

*HANDBOOKS PREPARED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
HISTORICAL SECTION OF THE FOREIGN OFFICE.—No. 133*

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HONDURAS

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1920

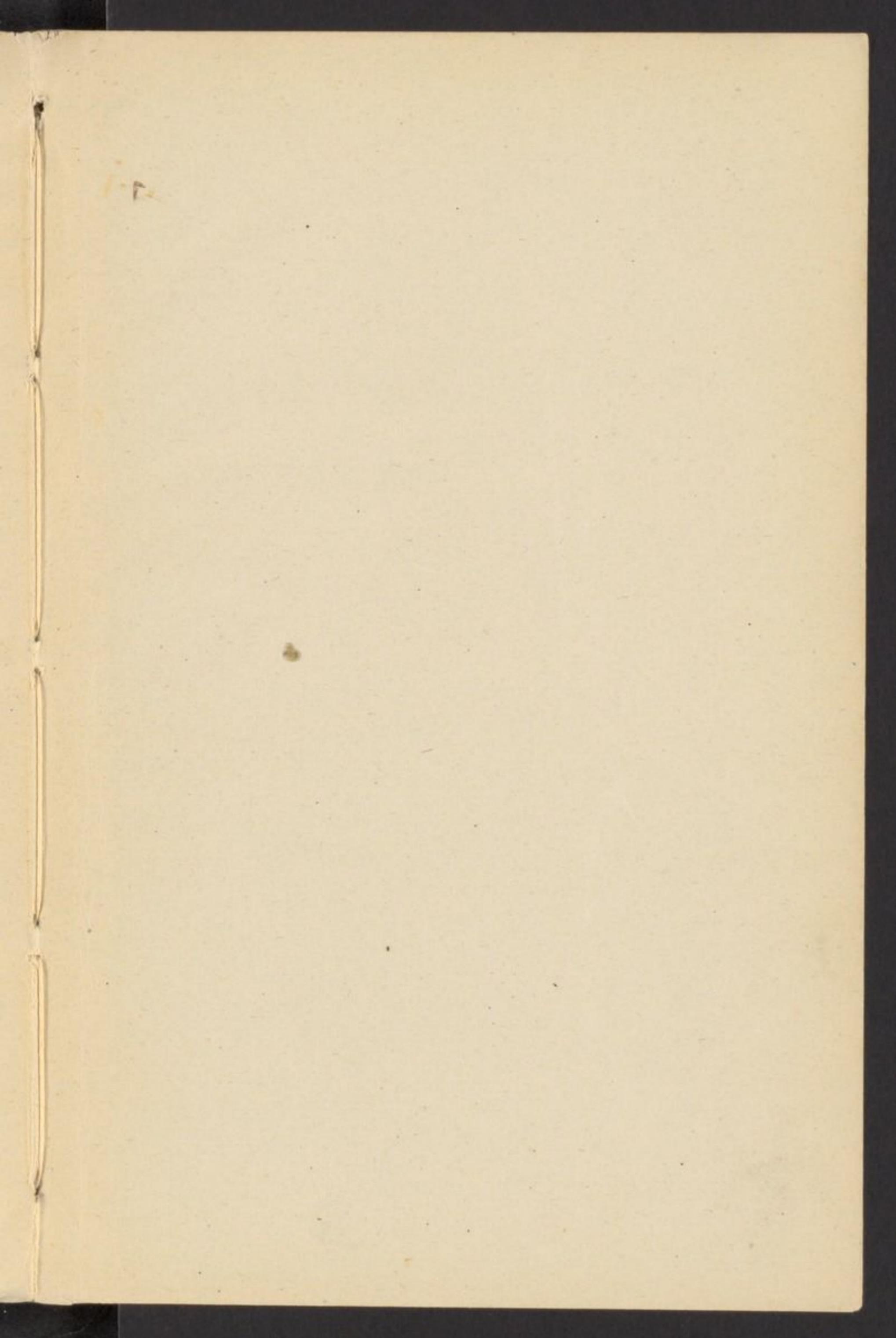


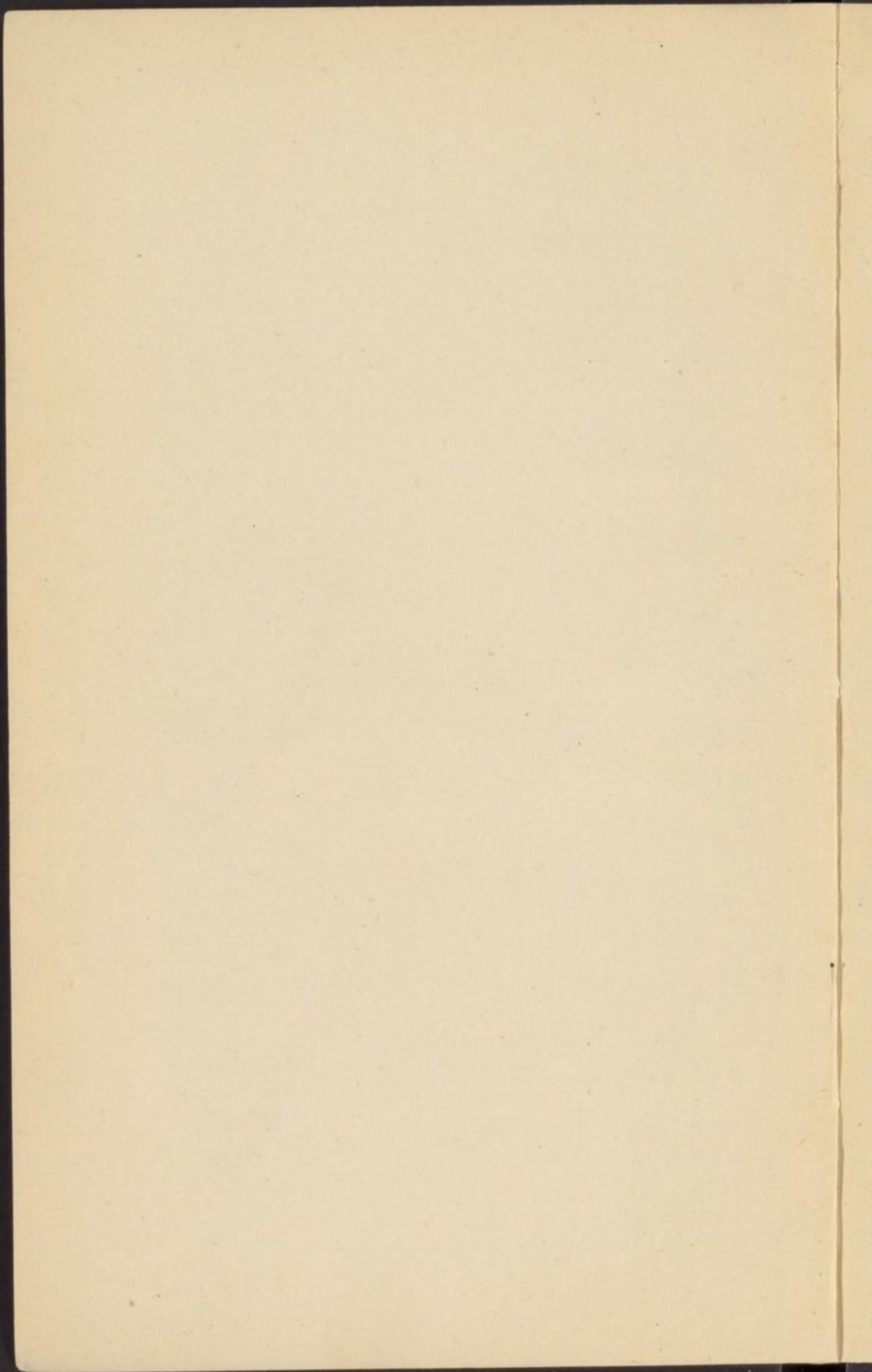
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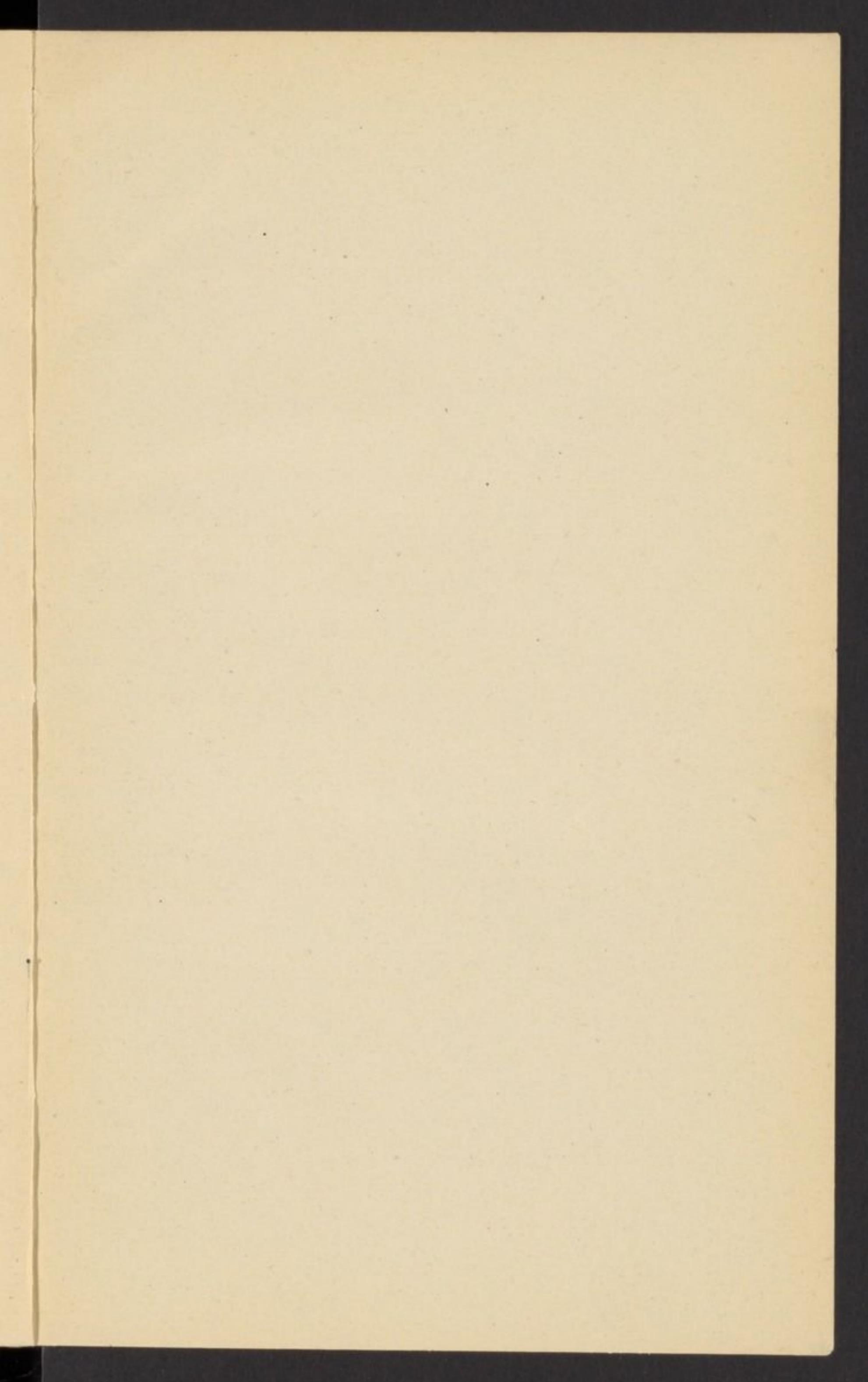
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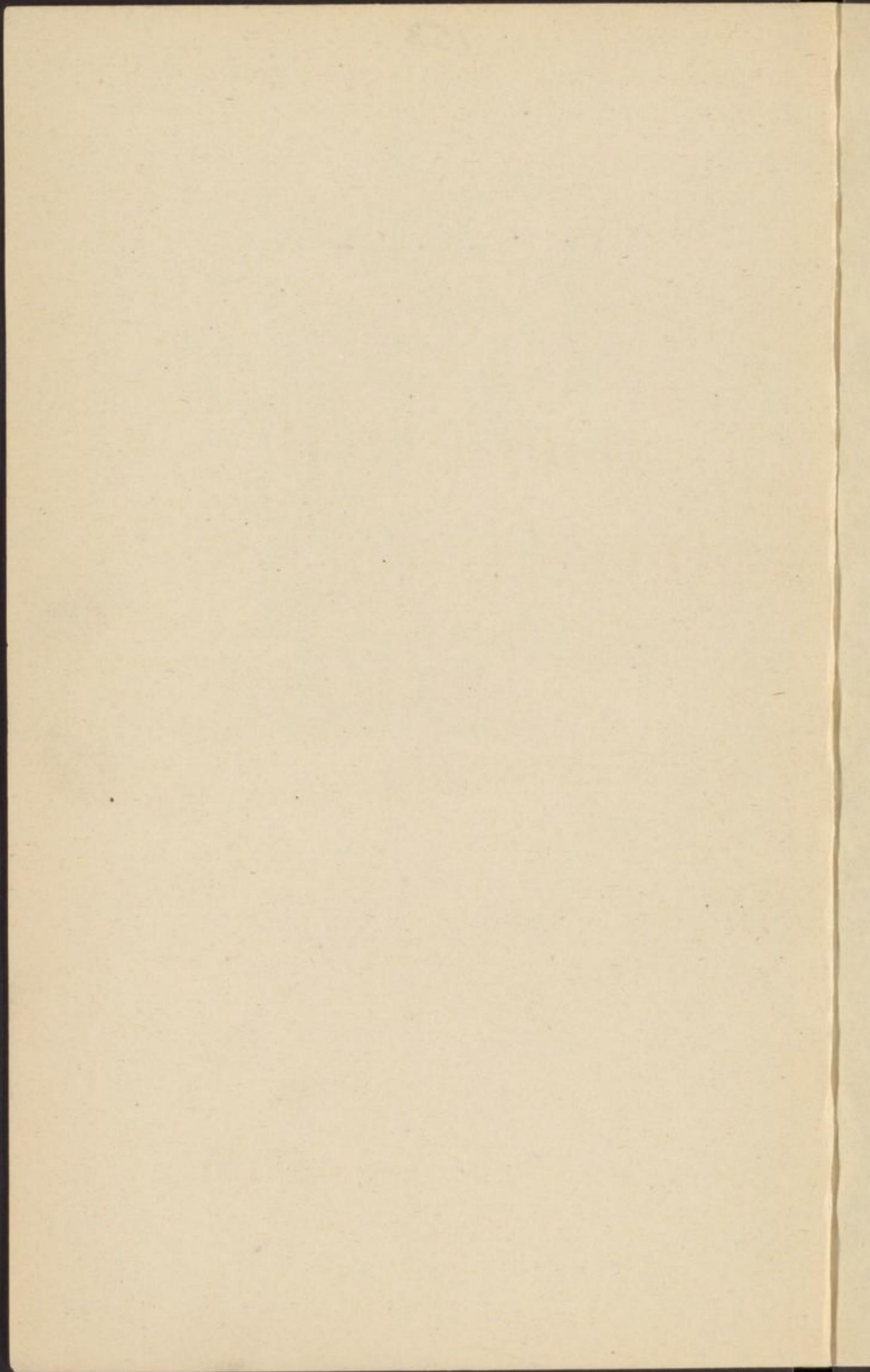
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EDITORIAL NOTE

IN the spring of 1917 the Foreign Office, in connexion with the preparation which they were making for the work of the Peace Conference, established a special section whose duty it should be to provide the British Delegates to the Peace Conference with information in the most convenient form—geographical, economic, historical, social, religious, and political—respecting the different countries, districts, islands, &c., with which they might have to deal. In addition, volumes were prepared on certain general subjects, mostly of an historical nature, concerning which it appeared that a special study would be useful.

The historical information was compiled by trained writers on historical subjects, who (in most cases) gave their services without any remuneration. For the geographical sections valuable assistance was given by the Intelligence Division (Naval Staff) of the Admiralty; and for the economic sections, by the War Trade Intelligence Department, which had been established by the Foreign Office. Of the maps accompanying the series, some were prepared by the above-mentioned department of the Admiralty, but the bulk of them were the work of the Geographical Section of the General Staff (Military Intelligence Division) of the War Office.

Now that the Conference has nearly completed its task, the Foreign Office, in response to numerous inquiries and requests, has decided to issue the books for public use, believing that they will be useful to students of history, politics, economics, and foreign affairs, to publicists generally and to business men and travellers. It is hardly necessary to say that some of the subjects dealt with in the series have not in fact come under discussion at the Peace Conference; but, as the books treating of them contain valuable information, it has been thought advisable to include them.

It must be understood that, although the series of volumes was prepared under the authority, and is now issued with the sanction, of the Foreign Office, that Office is not to be regarded as guaranteeing the accuracy of every statement which they contain or as identifying itself with all the opinions expressed in the several volumes ; the books were not prepared in the Foreign Office itself, but are in the nature of information provided for the Foreign Office and the British Delegation.

The books are now published, with a few exceptions, substantially as they were issued for the use of the Delegates. No attempt has been made to bring them up to date, for, in the first place, such a process would have entailed a great loss of time and a prohibitive expense ; and, in the second, the political and other conditions of a great part of Europe and of the Nearer and Middle East are still unsettled and in such a state of flux that any attempt to describe them would have been incorrect or misleading. The books are therefore to be taken as describing, in general, *ante-bellum* conditions, though in a few cases, where it seemed specially desirable, the account has been brought down to a later date.

G. W. PROTHERO,

*General Editor and formerly
Director of the Historical Section.*

January 1920.

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I. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL

(1) POSITION AND FRONTIERS

THE Colony of British Honduras extends (including islands) between latitude $15^{\circ} 53'$ and $18^{\circ} 30'$ north and longitude $87^{\circ} 28'$ and $89^{\circ} 16'$ west. The estimated area is 8,598 square miles, including 212 square miles of cays (islands) off the coast, a large number of which are mangrove swamps without any soil. Its greatest length is about 180 miles, and its greatest width 57 miles. The Colony marches with Mexico and Guatemala, but at no point touches the Republic of Honduras, despite the identity of name.

On the east the Colony faces the Gulf of Honduras in the Caribbean Sea. On the south the boundary follows the River Sarstoon from its mouth as far as the rapids of Gracias-à-Dios. Here it turns slightly east of north, and runs in a straight line till, near Benque Viejo, in about $17^{\circ} 4'$ north latitude, it meets the meridian of $89^{\circ} 9'$ west longitude. The further course of the western boundary is undefined, but approximately follows the meridian as far as the Blue Creek (Rio Azul), a tributary of the River Hondo. It then follows the Hondo to its mouth in Chetumal Bay. On the other side of the bay the sea-boundary passes through the Boca Bacalar, thus giving Ambergris Cay to Honduras.

(2) SURFACE, COAST, ISLANDS, AND RIVER SYSTEM

Surface

British Honduras falls naturally into two divisions, of which the northern is nearly flat, with a slight incline from the western frontier to the sea, while the southern contains mountain ranges. The chief of

these is the Cockscomb range, which is characterized by very sharp volcanic cones of jagged outline, the highest being Victoria Peak (3,700 ft.). Beyond the Cockscomb Mountains is the Alexandra range. Nearer the sea are ranges of lesser elevation, including the Sibun and Manatee hills in Belize district, and the Seven Hills (470 ft.), which are south of the Deep River.

The river valleys are usually separated from one another by tracts of arid, sandy land with poor soil and coarse grass, called 'pine ridges' from the characteristic red pines found in patches upon them. Somewhat more fertile, though partaking of the same general characteristics, are the so-called 'broken ridges', while the alluvial soil of the river valleys is known as 'cohune ridges' from the prevalent growth of cohune palms. These 'ridges' support a luxuriant growth of all manner of tropical vegetation, and altogether constitute about two-fifths of the soil of the country. Farther inland are elevated savannahs and open grassy country with a scattered growth of oak-trees, but this part is largely uninhabited.

Most of the shore and the lower courses of the numerous rivers are fringed with low and swampy land, and along the river banks stretch impenetrable mangrove swamps, above which the land becomes firmer, being clothed with mahogany and other great trees.

Coast and Islands

The coast is as a rule low, flat, and densely wooded. It is broken by many river mouths, and in some parts short passages communicate with lagoons of considerable length, the chief of which are Revenge lagoon, New River lagoon, and Placentia lagoon. Between Negro Point and the mouth of Monkey River the coast is more elevated and is fronted by a beach.

The whole coast is fringed by a series of small, low islands called *cays*, resembling one another so much that navigation is sometimes attended with very great danger. Some of these cays form extensive reefs. The most important are the Turneffe Islands, a large cluster of mangrove islands on a barrier reef, 30 miles in length and from 4 to 7 broad, which are so closely grouped as to give the appearance of one flat island. There are, however, openings into lagoons with 4 to 8 ft. of water. Ambergris Cay to the east of the entrance to Chetumal Bay is 19 miles long, and from 2 to 4 broad. It is low and swampy and separated from the coast to the north by a narrow boat channel. St. George's Cay, $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles north-east of Belize, is a health resort, and others of the smaller cays, e. g. Weewee Cay and Garbutt Cay, are inhabited.

The whole belt of cays constitutes an effective barrier to the shore, and provides a stretch of calm water between the islands and the mainland. The narrowest part of this channel is between Bugle Cay and Potts Shoal. There is no regular tide along the coast.

River System

Along the whole coast is a series of streams, flowing from the Cockscomb Mountains, and towards the south from the Blue Mountains of Guatemala. The following are the most important, proceeding from north to south. The Hondo, which is the northern boundary of the colony, flows from south-west to north-east. The New River, with a parallel course, flows through a considerable lagoon, and near others; it is a dull sluggish stream. The Belize (or Old River) has a tortuous course of more than 150 miles, with a depth of 6 to 9 ft. and an average width of 140 ft. The Sibun flows through a fertile hilly district, which is studded with plantations. The Manatee is narrower and has

the most dangerous bar in the Colony, and the Mullins River is very deep and slow. North Stann¹ Creek is about 35 miles long. The Sittee is difficult to navigate because of rapids, and South Stann Creek is obstructed by rocks and boulders. The Monkey River is deep and narrow for some 12 miles above its mouth; the Deep River has a wide and deep mouth, and the Sarstoon River, which forms the southern boundary, is also in part navigable. All these rivers have bars at their mouths, and their channels constantly change.

(3) CLIMATE

Although British Honduras lies entirely within the tropics, the climate is only sub-tropical. It is tempered by sea-breezes, and the trade-wind blows with hardly any interruption for 8 or 9 months in the year. The dry months are from February to May; the rainiest season is from September to November.

The temperature differs considerably in various localities and according to different altitudes. South Stann Creek has a much pleasanter and cooler climate than Belize, while the highlands of the interior are said to have a climate suitable for Europeans. The shade temperature of Belize averages from 75° F. to 85° F. (24°–29° C.). The mean temperature during five years' observations was 79° F. (26° C.). During these years the monthly mean ranged from 82° F. (28° C.) in August to 75° F. (24° C.) in January. Between 1888 and 1891 the maximum temperature was 92° F. (33° C.), the minimum 56° F. (13° C.).

The rainfall varies to an extraordinary extent. Between 1906 and 1915 the average rainfall was 85.16 in. (216.3 cm.), the maximum being 130.93 in. (332.5 cm.) in 1911 and the minimum 63.76 in. (161.9 cm.) in 1910. Of these years 1907 had the smallest number

¹ The name is erroneously given as Staun on several maps.

of rainy days, 80; 1913 had the largest, 167. But in 1861, 153 inches (388.16 cm.) fell in 167 days, while in 1867 there were only 26 inches (66 cm.) in the year.

The prevailing winds from January till the end of September range from south-east to east, and are succeeded by north, north-east, and north-west winds. North winds occur mostly in November and December, and sometimes as late as the end of February; they usually bring fine cool weather, but do not blow south of Placentia Point. The weather is usually more or less cloudy throughout the year.

(4) SANITARY CONDITIONS

The health of the Colony is better than might be expected. The chief ailments affecting Europeans are malarial fever and liver affections, but these are generally very mild. The climate is usually good for phthisis, but bad for rheumatism, and tropical diseases such as cholera and yellow fever have occurred sporadically. Malaria is the principal cause of death. Leishmaniasis and a form of myiasis locally known as screw-worm disease, which invades the brain through the nostrils and generally proves fatal, are also found.

Ankylostomiasis is frequent among the Indian population of the Toledo district and at Orange Walk, and the natives also suffer from an affection called *cacaobay*¹, which affects the hands, feet, and joints, but from which persons of cleanly habits are exempt.

(5) RACE AND LANGUAGE

There are six chief elements in the population. (1) The *Moya Indians*, representing the aboriginal inhabitants, live chiefly in forest villages to the west and north, away from the sea-coast. (2) The *European*

¹ *Cacaobay* is the native name for leprosy, but it probably includes several diseases diagnosed as non-leprosy.

element is descended from the English buccaneers of the seventeenth century, reinforced by Scotch and German mercantile elements, with some mixture of Spanish from the neighbouring republics, and a limited number of immigrants from the Southern States of America. There is also a settlement of German planters in Stann Creek. (3) The *Belize Creoles*, a numerous section of the population, are descended from West African negroes who were slaves in the West Indies. (4) The *Caribs* are not pure bred, but of mixed Carib and negro blood. They were brought from St. Vincent in the eighteenth century, and live in the southern districts, chiefly in coast villages. (5) Intermingled with the Caribs in the south is a mixed *Spanish-Indian* population (known as 'Spaniards'), whose Indian blood is distinct from that of the Moyas. They include Waikuas, who have an element of African blood; Ladinos, who are a blend of European and Indian; and Mosquitos from Guatemala and Honduras. With them should be grouped the Mulattos of mixed European and negro blood, and the Sambos, a limited race, who are a cross between Indian and negro. (6) In the north and in various places as far south as Belize are found not only 'Spaniards' but *Yucatecans*, refugees driven from Yucatan in 1848 by the native Indians.

The languages spoken in the Colony are Spanish, English, and Carib.

(6) POPULATION

Distribution

At the last census (1911) the population numbered 40,458. The estimated population at the end of 1916 was 42,323. The density is about 4.7 per square mile. About two-thirds of the population inhabit the Belize and northern districts; the inhabitants of Belize itself number over a quarter of the total. The southern part

of the Colony is very sparsely peopled, and considerable tracts of the interior are uninhabited.

The white population amounts to but a few hundreds. The English do not as a rule make a permanent habitation in the Colony; the Americans appear more ready to settle.

Towns and Villages

The chief towns of British Honduras are Belize, Corosal (or Corozal), Orange Walk, Cayo, Stann Creek (on the North Stann), and Punta Gorda. These are the respective capitals of the six districts into which the Colony is divided.

Belize (population, 10,478¹) is the capital of the country, and the whole Colony is sometimes called by its name. It lies on both banks of the Belize River, which is there spanned by a bridge. The town is one of the cleanest and brightest in the West Indies.

Corosal (population 1,696) is on the west side of Rowley Bight, near the mouth of New River. It is now, properly speaking, an Indian town. There are several sugar plantations in its neighbourhood.

Orange Walk (population 1,244) is on the west bank of New River; Cayo (population 421) stands in a pleasant and healthy site below Garbutt's Fall on the Belize; Stann Creek (population 2,459) lies at the mouth of North Stann Creek; and Punta Gorda (population 706) is a Carib settlement in the south of the Colony. At the last-mentioned place there is also a settlement of Americans, chiefly engaged in planting sugar-cane.

Movement

The population has increased from 27,452 in 1881 to 42,323 in 1916. The death-rate in 1916 was 26.3 and the birth-rate 39 per 1,000.

¹ The figures for Belize are those of 1911; for the other towns those of 1904.

II. POLITICAL HISTORY

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- 1650 (*circa*). First British connexion with Yucatan coast.
1670. First Anglo-Spanish treaty affecting British woodcutters.
1713. Treaty of 1670 confirmed by Treaty of Utrecht.
1763. Treaty of Paris.
1765. Beginning of recognized self-government among the settlers.
1783. Treaty of Versailles.
1786. Convention of London. Government Superintendent appointed.
1798. Defeat of the Spaniards and establishment of the settlement in its own right.
1853. A Colonial Legislature constituted with an Elected Assembly.
- 1859-60. Great Britain gives up the Bay Islands and the Mosquito Coast to the Republics of Honduras and Nicaragua.
1862. British Honduras declared a Colony under the Governor of Jamaica.
1870. British Honduras constituted a Crown Colony.
1884. British Honduras separated from Jamaica.

(1) *Dealings with Spain*

THE Colony of British Honduras owes its origin to the British logwood cutters who frequented the coast from the middle of the seventeenth century. Under a treaty of 1670 between Spain and England, the former covenanted that the latter should

'keep and always possess in full right of sovereignty . . . all the lands, countries, islands, colonies, and other places, be they what they will, lying and situate in the West Indies or in any part of America, which the said King of Great Britain and his subjects now hold and possess'.

The wood-cutters contended that, as they had enjoyed before this time

'an uninterrupted liberty of cutting logwood in the Laguna

de Terminos and other places not inhabited by Spaniards in the province of Yucatan either through right, sufferance, or indulgence',

the provisions of the treaty applied, and established a right, to the Laguna de Terminos and the parts adjacent, those places at the time of the treaty being, and for some years before having been, actually in the possession of British subjects.

The Peace of Utrecht (1713) made no change, merely confirming the previous treaty. The Spaniards, however, had never recognized the British contention; and about 1717 the settlement at Laguna de Terminos was broken up by them, the wood-cutters and traders retiring to Belize and the Mosquito Coast. The wood-cutters, now known as the 'Baymen', gradually concentrated themselves on the Belize River, where they formed a practically independent community under the nominal authority of the Jamaica Government.

Article XVII of the Treaty of Paris (1763), between Great Britain and Spain, was in effect a compromise between the two claims. It ran as follows:—

'His Britannic Majesty shall cause to be demolished all the fortifications which his subjects shall have erected in the Bay of Honduras and other places of the territory of Spain in that part of the world, four months after the ratification of the present treaty; and his Catholic Majesty shall not permit his Britannic Majesty's subjects or their workmen to be disturbed or molested, under any pretence whatsoever, in the said places, in the occupation of cutting, loading, and carrying away logwood; and for this purpose they may build without hindrance, and occupy without interruption, the houses and magazines which are necessary for them, for their families and for their effects.'

Article VI of the Treaty of Versailles (1783) affirmed that,

'The intention of the two high contracting parties being to prevent, as much as possible, all the causes of complaint and misunderstanding heretofore occasioned by the cutting of wood for dyeing, or logwood, and several English settlements

having been formed and extended, under that pretence, upon the Spanish continent, it is expressly agreed that His Britannic Majesty's subjects shall have the right of cutting, loading, and carrying away logwood in the district lying between the rivers Wallis or Bellize and Rio-Hondo'.

At the same time, these stipulations were not to be considered as derogating in any wise from Spanish rights of sovereignty.

By the Convention of London of July 1786, the boundaries of the settlement were extended to the Sibun river, and more extensive rights with regard to wood-cutting and the collection of natural products were given to the settlers. Moreover the occupation of St. George's Cay by the Baymen was recognized. At the same time all the political restrictions of the Treaty of 1783 were maintained. The inhabitants were warned against 'meditating any more extensive settlements or the formation of any system of government, either military or civil, further than such regulations as Their Britannic and Catholic Majesties may hereafter judge proper to establish for maintaining peace and good order amongst their respective subjects'.

(2) *Extinction of Spanish Claims*

In 1798 a determined attempt by the Spaniards to put an end to the settlement at Belize met with complete failure. They were beaten by the Baymen with the help of a British ship; and from that date British Honduras no longer existed on sufferance, but became a British Colony in its own right. Hitherto the relations of the settlers with the British Government had been somewhat confused. They had practically governed themselves, electing their own magistrates; and their practice had been recognized in 1765 by the British Government. In 1786 the appointment by the Government of a Superintendent, the notorious Colonel Despard, led to disputes and trouble between the old and the new settlers. After a short interval, from 1797 onwards, there was always a representative of the

British Government at Belize; but the settlers still held their public meetings or general assemblies, and elected their magistrates down to about 1830. In 1853 the legislature was defined by Ordinance to consist of the Superintendent and a Legislative Assembly, of which eighteen members were elected and three nominated. In 1862 the settlement was formally declared to be a Colony, the Governor of which was the Governor of Jamaica, a Lieutenant-Governor being substituted for the Superintendent. At the end of 1870 popular representation was abolished, and British Honduras became a Crown Colony. In 1884 it was wholly severed from Jamaica.

In spite of the increased importance of the Bay settlement, no attempt was made by the British Government, in any later treaty with Spain, to give direct expression to the British claim; it being assumed that a state of war had put an end to the previous treaties.

(3) *Relations with Central America*

During the years that followed Waterloo, as the Spanish power grew weaker in Central America and Spanish Commissioners no longer visited the region, British settlement gradually advanced south of the Sibun River till it reached the Sarstoon. With the cessation of Spanish rule over Central America the situation increased in difficulty. The relations between the Belize settlement and the new Republics became strained; and the predominant position of the United States with regard to Central American questions further complicated the situation.

Consideration has here been confined to the case of British Honduras; but it must be remembered that the Bay Islands, situated to the south-east of Belize, off the north coast of the Republic of Honduras, as well

as the Mosquito Coast farther south, were also claimed as being under British sovereignty or British protection. The Bay Islands (Ruatan, Bonacca, &c.) were erected into a British Colony by Royal Warrant of March 20, 1852. With regard to the Mosquito Coast, the question at issue was whether there had been a Mosquito kingdom independent of the Spanish power, the protection of the Indians demanding that the British claim should be enforced.

(4) *Relations with the United States*

It was when affairs were in this tangled position that a new factor appeared in the case in the proposal for an inter-oceanic canal. From about 1840 onwards the Americans maintained that the principle of the Monroe doctrine applied to Central America; and it was undesirable, from their point of view, that Great Britain should possess a grip on one end of the Isthmus of Nicaragua. The British as well as the American agents on the spot were busy endeavouring to make good their respective claims; and at any moment some cause of dispute might arise between the United States and Great Britain. Conversations between the American Minister in London and Lord Palmerston in September, 1849, established that, on the one hand,

‘the United States sought no exclusive privilege or preferential right of any kind in regard to the proposed communication’; while, on the other hand, it was explained, on the part of the British Government,

‘that, as to any idea of their holding exclusive possession of the mouth of the San Juan, as the key of the contemplated communication between the Atlantic and the Pacific, nothing could be further from their minds’.

The United States Government desired to remove British influence from the Mosquito Coast, but was still more desirous of arriving at a friendly settlement with regard

to the future canal; the British Government was unwilling to abandon its claims to the Mosquito Coast, but had no desire to thwart the Americans in their policy with regard to a canal.

In this state of things it seemed best to ignore the differences of opinion as to existing rights and merely to agree, as was settled by Article I of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850, that

'The Governments of Great Britain and the United States hereby declare that neither the one nor the other will ever obtain or maintain for itself any exclusive control over the said ship-canal; agreeing that neither will ever erect or maintain any fortifications commanding the same, or in the vicinity thereof, or occupy, fortify, or colonize, or assume or exercise any dominion over Nicaragua, Costa Rica, the Mosquito Coast, or any part of Central America'.¹

Before the ratifications were exchanged, Clayton handed to Bulwer a statement declaring that the Treaty was not understood by the British or American Governments or by the negotiators

'to include the British settlement in Honduras (commonly called British Honduras, as distinct from the State of Honduras) nor the small islands in the neighbourhood which may be known as its dependencies. To this settlement and these islands the treaty as negotiated was not intended by either of us to apply. The title to them it is now and has been my intention, throughout the negotiation, to leave, as the treaty leaves it, without changing, affirming, or in any way meddling with the same, just as it stood previously. The Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate, the Hon. William R. King, informs me that "the Senate perfectly understood that the treaty did not include British Honduras".'²

According to Bulwer,

'the treaty was intended to apply to future and not to present possessions in Central America; so that, without any question as to what Central America is, H.M.'s settlements in Honduras and its dependencies are not included in the said treaty'.

¹ The treaty is given in Hertslet, *A Complete Collection of Treaties*, vol. viii, p. 969.

² *Parliamentary Papers*, 1856, vol. lx, p. 64.

According to Reverdy Johnson, the American Attorney-General,

'the treaty did effectually, to all intents and purposes, disown the British Protectorate in Central America and the Mosquito Coast, although it did not abolish the Protectorate in terms, nor was it thought advisable to do so *ipsissimis verbis*'.¹

(5) *The Mosquito Coast*

The intention of the British Government, in maintaining its hold on the Mosquito Coast, was to continue its long-standing protection of the Indian interests; the situation was altered when an active little white community at Greytown (San Juan del Norte) embroiled itself in disputes with Nicaragua and incidentally with the United States. Henceforth the one aim of the British Government was to arrive at a settlement consistent with British honour.

It was evident that, since Great Britain first assumed the protection of the Mosquito Indians, the position of all parties had changed. Spain, instead of retaining absolute sovereignty over all Central America and prohibiting all commerce on the coasts under her sway, had entirely lost her dominions from Cape Horn to Florida. The Mosquito Indians, instead of governing their own tribe according to their own customs, were merely the nominal rulers of an active community of Americans and Europeans. Great Britain, instead of having an interest in the defence of the Mosquito Indians for the sake of rescuing part of the territory of Central America from Spanish control and obtaining an outlet for her commerce, had no other interest in the country than that which was derived from an honourable regard for her old connexion with the Indian natives or Mosquitos.

¹ *U. S. Docs.* ser. no. 694, doc. 13, p. 15, quoted in note to p. 108 of *Anglo-American Isthmian Diplomacy, 1815-1915*, by M. W. Williams.

The British Government had for several years endeavoured to suit its engagements to the altered circumstances of the case. But every proposal had encountered some insuperable obstacle. The contentions between Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and the Republic of Honduras, the absence of any authority with which any permanent agreement could be made, unfounded jealousies of Great Britain, and various other circumstances, prevented for a long time a settlement of this vexatious question.¹ At last, however, a settlement was arrived at (January 28, 1860). Under this treaty² the Mosquito territory was assigned to Nicaragua, with reservations on behalf of the Indians, and with a proviso against cession to any foreign State or person. Finally, in 1894, the Mosquitos were altogether incorporated with the Republic of Nicaragua. In November, 1859, under a treaty³ with Honduras, Great Britain had ceded the Bay Islands to Honduras, together with so much of the Mosquito territory as lay within the Honduras frontier. In this treaty the cession of the Bay Islands was stated to be in consideration of

'the peculiar geographical position of Honduras, and in order to secure the neutrality of the islands adjacent thereto, with reference to any railway or other line of inter-oceanic communication which may be constructed across the territory of Honduras on the mainland.'

Honduras was bound over not to cede the islands to any other nation.

But, though Great Britain retired from the Mosquito Coast and the Bay Islands, her position was consolidated in British Honduras. The American contention had been that Great Britain should confine

¹ *Parliamentary Papers*, 1856, vol. lx, p. 202. Letter of Lord John Russell, January 19, 1853.

² *Parliamentary Papers*, 1860, vol. lxxviii. The treaty is given in Hertslet, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 446.

³ *Ibid.* The treaty is given in Hertslet, *op. cit.* vol. ii, p. 367.

herself within the limits of the original territory of Belize; but the abandonment by Great Britain of the Mosquito Coast and the Bay Islands served, in great measure, to remove what the American Secretary of State had termed, in June, 1859, the only obstacle to a complete and cordial understanding between the British and American Governments.¹ At the same time the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, which gave Great Britain an equal position with the United States with regard to an inter-oceanic canal, had never been popular with the Americans; and therefore its abrogation by the Hay-Pauncefote Convention of November, 1901, was generally welcomed.²

¹ *Parliamentary Papers*, 1860, vol. lxviii, p. 258.

² *Parliamentary Papers*, 1902, vol. cxxx. The treaty is given in Hertslet, *op. cit.* vol. xxiii, p. 1151.

III. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Religious.—More than half of the population is Roman Catholic, but the Church of England has a considerable number of adherents, and there is an Anglican bishopric at Belize.

Political.—The government of the Colony is in the hands of a Governor, advised by an Executive Council of six members, three of whom are unofficial, and of a nominated Legislative Council, in which there is an unofficial majority.

Educational.—Education is almost entirely denominational; and a law has recently been passed to provide for compulsory education in certain cases.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

British Honduras is one of the more isolated British possessions; and, apart from its timber supplies, which now appear to come largely from outside the Colony, it cannot be said to have outstanding importance. But it is a *bona fide* British settlement, British not through the action of the Government but through the sturdiness and insistence of British adventurers, and possessing a long and honourable tradition of British connexion. It has, moreover, economic potentialities which are not yet fully developed (cf. below, p. 55).

IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

(A) MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

(1) INTERNAL

(a) *Roads*

THE roads as a rule are very inadequate. Few of them are fit for vehicular traffic, and those marked on the map are, for the most part, merely bridle-paths or tracks, intended for mounted or animal traffic. The Corosal district is distinguished from the rest of the Colony in having a number of roads suitable for wheeled traffic.

The so-called roads follow three main directions. From Belize a road runs in a south-westerly direction to Cayo, and thence ($8\frac{1}{2}$ miles) to Benque Viejo (on the boundary of Guatemala)—about 70 miles in all; this last stage is described as good. Another road from Belize runs approximately parallel with the coast northwards to Maskall's Bank, and then, bending to the north-west, proceeds to Guinea Grass (about 50 miles). A road runs from Cayo *via* Guinea Grass, Orange Walk, and San Estevan to Corosal, and thence to Consejo, in the extreme north (about 90–100 miles).

These main routes are joined and looped by other roads; a westerly road runs from Orange Walk along the Hondo River, and afterwards in a south-westerly direction to Quam Hill; here it turns to the south-east, and at Canal Bank divides into two branches, both of which reach the road from Cayo to Consejo.

There are occasional isolated roads running a little way inland from the coast. South of 17° north latitude,

however, there is practically no internal communication.

Roadwork consists in opening up and clearing tracks through the bush, and trenching and filling up swampy portions. 'The vitality of the forest is extraordinary. Paths cut are obliterated in a year or two, and it is a constant struggle to keep forest encroachments from the plantations.' Work on the roads is carried out by the Public Works Department from grants made by the Government on the recommendation of the Roads and Rivers Board.

The absence of proper communication by road has not as yet been seriously felt, since, owing to the rivers, the coastal area has been adequately open.

(b) *Rivers and Canals*

Rivers.—The importance of the rivers of British Honduras is very great, on account of the absence of good roads. Most of the waterways in the northern portion of the country are navigable by doreys or pitpans (native cargo boats) for a considerable distance inland. Much produce from the interior is brought down by water to Belize, and cargoes of manufactured goods are carried back. At present, therefore, the grower who has anything to sell in the local markets has to take a voyage which may occupy any length of time from a few hours to several days, according to distance. A small paddling dorey can take only a limited amount of produce, the condition of which is not improved by exposure to weather, and, perhaps, salt water.

The *Hondo River* may be navigated by vessels drawing 4 ft. of water for a distance of about 50 miles, and by smaller craft for 60 miles. The *New River* is navigable for an equal distance. The *Old* or *Belize River* forms the chief highway from the coast to the western and south-western parts of the Colony. It

has a depth of 6-9 ft. ; it is 187 ft. wide at Orange Walk, 121 ft. at Belize Bridge, and 600 ft. at Haulover. It is navigable for light-draught motor and cargo boats for a distance of more than 100 miles. About 30 miles from Belize there are rapids, which necessitate a portage, and other rapids occur at frequent intervals in the remainder of its course. Two great obstructions to navigation have been removed at places known as Little Falls and Big Falls. Most of the traffic to and from the interior is carried over this route, despite high rates for both passengers and freight. Until 1906, goods intended for the western part of the Colony had to be carried, during the wet season, in pitpans, which generally took three weeks to go from Belize to Cayo and suffered frequent accidents. Now, during eight months of the year, goods are taken up in motor-launches, which usually perform the journey in two and a half days, and have been known to accomplish it in as little as 27 hours.

The *Sibun* is navigable for about 30 miles ; the *Manatee*, which has the roughest bar in the Colony, for about 16 miles ; *Mullins River*, a very deep and slow stream, for about 16 miles ; *North Stann Creek* for 18 miles ; the *Sittee* for 16 miles (about 20 miles up there are rapids) ; the *Temash* for about 30 miles ; *Sarstoon River* for about 40 miles, but it has a very dangerous bar. Other smaller rivers are navigable for a few miles above the bar. Some of the estuaries, such as that of the Mullins River, where there is a boat-building industry, are important for navigation. Improvements have been made in the river mouths, and there is scope for further work when money and enterprise render the task possible.

Canals.—There are two short but useful canals. One, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, 20 ft. in width, and 5 ft. 6 in. in depth, leads from the Sibun River to the sea.

This canal was cut by a grab-dredger, and the excavated material has been used for road-making. The canal enables doreys to enter the Sibun River without having to cross a dangerous bar. Another small canal has been dug between the Sibun River and the north Manatee lagoon. It is intended that this canal should be enlarged; and, as there is a natural connexion between the northern and southern lagoons, a fair extent of inland navigation would thus be made available for small vessels, which cannot with safety cross either the Sibun or Manatee bars. These lagoons receive a considerable stream of water.

It is clear that an extended system of canals would greatly facilitate and increase commercial undertakings. The Agricultural Commission in 1917 pointed out that a canal connecting the Belize and Sibun Rivers would be of great advantage to that area. The market at Belize is supplied by the inhabitants of the Belize and Sibun valleys, but while the former have an inland waterway to the town, the latter are obliged to cross Sibun Bight, and are often delayed for days by rough and dangerous seas.

(c) *Railways and Tramways*

The first *railway* of the Colony was constructed in the south, where railways are most needed, since the waterways are much less useful than those of the north. It is a short line running to Middlesex from the town of Stann Creek, 25 miles inland. Its gauge is 3 ft. The line is the property of the Government. The first section was opened towards the end of 1908, the second in March 1909, and the line was practically complete in 1910; but extraordinary floods in the following year carried away two bridges, and did other damage. The railway has been extended from Stann Creek to Commerce Bight, where a pier, 400 yds. in

length, has been built. The work of reconstruction was concluded in 1913. Fifty-two bridges were built, with steel and plate girders, and concrete viaducts and culverts. Ballasting and regrading were carried out, additional sidings and new rolling stock were provided, and the permanent way was brought to a state of efficiency. The head of the steamer pier at Commerce Bight, in connexion with the railway, was reconstructed of reinforced concrete, which added greatly to its strength and stability. Steamers can now come alongside with safety.

This railway was constructed for the purpose of conveying bananas and other produce to the coast for shipment. The total cost up to December 31, 1914, was \$826,250.00. In 1914 the receipts from passenger traffic were \$4,434.25, and from goods traffic \$27,778.73; the annual charge for interest was \$24,438.75.

There are two short *tramways* in British Honduras, in the districts of Stann Creek and Toledo. These tramways are open for public traffic, but are principally used for the carriage of bananas from the interior for shipment. The tramway owned by the British Honduras Syndicate runs from the pier at Stann Creek for about $8\frac{3}{4}$ miles through Crown and private lands. Another tramway, about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, connects the Sennis River with the Swasey branch of Monkey River.

(d) *Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephones*

There are twenty-seven post offices in the Colony, six of which are also money-order offices. During the dry season the mail launch runs for about two-thirds of the distance between Belize and Cayo, mules carrying the mails the rest of the way. There is now a regular mail service between these two towns.

A telegraph and telephone line runs from Belize to Punta Gorda, in the extreme south, and another from Belize to Cayo. There is a telephone system in connexion with the roads. One telephone line accompanies the road from Belize *via* Cayo to Benque Viejo, while another runs along the road from Belize to Maskall's Bank for the greater part of its length and is joined at Orange Walk by a line serving the road from Consejo.

Telegraphic and telephonic communication thus extends over a distance of about 200 miles. There are intermediate telephone stations at Orange Walk, San Estevan, and Corosal. Guinea Grass has been connected by telephone with Orange Walk, a distance of 10 miles.

(2) EXTERNAL

(a) Ports

All along the coast-line (180 miles) there are frequent river-mouths, and, at many points, anchorages close inshore for small vessels. In one respect the Colony has an advantage over the West Indian islands. Owing to the long, protecting stretch of reefs and cays, lying some miles out at sea, steamers can ride at anchor almost anywhere along the shore where the water is deep; this gives importance to places like Punta Gorda. There is no regular tide along the coast, but generally there is about one foot more water on the bars of the rivers in the evening, according to the strength of the sea-breeze.

The only two ports of importance are Belize and Commerce Bight. *Belize*, at the mouth of the Belize River, is approached from the east by a well-buoyed channel with sharp turns, which is from two-fifths to three-fifths of a nautical mile in width, and varies in

depth from 60 to 197 ft. The harbour itself is about 11 miles in width from east to west and 3 to 5 miles in length; it is protected to seaward by a reef and numerous mangrove cays. It lies about 10 miles within the barrier reef. The anchorage, which is on mud and sand, in about 20–27 ft. of water, lies between one and three miles to the south of the town. Vessels are loaded and discharged by lighters. There are four public wharves belonging to the Government, on one of which there is a crane capable of lifting 6–7 tons. Belize, which is a port of registry, is about 5,700 miles from Liverpool, 900 from New Orleans, and 600 from Jamaica.

Commerce Bight is situated three miles from North Stann Creek. It has a well-sheltered pier (1,200 ft. long) with a depth alongside of 24 ft. at high tide and 21 ft. at low water. A large quantity of fruit and other cargo is handled here. Commerce Bight was chosen as the coast terminus of the railway rather than Stann Creek, because, although the latter has a protecting reef, the anchorage there is exposed to north and north-east winds, which often render landing and unloading difficult.

Of the anchorages at the river-mouths, that on the Hondo, i. e. deep river, is the deepest in the Colony; the bar has 5 ft. of water, but the entrance is obstructed by many rocky heads. The New River has an approach free from shifting sand-banks; its port at Corosal can be approached by light-draught vessels and the depth off the pier-head is $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. There is a dry sand-bank at the entrance of the Sittee River; the stream discharges by northern and southern channels, the former having 5 ft. of water on the bar, whereas the latter can be used by canoes only; within the bar there is a depth of 12–15 ft., while anchorage in 5 fathoms can be found a nautical mile south of the Sittee outlet. At the mouth of South Stann Creek the water on the bar is too shallow

for large boats, but there is anchorage in 4 fathoms half a mile east of the entrance. Punta Gorda, at the north-west end of the Gulf of Honduras, is in the neighbourhood of detached patches of $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 fathoms depth, lying $4\frac{1}{2}$ nautical miles to the south-east. The Rio Grande, where mahogany is shipped, is about 5 nautical miles north of Punta Gorda ; it has an anchorage of about 4 to 5 fathoms and 2 ft. of water on the bar. The Sarstoon River has a bar with about 6 ft. of water ; within the river, beyond a small island, there is anchorage in depths varying from 4 to 10 fathoms, and other anchorages at no great distance. These are only some among the numerous anchorages along this comparatively safe coast, so that there is a possibility of increased harbour facilities wherever there is increased commercial development.

(b) *Shipping Lines*

The only direct steamship service to the Colony from New York is that of the United Fruit Company. Vessels sail every alternate Friday from Belize and Puerto Barrios in Guatemala, carrying freight and mails on one voyage, and passengers on the next. Shipments may be consigned *via* the Southern Pacific Company (Morgan Line) to New Orleans, where goods are transferred to the steamers of the United Fruit Company. From Mobile at the mouth of the Alabama River, the Orr-Laubenheimer Company despatches freight steamers twice a month for Belize and ports in Guatemala and the Republic of Honduras. The average time from New York to Belize is 9 days, from New Orleans 3 days, and from Mobile $3\frac{1}{2}$ days.

There is no frequent direct service to Europe, although the Harrison Line sends 11 steamers every year, which call at Colon on the way. The dates of

sailing are fixed and notified before the beginning of the year. This certainty much stimulates the traffic. The voyage takes about 26 days.

Scrutton, Sons & Company send about 8 steamers each year to carry timber to London. The dates of these sailings are not fixed, and the steamers sometimes return to the West Indies to complete their cargo. They make the direct passage in about three weeks and have a great reputation for comfort.

There are also some lines of local coasting steamers ; for example, a steamer plies between Belize, Corosal, and Orange Walk on the New River.

The following table shows the total shipping inwards and outwards in 1912-14 :

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Inwards.</i>	<i>Outwards.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
1912	316,660	313,404	630,064
1913	407,822	409,036	816,858
1914	453,955	470,024	923,979

Normally, the United States and Guatemala send most of the steam vessels, while the Republic of Honduras and Great Britain come next. Most of the sailing-vessels come from the Republic of Honduras, Mexico, and Guatemala. Norwegian ships are replacing British in the fruit trade with the United States. The following return shows the nationality of ships entering British Honduras ports in 1914 :

<i>Nationality.</i>	<i>Steamships.</i>		<i>Sailing-vessels.</i>		<i>Total.</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Tons.</i>
Denmark . . .	1	1,621	—	—	1	1,621
Germany . . .	1	2,098	—	—	1	2,098
Great Britain . . .	138	258,688	369	8,197	507	266,885
Guatemala . . .	—	—	16	106	16	106
Mexico . . .	2	50	26	385	28	435
Norway . . .	156	104,650	—	—	156	104,650
Republic of Honduras	—	—	94	1,326	94	1,326
United States . . .	102	75,649	50	1,185	152	76,834
Total . . .	400	442,756	555	11,199	955	453,955

(c) Cable and Wireless Communication

Telegraphic communication with Europe is maintained by a land line to Consejo on the Hondo River, by a cable across the Hondo connecting with the Mexican telegraphic system through Payo Obispo in Yucatan (1911), and by wireless communication with New Orleans (1915). A wireless station has been erected at Belize, with a capacity of 5 kilowatts, and capable of transmitting messages for 400 miles and receiving them from a distance of 600 miles.

(B) INDUSTRY**(1) LABOUR***(a) Supply*

In 1914 there were 5,945 persons in the Colony engaged in agriculture, and 7,675 in trade and commerce.

A large proportion of the population of British Honduras are native Indians, most of whom are engaged in agriculture, while some near the coast are occupied in fishing and, to some extent, in logwood-cutting. They are sturdy in build, industrious, frugal, and inoffensive, and their capacity is by no means slight. The numerous black population furnishes the best and most effective labour of the Colony. Among these, the Belize Creoles are a vigorous and hardy race, who act as wood-cutters in the interior, and are chiefly responsible for keeping up the supply of mahogany and dye-wood. Of other races, the Ladinós supply most of the artisans and operatives, and are also engaged in agriculture in the northern district; the Caribs are largely engaged in fishing—they are more limited in intelligence and perseverance. In the south of the Colony, Guatemalan Indians are employed on the sugar plantations; in

the same district there is also a numerous class of peasant farmers or *milperos*.

Work on plantations has never played so prominent a part in British Honduras as the business of wood-cutting. The system of slavery, therefore, has left effects less disastrous than elsewhere, because of the more unrestrained life that was led by the woodmen in the forest, and the easier relations on which they stood with their masters. This comparative freedom, however, has made wood-cutting so popular that it has been difficult to procure sufficient labour for agriculture. The strong, robust man refuses to till the land; he leaves that work for those who are enfeebled by age or otherwise incapacitated. The ordinary labourer will not wait for the slow yet sure reward offered to the agriculturist. The majority of those who work as agricultural labourers are men who are no longer fit for work as mahogany-cutters. They have been accustomed to task-work, which means that their day is over by 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning, and they refuse work which takes longer. Mahogany-cutting tends to make men nomads.

The Colony is therefore confronted with the problem of shortage of labour and inefficiency of labourers. Its abundant fertility cannot be properly exploited. The best workers are engaged either in cutting mahogany or bleeding chicle. The best land is in the hands of the idlest of the natives. The schools could do much to improve matters if the teachers would give instruction in elementary agriculture, and thus help to increase the number of peasant proprietors.

Many youths wander aimlessly about Belize. It is said that in Cayo alone 150 men are annually idle from the beginning of March to the end of July. These are the *chicleros* (chicle-bleeders), whose business takes them to the forest for the rest of the year. A similar state of affairs exists in other parts of the Colony,

as, for example, in the Orange Walk district. Dr. Lewis, Secretary of the Cayo Agricultural Society, suggests that for the good of the Colony these men should be compelled to cultivate a certain amount of land each year during the idle months; experience has shown that a self-supporting labourer may be made in two years out of the most unpromising material.

It has been suggested that labour might be imported from the West Indies or India if proper inducements were offered. But the attempt to introduce Chinese labour was discouraging, for the Chinese made common cause with the Santa Cruz Indians, who had vowed to exterminate the white man. Although the Colony in normal times is most desirous of obtaining new and enterprising inhabitants, and offers the inducement of land at an easy rental, there is little immigration.

(b) Labour Conditions

One discouragement to industry in the Colony is the prevalence of larceny. It is said that the more thrifty and hardworking a planter is, the more he loses in this way. All crops appear to suffer, but especially ground produce, plantains, and coco-nuts. Police protection is ineffective, and legal proceedings, when taken, involve serious loss of time. A system has been advocated, which is in use in Jamaica, whereby authorized persons in each district are empowered to arrest suspected offenders.

The rate of wages varies. In 1914 the wage for woodcutters averaged from \$10.00 to \$16.00 per month, with rations. The rate for logwood-cutters was somewhat lower than for mahogany-cutters. Plantation labourers earned \$7.50 to \$12.00 per month with rations. Casual labour in the towns was paid at the rate of 50 cents to \$1.00 per day, without rations. The scale for rations was 7 lb. of flour and 4 lb. of pork per week or \$1.00

(in Cayo \$1.60) as cash equivalent. Women domestic servants were paid at the rate of \$3.00 to \$10.00 per month, and men at \$10.00 to \$15.00, both with keep. Carpenters were paid an average wage of \$1.50 per day, masons \$2.00, and blacksmiths \$2.50. In Cayo and Stann Creek the rate was somewhat higher.

A demoralizing system is in vogue, by which the labourer is paid some of his wages in advance. The hiring is done almost entirely at Belize, so that employers and workmen throng to that town at the end of the year, which is the hiring season. The labourers want money for clothes and amusements, and the employers take advantage of this to make the agreement more binding by allowing the labourers to get into their debt. Accordingly, the labourer obtains an advance of from two to six months' wages, which is quickly spent; after this he is at the mercy of his employer, his character deteriorates, and he loses independence. The labour laws of the Colony have endeavoured to remedy this abuse. The Government relies upon district magistrates using every opportunity of making the law on the subject well known, and applying remedies. Before a recent commission, the only persons who testified to having no difficulty with labourers were those who had some village settlement near them, from which they could draw a sufficient supply of labour. Only two such employers gave evidence, and neither employed this pernicious system of 'signing on' labourers and paying wages in advance.

The late war has had marked effects upon employment in the Colony. Staffs have had to be reduced and the amount of wages lowered. During the hiring season of 1913-14 there were hired in Belize 1,717 labourers at an average wage of \$12.64 per month, while in 1914-15 only 714 labourers were engaged, at an average wage of \$8.21. The Government initiated a scheme for

growing cheap food-stuffs and reducing unemployment; no financial success was anticipated, but it was hoped to tide over a difficult time. Possibly the stimulus given to the cultivation of home produce may have effects that will outlast the war and contribute to the solution of the problem of the shortage of labour.

(2) AGRICULTURE

(a) *Products of Commercial Value*

British Honduras is mainly a wood-producing country, and only a comparatively small proportion of the total acreage is under cultivation, but the soil is very fertile and crops of great variety and abundance can be grown.

Maize, or Indian corn, is the staple food of the Indians and Caribs, who make it into *tortillas* or griddle-cakes. The whole of the produce is consumed in the Colony and there has never been a surplus. In 1914 the Colony imported maize to the value of about \$12,000 from adjacent countries. Perhaps no one article varies so much in price during the year as maize. The new corn is sold at from 50 cents to \$1 per cargo (60 quarts); during 1917 it reached \$4.80 per cargo.

Rice of a high quality is produced, but the amount is limited. The conditions for its growth are eminently satisfactory, but it does not figure among the exports. Some years ago all the rice consumed locally was grown in the Colony; but the foreign article was introduced by enterprising merchants, who were able to sell it at a price which made local production unprofitable; and consequently its cultivation, except in small patches, was abandoned. In 1914 nearly \$50,000 worth was imported. Yet export might be profitable, for the Governor says that the Japanese Government, having seen a sample at the Colonial and Indian

Exhibition, gave an order for 60 sacks, but were able to obtain only one.

Sugar-cane could be grown in most parts of British Honduras. It is cultivated by Americans in the north, and also in the Toledo district in the south, but the cultivation needs stimulus. The cheaply-produced sugar of Guatemala quite recently threatened the sugar industry of British Honduras with annihilation. The cost of producing sugar at the factory is said to be about 4 cents per lb., a figure nearly 100 per cent. higher than the cost of production in the West Indies. The exports of raw sugar in 1911 were about 177,000 lb., in 1912 about 109,000 lb., in 1913 about 123,000 lb., but in 1914 the amount had dropped to 64,000 lb. The sugar trade is hampered by lack of capital and shortage of labour.

Coffee and *cocoa* are both imported, though both grow luxuriantly in the Colony. Cocoa grows wild in the forests¹; it figures in the exports, but only to a limited extent—10,000 lb. in 1912, and 25,000 lb. in 1913.

The fine light soil along the banks of the rivers is admirably suited for the cultivation of *tobacco*, which grows luxuriantly everywhere in the Colony, especially near Corosal. It is said that if it were more generally cultivated and well cured, this tobacco might compete with that of any country. As it is, the Indians and Caribs raise it in quantities far too small to meet the requirements of the Colony. The manufacture of cigars is carried on in a small way with fair results.

Fruit and Vegetables.—Fruit-trees are numerous, but the quality of the fruit is not always very good, and there are many valuable kinds that might be introduced with advantage. The mango is widely distributed, especially at Belize and the settlements, but

¹ Attempts to cultivate cocoa have met with only temporary success, owing to the liability of the plants to attack by very destructive root disease.

the standard of the fruit is not high. The bread-fruit is thoroughly established, and one tree at Belize is equal to anything seen in the West Indies. Pine-apples, oranges, lemons, and limes are found, and with proper attention could be grown with great profit. Other fruits are the akee and the avocado pear. Most important are bananas and plantains, which have been raised for many years, and appear conspicuously in the exports. They are all shipped to the United States. In 1904 over 500,000 bunches of bananas were exported, and in 1913 over 617,000. Plantains have also been exported in small but increasing quantities; in 1912 the number exported was 3,341,425; in 1913 it was 3,300,450. Yams are much grown and eaten. Cassava is a popular crop, and, among other things, produces arrowroot and tapioca. Beans furnish a staple diet (*frijole*), and most European vegetables grow well side by side with tropical products.

Palms rank among the outstanding features of the Colony. They present much variety in size, form, and habit. Among them may be mentioned the pimento palm, the cabbage palm, the big-thatch palm, and the bay-leaf palm. Most characteristic is the cohune palm, which constitutes from 20 to 30 per cent. of the vegetation. It has an annual growth of nuts which hang like huge clusters of grapes. The seeds yield a valuable oil, used locally for feeding pigs and for burning. It is of excellent quality, superior to and burning twice as long as coco-nut oil. The yield is about a quart from 100 nuts. When in full growth, the cohune palm will yield up to three bunches of fruit, each with an average of 500 nuts. Attempts have been made to establish an industry in connexion with the extraction of the oil, but hitherto without success. The shells are very hard, and the problem is whether it would pay better to take the shell to

the machinery or to bring the machinery to the shell.

The coco-nut palm grows in many plantations and might be planted extensively along the whole sea-coast. About 6,000,000 coco-nuts were exported in 1912, and this number had increased to 9,000,000 in 1914.

Among the numerous *oil-plants* in the colony are the wanglo, which is cultivated to some extent, the pindar-nut, a plant grown in light soils, the croton-oil tree, the African oil-palm, the butter-tree, and the horse-radish tree.

There are several *medicinal plants*, such as the castor-oil plant, the physic-nut, jalap, turmeric, sarsaparilla, and a bastard type of ipecacuanha, which grows freely. Cinchona grows to a great height in this country. Spices and other plants of value include cinnamon, camphor, cardamom, ginger, and black pepper.

Fodder-plants are not abundant; those which most deserve mention are the guango, which yields abundant fodder, and the water-grass or Parà grass.

Two native plants yield *fibre*, the *pita* (silk-grass) and the *hennequin* (or sisal hemp). Both these could be cultivated, and their fibre could be prepared by a very simple machine. The value of the sisal trade lies in its certain and abundant profit, for in the English market sisal hemp sells at about £30 per ton. Fibre is obtained also from the plantain, the banana, and the pine-apple.

Cotton is grown to a limited extent, and has been planted experimentally at Vaca by the Vaca Falls Company, but the cultivation is on the whole neglected and needs stimulation.

Rubber.—A variety of the india-rubber tree, the *Castilloa elastica*, called by the native *toona*, is found on most of the cohune ridges and especially along the banks and in the valleys of the Rio Grande, the Mullins,

Sittee, and Sibun Rivers, and the upper waters of the Belize River. The tree is very abundant in places, and grows to a height of 40–50 ft. Rubber gatherers are supposed to obtain a licence before they tap trees on Government areas, but many trees are bled carelessly and ruthlessly. With proper attention this tree might bring much wealth to the Colony. Parà rubber has been grown experimentally at Vaca.

There is a great variety of *dyes* and *gums*. Indigo seems to be indigenous, and is widely distributed; annatto, the seeds of which yield an orange or yellow dye for silks, grows freely. The tree on which the cochineal feeds is abundant. The dye-woods of the Colony are treated under Forestry (see below, p. 37).

Live-stock.—British Honduras possesses a breed of small horses suitable for the country. Mules of excellent quality are bred. The ass is used for stud purposes only. Cattle are chiefly used for drawing timber from the forest. Very few of the small planters raise stock, although there are in the Colony vast stretches of excellent pasture land with rather coarse herbage.

The wild fauna is very varied. Among the birds may be named the wild turkey, though it has become rare, and the curassow. The domestic turkey is abundant. The iguana and its eggs are much esteemed as food by the natives.

(b) *Methods of Cultivation*

British Honduras might be greatly developed, were more attention paid to its resources. It has not yet been exploited by the economic botanist, or its rich oil-bearing nuts and vanilla would have been turned to account instead of being allowed to go to waste. There is a wide field for the colonist endowed with common sense and a little capital. More scientific methods and more co-operation are greatly needed.

Each planter now has his own sugar-cane fields and his own mills and apparatus for making sugar. He must combine the work of a chemist, a mechanic, and a plantation foreman. Furthermore, intelligent foremen are much needed in the sugar and other industries, who could instruct and train the men under them.

For the cultivation of rice, maize, and leguminous crops, the implements which are generally employed are of the most primitive kind, and modern tools and machinery would be useless until the people had been taught their value and how to use them. Antiquated methods have retarded production in the Colony. The rice is reaped by hand, each ear being cut from the stalk by means of a knife, until a handful has been gathered, which is then tied with a string. The rice is kept in these bundles till required for use, when threshing is done by hand, and the hulling with a pestle and mortar. This is a long and laborious operation, and results in much broken rice. Two or three rice-hulling mills have been introduced. Modern agricultural machinery would work wonders in the quantity and quality of supplies. The nut of the cohune palm is also broken in an antiquated way, and it would be desirable to introduce machinery which would break the shell without damaging the kernel.

There is a current belief that corn can only be kept secure from the attack of insects in the cob, and rice in the paddy. This is a fallacy. The application of scientific knowledge would be of great value to the local growers.

With regard to irrigation, the numerous rivers and their tributaries greatly assist cultivation; but there is still need in many places for canals and artificial waterways, which might be used for irrigation as well as for transport.

(c) Forestry

The oldest industry in British Honduras is the cutting of logwood. The logwood-tree (*Haematoxylon campechianum*) grows in moist lands in the north-west parts of the Colony and is also found in the lowlands of the south, although it is not specially characteristic of cohune ridge-land. The trees are from 15 to 20 ft. high, and have a grey outer bark which turns dark as the branches grow older. The trunks are rarely more than 1 foot in thickness. The outer wood or sapwood is immediately removed, as only the inner reddish heartwood is of commercial value. Logwood is too heavy to float and is drawn along tracks to the nearest large stream, where it is packed in bark-logs, which are made into long rafts and floated down the river to the sea.

It is claimed that the logwood of British Honduras is worth 40 per cent. more than that of the West Indies; but the fall in prices some years ago, owing to the increased use of German dyes, greatly curtailed the amount exported. Up to the beginning of the present century, logwood occupied the first place in the Colony's exports, but it was outstripped in 1901 by mahogany and in 1905 by chicle. The export in 1895 was 30,830 tons, value \$699,525, but in 1911 it was only 3,231 tons, value \$54,549. The average price of logwood per ton dropped steadily from \$22.65 in 1895 to \$19.13 in 1901. This induced many cutters to turn to the more lucrative business of mahogany-cutting, and an increase in the cost of freight also served to discourage further operations. There are, however, signs of recovery in the trade. It was estimated that in 1914 mahogany and logwood works occupied 2,615,040 acres.

Mahogany-cutting is another old industry. The

largest 'banks' are along the Belize and New Rivers; but the cutting is carried on along most of the northern and some of the southern rivers, though the mahogany of the south is deficient in density and fine grain. Much of the finest timber within easy reach of the principal rivers and their creeks has been cut down. The whole of the northern part of the Colony was divided by the original settlers into enormous estates, which have passed more or less intact to their descendants to-day. Each estate has a river frontage of several miles, taxed by the Government at \$8 per mile. Some of these estates are over a million acres in extent, and, with the limited labour available for cutting, the policy of the past has been to discourage labourers from leaving a plantation. In order to ensure a constant supply of timber, employers cut only one-twentieth part of their forest each year, selecting trees of over 17 in. in diameter, and thus, in the course of twenty years, they return to their original cutting. In this manner, a fixed amount of capital and a permanent gang of men can be steadily employed, without any risk of a failure of timber supplies.

When the owner of an estate decides to establish 'works', or a lumber camp, an experienced woodman, called a 'hunter', is sent to locate trees suitable for cutting. In August the leaves of the mahogany are of a reddish yellow tint, so that they are easily distinguishable. The 'hunter' is paid so much for every tree which, upon examination, is found suitable for cutting, i. e. squaring 18 inches and upwards. A track is opened to each tree, which is then cut down, a platform being necessary, owing to the immense girth of the buttress, or lower part of the trunk. When lopped, cleared, and sawn in serviceable lengths, the logs are drawn to the river, during the dry season, on huge trucks mounted on wheels 3 ft. in

diameter with a nine-inch tread. These are hauled by bullocks, and at night, on account of the heat. During the wet season the logs are drawn on a kind of sleigh which travels over 'skids', long, hard, wooden posts placed across the track. Occasionally logs are drawn a distance of eight or ten miles.

Formerly all logs were squared and prepared for market, unless likely to be injured in transit. Now American mahogany buyers accept logs in the round, owing to the fact that they can be squared more economically at Belize or elsewhere. This has reduced the capital necessary for starting the business of cutting, and has resulted in an immense increase in export.

The development of the trade in chicle (sapodilla gum) has been very marked in recent years. Chicle is obtained by tapping the sapodilla (*Sapota achras*), a handsome hard-wood tree that grows on cohune ridge-land. The tree furnishes a very durable wood, much used for doorposts; but, as it is too heavy to float, it is not exported as timber. To obtain the gum, an incision is made around the trunk, and the sap flows into the lower notch, where a cup is placed to catch it. This sap coagulates into a gum which forms the basis of practically all the chewing gum made in the United States. More than 5,000,000 lb. are now annually exported to the United States, British Honduras being second only to Mexico as supplier. Much of the chicle trade of British Honduras, however, consists of re-exports, only 43 per cent. or 1,410,355 lb. of the exports in 1911 being local produce. The increase in the export of chicle was remarkable in the last decade. In 1909 it ranked first as an article of export. In 1895 the export was 105,478 lb., valued at \$34,479, and in 1911 the export reached 3,219,990 lb., valued at \$968,392.

A contract was signed in 1904 for the sale of pine-trees to Mr. B. Chipley, a citizen of the United States, at the price of 1 cent per tree. It was hoped that wholesale cutting of pine-trees would open up the interior and be of great benefit to trade.

In the backwoods there are many trees of commercial value, many of them as yet unknown to commerce. There are eighty-three kinds of wood enumerated. Some of the trees are dye-wood trees, such as fustic, logwood, &c. ; in 1914 90 tons of fustic, value \$1,350, were exported to Great Britain. Others have medicinal properties, such as the balsam, which in its wood resembles mahogany and sapodilla, but possesses a bark and a gum which can be employed medicinally. Others are oil-bearing, as, for example, the Santa Maria, the seeds of which yield an abundant oil useful for burning, while its timber is unsurpassed for shipbuilding, and is used on account of its durability for the construction of the trucks on which the mahogany logs are drawn to the rivers. The bullet-tree yields a resinous gum (*balata*). The mahoe, a darkish-green wood of great value, supplies the celebrated Cuba bast, which is prepared from the inner layers of its bark. Rosewood, much in request for cabinet-making, is very plentiful in the Colony. Salmwood, a brown and very durable wood, is avoided by all kinds of insects and is therefore useful for lining wardrobes. Other useful trees are the timber sweet, madre cacao, buttonwood, calabash, allspice (much used for walking-sticks), fiddlewood, ironwood, &c.

(d) *Land Tenure*

The Government owns large tracts of land in the Toledo, Stann Creek, and Cayo districts, and smaller tracts elsewhere. In the Blue Book for 1914 the number of acres granted in the Colony was stated to be 2,824,997 (no distinction being made between lands

granted and those sold), while 2,574,714 acres remained ungranted, making an aggregate of 5,399,711 acres. The number of purchases made in that year was 27, comprising some 700 acres. No free grants were made. The land was sold at prices varying from \$2 to \$4 per acre. Building land in Belize and elsewhere fetched higher prices. Much of the land left ungranted is difficult of access until roads, canals, and railways are further extended.

The Land Law permits the Governor in Council to make free grants of 20 acres to immigrants who will cultivate them. All land not in towns is liable to a tax of $1\frac{1}{4}$ cents, and on lands served by a railway a further tax, not exceeding 8 cents per acre, may be levied.

Land is also held by the Western Lands Syndicate, the British Honduras Syndicate, and the Belize Estate and Produce Company, Ltd. These three concerns own about 1,300,000 acres, or nearly a quarter of the whole area of the Colony.

In 1914 it was estimated that only about 60,000 acres¹ were under cultivation. The number of estates under cultivation is unknown, as is also the number of estates once cultivated but now abandoned.

The Colony as a whole has never been surveyed. The need of this work becomes daily more pressing now that the Crown lands are being sold in blocks. Sir E. Swayne, a former Governor, recommended in 1917 that the survey should be accompanied by a geological and economic investigation, in order to ascertain the value of the Colony.

The usual sale price of Crown land for agricultural purposes is \$3.50 per acre, including the cost of survey, and land can be rented at 25 cents per acre ; but these rates may be increased, or reduced, as circumstances

¹ The same figure was given for 1893.

seem to warrant. Sales also take place on condition that a certain area is put under cultivation.

A survey made for the Agricultural Commission (1917) shows that the Crown lands now vacant and suitable for cultivation under present conditions are of small extent. Most of the accessible land is owned or leased by companies or individuals, whereas it would be necessary to make roads in order to get access to Government land. However, there is no real difficulty involved, as most of the large landowners are willing and even eager to let their lands on reasonable terms. Very few planters cultivate more than a small proportion of the estates they own. They grow a bare sufficiency for their own needs, and it is surprising how small a plantation proves sufficient to maintain a family.

It is thought that an increase in the number of peasant proprietors would multiply the production of food-stuffs and render the Colony less dependent on imported articles. It is recommended that available Crown lands should be sold in small blocks of 5-10 acres, the purchaser being allowed to pay by instalments and the conditions being so arranged that the granting of titles should depend upon the whole block being put under cultivation within a given period. This would give security of tenure, and induce the planter to put in staple crops, such as coco-nuts, coffee, cocoa, and fruit, which would ensure him a livelihood.

(3) FISHERIES

Fishing is the main occupation of a large proportion of the Carib race in spite of the fact that the waters are full of sharks, some of them of great size; the creeks also are infested with large alligators.

The sea, as well as the rivers, affords an abundant supply of fish. The most prized are the callipever,

snapper, bass, mullet, grouper, and king-fish or June-fish. In the rivers the mountain mullet, or tropical trout, not only affords good sport but is most delicate eating. Turtle is found along the coast, and, during the season, turtle-fishing is an established industry. The green turtle is in chief request for food, the hawksbill and loggerhead being taken for the sake of the shell. In 1914 some 2,000 lb. of tortoiseshell were exported to the United Kingdom. Several freshwater tortoises are found in the rivers and used for food, the chief being the hiccatee. The manatee, an animal about the size of a seal, is an inhabitant of the waters of the Colony and is hunted for its skin, its oil, and its flesh, but is becoming more and more rare, owing to the attacks made upon it.

The king, queen, and common conch are found in the outer cays and along the coast, and the flesh of some of these is used for food. It is said that the shells might form an important article of export, as they are largely used for cameos, and in the common conch there is found a beautiful, pale pink pearl of great value. An attempt has been made to develop the sponge fisheries, but without success. In 1914 some 900 lb. of raw sponges were exported to the United States.

(4) MINERALS

There has always been a strong presumption of the existence of mineral wealth in the Colony, in view of the yield of mines in the neighbouring republics. An investigation of the country at the head-waters of the Sittee River in 1878 led to no definite result, but a search among the hills that run north and south behind the Cockscomb Mountains justified the belief that *coal*, *gold*, and *silver* might be found in these parts. In one locality a large quartz reef was dis-

covered, some pieces of which, upon analysis in Belize, were pronounced to be gold-bearing quartz. More recently a mining expert has brought back specimens from the country north of the Cockscomb Mountains, which upon reduction yielded a considerable percentage of gold. On the borders of British Honduras gold has been mined, and the Spanish half-breeds have brought down gold-sand from unknown districts in the interior.

A surveyor brought back a few *rubies* found in blue clay up the Belize River. They were cut at Aberdeen and found to be beautiful stones. Unfortunately the surveyor died before he could indicate the locality. *Opals* have been obtained from Caribs in the southern district.

Manganese, graphite, and lead have been discovered near South Stann Creek.

Vast deposits of *limestone* have been found in numerous sections along the southern rivers. This stone has proved of great service in the construction of the railway, and offers the possibility of establishing cement-works. In the same region have been found fine *building-stone* and *marbles* of excellent quality. Every sort of *clay* has been found in the Colony, including large tracts of pure white clay (kaolin).

In the bed of the Deep River there are *mineral springs*, impregnated with sulphur, and having a temperature of 84° F. (29° C.).

(5) MANUFACTURES

The most important manufactured products of the Colony are sugar and rum. Altogether there are about fifty sugar-mills in British Honduras, but all the produce is consumed locally. In the Belize district sugar is manufactured by the open kettle system, except

at San Francisco, San Maximo, Aventura, and Louisville, where continuously working shallow evaporators are used. The Corosal district has seven steam sugar-mills ; Orange Walk district has one motor-driven and two steam sugar-mills ; in Stann Creek district there are two sugar-mills ; in Cayo district there are five sugar-mills of a primitive type ; in Toledo district there are ten sugar estates with mills. *Panela*, a substitute for sugar, is made in the Cayo district.

There are seven still-caps in the Corosal district, varying in capacity from 100 gallons to 450 gallons ; in Orange Walk district there are two.

In 1913 rum was made at ten distilleries, nine situated on the sugar farms in the northern districts and one at Cayo. Their output and export from 1909-13 were as follows :

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Gallons made.</i>	<i>Gallons exported.</i>
1909	62,708	2,672
1910	46,714	3,826
1911	48,632	6,611
1912	63,701	12,690
1913	82,787	14,811

The locked-still system of making rum came into force in December 1910, and has worked successfully.

Moccasins are manufactured in large quantities in the Corosal and Orange Walk districts, and also at Punta Gorda, Monkey River, Cayo, and Benque Viejo.

Cigars are manufactured in fair quantities in the Corosal and Toledo districts.

Other factories in the Colony include a steam ice manufactory and an electric-light factory in the Belize districts, a cohune factory in Stann Creek district, and a coffee mill in the Toledo district. There are two small saw-mills in the Belize district and one saw-mill apiece in the Toledo and Stann Creek districts.

A certain amount of boat-building is done in the Colony, on the Mullins River and elsewhere.

(6) POWER

There are a number of waterfalls and rapids in some of the rivers, but they do not seem to be of great height. In the Cockscomb Mountains there are waterfalls of greater height, which might be available for power. It has been seen that there are saw-mills and sugar-mills which are driven either by electric power (Morter's Rancho, Fair View, Spice Hill, Fern Hill) or by steam, or are worked by cattle.

(C) COMMERCE

(1) DOMESTIC

(a) Principal Branches of Trade

The domestic trade of the Colony is in an unsatisfactory condition, and needs the best attention of the authorities. It is not strong enough to hold out against foreign competition, as was shown in the case of rice and, to some extent, in that of sugar. There are no satisfactory inducements to make the planters grow more than will satisfy their own needs, and only a good season gives them a sufficient surplus to stock the local markets. It is a depressing fact that an exceptionally fertile colony should be driven to import the bulk of its food-stuffs.

A large amount of maize is grown in British Honduras. It is stated that a system has been pursued for years, by which the corn is bought when it is new and low in price, and is held up till the market has risen. Practically a ring has been formed, and a few men have been enriched to the detriment of the many. It is

recommended that a maximum price should be fixed for maize, and also for rice, from time to time, so that the planter might expect a fair profit while the public would be protected against 'profiteering' prices. The Agricultural Commission of 1917 suggested also that some security should be afforded to the growers by a protective tariff, until the industry should become firmly established.

Rice has found it difficult to survive the competition of the foreign article. It has been held that if the Government introduced rice-cleaning machinery, protection from undue loss could be secured by the purchase outright of rice in the paddy, at a figure which would enable the Government to clean and prepare the product for use, and then sell to dealers for the retail trade.

Though sugar can be grown in most parts of the Colony, no advance has been made in the sugar trade. All, or nearly all, of the sugar grown in the Colony is sold locally, and a considerable quantity is imported annually. The war opened a possibility of re-establishing this industry.¹ Some effort ought to be made to attract capital for the establishment of central factories. The day of small planters, each toiling to make a living with the primitive methods of the past, is over.

(b) *Towns, Markets, &c.*

Belize is the chief centre of trade. The market accommodation is inadequate, but the Chamber of Commerce will probably prove useful in this respect. It is said that the war has stimulated production, and it is to be hoped that the Colony generally will take advantage of this to develop its resources to greater advantage when normal conditions return. At present

¹ Nevertheless, throughout the late war, Belize remained dependent upon Guatemala for its supplies of white sugar for local consumption.

coco-nuts, plantains, &c., are sold to the store-holders in bulk, and retailed in small lots. The general feeling is that trade would benefit if all food-stuffs were bought and sold by weight and measure. Planters never know what price they are getting for their produce, and the buyer is at the mercy of the retailer.

Corosal has a market, and *Punta Gorda*, a Carib settlement, supplies Belize with cattle, fruit, and vegetables.

(c) *Organization to promote Trade and Commerce*

A Chamber of Commerce has been lately inaugurated, and will, no doubt, help to make known more widely the openings for trade with the Colony; but, meanwhile, for the reasons which have been assigned, trade is restricted.

(d) *Foreign Interests*

Owing to the proximity of American markets it is not surprising that the United States secures the chief share of imports and exports. Progressive merchants take advantage of the attractions of the American market. Comparison is made between the push of American enterprise and the slowness of British methods. American magazines and books enter the Colony more freely than British literature, and American books of instruction are used even in the schools. The mass of the people, however, are solidly loyal to their British connexion, though coming so largely under American influence. The trade of the Colony is mainly in the hands of British merchants, though there used to be some German firms.

(2) FOREIGN

In proportion to the number of its inhabitants the foreign trade of British Honduras is extremely large. This is due in great measure to the fact that the

Colony forms the commercial gateway to a considerable part of Yucatan in Mexico, and to nearly the whole of the state of Peten in Guatemala. There is a considerable trade with the latter region which does not appear in the export returns. Owing to the large and increasing trade in chicle and mahogany from Mexico to Guatemala, the percentage returns of the import trade are somewhat misleading. The total imports into the Colony in 1911, for example, amounted to \$2,886,677, more than double the value of imports ten years ago, but included in this total are the figures for the transit trade, which comprise certain imports re-exported, without in any way entering into the commerce of the Colony. The total trade of the Colony in 1912 amounted to \$6,353,051, in 1913 to \$6,311,593, and in 1914 to \$5,899,181.

(a) *Exports*

The exports from British Honduras include a wood called cedar,¹ logwood, fustic and mahogany, bananas, plantains and other fruits, cocoa, coco-nuts, sapodilla gum, rubber, rum, sponges, sugar, and tortoiseshell. In 1913 some of the mahogany and cedar, and a large quantity of sapodilla gum, came from Mexico and Guatemala, and many of the coco-nuts were foreign imports re-exported.

The following table shows the value of the chief articles of export (including articles imported and re-exported) in 1912 and 1913 :

	1912.	1913.
	<i>Dollars.</i>	<i>Dollars.</i>
Bananas.	105,109	147,515
Cocoa	4,550	4,972
Cedar	151,771	222,383
Coco-nuts	123,386	166,469
Logwood	56,340	53,061

¹ This is not true cedar, but a wood similar to mahogany.

	1912. <i>Dollars,</i>	1913. <i>Dollars.</i>
Mahogany	1,012,864	1,050,987
Plantains	27,563	27,225
Rubber	17,298	6,277
Sapodilla gum (chicle)	931,848	969,422

The exports were distributed as follows :

	1912. <i>Dollars.</i>	1913. <i>Dollars.</i>
United Kingdom	309,336	381,788
British Colonies	—	18,233
United States	2,249,732	2,376,685
Mexico	127,636	225,693
Guatemala	46,338	16,415
Republic of Honduras	87,317	76,009
France	33,200	21,996
Other Countries	2,584	9,406
Total	<u>2,856,143</u>	<u>3,126,225</u>

(b) *Imports*

The values of the principal articles imported in 1912 and 1913 were :

	1912. <i>Dollars.</i>	1913. <i>Dollars.</i>
Apparel	67,105	66,145
Boots and shoes	94,855	120,993
Cotton piece goods	216,656	215,081
Flour	118,722	106,542
Hardware and cutlery	75,317	82,934
Machinery	53,516	35,794
Mahogany	297,750	210,262
Sapodilla gum (chicle)	418,500	351,719

Imports both from the United States and the United Kingdom were steadily increasing in the years immediately preceding the war, but there was no sign of British goods being superseded in any way by foreign goods. On the contrary, such articles as butter, boots, candles, confectionery, and clothing were im-

ported more extensively from Great Britain in 1913 than they were five years earlier.

The following table shows the countries of origin of the imports in 1912 and 1913 :

	1912. <i>Dollars.</i>	1913. <i>Dollars.</i>
United Kingdom	666,765	700,859
British Colonies	45,654	38,913
United States	1,327,550	1,567,582
Germany	55,072	52,246
France	43,813	32,830
Mexico	1,100,136	489,399
Guatemala	145,269	106,603
Republic of Honduras	77,039	161,890
Other Countries	35,610	35,046
Total	3,496,908	3,185,368

(c) *Customs and Tariffs*

An *ad valorem* import duty of 12 per cent. is imposed under Ordinance No. 14 of 1911 on various articles, among which are bacon and ham, cheese, confectionery, wearing apparel and haberdashery, cotton and silk piece goods, drugs and patent medicines, hardware, jewellery, machinery, wood and wickerware, arms, and certain building materials.

Specific import duties are also imposed on certain articles. For example, beer, porter, cider, and perry pay 25 cents per gallon, cigars 25 per cent. *ad valorem* and \$6 per thousand, opium \$4.00 per lb., pork \$1.00 per barrel, refined sugar 0.03 cents per lb., and unrefined sugar 1½ cents per lb.

There are various exemptions, including agricultural implements, animals, and books and stationery.

(D) FINANCE

(1) *Public Finance*

The amount of general revenue and expenditure from March 31, 1910, to March 31, 1914, can be seen from the following table :

<i>Year.</i>	<i>General Revenue.</i> <i>Dollars.</i>	<i>General Expenditure.</i> <i>Dollars.</i>
1910-11	459,295	542,810
1911-12	1,201,908	532,123
1912-13	575,243	611,040
1913-14	590,982	609,441

The figures for 1911-12 include \$703,593 reimbursed from loan funds on account of expenditure on railway and other public works.

The chief heads of revenue for the year 1913-14 were as follows :

	<i>Dollars.</i>
Customs	324,178.90
Internal Taxation	97,266.87
Revenues of Government Property	23,070.05
Fees of Court or Office, &c.	24,223.82
Post Office	28,305.42
Telegraphs and Telephones	10,620.72
Interest	19,103.80
Railway Receipts	29,191.37
Reimbursement from Loan Funds on account of Railway Construction Loan work	17,173.70

The principal heads of expenditure in the same year were :

	<i>Dollars.</i>
Public Works and Telegraphs, Recurrent Expenses	56,572.33
Stann Creek Railway.	49,205.73
Police Department	47,588.85
Medical Department	41,493.79
Public Debt	41,734.66

On March 31, 1914, the assets of the Colony stood at \$490,125 and the liabilities at \$201,955, so that the excess of assets over liabilities was \$288,170.

The loan debt of the Colony on December 31, 1913, was as follows :

	<i>Dollars.</i>
Loan of 1885 (5 per cent. Debentures)	27,875
Loan of 1887 (4½ " ")	43,740
Loan of 1891 (4½ " ")	97,200
Railway and Public Works Loan 1911 :	
Debentures	209,466
Inscribed Stock	568,134
Total	946,415

The loans of 1885, 1887, and 1891 were all contracted for the improvement of the town of Belize. The local fund contributes one-half of the interest on the loans of 1885 and 1887 and one-half of the sinking fund on the loan of 1887, but nothing in respect of the loan of 1891. The sinking fund of the loan of 1885 requires no further contributions, as the present capital value of the fund is sufficient to produce, at compound interest, the total amount which will be required to liquidate the loan when the payment is due. Ordinance No. 10 of 1902 legalized the discontinuance of contributions to the fund.

Provision for the repayment of these loans was made by the investment of the sinking funds. The loans of 1885 and 1887 were repayable in 1916 and 1918 respectively. The market value of the investments made on account of the 1891 loan, repayable in 1923, was \$48,848 on December 31, 1913.

(2) *Currency*

By Ordinance No. 31 of 1894, the currency was established on a gold basis, the United States gold dollar being adopted as the standard coin; the exchange

value with London in 1914 was \$4.86 to the pound sterling. Gold coins of the United States Mint are legal tender for the amount of their face value, as are also the British sovereign and half-sovereign for the amounts of \$4.867 and \$2.433 respectively. There is a local subsidiary currency of 50-cent, 25-cent, 10-cent, and 5-cent silver pieces, and a Government note issue of the following denominations: 1, 2, 5, 10, 50, and 100 dollars. The value of notes in circulation on March 31, 1915, was \$191,980. A nickel-bronze 5-cent piece and a bronze 1-cent piece are also current. The limit of the legal tender in silver is fixed at \$10, and in nickel or bronze at 50 cents.

In 1914 the estimated amount of gold coin in circulation was \$50,000, of silver \$158,916.75, of nickel-bronze \$2,500, and of bronze \$5,750.

(3) *Banking*

The Government Savings Bank, established in 1846 at Belize, with branches at Corosal, Orange Walk, Stann Creek, Punta Gorda, and Cayo, had a capital of \$104,441.55 on March 31, 1916.

On October 14, 1912, the British Bank of Honduras, Ltd., was bought over as a going concern by the Royal Bank of Canada. The capital of the British Bank of Honduras, Ltd., was \$100,000, and there were deposits of \$401,479. Banking of every description is conducted by the Royal Bank of Canada, which has a paid up capital of \$11,560,000. The considerable volume of trade with the United States has accustomed local merchants to the American demand for short credits. For small transactions it is generally better to deal through a responsible commission agent in Belize.

(E) GENERAL REMARKS

The two chief handicaps to the prosperity of British Honduras are its geographical position and the shortage of labour. The first cannot be remedied, and for the second no satisfactory remedy has yet been devised. The Colony lies at the head of a gulf, distant from any main trade-route, and on the direct route to nowhere except its own hinterland of Guatemala. It is, moreover, too far north to profit much by the opening of the Panama Canal. The difficulties that arise from the shortage of labour have already been described on pp. 28-9. On the solution of this labour problem depends the value of British Honduras to the mother-country.

The Colony on the other hand has many advantages. Every witness before the Agricultural Commission in 1917 testified to the fertility of the soil. British Honduras is practically free from hurricanes; earthquakes are slight; the long line of cays acts as a protection to its coasts and provides comparatively calm water; and it enjoys the advantage of deep estuaries.

There is a good deal that is encouraging in the present situation. The difficulty of importing sufficient food-stuffs in time of war has given a stimulus to home agriculture. There are many crops, successful on a small scale, which with due attention might be made profitable on a larger scale. Much might be done with rice, cotton, sugar, coco-nuts, and cocoa, and the comparative success of bananas and plantains might be made more notable. There has been a largely increased demand for mahogany for Government purposes, which has given a great impetus to employment, and is proving beneficial to the Colony in general. It is true that the logwood trade was steadily declining

before the war, owing to the popularity of German dyes. The suspension of the import of German aniline dyes, however, has caused an increased demand for the vegetable dyes of British Honduras, and with the development of the dye industry in Great Britain the demand is likely to continue. Even as it is, only the difficulties of transport keep the exports of log-wood and fustic at a low figure.

The recent report of the Agricultural Commission encourages the hope that more will be done for the agricultural resources of the Colony. Time and capital are required in order to develop the internal means of communication, but, if these are improved, trade in British Honduras may be expected to expand considerably.

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HISTORICAL

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CHAPTER I

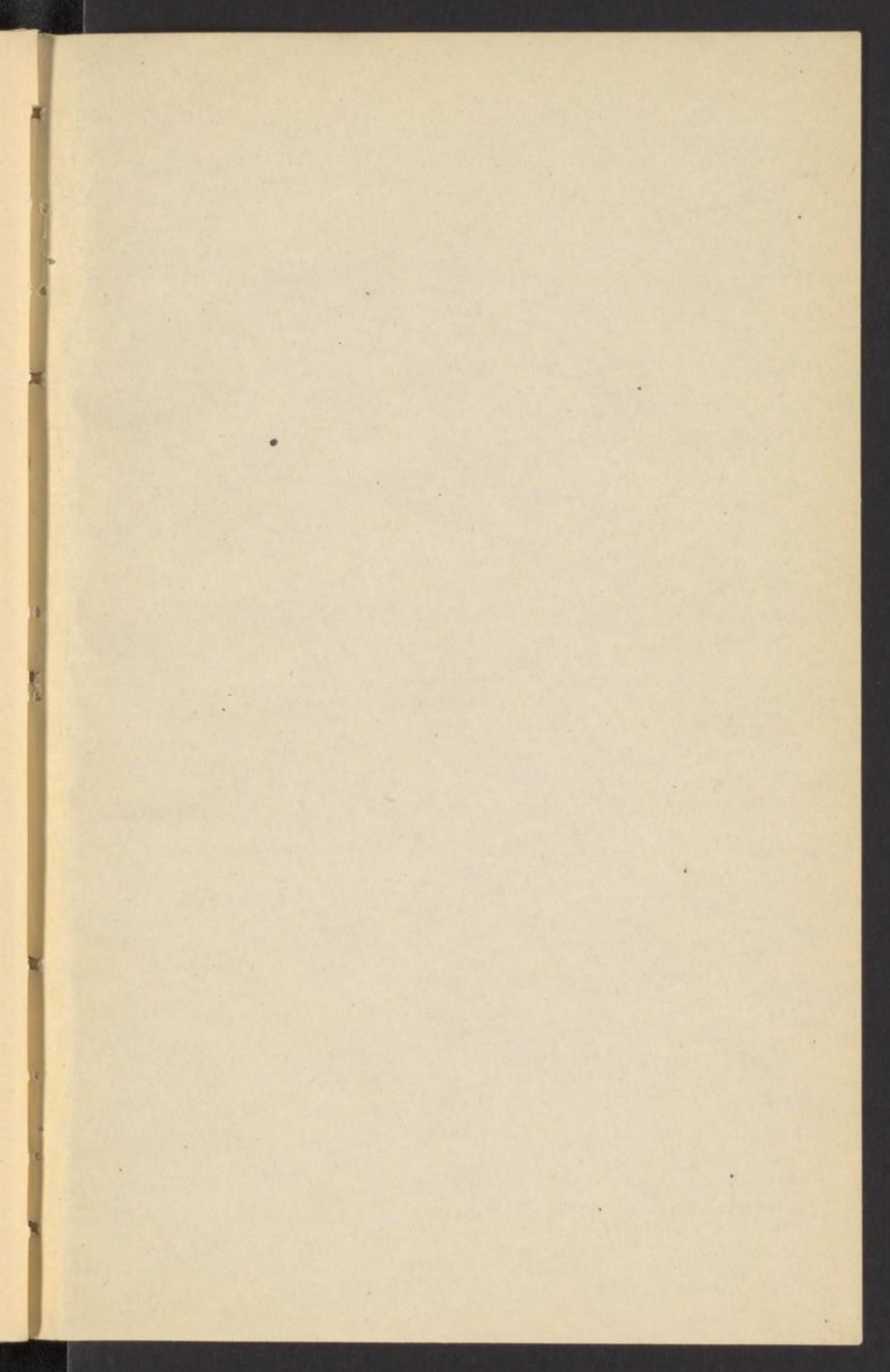
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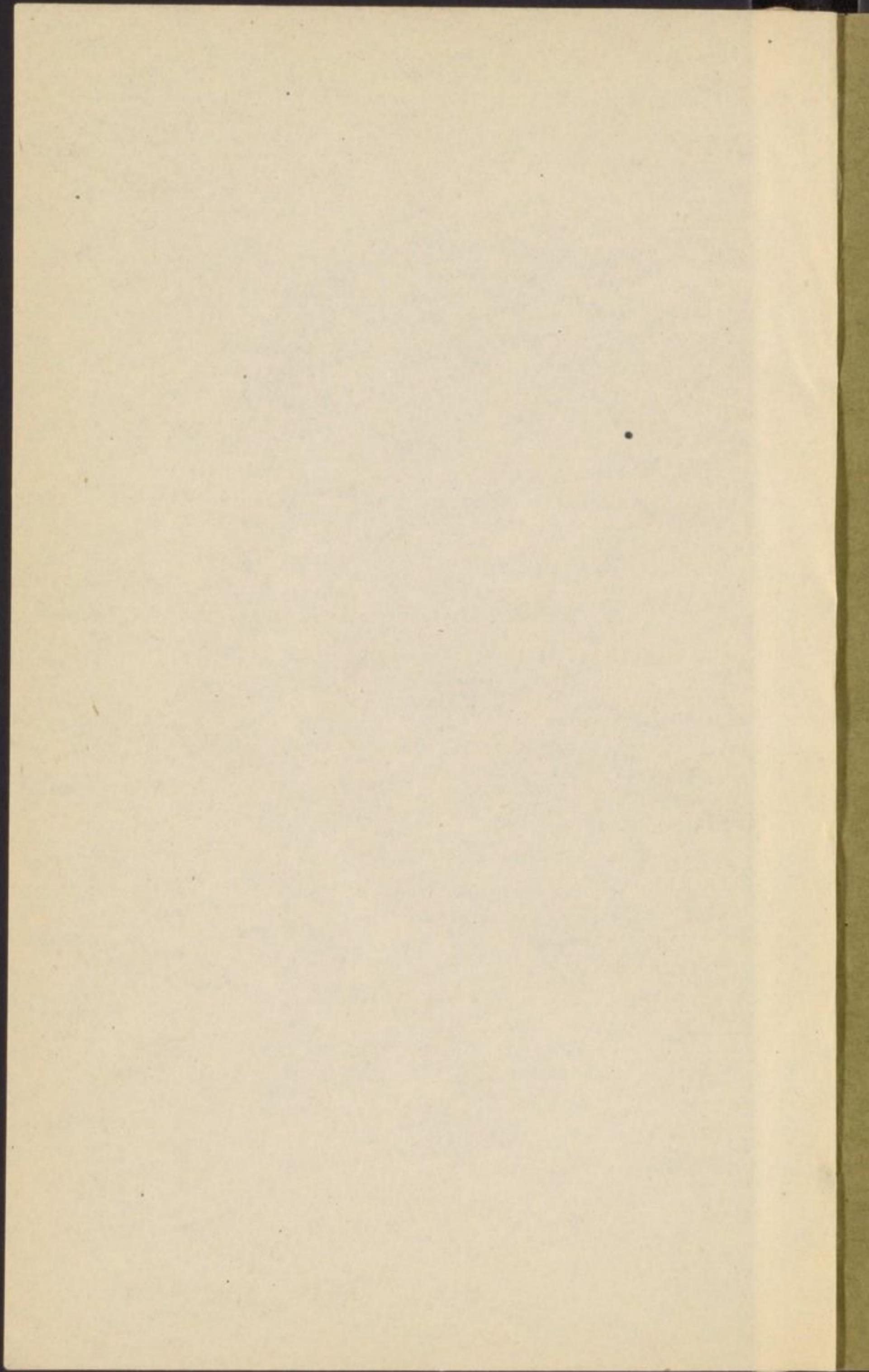
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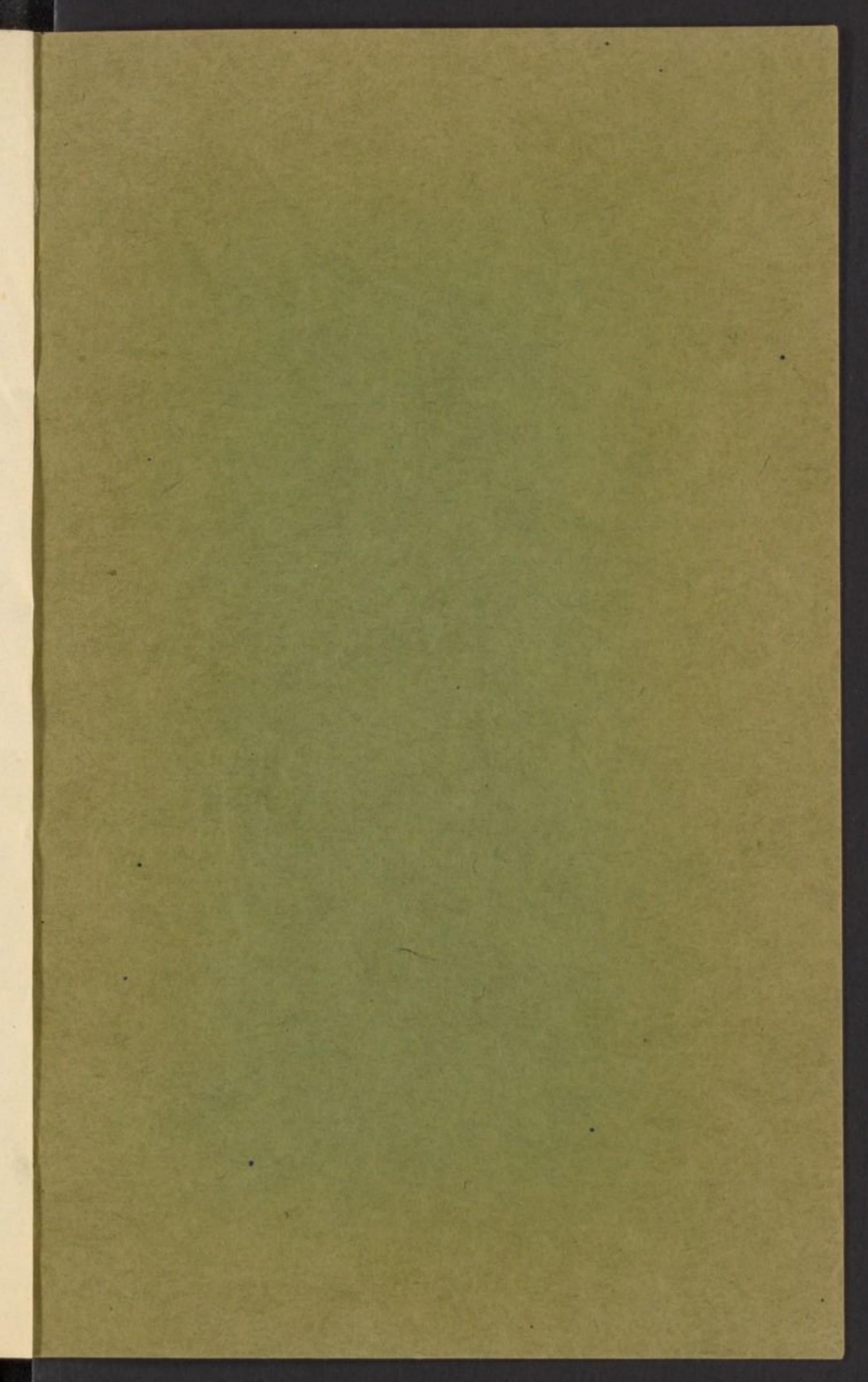
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