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G O L D C O A S T.

REPORT BY SIR DAVID P. CHALMERS

ON

THE EFFECT OF THE STEPS WHICH HAVE BEEN  
TAKEN BY THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT

IN REFERENCE TO

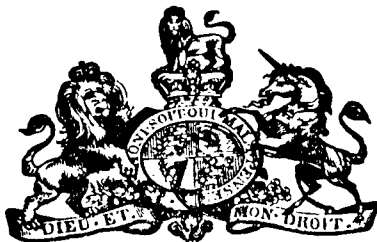
THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY WITHIN THE  
PROTECTORATE.

*(In continuation of [C.-1159.], February 1875.)*

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Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.  
*August 1878.*

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1878.

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## GOLD COAST REPORT.

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### No. 1.

The RIGHT HON. SIR M. E. HICKS BEACH, BART., to GOVERNOR FREELING, C.M.G.

SIR, Downing Street, May 24, 1878.  
As a considerable time has now elapsed since the abolition of slavery within the Protectorate on the Gold Coast, a natural desire has been expressed to ascertain what have been the effects of the measure upon the social and industrial condition of the natives.

I do not find in the records of this Department any such detailed information as would enable me to answer satisfactorily the inquiries which have been made, and I should therefore be obliged by your furnishing me with a full and comprehensive report upon the subject, noticing particularly any steps which have been taken by the Government of the Gold Coast for the improvement of the native population, in the way of education, civilisation, &c.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) M. E. HICKS BEACH.

Governor Freeling.

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### No. 2.

LIEUT.-GOVERNOR LEES, C.M.G., to the RIGHT HON. SIR M. E. HICKS BEACH, BART.  
(Received Aug. 5, 1878.)

Government House, Christiansborg Castle,  
Accra, July 5, 1878.

SIR, I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Despatch of the 24th of May,\* having reference to the abolition of slavery within the Protectorate on the Gold Coast, and requesting to be furnished with a Report on the subject.

2. I beg to transmit a Report which Sir David Chalmers has been good enough to furnish me.

3. With regard to the last part of your Despatch, having reference particularly to any steps which have been taken by the Government of the Gold Coast for the improvement of the native population in the way of education, civilisation, &c., I may bring to your notice that there have not as yet been funds available, except to a limited extent, for the special purposes to which you allude, as the removal of the seat of Government from Cape Coast to Accra and the resumption of a part of the parliamentary grant have hitherto largely absorbed the surplus revenues. With a portion of the funds, however, which have been at disposal, some progress has been made in road making, and education is being promoted by the Colonial School at Cape Coast and by grants in aid of the Basel and Wesleyan missions.

4. But it appears to me that such educational work as is now in progress ought merely to be regarded as provisional, and that the problems connected with the improvement, education, and civilisation of the natives should be viewed in a more comprehensive and systematic manner than has hitherto been the case. In education, for instance, I venture to say from the meagre data at hand, in consequence of the difficulties of obtaining reliable statistics to form anything like a confident opinion, that neither the objects to be aimed at nor the methods to be followed, nor even the language in which European knowledge may most suitably be imparted, has as yet received that deliberate consideration with relation to the innate or acquired qualities of the natives and to their peculiar position and surroundings as the importance and difficulty of the subject requires. So far, however, as conclusions may be drawn from such experiments as have hitherto been made, I am disposed to give a decided preference to the education which includes training in the industries and crafts which promote the material comforts and amenities of life, to that which is limited to literary or religious instruction.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) C. C. LEES,  
Lieut.-Governor.

The Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks Beach, Bart., M.P.,  
&c. &c. &c.

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\* No. 1.

## Enclosure in No. 2.

SIR,

Accra, June 27, 1878.

YOUR Excellency has honoured me with the perusal of Despatch, Gold Coast, Downing Street, 24th May, with the request that I would communicate any information I was possessed of on the subject there referred to.

2. Without inquiry of a statistical nature it is difficult to state more than impressions which I have derived from such circumstances as have from time to time come within my observation, and which I feel hesitation in extending into generalisations. Under this qualification the following remarks are submitted :—

3. As regards the social condition of the natives I think there is but little change. In marriage it is a discernible feature that it is now more frequently than formerly contracted through the interposition of the blood relations of the woman given in marriage, and there are proportionally fewer instances of its contraction through the master or mistress of a household. I have even known instances, and I believe there has been many of them, in which the sentiment attaching to free marriage was so much appreciated that persons who had been married as slaves previous to the promulgation of the Emancipation Laws have subsequently gone through the ceremonies of native marriage a second time as free persons. But the character of the relation in other respects is not altered. The permanence of the tie, be it more or less, is dependent on the inclination of the parties, and it is very rare to find any considerable feeling of sanctity attaching to it; nor, indeed, is there reason to expect alteration unless by the spread of the principles of Christianity amongst the population. Neither is there any apparent alteration in the reciprocal position of parents and children. It may be believed, however, that the abolition of the practice of placing children in pawn for debts may tend to strengthen the feeling of personal relationship and affection.

4. There is no change in the nature of the employments of the natives. They are cultivators, traders, artificers, labourers, or servants as before, but it will now be found that much larger numbers of persons are living an independent life apart from a master's control than formerly. Of those who have segregated themselves from the large households of Chiefs and other influential persons some are found in small knots forming little villages in which they inhabit, but I think, amongst the class who have no occupation but that of cultivators, the more frequent tendency is to settle on the soil in single families, each family constructing their own dwelling, and cultivating a portion of the soil for their subsistence.

5. Far more frequently the slaves who have emancipated themselves have not settled in the vicinity of their former master's dwelling, but have joined their relations in distant parts of the country, from whom they had, perhaps generations ago, been separated by the effect of the wars with the Ashantees and intertribal wars which have so often prevailed in the Protectorate; the desire for such re-union being, indeed, in a great many cases the motive for which emancipation was sought. It redounds to the credit of the Chiefs and other persons who possessed households of servants that the cases are very rare in which harsh treatment of any kind has been alleged as the reason for separating from the master. Arrived at their new places of residence these travellers settle down mainly, I believe, in their previous occupations; perhaps an increased proportion try their fortune as petty traders.

6. It is said to be more difficult now to obtain hired labour in the towns on the sea coast than before the emancipation. I think this is not difficult of belief, and may readily be accounted for. Formerly the householder, possessed of a large retinue of retainers for whose maintenance he was considered responsible, was always ready to hire out the services of his people at moderate rates, and he had means of enforcing on them a certain degree of attention to the work entrusted to them. Many of these retainers have emancipated themselves, or, at least, are so much out of any real control by their head, that he cannot induce them to work except on their own terms. As these emancipated persons have scarcely the idea of accumulating money, as the householder himself had, there is a very considerable disposition on their part to work only so much as is requisite for subsistence, and, as their wants are supplied for a very small sum, the result is not unfrequently that a few days' labour in the week is all they care to undergo or will perform. The more that wages are increased the greater is the facility for idleness. If increasing population should make the means of living less easily attained, or so far as increasing civilisation may bring with it fresh wants to be supplied, the practice of regular industry may become more general.

7. I have not learned that the palm oil industry, the only important one as respects exportation, has been materially affected. The cultivation of the trees and preparation of the oil has generally been a separate branch of labour from the transporting of the prepared oil to the coast; the former was carried on by the owners of and dwellers on the soil; the latter, even before the emancipation measures, was done to a large extent by hired labour or by persons who purchased the oil from the cultivator and were remunerated by a profit on again selling the oil to the exporters. These arrangements continue, I understand, with but little disturbance.

His Excellency Lieut.-Governor Lees, C.M.G.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) D. P. CHALMERS.

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