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Colonial Secretary's Office, 6th July, 1905.

THE GOVERNOR directs the publication, for general information, of the following report on the working of the Stamp Department during the year ended 31st March, 1905.

By command,

H. CLARENCE BOURNE, Colonial Secretary.

Stamp Office, 24th June, 1905.

SIR,

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Stamp Department for the Financial year ended 31st March, 1905.

2. The cash receipts for the year amounted to nineteen thousand three hundred and six pounds eighteen shillings and a penny half penny (£19,306 18s. 1½d.) being two thousand eight hundred and six pounds eighteen shillings and a penny half penny (£2,806 18s. 1½d.) more than the estimate of sixteen thousand five hundred (£16,500).

3. The annexed statement marked "A" shows the aggregate collections during 1904-05 to have been six hundred and eight pounds three shillings and eleven pence half penny (£608 3s. 11½d.) more than those of the previous year, and two thousand eight hundred and seven pounds seventeen shillings and five pence half penny (£2,807 17s. 5½d.) less than the average of the last three previous years.

4. The analysis of the cash receipts for stamps impressed at this office during the past year, compared with the two preceding years is shown in the annexed statement marked "B."

"A." Statement showing aggregate collections on account of Stamp Revenue during the past three years from 1902-1903 to 1904-1905.

"B." The analysis of the cash receipts for stamps impressed at this office during 1904-05 as compared with the two preceding years.

A.—Statement shewing aggregate collections on account of Stamp Revenue during the past three years 1902-03 to 1904-05.

Year.	Stamp Office, Kingston.	Sales by Country Distributors.	Composition paid by Colonial and Nova Scotia Banks on average circulation of notes.		Stamp Duty collected through R. M. Courts.	Subsidy from General Post Office.	Total.
			Circulation.	Duty Paid.			
1902-1903	£ s. d. 19,844 9 6	£ s. d. 1,100 2 9½	£ 174,451	£ s. d. 1,745 10 3	£ s. d. 618 0 3	£ 1,170	£ s. d. 24,478 2 9½
1903-1904	14,268 16 7	1,152 4 7	150,188	1,502 10 0	605 3 0	1,170	18,698 14 2
1904-1905	15,278 14 11	1,093 11 6½	131,518	1,315 3 8	449 8 0	1,170	19,306 18 1½

B.—The Analysis of the Cash Receipts for Stamps impressed at this office during 1904–1905, as compared with two preceding years.

Documents Stamped.	1902–1903.	1903–1904.	1904–1905.	Comparison between receipts of last two financial years.	
				Increase.	Decrease.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Conveyances ...	1,547 19 6	1,607 3 3	1,737 15 6	130 12 3	...
Diagrams ...	48 10 0	36 9 6	35 9 0	...	0 0 6
Mortgages ...	757 8 9	660 15 6	664 11 8	3 16 2	...
Leases ...	126 8 0	132 15 2	133 8 6	0 13 4	...
Settlements ...	343 2 7	49 15 0	57 0 0	7 5 0	...
Foreign Bills of Exchange ...	1,193 2 6	1,113 16 1	1,089 10 2	...	24 5 11
Inland Bills of Exchange ...	480 18 7	546 9 8	493 16 7	...	52 13 1
Foreign Bills of Lading ...	696 10 6	539 6 9	583 5 8	43 18 11	...
Coastwise Bills of Lading ...	385 14 6	403 17 0	352 6 9	...	51 10 3
Receipts ...	43 15 0	64 15 11	82 18 3	18 2 3	...
Supreme Court Fees ...	377 11 3	456 2 11	568 2 10	111 19 11	...
Probate Duty ...	1,791 16 3	944 6 10	2,310 3 7	1,365 16 9	...
Legacy Duty ...	3,897 17 5	2,069 11 2	890 10 1	...	1,179 1 1
Fire Policies ...	1,060 16 11	981 3 5	1,010 2 9	28 19 4	...
Life Policies ...	164 18 0	243 8 4	214 1 4	...	29 7 0
Marine Policies ...	79 19 11	110 3 6	111 1 10	0 18 4	...
Powers of Attorney ...	205 19 3	185 9 7	188 6 6	2 16 11	...
Marriage Licenses ...	50 0 0	35 0 0	45 0 0	10 0 0	...
Bank Cheque Books ...	1,131 5 10	1,133 17 1	1,127 0 1	...	6 17 0
Orders at Sight ...	7 12 8	6 6 5	...	...	6 6 5
Deeds not otherwise charged ...	120 9 0	160 10 6	102 17 6	...	57 13 0
Charter Parties ...	3 5 0	...	...	...	...
Articles of Copartnership ...	15 0 0	16 10 0	6 15 0	...	9 15 0
Bonds ...	94 1 6	28 14 0	23 8 0	...	5 6 0
Agreements ...	53 10 8	99 14 2	100 3 6	0 9 4	...
Satisfaction on Mortgages ...	13 19 0	23 18 0	11 2 0	...	12 16 0
Notarial Certificates ...	9 16 0	12 8 0	4 4 0	...	8 4 0
Paper Stamps ...	32 3 3	12 6 9	9 11 6	...	2 15 3
Articles of Clerkship ...	100 0 0	50 0 0	52 10 0	2 10 0	...
Assignment of Articles ...	...	...	...	...	...
Surveyors Notices ...	1 14 0	0 18 0	0 7 0	...	0 11 0
Patents of Invention ...	20 10 0	15 0 0	4 18 6	...	10 1 6
Registration of Debentures ...	20 4 0	26 0 0	19 9 6	...	6 10 6
Bank License ...	130 0 0	130 0 0	130 0 0	...	...
Admission of Barristers ...	15 0 0	...	...	...	...
Admission of Solicitors ...	400 0 0	300 0 0	830 0 0	530 0 0	...
Articles to Land Surveyor ...	...	1 0 0	...	...	1 0 0
Commission as Land Surveyors ...	...	60 0 0	...	...	60 0 0
Declaration Medical Law ...	1 0 0	...	2 0 0	2 0 0	...
Patents of Land ...	...	7 10 0	2 0 0	1 10 0	...
Certificates Medical Law ...	1 0 1	...	2 0 0	2 0 0	...
Public Notaries Commission ...	6 0 0	...	...	...	...
Letters of Preference ...	7 0 0	6 0 0	1 10 0	...	4 10 0
Certificates ...	70 19 0	51 11 6	70 2 6	18 11 0	...
Probate Papers ...	297 9 0	172 18 6	358 19 8	186 1 2	...
Transfer of Land ...	...	29 1 6	...	...	29 1 6
Accident Policies ...	0 12 0	2 14 6	0 8 0	...	2 6 6
Passports ...	11 10 0	19 0 0	19 0 0	...	...
Transfer of Shares ...	41 19 6	49 5 6	27 2 6	...	22 3 0
Blank Papers ...	21 4 6	37 7 6	9 9 11	...	27 7 7
Letters of Naturalization ...	16 0 0	40 0 0	28 0 0	...	12 0 0
Succession Duty ...	1,753 0 3	667 3 7	641 14 9	...	25 8 10
Memorandum of Association ...	112 10 0	...	...	...	...
Insurance Licenses ...	2,050 0 0	925 0 0	1,100 0 0	175 0 0	...
Transfers of Debentures on Sale ...	3 18 6	...	...	...	...
Voting Papers ...	2 12 8	...	...	...	...
Certificate of Shares ...	0 4 9	...	...	...	...
Award ...	1 10 0	...	...	...	...
Articles of Association ...	25 0 0	19 10 0	25 0 0	14 10 0	...
Proxies ...	...	0 1 6	...	...	0 1 6
Total ...	£19,844 9 6	£14,268 16 7	15,278 14 11	2,657 10 8	1,647 12 4

	1903-1904.			1904-1905.
Probate Duty	£944 6 10	...	...	£2,310 3 7
Legacy Duty	2,069 11 2	...	...	890 10 1
Succession Duty	667 3 7	...	...	641 14 9
	£3,681 1 7	...	...	£3,842 8 5

5. The above items are usually designated the Death Duties, and are derived from Real and Personal Property of deceased persons passing under Will, intestacy, or settlement. It will be noticed that the combined receipts are in excess of those of the previous year by nearly two hundred pounds.

6. In dealing separately, however, with each source from whence this Revenue is derived it affords me pleasure to point to the very marked improvement in the yield from Probate Duty. The increase does not come from any one Estate but is distributed generally throughout the year and is therefore on this account all the more satisfactory. A glance at the figures show that on this latter respect the collections have exceeded those of the previous year by nearly one hundred and fifty per cent. These facts when taken in connection with previous records show that Probate Duty is subject to considerable fluctuation and cannot be depended upon to yield anything like an average sum annually. The reason for this is obvious.

7. These remarks although applying specifically to Probate Duty are also applicable to each of the items that constitute Death Duties, and in consequence Revenue from those sources may yield considerably less or more than what was anticipated when an Estimate of probable Revenue is framed.

8. At the time of the Grant of Probate, etc. the receipts from Probate Duty depend on the value of the Personal Estate and although the Revenue may be much benefited at this stage and remain so if the Estate is not encumbered it does not necessarily follow that either Legacy or Succession Duty will produce equally good results. If they do it is hardly ever collectable in the same year in which the Grant of Probate or Administration is made, but may be so controlled by circumstances so as to necessitate payment being deferred until the following year and may even continue for years afterwards.

9. These general remarks will serve as an introduction to the subject of Legacy Duty, the yield from which, during the year under review is much below the sum collected in 1903-04. But it should be borne in mind that the receipts in that year were materially assisted to the extent of considerably over one thousand pounds from old Estates, and if allowance is made for these unexpected accretions, the falling off would not be in such marked contrast.

10. The decrease in receipts from Succession Duty is very inappreciable and when compared with the collections in 1903-04 a fall of about twenty five pounds is noticeable. Like Legacy Duty there are no means available of approximating with anything like exactitude what Revenue will be collected. The fact that Revenue from this source depends on the death of those possessing property of value, indicates at once the uncertainty of ascertaining within prescribed period what the receipts will amount to.

11. I do not think it is as well known as it should be that the Crown has a claim on property for unpaid Succession Duty. It would be therefore in the interest of intending purchasers or mortgagees to first ascertain if any claims exist, before finally concluding transactions in either of the above respects. It would be well however for successors to property under Deed of Settlement to pay Duty immediately on coming into possession and not leave the matter open until the stage above alluded to has been reached, for the law protects the interest of the Revenue by surcharges which increase in proportion to the length of time the duty remains owing and the liability then becomes a very heavy one.

12. Taking the aggregate revenue collected this financial year, and comparing it with the total receipts of the previous year, the indications are, that whilst the total receipts from all sources do not show a marked increase over those of 1903-04, I would draw attention to the fact that the increase in Stamp Duty on Bills of Lading denote increased exports; and those from Conveyances serve to show that transactions in the sale of property exceeded those of the past year and is no doubt significant of the fact, apart from other considerations, that investment in real estate is thought capable of yielding a fair return.

13. Both circumstances present, I submit, favourable outlooks in estimating the condition of the Colony, as shown from the point of view which the receipts from Stamp Duty afford.

14. The stock of adhesive, judicial and embossed stamps, postage, telegraph stamps, newspaper wrappers, postal orders and post cards on the 31st March, 1905 :—

Judicial Stamps	...	£8,791	0	0
Embossed "	...	94,514	15	0
Postage "	...	47,876	17	0
Telegraph "	...	3,517	10	0
Newspaper Wrappers	...	475	19	7
Postal Orders	...	8,675	0	0
Post Cards (single)	...	206	2	1½
" (reply)	...	44	3	0
Telegraph Books	...	639	0	0

£164,740 6 8½

15. I gladly place on record my appreciation of the services of those of the Staff, who have assisted me in the work of the office during the year under review.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

E. JORDON ANDREWS,

Stamp Commissioner.