

(11)

Four Report - Chagos May 1967.

Itinerary

30th April	Dep. Mahe
5th May	Arr. Diego Garcia
6th May	Dep. Diego Garcia
7th May	Arr. Peros Banhos
9th May	Dep. Peros Banhos
10th May	Arr. Salomon
11th May	Dep. Salomon
12th May	Arr. Diego Garcia. Dep. Diego Garcia
25th May	Arr. Mahe via Mauritius and Kenya

DIEGO GARCIA

Plantation

Inspected plantation by Landrover. The plantation is generally in poor condition, the major part requiring extensive clearing. There are signs of damage by Rhinoceros Beetle, especially in the settlement area, and rat damage in several more remote areas. The labour force has been increased and the Manager is to begin a programme of rough clearing which should considerably increase the collection of nuts. Poisoning of the rats is to be carried out. Damage by Rhinoceros Beetle is said to be declining.

The plantation buildings are basically sound, but in several cases require extensive maintenance.

Labour

Labour relations appear generally good. There are 15 quarters in the camp, made from permanent materials and in good condition. The other quarters are in old army buildings which require replacement, being beyond economic repair, and in huts made from local materials, which are in reasonable condition. The water supply is from rain catchment for drinking purposes and from wells for other uses and is adequate. Proper arrangements are made for the collection and disposal of night soil and refuse. The camp area was, however, untidy.

Rations are supplied and a well stocked shop is run by the management, with goods sold at wholesale price + 12%. This results in most items being available at appreciably less than Mahe prices.

The basic wage is Rs.25 per month for men and Rs.10 for women. Contracts are for a period of either one or two years. The male labour force consists of 16 artisans, 15 boys and 180 labourers. Seven women are employed as domestic servants and five in the hospital and creche. Most of the other 87 women on the island are employed for one task per day on the plantation.

Medical

A dresser and a midwife are resident on the island and the manager's wife, who is also a nurse, also assists.

The hospital (12 beds) is well kept and the supply of drugs appears adequate, if old fashioned. Dr. d'Offay is preparing a new list of recommended drugs for the management.

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Wage

Education

The school, which was on holiday, is staffed by the Manager's daughter and the dresser's daughter, both of whom are untrained. A new stock of books has been obtained from the Seychelles Education Department.

Communications

Communications within the island are mainly by road, though heavy loads are transported by water. None of the boats on the island is suitable for use on the open sea and communication with the other islands in the archipelago depends on visiting vessels.

The meteorological station maintains radio links with Mauritius and Agalaga and also joins in a local network run by the management and including Leros Banhos and Salomon.

Peace Officer

The records are generally well kept. An appeal was heard in one case of conduct liable to cause a breach of the peace and the finding and sentence were quashed. (See App. I). The prison cells are secure but ill ventilated and damp.

Civil Status

The records were untidily kept but there was no indication that they were incomplete. (See App. II). The population was checked from the Manager's figure, (See App. III) and arrangements made to enable full details to be collected on a subsequent visit.

Meteorological Station

The Mauritius Government maintain a met. station which, in addition to the normal observations, undertakes radar-sonde and radio-sonde work. Five officers are at present posted on the island.

Some difficulties have recently arisen between the met. staff and the management which, on investigation, seem to have had as their basis a clash of personalities. Those mainly involved have left the island and, with the arrival of a new senior member of the met. staff who has spent four tours of duty on outer islands, the position should improve.

FEROS BANHOS

Plantation

It was only possible to visit four of the islands near to the settlement. These were quite clean, but a large number of nuts remained uncollected. A number of the more distant islands are said to be in poor condition, with a heavy undergrowth of germinated nuts. A senior overseer has been appointed to establish a settlement on Diamond Island to clear the neglected areas. There is little sign of pest damage. The buildings on the island are basically sound, but many require extensive maintenance.

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Labour

Labour relations seem generally to have been satisfactory, but there was a stoppage of work on 7th May, following complaints that the number of passages available to Mauritius was inadequate and had been unfairly allocated. The labour returned to work after an undertaking by Mr. Moulins to review the allocation of passages. The stoppage lasted approximately half an hour. It was found necessary to reallocate a number of passages, as length of service and the dresser's reports had been given insufficient attention in producing the original list.

The camp consists almost entirely of temporary buildings in quite good condition and was well kept. Proper arrangements are made for the disposal of night soil and refuse. The water supply (rain catchment and shallow wells) was adequate.

Rations are supplied and the store well stocked. The prices were the same as in Diego Garcia.

The basic wage is Rs.25 per month for men and Rs.10 for women. Contracts are for a period of one or two years. The present labour force consists of ten artisans, five boys and 59 labourers. Four women are employed as domestic servants and three in the hospital and crèche. The majority of the remaining 42 women work daily in the plantation.

Medical

A dresser and midwife are resident on the island and the hospital (8 bed) is well kept. The supply of drugs appeared to be adequate, but there was a shortage of bandages. Cloth from the shop was provided to meet this shortage.

Education

No school is run on the island, due to the lack of a suitable person to act as teacher.

Communications

Communication between the islands is by launch or pirogue. A cutter (30') is used for communication with Salomon.

A small receiver/transmitter is provided by Chagos/Agalaga Ltd. and is in contact with Salomon and Diego Garcia.

Peace Officer

The Peace Officer's records were checked and found to be well kept. Two cases of assault occasioning actual bodily harm were heard. The three prison cells were in good repair, though the design makes them insecure. (See App. I).

Civil Status

The records were found to be well kept. (App. II). The Manager's population records were checked (App. III), and arrangements made for a full population check on the next visit.

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Plantation

The position is similar to that in Peros Banhos and it is intended to carry out a clearing programme with the larger labour force now available. The islands are now to be managed from Peros Banhos, with an assistant manager resident on Salomon and not independently, as has previously been done.

The buildings on the settlement are, in many cases, roofed with shingles (formerly a local product) and this has made maintenance more difficult than on the other islands of the group, where corrugated iron was used.

Labour

The Manager's post (now replaced as above) has been filled on a temporary basis by a dresser and his inexperience has led to difficulties with the labour.

On 6th March a new detachment of labour arrived from Seychelles on a basic wage of Rs.25 per month, compared to Rs.24 which was then the standard rate on the island. It was the intention of the Chagos/Agalaga Co. that the existing labourer's rate should be raised to Rs.25, but, due to a breakdown in communications, the Manager was not informed of this. The labour went on strike on 7th March and the Manager refused to negotiate. In consequence confidence was lost and, although the Manager received instructions on 9th March to increase wages, he did not succeed in persuading the labourers to return to work until 14th March. There was no violence. Mr. Moulinie spoke to the workers on 10th May, at which meeting they expressed themselves satisfied with their conditions of service and the re-organization of the running of the island. The loading was well carried out and there was no evidence of unrest.

The camp is built in temporary materials, but the quarters are in good condition. No regular arrangements had been made for the collection of night soil and refuse and, although the camp was itself clean, the latrines and surrounding countryside were in urgent need of cleaning. Steps were taken to ensure the proper cleaning of the area and it is intended as a matter of urgency to construct pit latrines.

The water supply (rain catchment for drinking and shallow wells for washing) is adequate. The need for care in siting the pit latrines, if the water supply was not to be contaminated, was explained.

Rations are supplied and a well stocked shop is run on a similar basis to those on the other islands.

The basic wage is Rs.25 per month for men and Rs.10.70 for women. Contracts are for a period of either one or two years. The labour force consists of six artisans, six boys and 44 labourers. Three women are employed as domestic servants and three in the L.P.C. nursery and creche. The majority of the remaining 32 women work regularly in the plantation.

Medical

A nurse/midwife is resident on the island. The hospital (8 bed) is well kept and the supply of drugs seems adequate.

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Education

The school was on holiday. The nurse/midwife acts as teacher and will be assisted by the wife of the new assistant manager.

Communications

The communication between the islands is by launch and pirogue. Two launches were under repair and the other boats were maintained in good condition.

Communications with Peros Banhos are by the cutter stationed in Peros Banhos.

A small transmitter/receiver is maintained by the management and is in contact with Peros Banhos and Diego Garcia.

Peace Officer

There were no cases in the first quarter of 1967. The Peace Officer had failed to bring to the attention of the last visiting magistrate two cases which he had reserved for his court. Both defendants had, by the time of the present visit, completed their contracts and returned to Mauritius. The cells were in satisfactory condition.

Civil Status

The records were quite well kept and appeared to be complete. (See app. II). The population records were checked (app. III) and arrangements made for a full return of population to be made on the next visit.

CONCLUSION

The islands have been neglected for the past eighteen months, due to uncertainty as to their future. On the basis of the present lease, the Chagos/Agalaga Co. is increasing the labour force and re-organizing the management so as to carry out an extensive programme of rough clearing to enable the maximum number of nuts to be collected. The clearing should also increase the yield of nuts in the areas at present neglected. Maintenance of buildings is being kept at the minimum compatible with their continued use.

Labour relations are generally good and Chagos/Agalaga Co. is at present experiencing no difficulty in recruiting, especially from Seychelles. The following table shows the number of workers and their families taken by the m.v. "Mauritius" and the number returning by the vessel during the present tour.

<u>Malis*</u>			<u>Seychellois</u>			<u>Mauritian</u>			<u>Total</u>
Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children	Men	Women	Children	
Arrivals 24	26	50	106	26	57	6	1	1	291
Departures 43	39	74	3	-	-	5	-	-	164

*Malis by own definition and includes those who have spent several contract periods on the islands.

/6....

- 5 -
Medical facilities are adequate. Periodic visits by a medical officer would enable improvements to be made.

Some basic education is provided, except in the case of Aeros Bahamas, but its quality and continuity is entirely dependent on the posting of other staff.

Communications within the islands are generally satisfactory and the radio network maintained by the Chagos/Agalaga Company and the Mauritius Meteorological Service has greatly improved external communications. External transport has been provided by the m.v. "Mauritius" (twice yearly) and the a.m.v. "Isle of Farquhar". The "Mauritius" is too large for the service (2,500 tons) and has in the past done the voyage at a loss. This has been possible as the "Mauritius" is run jointly by Rogers & Co. (1/3 shareholders in Chagos/Agalaga) and the Mauritian Government (who were responsible for the islands). With the change in the ownership and responsibility for the islands, this subsidy may no longer be possible, and other arrangements may have to be made if the islands are to be run as an economic unit.

The administrative services run by the Managers for the Government (legal and civil status) are generally satisfactorily carried out and the extension of the Seychelles legal and court systems to the ex-Mauritian islands seems to have caused no difficulty.

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JUDICIAL
1st Quarter 1967

<u>Offences</u>	<u>Diego Garcia</u>	<u>Peros Banhos</u>	<u>Salas</u>
Assault	4		
Stealing	2		
Affray	1		
Drunkenness	3		
Conduct liable to cause a breach of the peace	3*		
Total	<u>13</u>	Nil	Nil

<u>Sentences</u>			
Fine:	Rs. 0-10	7*	
	11-20	2	
Imprisonment:	0- 7 days	4	
	8-14 days	-	
		<u>13</u>	Nil
			Nil

*Note:- Appeal heard against conviction and sentence in one case of conduct liable to cause a breach of the peace. Appeal allowed and conviction and sentence quashed.

CIVIL STATUS RECORDS - 1966

Island	Male		Births		Deaths		Marriages	Still Births
	Male	Female	Legitimate	Natural	Male	Female		
DIEGO GARCIA	10	7	5	14	5	1	2	1
PEROS BANCOS	5	6	9	2	4	2	2	-
SALAMON	5	2	2	5	2	5	3	-
TOTAL	20	15	14	21	9	6	7	1

CIVIL STATUS RECORDS - 1ST QUARTER 1967

DIEGO GARCIA	-	-	-	-	2	2	-	-
PEROS BANCOS	-	3	1	2	-	-	-	-
SALAMON	1	2	-	3	-	1	-	-
TOTAL	1	5	1	5	2	3	-	-

POPULATION

After Departure of s.v. "Mauritius"

Island		Ileis	Seychellois	Mauritian	Total
DIEGO GARCIA	Men	35	172	7	214
	Women	38	53	3	94
	Children	93	102	-	195
	Total	166	327	10	503
PEROS BANHOS	Men	36	41	-	77
	Women	41	6	2	49
	Children	104	23	-	127
	Total	181	70	2	253
SALAMON	Men	29	17	4	50
	Women	34	3	2	39
	Children	77	1	1	79
	Total	140	21	7	168
TOTAL CHAGOS	Men	100	230	11	341
	Women	113	62	7	182
	Children	274	126	1	401
	Total	487	418	19	924

Notes: 1. Children aged 0-12 years.

2. Ileis classified on basis of their own assessment and includes Mauritians who have worked on the islands for long periods and who wish to continue this employment.