROVINCE</u>																										
NEROK	10.26	2.62	7.64		2.90	3.61		0.71	3.26	4.28		1.02	0.42	5.38		4.91	1.44	4.16		2.72						
<u>NORTHER FRONTIER</u>																										
Marsabit	3.28	0.38	2.90		0.11	1.59		1.48	1.67	2.66		0.99	1.65	5.83		4.18	1.25	4.43		3.18						
																						8.25	0.12	0.13		