

## CHAGOS

(Notes of a visit by the Commissioner and Administrator B.I.O.T.,  
9th - 22nd November, 1968)

(Reference may also be made to the previous reports  
made in May 1967 and September 1968)

### Itinerary

9th November	1330 hours	Departed Mahe
14th November	0700 hours	Arrived Diego Garcia
15th November	1700 hours	Departed Diego Garcia
16th November	0630 hours	Arrived Salomon
17th November	0600 hours	Departed Salomon
	1030 hours	Arrived Peros Banhos
18th November	0700 hours	Departed Peros Banhos
22nd November	0300 hours	Arrived Mahe

The Commissioner and the Administrator were accompanied by Mr. Marcel Moulinie representing Moulinie & Company; Mr. G. Hoareau, Chief Health Inspector; and Sergeant Wayne Hive of the Seychelles Police.

### 2. Plantations

(a) The plantations from East Point to the North-east tip of the island and at Pt. Marianne were inspected on Diego Garcia, those on Boddam and Takamaka Islands on Salomon and at Ile du Coin on Peros Banhos. In all cases there were nuts waiting collection and on Diego Garcia extensive clearing was needed. The present labour force is too small to run the islands efficiently or even to maintain the present position. On Diego Garcia the vegetation is unusually dense for a coral island and the undergrowth in many areas can no longer be kept under control and these areas have had to be abandoned. On the other islands the period between the collection of nuts is increasing and a number of nuts are being lost through germination. The same picture of gradual decay is apparent in the buildings which, whilst still usable, are slowly deteriorating due to lack of maintenance.

(b) The following table shows details of copra production for the first 10 months of 1968 compared with the same period for 1967.

	<u>Jan-Oct 1967</u> (tons)	<u>Jan-Oct 1968</u> (tons)
Diego Garcia	613	512
Peros Banhos	304	252
Salomon	166	153
Total	<u>1,083</u>	<u>922</u>

/ (c) . . .

(c) The livestock on the island was generally in good condition.

3. Labour

(a) Labour relations appeared to be generally satisfactory although on Salomon the labourers refused to continue loading at night. This was attributable to a desire to keep the Nordvaer in the atoll as long as possible - a very natural reaction in a remote and seldom visited island. Rather than delay the Nordvaer, she sailed on schedule leaving some cargo unloaded.

(b) The camps were generally clean but the poor condition of the houses is not conducive to a high standard of personal and household hygiene.

(c) There had been heavy rain in the islands during October and November and the water tanks were well filled.

(d) Ration supplies on all the islands were adequate and the shops with the exception of that on Diego Garcia were reasonably stocked. Moulins & Company have been asked to increase their order for the Diego Garcia shop and additional cigarettes were obtained from the Nordvaer.

(e) The following table shows details of earnings for October.

	<u>Diego Garcia</u>	<u>Peros Banhos</u>	<u>Salomon</u>
Persons employed	248	90	88
Total basic salary	Rs.8329	Rs.2486	Rs.2010
Extras	5810	2282	1507
Total payments	Rs.14139	Rs.4768	Rs.3517
Extras as % of basic salary	69%	90%	75%

4. Medical

(a) The hospitals were clean and in quite good condition and the supply of drugs was adequate. The dresser at Diego Garcia is wholly unsatisfactory and is being replaced. Additional equipment is needed at the clinics to allow the proper sterilisation of instruments.

(b) The Chief Health Inspector inspected all the quarters on the islands and the water supplies, sanitation and refuse disposal arrangements. He will provide a separate report with recommendations for improvements. Worm mixture was distributed and a supply of vitamin tablets was left with each of the dressers. A supply of insecticides was also left with the island managers.

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# 5. Peace Officers

(a) Since the last visit to Chagos in September, there have been no criminal cases in Diego Garcia or Salomon. There were three cases in Peros Banhos all involving a number of accused as a result of which the Peace Officer fined five persons Rs. 10 each for drumming without a permit and four persons Rs. 10 each and one Rs. 20 for drunkenness. There were no appeals against these findings.

(b) Four cases were pending for the Magistrate's Court, two of assault and two of indecent assault. The cases were investigated by the Police Sergeant and all the accused pleaded guilty. The cases were disposed of as follows:-

<u>Charge</u>	<u>Sentence</u>
Assault	i. Admonished ii. Fine of Rs. 20
Indecent Assault	i. 3 months' imprisonment ii. Fine of Rs. 100

# 5. Civil Status

(a) There was one marriage on Diego Garcia since the last visit and one death on Peros Banhos. The Peros Banhos death was a man aged 36 from Salomon who seems to have died from a tumour in the stomach. Whilst there have been several cases of enteritis in Peros Banhos since the last visit these have been successfully treated with enterovioform.

(b) An analysis of the records of births since the creation of B.I.O.F. was carried out and the results are summarised in the following table.

	<u>Legitimate Children</u>	<u>Natural Children</u>	<u>Nationality of the father or in the case of natural children the mother</u>		
			<u>Seychellois</u>	<u>Mauritian</u>	<u>Illois</u>
Diego Garcia	14	34	24	1	23
Peros Banhos	18	18	8	-	28
Salomon	8	20	-	1	27
Total	40	72	32	2	78

# 6. Geodetic Survey

The United States geodetic survey teams did not arrive at Diego Garcia until after the departure of the Nordvaer but it is reported that they successfully unloaded their stores and have set up their station though not without some difficulties in landing their heavy loads.

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7. Conclusion

The Chagos islands continue to function as coconut plantations but with a gradually declining population and an almost complete lack of capital investment they are reaching the point where they are becoming uneconomic and the condition of the plantations and buildings is steadily deteriorating. The longer this continues the higher will be the costs of eventual rehabilitation.



Administrator

26.11.68