PALESTINE'S PROGRESS.

THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE POSSIBILITIES.

III.

(By Our Special Correspondent).

As shown in our last article there are great possibilities for the development of the import trade and Palestine offers an admirable market for English traders since the main source of supply in the future must be Great Britain. Although Egypt has aided Palestine considerably since the cessation of hostilities little more can be expected from that source. Before the war Egypt was in no way a large supplier of Palestine, the figures for 1913 being £61,000, which bear no comparison with those of England. Turkey and Austria. Since the occupation Egypt has imported rice, sugar, beans, soap, onions, tobacco, footwear, Manchester goods, fish, caustic soda, alcohol, provisions, dates and household utensils, but the regular supply of these goods to Palestine must be regarded as abnormal, as it took place at a time when Egypt's own imports were considerably limited by the exigencies of war and a prolonged demand upon this market cannot continue indefinitely. Of course, for some little time to come Palestine must depend upon Egypt to a certain extent for the supply of its own immediate needs. The time is already ripe for opening up new sources of supply. Very little is to be looked for from the immediate neighbours of Palestine. Hardly anything can be expected from the east of the Jordan for supplies from that quarter must be always irregular and unreliable, while the north is as impoverished by the war as was Palestine before it was occupied by the British forces. At the present time imports mainly consist of foodstuffs (chiefly confined to colonial goods, such as rice and coffee) petrol and hardware. The last-mentioned import is still in its infancy. Palestine's most pressing want is building materials, and cement is badly needed. Timber is also urgently required. Since the beginning of the war the Turks cut down about fifty per cent of the forest and fruit trees in the southern part of the country and their depredations under this head in the north were almost as great, so it will be years before the country can recover from this treatment and before the new plantations now being made can produce any result. Forest nurseries have been established already at convenient centres, and considerable tracts of hill country, unsuited for other cultivation, have been enclosed as forest areas. Forest laws have been promulgated and tree planting is being encouraged in every possible way, a remission of the land tax being granted in respect of enclosed and planted areas. The country is capable of great development by afforestation, which the Turks had entirely neglected, and a large revenue may ultimately be expected under this head. The two most important timber areas are those of Hebron and Mount Carmel, and there is no doubt that large tracts of hills in other places are now bare and once well wooded. A special effort is being made to reafforest the area around Jerusalem and some thousands of seedlings have been laid down to be planted out this year. Certain forest areas in the Jericho and Haifa districts are already being worked remuneratively for fuel, of which there is a considerable shortage in the country, and it is anticipated that in future years these areas will, under proper control, yield a handsome annual revenue. But for the time being timber is urgently required, although as soon as the country again becomes wooded timber will be a lucrative source of export especially to Egypt.

INDUSTRIAL PROSPECTS.

In the past the industries chiefly consisted of soap, oil from sesame and olives, and there was some weaving and the making. Souvenir articles are another special industry and raw and tanned skins used to be a big business. Orange cultivation is another industry capable of great development and much has been done to encourage it by the Occupied Enemy Territory Administration by providing petrol. The crop this year has been poor owing to many groves having been uncultivated. The wine industry suffered greatly from locusts in 1915, but the vines are now gradually growing again. Industries before the war consisted owing to the forty-three Jewish and five German colonies scattered throughout Palestine. The former greatly suffered through the appropriation of stock and in several cases from military occupation, while the latter, who have in the main been taken over by the Military Authorities, were well treated. There are satisfactory signs that the natives are awake to the possibilities of the industrial development of their country. Three months ago a Chamber of Commerce was formed at Jaffa, while one is being started at Jerusalem and another at Haifa. Six weeks ago at Hebron, an ancient city of ten thousand inhabitants, twenty-five miles from Jerusalem, a trade association was instituted among the leading men for the general advantage of the people. It has already got to work and has made many enquiries to O.E.T.A. with a view to getting into touch with British trade for general goods and has made special enquiries for moulds for lamp glasses.

The country offers great possibilities in the way of other sources of revenue that still remain untapped. The development of the ports of Haifa and Jaffa, the exploitation of hydro-electric power, the establishment of state flour mills, and the organisation of the supply and distribution of fish have all been proposed as profitable methods that might be adopted by the Government with benefit rather than injury to private enterprise. These, however, will all take some time to develop and the O.E.T.A. during the few months of its existence has been fully occupied with the essentials of organisation and fiscal reform. No mines have yet been prospected or worked, and there is no revenue under this head, but a considerable revenue in royalties should be obtained in the course of the next few years. A concession for petroleum was granted by the Turks, but work has not yet been commenced.

EXPORT TRADE.

There have been no exports of any importance save to Egypt, which has received about six hundred truckloads of oranges and olive oil, durra, sesame, wine, and lupins. Only a few weeks ago the London newspapers announced the first shipment of Jaffa oranges to arrive in England since the war as a very notable event. But it should not be forgotten that a substantial export trade was carried on by Palestine before the war, and with careful encouragement it could be revived and developed to a considerable extent. The latest export figures available are for 1913:—Barley, £9,000; Beans, £3,400; Cattle, £5,200. Durra, £9,500; Hides, £10,530; Lupines, £12,300; Olive Oil, £6,270; Oranges, £207,700; Grapes £10,400; Souvenirs, £208,000; Sesame £31,300; Soap £20,000; Fruits, £43,000; Wines and Spirits, £60,530; Others Articles, £30,040.

Much has been done to facilitate trade in the way of arranging for freight by the small trading vessels plying between the Syrian port and Egypt and impending arrangements show that ere long regular calls from European liners will be in vogue. The restrictions on exports from the United Kingdom are being pruned to something like a pre-war state, and the commercial relationship between Palestine and Great Britain is already of such a nature as to encourage considerable trade between the two countries.

COLONIAL PRODUCE.

There ought to be a good market in Palestine for produce from our overseas dominions, and Indian and Australian Chambers of Commerce should study the needs of that country. The amount of colonial produce imported into Jaffa during 1913 was £326,000 or forty-five per cent of the whole imports (£1,200,000). This might very easily be repeated in the first year of peace, and with this in view the value of greater direct developments and consequent increased traffic suggests the consideration later on for a special scheduled steamship service, which could ply between Australia, Burmah, India, and Palestine, there picking up barley, etc., for England and returning to the particular colony with British cargo. Palestine received flour and rice in the past from Egypt, though the actual country of origin was Russia and Roumania for flour, and the Far East for rice. In these and other commodities competition will be keen in the future, and the following classification might be of practical use:— Flour, Roumania and Russia; Provisions, France and Italy; Sugar, Austria-Hungary, Roumania and Russia; Wines, France; Wood, Russia. In view of the certain influx of immigrants into Palestine and the equally certain development of its resources, the demand will be large and worthy of attention.

EGYPT-PALESTINE TRADE.

Before closing our review of trade prospects in Palestine we should not forget to mention the help that Palestine has received from Egypt since the war. Few hardier tasks have falled an Administration than that of a period of infinite difficult to keep alive, commercially and industrially, a territory which had already been impoverished and almost gutted by the enemy. As Egypt was the only source of supply available, the dependence of Palestine upon Egytian resources has been great. The arrangements made by the O.E.T.A. for facilities of trade between Egypt and Palestine have gradually developed into the simplest of ways and means. Any merchant in Egypt who is desirous of exporting goods to Palestine, can charter a ten-ton truck without having recourse to any intermediary beyond the actual railway company which transports the merchandise. The right of conveying smaller consignments and parcels is temporarily vested with Messrs. Cook and Sons, though the goods transported through that firm have not extended to more than five per cent of the total quantity from Egypt to Palestine. During a period in which the production of the whole world was at its minimum and countries even less implicated in the war than Egypt, were reduced to rationing most of their supplies, it is obvious that complete freedom of exportation could not be granted for all articles to Palestine. That the utmost consideration was given to the needs of the country is proved by the institution of the administrations governing the trade of the country. There is an entirely free list of thirty nine lines of goods which may be exported from Egypt without a licence, the individual lines being of a comprehensive nature including clothing and all essential foodstuffs. Licences are not required either for goods which have reached Egypt manifested in transit, nor for the export of merchandise by sea to Jaffa and Haifa, nor for the despatch of goods by parcel post. Even in the case of prohibited articles, application for their export may be made to the Director of the War Trade Department at Cairo and will receive due consideration. As regards Customs dues according to the regulations of O.E.T.A., dues are payable at the rate of eight per cent on goods of Egyptian origin, eleven per cent on goods of other origin, assessed on the invoice value of goods, plus freight and packing. In the light of the heavy demands made upon the railway connecting Egypt with Palestine for the needs of the troops, which naturally always had priority, the shortage of supply, the fact that the track is only doubled for a short distance, and that Egypt has been the only source of supply, the economic condition of the 540,000 inhabitants of Palestine is a matter of great satisfaction. Food costing shillings last year now costs piastres, and the villagers have been brought from a state of malnutrition to one of cheap food and plentiful supply. The customs statistics for one of the principal towns show that in the course of one week recently customs dues were paid on goods to the value of £51,379 consigned direct from Egypt. Facts such as these speak volumes for the development of the country in the space of a very few months.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

WHY ARE THEY IN FRENCH?

It is to be regretted that under the British Protectorate and the general desire to promote the interests of British trade in Egypt, the Egyptian Government should still issue specifications for contracts of a technical nature in French, instead of in English, says the "Monthly Journal" of the British Chamber of Commerce of Egypt. Apparently under the changed conditions no measures have as yet been taken to remedy a disadvantage which has been so detrimental to British interests in the past.

Conditions of tender and specification for supply of a Diesel engine and dynamo installation for the Port Said municipal Department of the Ministry of Interior have just been issued drawn up in French, and containing technical information in language which would debar many British manufacturers thoroughly realising the requirements.

This Chamber urgently advocated in 1916 the establishment of a Permanent Trade Commission in this country for remedying such defects, as well as a Department of Trade and Commerce, and in 1917 the attention of H.E. the High Commissioner was again drawn to these important subjects in a memorial sent to him by the Special Trade Commission which has already been referred to in the Journal of the British Chamber of Commerce. To the present date, however, no steps have been taken in the directions advocated.

The constitution of such a permanent commission on the lines suggested by the Chamber should present no difficulties and the suggestion could be adopted at not the slightest delay. Three years have elapsed, and there are no indications of the formation of such a commission.

CEREAL MERCHANTS' LICENCES.

The Supplies Control Board has issued the following order:

The Order of the Supplies Control Board relative to the licencing of persons carrying on business as retail cereal merchants, flour merchants or bakers in Cairo, dated April 17, 1919 and published in the Official Journal No. 39 of April 24, 1919, is rescinded. The rescission of the Supplies Control Board's Order of April 17, 1919 does not affect the provisions of the ordinary law in regard to the necessity for "rukhas." It merely renders unnecessary the special licences issued by the Board.

UPPER EGYPT UNREST.

THE DEIRUT OUTRAGE.

THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVENTH WITNESS.

The hundred and twenty-seventh witness for the defence in the above case, Hizanyin Abdalla, a farmer, stated that he saw one of the accused trying to disperse the mob at the station. They saw the wrecked carriage and the dead bodies in the van. The omda told the ghaffirs to fire but they could not and someone in the crowd hit the omda on the head. The train left some minutes afterwards. In cross-examination witness admitted that the party was at the station for about fifteen minutes after the train left. The omda prevented the mob from stoning the engine and dragging the bodies out of the van.

The next witness corroborated this evidence.

Several witnesses stated that they had intended journeying to Mellawi in the day of the murders, but gave up the idea as there were no tickets. Three more witnesses were occupied with the grinding and carting of corn on the day.

Such Hassan stated that one of accused whom he indicated, was at Manfalut three days before the attack on the train, and he, witness, saw him every day for about ten days afterwards.

In cross-examination witness became involved in his facts regarding the dates of the attacks on the train and on the markaz.

Ahmed Hassanain remembered the attack took place on a Tuesday, on which day he was with one of the accused buying beans. He did not know before coming into court for whom he was to give evidence.

The preceding evidence together with that of several more witnesses brought the defence to an end. Fifty witnesses for the prosecution were examined and one hundred and fifty-four for the defence. In addition to these about seventy persons gave evidence on their own behalf.

All the witnesses having been examined in the above case, Tewfik Bey Doss, who has throughout organised the defence, opened his address for the 75 accused persons before the Court. Before dealing with the details of the case, Tewfik Bey Doss paid a high tribute to the fairness and patience which the Court displayed during the trial. He then touched briefly on the events which led to the rising in March. Counsel pointed out that all classes were suffering under a grievance and that the outrages were, a political one, culminated in the departure of their leaders. The fellah was sore about some of the methods employed by the omdas and lower officials in recruiting for the Labour Corps. At the same time, whether their grievances were real or not, Egyptian public opinion could never admit them as an excuse for these brutal murders. Counsel took up the life of defence that the educated classes could never have imagined that violence would achieve anything and made some proof of personal motive argued that murder could not be brought against them. Counsel emphasised the fact that in Egypt the practice of giving false evidence is universal. It is often done to satisfy a personal grudge.

Tewfik Bey spoke for an hour and a quarter for the defence of Shaikh Hamza, pointing out how the accused's past life and education rendered it impossible for him to conspire in the murdering of the officers. His accused's defence was English factory work, a proof of his sympathies with the English. Tewfik Bey spoke in all for two hours and delivered a spirited and powerful address.

Mr. Russell then defended the cases against the acting mamour of Deirut and Ahemd Korashi an advocate. Counsel of necessity went over some of the same ground as Tewfik Bey and made some criticisms on the preliminary enquiries. Mr. Russell brought forward a legal point as to whether "neglect of duty" should be taken to mean, to a charge of man-slaughter. The first named was an overworked man with an inadequate police force. Counsel then went thoroughly into the details of the evidence.

Tewfik Bey appeared on behalf of several others of the accused. The Court on this occasion sat for five and a half hours.

The next day Tewfik Bey again spoke, this time on behalf of the Zeid family and the omda of Deir Mowas.

Shakir Fahmy and Habeeb Dost, Abadier Yusef, Ibrahim Muntas, Risk Abbouk and Fuad Abdel Malek all appeared for the defence. The question of the "staff" was discussed by three of the advocates. The insinuation being that the stationmaster gave it up and to defend himself afterwards said that it had been taken from him by force. The case is proceeding.

THE SMITH MURDER CASE.

The Court on sitting proceeded to hear Counsel's addresses for the accused.

Ali Bey Hafiz, having just arrived from Alexandria then gave evidence that he was Headmaster of Ras el Tin School, Alexandria. He stated that Mahmoud Saad Khalil was in the school from March 13 up to March 31, his prosecution. He stated that this information was deriv-

Continued on bottom of preceding column

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FAITH AND SCIENCE.

(To the Editor, "Egyptian Gazette.")

Sir,—The second letter of "Scientist," is amazing though very rude!!!

Your correspondent appears very angry, and, when people who argue get angry, they are apt to miss the points in question and either substitute abuse for arguments, misrepresent what the other side says, or, skip off to something else; very often the three things happen, witness the letter of "Scientist."

Once then the point was not whether the scientists in Huxley's time agreed or not, I agree with that correspondent calls his agnostic THEORIES (sic) capitals are mine, but whether the scientists of his time did not take Huxley's arguments seriously and considered them as stunts in mathematics as your correspondent said, and more in particular, to have an intelligible connection with our letters, whether they approved or disapproved the arguments against the probability of "the water to wine" miracle and "transference of devils from one man or two MEN to pigs." For on the truth of these statements depends the value of the New Testament Gospels and in consequence the conflict of science on the fundamental beliefs of the Christian creed. Either these events were witnessed by the alleged authors of these gospels and did happen in which case there is good presumption for their rest, or else they were not the alleged authors and never wrote these gospels, nor eye-witnessed the events.

Now the conclusions of Huxley and his school and also of the authorities on the Bible, such as, STRAUSS, VOLKART, RENAN and, many others was and is in the negative; in that, the origin of these gospels is known, that they have historical value, and that their authors are the alleged apostles. Such is the evidence, and, therefore the events narrated must be judged on their probability with known phenomena since the evidence is untrustworthy.

Instead of answering this point, (and, in my previous letter, I distinctly asked "Scientist" to give the name of the scientists in Huxley time who did not take his arguments seriously on these points and who believed in the "Water to Wine Miracle and Devil to pig Miracles), he gives me the name of several who DID NOT AGREE WITH HUXLEY'S AGNOSTIC THEORIES (sic again) I may be justified in thinking that your correspondent does not understand the meaning of the word agnosticism. Further in the list of names he has given, figure Dr. Ware who was a theologian and Mr. Gladstone who was a statesman both of which words do not mean scientist, and therefore if Dr. Ware or Mr. Gladstone only did or did not believe in those miracles the verdict of scientific authorities is unaffected. When your correspondent will be in a position to show that the other and only real authorities named by him to wit Lord Kelvin, Agnil and Charles Darwin, believed in the water to wine miracle, and devil to pig transference miracles I for one will be extremely grateful to him if he will tell me where I can read their reasons for this belief.

After having jumped off from scientists in Huxley's time, who did not take his arguments seriously and regarded them as mathematical stunts whereby one can prove a number equal to nothing.....to scientists.....who did not agree with his agnostic theories, your correspondent deliberately misrepresents matters in a way which could justifiably me to return him the suggestion about, a cold wet towel, but good manners prevent, so I would ask him to quote any part of my letters where I said "that because a miracle had never happened it could never happen" and where I said any part of my letters where I admitted having made this mistake. The reminder of his letter consists of abuse which proves nothing except lack of good manners and shows that he does not realise the hospitality of the Gazette in that a paper is given to discuss questions of general interest and not to exhibit bad

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