

REPORT
by His Britannic Majesty's Government
to the Council of the League of Nations
on the Administration of
PALESTINE AND TRANS-JORDAN

FOR THE YEAR

1927

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Section 1.

PALESTINE.

I.--INTRODUCTORY.

The year under review has witnessed a period of financial stress which has borne heavily upon Jewish settlement in Palestine, and was aggravated by drought in the south of the country and by the effects of earthquake shock in July. An almost total absence of rainfall in the region of Beersheba, coming after a succession of "lean years," necessitated the removal at the public cost of famished herds to more favoured parts of the country, remissions of taxation, and the issue of agricultural loans to needy peasants. The earthquake shock caused loss of life and property in many towns and villages, notably at Amman and Es-Salt in Trans-Jordan, and Lydda, Ramleh, and Nablus in Palestine: several villages were almost completely destroyed. Relief was afforded by Government making available £100,000 for loans to individuals for the repair of their houses; and by the provision of free housing or grants of small sums of money to necessitous persons from a fund obtained by voluntary subscriptions, which totalled £22,500 at the end of the year, from Palestine and abroad.

Public security was well maintained and progress in administrative reforms has continued unchecked. A new currency was issued in Palestine on the 1st of November, and was simultaneously adopted by Trans-Jordan. At the end of the year notes and coins to the value of £P.1,635,296 were in circulation. New issues of postage stamps were made in Palestine and in Trans-Jordan. The Stamp Duty Ordinance enacted on the 1st of

November replaced the complicated Ottoman law previously in force and introduced a single stamp duty based on English models.

A revised Import tariff was introduced on the 4th of November. The new tariff was designed to change Customs dues, wherever possible, from an *ad valorem* to a specific basis and to give further protection to local industries.

The Commutation of Tithes Ordinance, an experimental measure, conferred powers to replace the annual assessment of agricultural produce by an average aggregate annual tithe payable by the reputed owners of village lands in certain villages to be specified by Order.

A Workmen's Compensation Ordinance and an Ordinance for the protection of women and children engaged in industrial establishments were enacted. Ordinances for the better control of education, for the organisation of Land Settlement, and for a new assessment of urban properties for taxation were published as Bills.

Municipal elections throughout the country aroused keen popular interest and, in many places, a factious spirit, but were carried out in an orderly manner. The newly-elected Municipal Councils are fully representative of the constituencies. Regulations were issued for the organisation of the Jewish Community.

Mr. J. D. Rockefeller, Jr., announced his munificent gift of 2,000,000 dollars to build, equip, and maintain an archaeological museum for Palestine. He stipulated that the museum should be built on a suitable site at Jerusalem to be provided by the Government and should be completed by the 1st of January, 1931. These conditions were gratefully accepted. Mr. Nathan Straus has given a considerable sum for the construction of Welfare Centres, open to all communities, at Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv.

The War Cemeteries at Ramleh and Jerusalem were formally dedicated in May by Field-Marshal Viscount Allenby: a Memorial to the 54th Division was unveiled at Gaza on the 27th of April.

The Imperial Airways service between Cairo and Baghdad via Gaza was opened to ordinary traffic in January.

Mr. M. F. J. McDonnell, the new Chief Justice, Mr. F. Pudsey, Director of Public Works, and Mr. E. T. Richmond, Director of Antiquities, have taken up their respective appointments. Mr. E. F. Colville, C.M.G., lately of the Nyasaland Protectorate, has succeeded Mr. A. Abramson, C.B.E., as District Commissioner, Northern District. Mr. Abramson was appointed to the new office of Commissioner of Lands and will direct the work of Land Settlement and preparations for a reform of the present system of land taxation.

The Government have lost the services of a valuable police officer in the person of Mr.

W. F. Sinclair, Superintendent of Police, Northern District, who died at Haifa on the 29th of July.

Economic Affairs.

As has been stated, the past year has been a period of economic depression, but it would be exaggeration to describe the condition as a "financial crisis." At the same time, it is improbable that there will be any immediate amelioration, and for the next few years the problem before the Government will be how, without imposing undue burdens on the people of a small and little-developed country, to find means to maintain an efficient administration and to defray the relatively high cost of its public security forces, to repay the several debts imposed on Palestine by treaty or otherwise, and to provide for debt charges on the loan of £4,475,000 issued in London in November last.

On the Jewish side there was a shrinkage of voluntary subscriptions to Zionist funds by world Jewry upon which the Zionist Organisation mainly depends, and also a smaller influx of private capital to the country. These phenomena are closely connected with Jewish immigration inasmuch as immigration and local trade activity are naturally a stimulus to Zionist enthusiasm in Palestine and abroad.

The need for further restriction of immigration, which in three years, 1924-1926, brought a new population of more than 50,000 persons to the country, was nevertheless evident. It was clear that Palestine could not in a short time absorb so large a number of immigrants, and that existing sources of supply were inadequate to meet the economic demands of this population. The large immigration caused a general rise in values, particularly those of immovable property, which was promoted by intensive urban settlement of immigrants and the limited area of available building land. The consequences were that costs of settlement of Jews in Palestine were increased, Jewish private capital was invested in local industries and property at an abnormally high outlay; and, further, that Zionist funds had to be diverted from investments in productive capital works in order to provide for the welfare and social services demanded by a Jewish population which increased from 70,000 in 1920 to 140,000 in 1927. It was inevitable, therefore, that a subsequent adjustment of local supply to demand should result in a fall in values generally, in the restriction of credit facilities, and consequent reluctance of would-be investors to introduce new capital.

While the loss of capital is an embarrassment, a certain writing-off of capital investment and ebb and flow of prosperity are probably inevitable stages in the development of Palestine. An important result of the present phase is the unemployment which inevitably followed curtailment and restriction of capital expenditure. It is estimated that there is still a Jewish population of about 5,000 manual workers who are dependent for their maintenance on Zionist funds and on such public works as it has been possible for the Government to undertake. It is, however, no disparagement of the remarkable results which Zionism has already achieved to suggest that the difficulties through which Zionist enterprise in the country is now passing will serve a useful purpose if they compel realisation that the Jewish National Home cannot be well and truly built on any other than a sound economic foundation. The Zionist Organisation has given practical evidence of

its recognition of this fact by the appointment of a Survey Commission under whose auspices a number of experts have visited the country to advise on various aspects of the problem of Jewish settlement.

These financial difficulties, briefly summarised above, which have become more acute since the last boom of apparent prosperity in 1925, are reflected during the current year in a decline of £40,000 in the net revenue from Customs, Excise, and Port Dues and a more significant fall of £400,000 in the value of merchandise imported; the number of transactions in real estate has also decreased.

It would be wrong to suppose from the above recital of difficulties that the general economic progress of the country, to which Jewish capital and enterprise have made such important contributions, has been retarded. The following facts indicate clearly that this is not the case.

The total value of exports of Palestine products in 1927 was £1,899,759, being an increase of £591,426 over the previous year. For the first time since the war, exports have exceeded imports of agricultural products, and to the extent of £P.282,274. The index number of yields of agricultural products has risen from 100 in 1921 (the basic year) to 139 in 1927, in spite of partial failures of wheat, melon, and durra crops. The area of land under orange plantation has almost doubled in the last four years. The soap, flour, and (recently established) cement industries show steady development and are increasing their export trade. The value of edible oils exported rose from £9,470 in 1926 to £75,673 in 1927. The tobacco industry is flourishing and one factory alone, which started business a few years ago with several thousands of pounds, has now raised its capital to £150,000. Several of the smaller industries established at Tel-Aviv are increasing their output and local sales and are also finding export markets. There is no slackening in the formation of new companies: 20 were incorporated and 32 new cooperative societies were registered during the year. The economic depression has had little effect on Post Office business; on the Railways there was a falling off of passenger traffic, partly on account of inability with existing rolling stock to compete successfully with motor transport, but the goods traffic brought £14,000 more revenue than in 1926. Of the much improved quality of nearly all kinds of agricultural produce, visitors to the very successful Agricultural Show held in Haifa in September had ocular demonstration.

VI.--HEALTH.

Palestine was comparatively free in 1927 from epidemics of the more serious diseases. There were 1,001 cases of enteric, with 76 deaths: the incidence was high in Jerusalem, but much reduced in Haifa, Tel-Aviv, and the Jewish settlements in the Valley of Esdraelon, where inoculation, practised after the serious outbreaks of 1926, gave a large percentage of immunity. Dysentery was more prevalent, with 1,782 cases, 31 fatal. Neither plague nor cholera occurred. There was a single case of smallpox in Jerusalem, imported from Damascus; 34,000 inhabitants of Jerusalem underwent vaccination in consequence. During the year, 81,893 persons were vaccinated. There were 3,305 cases of measles, a source of considerable infant mortality; 324 deaths resulted. 83 cases of

typhus occurred, with one death, in the villages where the disease is endemic.

Urban scavenging services were generally well maintained and not a few improvements in organisation and in refuse disposal introduced. The improvement in the sanitation of shops and houses was marked in old quarters as well as in new suburbs.

A little progress was made in improving the sanitary conditions in the settlements attacked by enteric fever.

The birth-rate was slightly less than in 1926, and the death-rate and infantile mortality increased. There were 3,186 more deaths than in 1926, including 2,620 of children under five and 450 of persons over 50 years of age. This increase was evenly distributed among Moslems, Jews, and Christians, and is not attributable to infectious disease.

TABLE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS FOR THE QUINQUENNIAL PERIOD
1923-1927.

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Birth-rate per 1,000 living.</i>	<i>Number of births registered.</i>	<i>Estimated* population (Mid-year).</i>	<i>Number of deaths registered.</i>	<i>Death rate per 1,000.</i>	<i>Infantile mortality, i.e., deaths of children under 1 year of age per 1,000 births.</i>
1923	47.43	31,402	662,013	16,994	25.67	184.76
1924	51.31	34,955	681,245	17,672	25.94	184.83
1925	49.31	35,479	719,508	19,611	27.25	188.64
1926	53.47	40,741	761,896	18,620	24.43	163.03
1927	50.35	39,193	778,369	21,806	28.01	200.46

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS BY RELIGIONS
FOR THE YEAR 1927.

	<i>Christians.</i>	<i>Moslems.</i>	<i>Jews.</i>	<i>Others.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
*Population	76,839	545,225	147,687	8,618	778,369
Deaths... ..	1,545	18,031	1,987	243	21,806
Deaths per 1,000 of population...	20.10	33.07	13.45	28.19	28.01
Births... ..	2,991	30,586	5,182	434	39,193
Births per 1,000 of population...	38.92	56.09	35.08	50.35	50.35
Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age	560	6,631	598	68	7,857
Infantile Mortality Rate... ..	187.22	216.79	115.79	153.68	200.46

Note:--No figures are included for the nomadic Bedouin population, which in 1922 was estimated at 103,000.

Twenty-six pupil midwives and 11 midwives with foreign qualifications were licensed, bringing the number of trained and licensed midwives up to 221. Yet midwives are reluctant to settle in the villages to practise among the peasantry, where their attendance is a crying need.

There are now 561 doctors, 160 pharmacists, and 183 dentists licensed in Palestine.

At the end of the year there were 28 Child Welfare Centres: 17 Jewish, 7 Government and municipal, and 4 conducted for Arab children by voluntary committees. Government

nurses are under training to conduct infant welfare and school work in larger villages where no facilities of the kind yet exist.

Twenty-four lepers, who are not in-patients at the Moravian Mission Home in Jerusalem, receive out-patient treatment at the Government dispensaries.

A British specialist surgeon has been appointed to the staff of the Department of Health.

Improvements at the Jaffa Lazaret are in progress: it is being adapted to receive infectious cases in the event of a large epidemic. The Haifa Lazaret was re-modelled and re-equipped to provide good accommodation for 500 persons.

601 Palestinians made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Foreign pilgrims, Persians, `Iraqis, and Indians, show an increasing tendency to return by way of Palestine and so overland to `Iraq.

The cholera epidemic in `Iraq necessitated special precautionary measures on the Palestine and Trans-Jordan frontiers, which the rapidly developing trans-desert route from `Iraq to Syria and Palestine renders more liable to infection.

There was rather more malaria on the whole than in 1926, and during the autumn several sharp but localised outbreaks occurred in the Jordan Valley and other infected regions.

An important scheme for draining the malarious Kishon swamps near Haifa at a cost of £P.22,000 has begun. The Palestine Jewish Colonisation Association continued work on the drainage of the Kabbara marshes. Malaria control measures over a large area round the Palestine Electric Corporation's camp near the confluence of the Jordan and Yarmuk were carried through by Government agency. Free labour of the inhabitants, directed by Government inspectors, accomplished much minor drainage work about Arab villages.

The Government are contributing some 30 per cent. of the cost of a new hospital in Tel-Aviv and will guarantee payment of an annual contribution by the Tel-Aviv Township towards its maintenance, on condition that a certain number of beds is set aside for the treatment of local cases of minor infectious disease.

Two new motor-ambulances have been obtained for the Department of Health; police in each district were instructed in first-aid, and police stations re-equipped with first-aid materials.

Eighty-three Import Certificates were granted for the importation of dangerous drugs.

Imports in 1927.

	Gms..
Medicinal Opium	2,039
Morphine	1,784
Heroin	489

Dionin	1,008
Codeine	6,675
"Pantopon" and Preparations	300
Liquid extract of Coca	14,000
Galenical preparations of <i>Cannabis Indica</i> in terms of extract (British Pharmacopaeia)	510

Regulations were published governing in detail the trade in dangerous drugs for legitimate medical and scientific purposes, the keeping of registers, and the procedure for import and export.

Over a hundred thousand routine bacteriological and chemical investigations were carried out; the bacteriological sub-section of the Government Laboratories has produced all prophylactic and curative vaccines required by Palestine and Trans-Jordan, as follows:-- small pox 180,000; plague 1,500; typhoid 32,600; T.A.B.38, 650; cholera 60,800; anti-rabic 71,585 (1,008 treatments).

The chemical sub-section devoted itself to the analysis of edible oils and fats.