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BASARABIA LA SFÂRȘITUL PRIMULUI RĂZBOI MONDIAL – BROȘURA DEPARTAMENTULUI ISTORIC AL FOREIGN OFFICE-ULUI (1919)

**Bessarabia at the End of World War I – The Handbook of the Historical
Department, Foreign Office (1919)**

Abstract: The paper reproduces the handbook on Bessarabia, the former Russian province united in 1918 with Romania, prepared by the Historical Department of the Foreign Office for the use of the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919. The handbook is an extremely important source for all aspects related to modern Bessarabia, from historical or geographical data to the social and economic realities in the province. The text proper is preceded by a short historical comment on the activity of the Historical Department of the Foreign Office in 1919-1920.

Keywords: Bessarabia, Romania, World War I, Historical Department, Foreign Office.

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Primul Război Mondial a însemnat, de-a lungul celor peste patru ani de lupte, o mobilizare fără precedent nu numai a resurselor militare și economice ale statelor implicate în conflict, ci și a resurselor lor intelectuale. Dincolo de savanții care au fost implicați activ în cercetarea cu aplicabilitate practică, ținând de dezvoltarea de noi tehnologii militare, Marele Război a necesitat și o contribuție masivă din partea istoricilor, ale căror opinii au servit fie pentru a justifica legitimitatea anumitor decizii politice și a le populariza în rândul publicului mai larg, fie, în calitate de consultanți, pentru a găsi soluții la complicatele probleme naționale și teritoriale cu care diplomații urmau să se confrunte.

Prin întinderea imperiului său colonial și prin statutul de mare putere cu interese globale, Marea Britanie avea nevoie să câștige nu numai războiul, ci și pacea. Cum viitoarele negocieri de pace anunțau schimbări majore la nivel mondial, iar diplomații de carieră se confruntau cu probleme de o mare complexitate, ecuații în care aspirații naționale și pretenții teritoriale se bazau pe motivații istorice sau pe rațiuni economice, apelul la istorici a fost unul natural. În primăvara anului 1917,

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George Walter Prothero¹, reputat istoric britanic, a acceptat oferta de a colabora cu autoritățile londoneze și a coordona elaborarea unor broșuri pentru uzul Foreign Office-ului. Lua astfel naștere Secția Istorică a Departamentului de Stat, a cărei misiune era de „a furniza delegaților britanici la conferința de pace informații în cea mai convenabilă formă – geografică, economică, istorică, socială, religioasă și politică – cu privire la diferitele țări, provincii, insule etc., cu care se puteau confrunta”². În afara acestor lucrări abordate într-o dimensiune teritorial-statală, au fost pregătite și volume pe probleme generale de natură istorică, pe teme ce puteau avea relevanță la încheierea tratatelor de pace (Chestiunea Orientală, istoria Poloniei, istoria arabilor etc.).

Lucrările au fost realizate cu contribuția unor valoroși istorici britanici, care, în cele mai multe cazuri, au acceptat să colaboreze cu Departamentul de Stat fără vreun fel de remunerație. La aspectele geografice s-a beneficiat de sprijinul Diviziei de Informații a Amiralității – Intelligence Division (Naval Staff) of the Admiralty, iar la cele economice de informațiile de la War Trade Intelligence Department. O parte a hărților ce însoțesc volumele au fost oferite de numita divizie a Amiralității, iar altele au fost furnizate de Secția Geografică a Statului Major al Departamentului de Război – Geographical Section of the General Staff (Military Intelligence Division) of the War Office³.

Au fost redactate circa 180 de broșuri⁴, cercetări istorice serioase, ce au fost publicate și pentru uzul publicului larg la sfârșitul conferinței de pace. Utilitatea lor în cadrul negocierilor de pace a fost extrem de mare, profesorul J. P. Whitney declarând că, la Paris, unele dintre volume „schimbaseră complet aspectul situației”⁵. Lucrările au fost bine primite și de lumea academică⁶, prin numărul și structura lor ele reprezentând o veritabilă radiografie a lumii la sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial. Patru broșuri sunt de interes pentru istoria noastră: *Rumania* (parte din *The Balkan States*, partea a II-a), *Bessarabia, Bukovina, Transylvania and the Banat*, ultimele trei pregătite în cadrul prezentării pe provincii a imperiilor ce se dezintegraseră la sfârșitul conflictului. Lucrările au o structură unitară, constând din patru capitole mari: 1. Geografia fizică și politică (așezare fizică și frontiere, suprafață, coastă, sistem hidrografic, climă, condiții sanitare, rasă și limbă, populație), 2. Istoria politică (prezentată cronologic), 3. Situația socială și politică (religia, aspecte politice, educația), 4. Situația economică (mijloacele de comunicație, industria și agricultura, comerțul, finanțele).

¹ W. Crawley, *Sir George Prothero and his Circle: the Prothero Lecture*, în „Transactions of the Royal Society”, fifth series, vol. 20, 1970, p. 124.

² G. W. Prothero, *Editorial Note*, în introducerea *Peace Handbooks*, issued by the Historical Section of the Foreign Office, vol. IV, *The Balkan States*.

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ M. L. Dockrill, Zara Steiner, *The Foreign Office at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919*, în „The International History Review”, vol. 2, nr. 1, ianuarie 1980, p. 56.

⁵ W. Crawley, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁶ M.I.N., *Handbooks of the Historical Section, Foreign Office: The Near East: Review*, în „The Geographical Journal”, vol. 56, nr. 4, octombrie 1920, pp. 314-316.

Reproducem, în paginile ce urmează, volumul asupra Basarabiei, după exemplarul păstrat la The National Archives, Foreign Office: Peace Conference of 1919 to 1920: Handbooks, No. 59 (FO 373/3/15).

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/1/ 1. GEOGRAPHY PHYSICAL AND POLITICAL

(1) POSITION AND FRONTIERS

Bessarabia, which occupies the extreme south-western corner of European Russia, and covers an area of 17,614 square miles, lies between 45° 14' and 48° 38' north latitude and 26° 2' and 30° 30' east longitude. The boundaries are almost entirely natural. On the south-east is the Black Sea; on the east and north Bessarabia is separated by the Dniester from the Russian Governments of Kherson and Podolia and from the south-eastern extremity of Austrian Galicia. In the north-west the country marches for a short distance with the Bukovina, but the western boundary starting from a point near Nowosselizy, follows the course of the Pruth as far as the confluence of this river with the Danube in the neighbourhood of Reni. The Danube itself and the most northerly (Kiliya) arm of its delta then form the short southern boundary.

(2) SURFACE, COAST, AND RIVER SYSTEM

Surface

Bessarabia as a whole presents an undulating surface sloping gradually from north-west to south-/2/east. Groups of well-wooded hills occur both in the north and centre, but the south consists of level steppes.

The northern heights, or Khotin Hills, are a continuation of the Carpathians, and are intersected by a series of parallel river valleys running from north-west to south-east. The main ridge, which serves as the watershed between the Dniester and the Pruth, runs in an easterly direction, rising to a height of 1,540 ft. near Sekuryany, this being the highest elevation in Bessarabia. South of Sekuryany the hills split up into three branches. The main branch continues at about the same height along the right bank of the Dniester. West of this ridge is a further series of hills extending in a south-easterly direction and forming the watershed between various tributaries of the Dniester and the Pruth; while still further west is a third range of hills, running in a southerly direction along the right bank of the Chugura.

Central Bessarabia, *i.e.*, the southern half of the district of Byeltsy and the districts of Orgyeev and Kishinev, is occupied by a thickly wooded series of hills belonging to the Jassy-Orgyeev system. These hills are divided into two branches, of which the higher eastern branch follows the valleys of the rivers Ikel and Byk and slopes down towards the right bank of the Dniester, while the lower western branch is split up into a series of longitudinal hills which finally merge into the Budzhak steppes. These latter hills are the source of numerous small rivers which discharge into the salt lakes along the Black Sea coast.

Southwards from about the latitude of Kishinev there are no heights over 1,120 ft., and the surface becomes gradually lower and less watered, with fewer trees. South of the Wall of Trajan lie the Budzhak steppes, where the forests cease and the elevation falls below 800 ft., gradually decreasing still further until the Black Sea coast is reached.

/3/ Coast

The coast-line is very short, extending from the mouth of the Kiliya arm of the Danube to the outlet of the Dniester, and is remarkable for its series of *limans*. These are inlets at the mouth of a river, separated from the sea by a narrow strip of alluvial land called

peresyp. From many of them salt is obtained. The water is shallow, especially in the northern part of the Dniester *liman*, which shows signs of being blocked by deposits from the river.

River System

There are three large rivers in Bessarabia, the Dniester, the Pruth, and the Danube.

The *Dniester*, from the Bessarabian frontier to its *liman* on the Black Sea shore, into which it falls by several mouths, has a length of some 594 miles (900 versts). As far as Bendery the Bessarabian bank is high, steep, and craggy, and is in most places covered with trees; but south of this point the banks become lower and more marshy. The current, even at low water, is decidedly rapid, and it is only in the lower part of the river that there are wide stretches of evenly flowing water. The average breadth is about 630 ft., and the average depth varies from 10 ½ to 21 ft. At flood-time in February or March, and also in June, the water often rises 20 ft. or more, and causes great devastation. The chief interruption to navigation is caused by the Yampol Rapids, beyond which large steamers cannot pass, but a natural channel on the left and an artificial one on the right of the falls render navigation possible for light river craft. In recent years improvements have been made in the regulation of the river, and the traffic, which taps regions of great productiveness, especially in cereals, timber, and fruit, has noticeably increased. The chief tributaries of the Dniester within Bessarabia are the /4/ Reut, Ikel, Byk, and Bolna, none of which is of much value for navigation.

The *Pruth* forms for 462 miles the boundary line between Bessarabia and Rumania. In its upper course it has the character of a swift mountain stream, the average depth varying between 4 and 7 ft. It has a large number of small tributaries, mostly on the left bank. The river is used for rafting wood; there are a few boats in use at the lower end, and Nyemtseny and Leovo are loading stations for corn and other cereals.

The left bank of the *Danube* forms the western part of the southern boundary of Bessarabia. The river flows in a single channel with a great volume of water as far as the Izmail Chatal (fork), where it divides into three main branches, composing a vast delta and a system of islands which are the remnants of a vanished *liman*. Bessarabia is touched directly only by the Kiliya branch, which flows north-east past the towns of Izmail and Kiliya. The enormous deposits brought down by this branch have caused the south-eastern coast line of Bessarabia to advance, while the sea here has become shallower.

(3) CLIMATE

The northern districts of Bessarabia are sensibly affected by the neighbourhood of the Carpathian Mountains, which form a barrier against cold winds, and make this region one of the most favoured as regards climate in the whole of Russia. The conditions are highly favourable to agriculture. The winter is milder than in most parts of European Russia and the summer warmer, and the prevailing winds are from the north-west. The mean annual temperature at Kishinev is 49.6° F. (9.8° C), the mean temperatures for January and July being 25.7° F. (– 3.5° C.) and 72.3° F. (22.4° C.) respectively. The rainfall averages 18.58 inches (472 mm.) for the year, of which 5.5 inches (140 mm.) fall in the months of June and July.

/5/ In the country south of Trajan's Wall, which is known as the Budzhak steppes, the climate is continental, particularly in the low-lying coastal districts. Climatic variations are extremely sudden, and are generally due to violent north or east winds. The atmosphere is dry, and the rainfall insufficient, while artificial ponds have constantly to be constructed in order to obtain a sufficient water supply.

(4) SANITARY CONDITIONS

Sanitation is in the same backward condition as in the Ukraine, being particularly bad in the towns. The medical service is quite inadequate, and official discouragement of private enterprise in matters concerning health has been very common.

(5) RACE AND LANGUAGE

The population of Bessarabia is extremely mixed, and the exact proportions of the various races who inhabit the country are very hard to determine. The chief difficulty lies in the fact that the figures of the official Russian census, taken in 1897, differ very materially from other Russian statistics of 1891 (see tables below). The 1897 census, however, is generally accepted as accurate, and the following account of the various racial elements in Bessarabia is based upon its conclusions.

The *Moldavians* (Rumanians), whatever figures be accepted, form without a doubt the largest element in the population. The census of 1897 puts them at 47.6 per cent of the whole, and the 1891 figures at 66 per cent. Rumanian nationalists naturally prefer the latter proportion – indeed, even higher estimates have been put forward, but these are certainly much exaggerated.

North of a line drawn between Reni on the Danube and Bendery on the Dniester, the population is overwhelmingly Moldavian, with the exception of that of the towns (which contain large numbers of Jews) and the district of Khotin in the extreme north. South of this line the Moldavians do not form a majority anywhere except in the regions to the south and south-east of Bendery.

The Moldavians are a dark-haired race of middle height and thick-set muscular physique. Their language is Rumanian, with a considerable admixture of Slavonic words.

The northern *Little Russians* are massed in the north of Bessarabia, particularly in the district of Khotin and (northern) Byeltsy and Soroki; these have occupied their land for centuries and are closely connected with the Galician Ruthenians. They are known by various names, e.g., Rusins, Rusnyaks, Galicians, and Railyane. The rest of the Little Russians entered Bessarabia at a much later date, during the period of political colonization in the last century. They came mostly from the Governments on the Dniester and Dnieper, and include the Cossack element in Bessarabia. They form the great majority in the district of Khotin, and occupy most of the villages in the Dniester valley as far south as Soroki. They also have a majority (largely composed of Cossacks) in the district of Akkerman. All Little Russians speak their own language.

Great Russians are conspicuously represented by officials, important members of the municipal population, soldiers, and large landowners. There are also large numbers of Great Russian peasants, mostly Old Believers (*Raskolniki*). These *Raskolniki* form a separate society of their own, consisting of colonies in the Khotin, Soroki, Orgyeev, and Akkerman districts.

The *Jews* predominate in nearly all the towns, except in the districts of Akkerman, Izmail, and Bendery. Commerce and industry are very largely in their hands. With the exception of some wealthy landowners and a few Greeks and Germans, they alone possess capital, and little business can be conducted except through their medium.

The *Germans* came to the Budzhak steppes from Württemberg in 1814, and both sides of the Kundak lake were colonized by them then under very favourable conditions. Since that date there has been a more or less regular influx of German colonists. Their main stronghold is still the district of Akkerman, where they occupy a large part of the northwest, centre and south-west.

Bulgarians and Gagauzi (Turkish-speaking people, whose descent was mainly Bulgarian) have at various times fled from Turkish rule to southern Bessarabia. The Gagauzi live chiefly on the left shore of the Yalpukh lake and to the north of it. Bulgarians are to be found in the south-west of the district of Akkerman and to the south-east of Bolgrad, in the Izmail district. Those who came from Macedonia and Rumelia speak Bulgarian; those from the Dobruja speak Turkish.

There are a certain number of other peoples in Bessarabia, of whom the chief are the following:

The *Poles*, consisting chiefly of landlords and officials, with some poorer settlers, who live in the district of Khotin and some of the larger towns in the district of Soroki. They speak Polish and Russian.

The *Greeks*, who live mostly in the ports of Reni and Izmail and in villages along the lower course of the Pruth; the *Gypsies*, who are scattered all over the country; the *Albanians*, of whom there are a few in the district of Izmail; and the *Armenians*, who have the same rights as other subjects. They are found mainly in the districts of Khotin, Kishinev, and Byeltsy; they are mostly engaged in business, and speak Armenian.

The numbers and distribution of the various elements of the population are shown in the accompanying tables.

/8/ (i) According to the 1897 census, the following were the figures for the principal nationalities by districts:

District	Total	Moldavians	Little Russians	Great Russians	Jews	Germans	Bulgars
Khotin	307,532	73,303 (23.8 per cent)	163,738 (53.2 per cent)	19,361 (6.3 per cent)	47,950 (15.6 per cent)	-	-
Soroki	218,861	138,351 (63.2 per cent)	35,094 (16 per cent)	10,678 (4.9 per cent)	31,162 (14.2 per cent)	-	-
Byeltsy	211,448	140,201 (66.3 per cent)	24,067 (11.3 per cent)	14,278 (6.8 per cent)	27,252 (12.9 per cent)	2,145 (1 per cent)	-
Kishinev	279,657	175,926 (62.9 per cent)	5,196 (1.9 per cent)	33,425 (11.9 per cent)	54,486 (19.5 per cent)	2,353 (0.9 per cent)	-
Orgyeev	213,478	166,218 (77.8 per cent)	11,887 (5.6 per cent)	5,708 (2.7 per cent)	26,680 (12.5 per cent)	-	-
Bendery	194,915	87,984 (45.1 per cent)	21,048 (10.8 per cent)	18,622 (9.5 per cent)	16,643 (8.6 per cent)	5,613 (3 per cent)	14,833 (7.6 per cent)
Akkerman	265,247	43,441 (16.3 per cent)	70,797 (26.7 per cent)	25,661 (6.6 per cent)	12,280 (4.6 per cent)	43,389 (16.3 per cent)	56,541 (21.3 per cent)
Izmail	244,274	95,495 (39.1 per cent)	47,871 (19.5 per cent)	30,502 (12.5 per cent)	11,715 (4.8 per cent)	4,781 (1.9 per cent)	30,587 (12.5 per cent)
Bessarabia	1,935,412 ⁷	920,919 (47.6 per cent)	379,698 (19.6 per cent)	158,235 (8.1 per cent)	228,168 (11.8 per cent)	58,281 (3.1 per cent)	101,961 (5.2 per cent)

⁷ There is a discrepancy of 88,150 between this total and that obtained by adding together the figures given for the various nationalities, caused by the omission of the smaller peoples alluded to on p. 7.

/9/ (ii) Draghicesco, a Russian senator, writing in 1918, quotes the distribution by districts as follows, according to the Russian 1891 statistics:

District	Moldavians Per cent	Russians Per cent	Others Per cent
Khotin	80	16.5	3.5
Soroki	82	3	15
Byeltsy	87	8	5
Kishinev	80	10	10
Orgyeev	65	15	15
Bendery	60	22	18
Akkerman	40	35	25
Izmail	34	23.5	42.3
Bessarabia	66	15.6	19.4

The latter figures are of course favourable to the Moldavians, but there are two noticeable exceptions, viz., the districts of Orgyeev and Izmail. The percentages for the Russians are in general accordance with the 1897 percentages in the case of the districts of Akkerman, Bendery, and Kishinev; the 1891 percentage is much higher for the district of Orgyeev; in the case of other districts, and especially of that of Khotin, it is lower. The 1891 percentages for "others" is higher than those of the 1897 census only in the case of the districts of Izmail and Orgyeev; there is a very large difference for the districts of Akkerman, Khotin, and Byeltsy; in the case of the two last the Jews may have been counted in with the Rumanians. As between the Moldavians and Russians, it is clear that the difference between the two sets of figures for the district of Khotin is the crux of the matter.

(6) POPULATION

Distribution and Density

The official Russian estimate of the total population of Bessarabia on January 1st, 1910, was 2,441,000 (as compared with the 1897 census total of 1,935,412), /10/ and on January 1st, 1915, was 2,686,600, or 152 per square mile.

The population and density per district according to the estimate in 1912 was as follows:

District	Population		Density per Square Verst (0.44 sq. mile)
	Total	Town	
Kishinev	348,100	123,100	106.4
Akkerman	363,000	38,700	51.6
Bendery	260,700	39,500	48.3
Byeltsy	273,900	20,600	56.2
Izmail	333,200	91,800	45.6
Orgyeev	277,200	18,200	76.3
Soroki	286,800	19,500	71.5
Khotin	396,000	22,100	113.1
Total	2,538,900	373,500	63.4

From these figures it can be seen that the population is densest in the districts of Khotin, Kishinev, and Orgyey, *i.e.*, that it is mainly an agricultural population and not one dependent on the industry in towns.

Rumanian estimates in 1916 put the population at about 3,000,000, including about 2,000,000 Moldavians, 320,000 Little Russians, and 270,000 Jews. Presuming that Moldavians and Little Russians had maintained something like the proportions assigned to them in 1897, they would now have a population of about 1,428,000 and 588,000 respectively. All recent figures, however, can only be regarded as approximate.

Towns

The chief towns are the capitals of the eight administrative districts and bear the same names: Khotin, Soroki, Byeltsy, Orgyeyev, Kishinev (which is also the capital of the whole Government), Bendery, Izmail, and Akkerman.

/11/ Movement

According to the official Russian Statistical Annual of 1914, there were in that year 102,654 births, 77,431 deaths, and 20,918 marriages; the percentage per 1,000 of births was 40.4, of deaths 30.5, of marriages 8.2; the net increase per 1,000 was 9.9.

The same publication gave the following figures of emigration for the period 1909-13 and for the year 1914:

Emigrants			Returned Emigrants		
Colonists	Eclaireurs ⁸	Total	Colonists	Eclaireurs	Total
1909-1913					
5,935	749	6,684	3,039	630	3,669
1914					
5,500	1,864	7,364	835	1,476	2,311

Recently emigration has been comparatively steady, consisting chiefly of peasants who migrate to South Russia and Siberia. After the 1905 massacre of the Jews at Kishinev there was a great exodus of Jews to America; and they still migrate annually there, though in smaller numbers.

Immigration consists very largely of Russians, many of whom occupy official or military positions, while others (particularly Little Russians) come to Bessarabia seasonally to find employment in the various branches of agriculture. There has been considerable German activity in South Bessarabia since the end of last century,

/12/ II. POLITICAL HISTORY **CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY**

106 AD. Trajan's Conquest of Dacia.

Second-Sixth Centuries. Invasions of Goths, Huns, Slavs, &c.

Fourteenth Century. Penetration of Rumanians.

1457-1504 Stephen the Great of Moldavia annexes Bessarabia.

1520-1566 Sultan Suleiman. Turks annex South Bessarabia (the Bujak).

1739, 1769. 1787, 1806 Russians occupy Bessarabia.

1812 Treaty of Bucarest. Bessarabia annexed by Russia.

⁸ These *êclaireurs* (*khodaki*) are pioneer emigrants, generally unauthorised by the Government, who are sent by villagers to report on the prospects of the new land.

- 1856 Treaty of Paris. South Bessarabia assigned to Moldavia.
- 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War.
- 1878 Treaty of Berlin. Bessarabia restored to Russia.
- 1905-12 Nationalist agitation in Bessarabia.
- 1916 (Aug. 27) Rumania joins the Entente.
- 1917 (Mar.) Russian Revolution.
- 1917 (May) National Moldavian Committee established in Bessarabia.
- 1917 (Dec. 15) Independence of Moldavian Republic proclaimed.

(1) INTRODUCTION. VARIOUS INVASIONS

The name Bessarabia, or Basarabia (in its Rumanian form), links the history of the province with that of the neighbouring country of Wallachia, across the Danube, for it is derived from that of the Basarab dynasty, which, at the end of the thirteenth century, formed out of the numerous small principalities of the Carpathians the first nucleus of the Wallachian State.

The present use of the word Bessarabia is in some sense a misnomer. The name Basarabia was applied to all the dominions of the Basarab princes on both sides of the Danube, but the only portion of modern Bess-/13/arabia which they incorporated in their dominion was the south-eastern corner – roughly, those parts which were assigned to Moldavia in 1856 and seized by Russia once again in 1878. The original inhabitants, Scythians and subsequently Getae, were presumably akin to the stocks that peopled the countries on the right bank of the Danube. Like them, they formed part of the Dacian State which, in the first century B.C., achieved a considerable degree of organisation under King Burebista. In the reign of Augustus the coastal region of Bessarabia became attached to the Roman Empire, and various Roman colonies were formed there, in many cases on sites which dated back to the Greek colonies of four or five hundred years earlier. Trajan's conquest of Dacia at the beginning of the second century was not followed by the annexation of Bessarabia, but Roman influence made itself felt there.

In the second century began the invasions of the Goths, who, though thrown back by strong Emperors like Constantine the Great, succeeded in giving a new character to the country. They, in their turn, were followed by the Huns at the end of the fourth century, and the name of "Hunivara" was then loosely applied to Bessarabia.

In the sixth century began the invasions of the Slavs, who have left permanent traces both on the racial character and the nomenclature of the population.

(2) RUMANIAN PENETRATION.

TURKISH AND RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS

From the end of the sixth till the thirteenth century Bessarabia, even more than the neighbouring countries, practically disappears from history under the inundations of barbarian invasions. In turn, Lombards, Avars, Bulgars, Magyars, Kumans, and, finally, Tartar hordes devastated and to some extent repopulated the country. Pisan and Genoese colonists occupied points on the coast, and during the early Middle Ages formed the one nucleus of civilisation in Bessarabia.

/14/ In the fourteenth century began a new penetration of the country by Rumanian elements from the northwest. The Moldavian prince, Stephen the Great (1457-1504), gradually incorporated in his dominions practically the whole of modern Bessarabia. The name Bessarabia, however, was kept for the southern portion, while the rest of the country was called, without distinction, Moldavia. Bessarabia, in the narrow sense of the word, was again the first part of the province to pass once more under foreign rule. Even before the

death of Stephen the Great, the Turks had succeeded in seizing its two chief ports, Kiliya and Cetatea-Alba, to the latter of which they gave the name "Akkerman" ("White City" – a literal translation). The Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent definitely added Southern Bessarabia to his dominions and formed out of the conquered territory the two Sanjaks of Akkerman and Izmail, so confirming the division of the southern part of the province from the rest of it – a division which has been suggested by geography, and which, to some extent, conforms to the modern distribution of races, but is, on the other hand, prejudicial to the economic development of the land.

The century 1594-1696 was a gloomy time in the history of the province. Cossack, Polish, and Turkish invasions in turn laid it waste and prevented its natural development. 1696 marks the beginning of Russian expansion towards the south under Peter the Great. The fate of the province for the next two centuries largely depended on the fluctuations in Russo-Turkish relations. In 1739, for instance, the Russian armies occupied Northern Bessarabia on their way to Moldavia, only to abandon it at the Treaty of Belgrade. In 1769, again, the armies of Catherine the Great occupied Bessarabia, but lost it by the Peace of Kuchuk Kainarji. A third war in 1787 led to the occupation of the bulk of the province by the Russian armies under Suvarov. The Peace of Jassy (Iași) in 1792 brought the Russian frontiers permanently as far as the Dniester. In 1806 a new war broke out /15/ between Russia and Turkey. The troops of General Michelson occupied Bessarabia, and the Russian armies pushed on into Moldavia proper, the annexation of the whole of which the Russian Government hoped to achieve. The imminence of war with Napoleon, however, forced Alexander I to content himself with less than he had hoped for. He hurriedly concluded, on May 28, 1812, the Treaty of Bucarest, by which Moldavia was divided into two parts, and the eastern part, the whole of what is now known as Bessarabia, passed under the Russian Crown.

(3) RUSSIAN RULE

That date is the most important in the history of Bessarabia. The new province was at first assured of special conditions. The population was promised exemption from military service and freedom from taxation for three years. Kishinev (Chisinau) was chosen as the capital of the country, which was allowed a Governor of Rumanian race. A special Exarch for the Church was nominated by the Holy Synod at Moscow. On the other hand, a strong army of occupation held the country. Russian seminaries and peasant schools were founded, and Bessarabia was separated from contact with the Rumanian countries across the Pruth. Southern Bessarabia – the Budzhak, as the Turks had called it – where the population, owing to the many vicissitudes of its history, was already of a varied character, was still further denationalised. Colonists of various nations were settled or allowed to settle there. Lipovans and other Russian heretics were permitted to make their homes there, and Bulgars escaping from oppression were welcomed. Above all, considerable colonies of Germans were called in to aid the economic development of what was in parts a mere wilderness.

Before long, however, the special privileges, of which the Tsar had at first assured his new subjects, were withdrawn, and a period of complete Russification set in. The upper classes, the boyars, offered little effective protest to this. They learnt to look to Petrograd rather than to Jassy, and before long had become completely enamoured of Russian ways and out of sympathy with the old nationalist feeling of the province.

The trade of Bessarabia passed rapidly into the hands of the Jews, Germans, Bulgars, Greeks, and Armenians. The peasant population, however (the great majority), remained untouched. Left to themselves, they went on living their old life, speaking their Rumanian dialect, and preserving their national customs. The Tsarist horror of popular

education saved them from the compulsory Russification they would have undergone had they attended the few schools set up by the Russian authorities, and they are to-day what they have always been – uninterested (like most peasants) in questions of higher politics.

(4) BESSARABIA REUNITED WITH MOLDAVIA

As a result of the Crimean War the territorial arrangements made by the Peace of Bucarest were in part modified. The victorious allies imposed on Russia the surrender of part of the province. By Article 20 of the Treaty of Paris the new frontier between Russia and Moldavia returned to Moldavia a great part of the Budzhak, roughly all the territory to the south of a line drawn from Akkerman to Bolgrad, and to the west of a line drawn from Bolgrad to Catamori on the Pruth. This partial reversal of the arrangement of the Treaty of Bucarest was hailed with delight by Rumanians, though, in fact, the part of Bessarabia returned to Rumania was that which, owing to the devastations of former times and the recent influx of foreign colonists, had come to be racially the least Rumanian part of the whole province. But for the next twenty-two years Rumania had the satisfaction of possessing at least a part of its old Bessarabian dominions.

/17/ (5) RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

BESSARABIA RESTORED TO RUSSIA

The Russian Government, however, waited only for a favourable opportunity of upsetting the settlement made by the Treaty of Paris. Just as in 1871 it succeeded in securing a complete revision of the Black Sea clauses of that Treaty, so a few years later it succeeded in reversing the decision about Bessarabia. Already in September of 1876 the prospect of war between Russia and Turkey loomed nearer; and, in view of the fact that a passage for Russian troops through Rumanian territory would be necessary, the question of Russo-Rumanian relations at once became an urgent one. The Rumanian Prime Minister, Bratianu (father of the present leader of the Liberal party) paid a visit to Alexander II at Livadia, and discussed the question. Already from this conversation Bratianu gathered that Russian policy was aiming at the retrocession of the three districts of Bessarabia lost in 1856. This was no pleasant prospect for Rumania, even if she were to be recompensed with a part or all of the undeveloped province of Dobruja. But it was clear to Bratianu that, whether he liked it or not, the Russian Government was determined on war with Turkey and on a passage for its troops through Rumania. He looked in vain to the other Powers of Europe for any support for Rumania, and was ultimately forced to accommodate himself to the idea of allowing the Russian troops to pass through. Nor was any help to be found in Turkey, who, under cover of constitutional reform, was seeking to reduce the Rumanian principality to the level of a mere “privileged province.” Lest worse should befall, the Rumanian Government hastened to make terms with Russia. One clause of the Treaty concluded on April 16, 1877, provided for the “integrity” of Rumanian territory. Unfortunately, as the Rumanian Government subsequently found, Russia did not consider that this /18/ promise extended to the Bessarabian possessions of Rumania.

On April 24 Russia declared war on Turkey, and Russian troops entered Rumanian territory. The Rumanian army for the time being was refused the privilege of cooperating as an allied force with the Russians, who were confident of being able to achieve their ends unaided. By the beginning of July, moreover, the Rumanian Government were already aware of the fact that Russia had included the re-annexation of Southern Bessarabia as one of its war aims. By the end of the month the non-success of the Russian advance compelled the Russian Government to appeal for the Rumanian assistance that it had hitherto despised, and by the first week of August the Rumanian army invaded Bulgaria. In the course of operations

which followed, especially at Plevna, Russia's new Ally contributed greatly to the success of the offensive. By the end of the year the Russian troops were in front of Constantinople; and on January 31, 1878, Turkey was forced to conclude the humiliating peace of San Stefano.

In return for her assistance Rumania looked for some satisfaction by Russia of her demands, which included the occupation of the Danube fortresses, the possession of the delta, and a compensation of about £4.000.000. All these demands were ignored. Instead, the Rumanian agent in Petrograd was for the first time officially made acquainted with the fact that the retrocession of Southern Bessarabia was demanded as a matter of "Russian prestige" and "political necessity." In return compensations in Dobruja were offered to Rumania. In vain the Rumanian Government strongly protested risking the occupation of the principality by Russian troops. Once again Bratianu turned to the Western Powers for sympathy and aid, but found everywhere an unwillingness to offend Russia. On June 13 the Congress of Berlin met, and on July 13 its resolutions were summed up in the famous Treaty of that name. To this /19/ Congress the Rumanian delegates, Bratianu and Cogalniceanu, were admitted only in an inforamatory capacity, and were allowed to take part neither in the discussions nor in the resolutions of the Congress. There was, therefore, no redress for Rumanian complaints. Russia's demands for the retrocession of Southern Bessarabia were accepted; and Rumania was forced to agree to the acceptance, as compensation, of the province of Dobruja as far south as a line drawn east from Silistra, touching the Black Sea just south of Mangalia. This was very reluctantly agreed to by the Rumanian Parliament, the wording of whose resolution ran: "Compelled thereto by the decisions of the Great Powers and in order to raise no hindrance to the ratification of peace, the Chamber empowers the Government to submit itself to the united will of Europe by withdrawing from Bessarabia its civil and military authorities and taking possession of Dobruja, the Danube delta, and the Serpents' Island." The Rumanian withdrawal from Bessarabia and occupation of Dobruja followed almost at once, since the Berlin Congress had made its recognition of Rumanian independence contingent upon the cession of Bessarabia.

(6) RUSSIAN RULE. CAUSES OF DISSATISFACTION

Such was the fateful decision of the Congress of Berlin, which, if it gave the Russian Government the satisfaction of extending its frontiers to the Danube, definitely confirmed the differences which, owing to history, already existed between the two nations. It was not so much the loss of territory (for, after all, it was not Bessarabia as a whole but merely a small portion of it, and that the least Rumanian part of the whole province, that Rumania was compelled to cede) as the fact that national sentiment had been outraged and that the Russian Government had unfortunately played into the hands of those Russophobes in Rumania who maintained that Russia was never to /20/ be trusted. The seizure of Bessarabia accounted in no small measure for the complete reversal of Rumania's policy and the conclusion in 1883 of the secret Treaty of Alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary.

From 1878 to 1905 Bessarabia relapsed into a mere "Government" of Russia. National feeling here, as distinguished from the Rumanian districts of Hungary, had no opportunity and no necessity for manifesting itself. The Russian autocracy was too unenlightened or too cunning to force the Rumanians of Bessarabia into a racial and cultural struggle with their non-Rumanian rulers. Beyond a few secondary schools and ecclesiastical establishments there were no means of education available for the population of the province, and consequently there was no medium for maintaining the intellectual life necessary for the intelligent conduct of any nationalist movement. The aristocracy of the province had, during the nineteenth century, succumbed to the allurements of Court and official life in Petrograd and Moscow. From Bessarabia were, in fact, recruited some of the

most ardent supporters of reaction in Russia – men of the type of Krupenski and Purishkyevich. For the peasants as a whole politics were an affair of little interest. But, in fact, they were neither worse nor better off than men of their class throughout the Russian Empire; and till the new current introduced by the Revolution of 1905 had made its way into Bessarabia, the Bessarabian question may be said to have been stifled, or at least dormant.

The Revolution of 1905 for the first time stirred the dead-weight of lethargy which had settled over Bessarabia. A few newspapers in the Rumanian or “Moldavian” language were now suffered to appear, though in the Russian Cyrillic script. Some chance was at last offered for public opinion – that is to say, the opinion of the “Intelligentsia” – to make itself heard. In a province, however, where the overwhelming majority of the Rumanian population, as distinguished from the Jews, Germans, and even Bulgars, /21/ are peasants, the ideas of a few intellectuals do not have very much effect on the feeling of the bulk of the people. A certain amount of agitation was spasmodically carried on from over the frontier of the Pruth, and revolutionary literature was from time to time smuggled into Bessarabia; but both the internal Russian and external European situation made any raising of the Bessarabian question in a serious form very unlikely.

The celebration in 1912 of the centenary of the Russian annexation provoked an outburst of indignation in Nationalist circles in Rumania, but there is no proof that this indignation found any real echo among the Bessarabians themselves. The main leaders of the Bessarabian Nationalist Movement were exiles like Constantiu Stere, a Bessarabian and a genuine democrat who had fallen under the displeasure of the Russian Government and in consequence spent nine years in Siberia, whence he escaped to Rumania to carry on from there an embittered campaign against Russia.

(7) EUROPEAN WAR. CHOICE OF RUMANIA

The outbreak of the European War at once unloosed the tongues of propagandists of various kinds. Whereas the bulk of the Rumanian “Intelligentsia” concentrated on their grievances against Austria-Hungary and the necessity for emancipating the Rumanians under the Habsburg yoke, Stere and his supporters, joined by the ex-Prime Minister, Carp, and, in a more discreet form, by a later Prime Minister, Marghiloman, pushed both publicly in the press and privately by every means their advocacy of war at the side of the Central Powers against Russia for the “liberation” of Bessarabia. This was, in fact, the almost daily theme set forth by Carp's paper *Moldova* and the various journals which Marghiloman patronised. It was in this direction that German propagandists naturally sought to turn /22/ the aspirations of the Rumanian people. The attempt, however, was unsuccessful; and on August 27, 1916, Rumania, by her declaration of war on Austria-Hungary, chose indirectly, if not directly, alliance with Russia. It was the hope of Pan-Rumanian enthusiasts that the victory of the Entente Powers would not only deliver Transylvania and the neighbouring lands by destroying the Dual Monarchy, but would deliver Bessarabia by the goodwill of a grateful Russian Government. Neither hope quite realised itself in the way that was anticipated; nor did Rumanian intervention in the war alleviate the lot of the adherents of the national cause in Bessarabia.

(8) RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. SCHEMES FOR AUTONOMY

In March 1917 broke out the Russian Revolution. “Self-determination” became the watchword of the supporters of all nationalities, small and great, throughout Europe. Bessarabia was not the first to move, but by the end of May a national Moldavian Committee had been established and a Congress was held at Kishinev, which decided to demand autonomy and full recognition of the Moldavian language. The National Moldavian

Committee modelled itself from the first on the lines of the neighbouring Ukrainian Council. During the early summer they contented themselves with demanding administrative and ecclesiastical autonomy; the use of the Rumanian language; a fairer distribution of land among the Moldavian peasants; the right of Bessarabians to do their military service in Bessarabia and to form local military units; expenditure in the province of revenue raised there; and the assurance of reciprocal religious, political and economic rights for "Moldavians" outside Bessarabia (Rumanians calculate there are over 1.000,000 of these in the neighbouring Governments of Kherson and Podolia), and non-Moldavians in Bessarabia. No demand for union with Rumania was /23/ being made at this time. In fact, to the Bessarabian Nationalists there must have seemed far more hope of securing free and full development of the province in connection with a federated republican Russia than in connection with a Rumania which had not hitherto proceeded to any definite legislation on electoral and agrarian reforms.

The Congress did not confine itself to political manifestoes. The practical work of awakening a Moldavian consciousness was entered on, and in the first fortnight of June a Congress of Bessarabian school teachers was held in Kishinev. This Congress resolved that Moldavian schools should be opened in the autumn in all the Moldavian villages of Bessarabia; the language of these schools should be Rumanian, the books to be printed in the Latin alphabet; Russian should be taught only to pupils in their third year for about six hours a week, but the curriculum of the schools should be standardised with the Russian. As for the towns, schools should be opened in proportion to the numbers of Moldavian children. Provision was also to be made for the establishment of secondary schools in the towns, and of professorships in "Moldavian" Language, History, and Literature at the Universities of Odessa and Kiev. On June 4, 1917, the first Moldavian people's library was opened in Kishinev.

The movement made considerable progress. By the end of August 350 out of 418 candidates for teacher-ships in the schools had passed a test examination in Rumanian language and history. Rumanian papers, no longer in Cyrillic but in Latin script, had begun to appear, the chief among them being the *Cuvânt Moldovenesc* ("Moldavian Word"). The Moldavian Council from the first took up a whole-hearted patriotic line; in its proclamations it called on its fellow-citizens to defend their newly-won liberties against the invader; and General Shcherbachev (then in command of the Russian armies on the Rumanian front) acceded to the request of the Committee that a /24/ reserve force of 40,000 Bessarabian Moldavians might be formed under its own officers.

(9) RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE

The first territorial difficulty arose with the Ukrainian Rada. In a declaration made by the latter early in August, Bessarabia was included within the frontiers of the contemplated Ukrainian State. The Bessarabian Committee indignantly protested; and a deputation was sent to Kiev pointing out that the Ukrainian demand infringed the principle of self-determination. The Rada finally gave way and admitted the exclusion of Bessarabia from the frontiers of its jurisdiction – a decision which it subsequently confirmed repeatedly, even so late as January 15, 1918, and only eventually reversed after the German intervention in the Ukraine had drawn it within the orbit of the Central Powers.

The National Movement in Bessarabia continued to make headway. Its leaders' original hopes of finding a place in a reformed federal Russian State broke down with the advent of the Bolsheviks to power. From the first these latter showed themselves intransigent towards the National Committee, denying that it represented the true Bessarabia or the

oppressed proletariat. Undeterred by this opposition, the Bessarabian leaders went on with their work. On November 3, 1917, 500 representatives of the population met in Kishinev and declared for the autonomy of Bessarabia. A month later, on December 8, a new "Council of the Land" (Sfatul Tarii) opened in Kishinev, comprising representatives of all sections of the population of Bessarabia. Of these there were 147, most of them (105) Moldavians. The other nationalities, Ukrainians, Jews, Germans, and Bulgars, were also represented in the proportions of 15, 13, 2, and 4 delegates respectively. The bulk of the Moldavian representatives were delegates either from different Soldiers' Committees or from the Provincial /25/ Council of the Peasants, and, in fact, nearly all of them possess obviously peasant names. A few professors and other intellectuals were also to be found in the Council, and naturally took the lead in voicing its feelings and directing its energies. Among these the most important were Professor Inculeț of Petrograd, and three Nationalist leaders, Ghibu, Pelivan, and Haneș. Important speeches were made by representatives of all the bodies constituting, through their delegates, the Council of the Land; and a Ministry with nine portfolios called the "Council of Directors General" took charge of the administration. On December 15 the Council proclaimed the "independence of the Moldavian Republic," thus pushing to its logical extreme the principle of self-determination on which their actions had been based. The programme of the Government of the new Republic showed at once its democratic character. Clause I provided that a Constituent Assembly of the Moldavian Republic should be convoked on the basis of universal, equal, direct, secret, and proportional franchise; Clause II that all the land should pass, without compensation to the landlords, into the hands of the peasants; Clause V for liberty of the individual, of the press, and of religious beliefs; Clause VII for the equality of all the nationalities and their autonomy on Moldavian soil; and Clause X committed the Bessarabian Republic to the support of a "peace without annexations and indemnities on the principle of full self-determination of peoples in agreement with the Allies and with the peoples of the Russian Federal Republic."

/26/ III. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS

(1) RELIGIOUS

Down to the annexation of Bessarabia by Russia in 1812, the Bessarabian Church was naturally an integral part of the Rumanian, and was under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Moldavia. When, by the Treaty of Bucarest, Bessarabia was annexed to Russia, the then Metropolitan of Moldavia, Gavril, left Jassy and established himself at Kishinev. In the same year an Ecclesiastical Court was set up by him, and at the beginning of 1813 he founded a Church seminary at Kishinev. The Russian Holy Synod granted his request for the establishment of a special Eparchy for Bessarabia, including the dioceses of Kishinev and Khotin. The Eparchy, however, at first extended beyond Bessarabia, as the Russian Government was unwilling to allow the idea, of even ecclesiastical autonomy to Bessarabia in such a form as to encourage nationalist aspirations. In 1837, after long discussion, the Eparchy was limited to the province; but by this time any chance of an autonomous development of the Bessarabian Church had been destroyed. At first the Russians had allowed the teaching of Rumanian and the publication of educational and religious books in the Rumanian language; but, from the first, Russian primary schools had been opened in the chief towns of the province. In 1833 a Russian lycée was established at Kishinev, in which at first the study of the Rumanian language was permitted, but afterwards discouraged, and in 1873 suppressed. In 1835 Russian private schools for /27/ the upper classes were opened at Kishinev. Practically nothing was done for the peasants, the only

elementary schools established being for the purpose of providing rudimentary education for the clergy.

By the Treaty of Paris (1856) a part of Southern Bessarabia, as we have seen, was returned to Moldavia, comprising, from the ecclesiastical point of view, about 100 parishes. To meet their needs, the Rumanian Government in 1864 established an Eparchy of the Lower Danube, with the Bishop's See at Izmail. Rumanian schools were opened in the recovered districts, and secondary schools at Izmail and Bolgrad. All this progressive work, however, was cut short in 1878, when this territory was recovered by Russia. From 1878 till 1917 Bessarabia as a whole was fully incorporated under the jurisdiction of the Russian Holy Synod. The chief ecclesiastic of the "Government" was the Archbishop of Kishinev, the Archbishopric having been established by Ukase of the Holy Synod in 1821. In 1859 the parishes of Bessarabia were grouped into circuits, each containing from 25 to 35 parishes. In 1870 there were 833 Churches in the Eparchy of Kishinev; by 1890 the number of parishes had increased to 929, with an Orthodox population of 1,220,439. As against this, the non-Orthodox population numbered 421,120, consisting of Jews, Protestants, Old Believers (Raskolniki), Roman Catholics, and Armenians. The Orthodox clergy numbered (in 1890) 1,590.

As for the position of the Church in Bessarabia, from the beginning most of the clergy were on the side of the National Movement; and the sittings of the Council of the Land were preceded by a *Te Deum* in the Cathedral, when the Archbishop of Kishinev, Gavril, officiated. Latterly there have been certain difficulties, as the Rumanian Government showed itself too anxious to assimilate Church conditions in Bessarabia with those prevailing in other parts of Rumania; and the Archbishop appears to have been deprived of his office for refusing to submit to the /28/ jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Moldavia. A protest has also been lodged by Tikhon, the Patriarch of Moscow, against the transference of Bessarabia from his jurisdiction to that of the Metropolitan of Moldavia. The matter has obviously not yet been settled finally, and the solution of the question will naturally be bound up with the political settlement of Bessarabia.

(2) POLITICAL

The question of the political developments of Bessarabia is bound up with Russo-Rumanian relations and with political developments in Rumania for which the evidence is not as yet complete enough to determine exactly the true course of events. Whatever Bessarabia's future – and everything points to its union with a free, united, and democratic Greater Rumania, if that is ever achieved – the Bessarabian question has once and for all become an international one. Its political and economic bearings cannot, of course, be neglected, but the factor of greatest importance will necessarily be the character and wish of the population. While it is not proposed here to enter into any detailed statistics⁹, it should not be overlooked that the official Russian statistics of 1891 returned, out of a total population of 1,641,599, 1,089,995 Moldavians and 223,251 Ukrainians (Little Russians), the next nationality in numbers. On this basis the percentage of Rumanians, Ukrainians, Jews, Bulgars, Germans, and Russians was respectively 66, 13.6, 9, 5, 2.5, and 2; if the population has since then increased in the same proportion the Rumanian element in 1913 out of 2,558,400 may be put roughly at 1,725,600. There is, in fact, apart from the extreme Northern department of Khotin and the mixed districts of Southern Bessarabia (the Budzhak), a big Rumanian majority in the bulk of the province, and, if it be remembered that in the neighbouring Ukrainian departments of Kherson and /29/ Podolia there are large

⁹ See above, pp. 8, 9

Rumanian minorities the Ukrainian claim for a share of the territory of Bessarabia is hardly justified.

(3) EDUCATIONAL

In 1890 the number of schools in the province was 669, 13 of them being secondary schools. The number of pupils was about 40,000. The percentage of illiterates was consequently very high among the peasant population, 90 per cent of whom were Rumanian. It is stated that at the time only 17 per cent, of the men among the Rumanians and 4 per cent, of the women knew how to read and write, whereas with the Germans the percentages were 83 and 81; with the Jews, 65 and 41; with the Bulgars, 42 and 13; and with the Ukrainians, 24 and 7. The fact that the schools employed the Russian language and were not intended to affect the peasants resulted in a total lack of any enlightenment amongst them.

Some account has been given above (p. 23) of the educational work taken up in the summer of 1917 by the National Moldavian Committee. The use of the Rumanian language in the press and also as a vehicle of instruction is the necessary step to exciting the interest of the population as a whole in education.

/30/ IV. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

(A) MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

(1) INTERNAL

(a) Roads

The country roads form the most important means of communication in Bessarabia, carriage by water and rail playing a secondary part. Nevertheless, the roads are in a very primitive state, consisting mainly of soil roads, which become almost impassable in bad weather. Authorities differ as to the nature of the roads in the province. The Association of Commerce and Industry states that there are 90 miles of macadamized road, 144 miles of paved road, and 3,100 miles of soil road. A very recent official military map shows a complete absence of macadamized road, and marks all the main roads as of second-class quality. All authorities agree, however, that the roads are, with negligible exceptions, of poor quality and principally soil roads. The necessity for improving these is very urgent. All the principal places are connected with one another by roads described as "post roads with posting stations." The district near the Austrian frontier is exceedingly badly supplied with roads, which have been neglected, probably for reasons.

(b) Rivers

The Dniester, Pruth, and Danube are the navigable rivers that serve Bessarabia.

The Dniester is navigable for rafts for the full length of its course in the province, of which it forms /31/ the eastern boundary. It is navigable for steamers from Akkerman at the mouth to Ushitsa, and there is a passenger service between these two points. The maximum draught of vessels navigating the river is 3 ft. 9 in., and the maximum tonnage 190 tons. Owing to the poor depth of water in the lagoon at the mouth, cargo as a rule goes no further down than Varnitsa, near Bendery, where it is discharged for further carriage by rail. A good authority describes the navigation conditions on the Dniester as "lamentable," and there has been a general decrease during recent years in the number of vessels using the river, which has many defects. It is frozen for about 120 days in the year, and, if the spring rain is deficient, it suffers from lack of water in the summer. Rapids are numerous and somewhat dangerous, and changes of course damage the channels from time to time. Between 1884 and 1893 the State expended £100,000 on deepening and rectifying the channels.

The Pruth is used for rafting for all that part of its course which serves as a boundary between Bessarabia and Rumania, and is navigable for steamers from Leovo to its entry into the Danube near Reni. The depth is very variable: it rises as high as 10-12 ft. in the spring, but in dry seasons falls as low as 2 ft. The river is frozen for about two months in the year. Although the traffic consists to a considerable extent of Bessarabian goods, the vessels and the management of the trade generally are in the hands of Rumanians.

The Danube is the boundary between Bessarabia and Rumania from its junction with the Pruth, near Reni, to its mouth on the Black Sea, a distance of about seventy miles. Thirty miles below Reni the Danube splits up to form the Delta. The most northerly branch of the river, known as the Kiliya mouth, continues to form the international boundary. The European-Danube Navigation Commission did not consider this branch of importance, and the main artery of /32/ traffic is the Sulina mouth in Rumania. For local purposes a channel 12 ft. deep has been dredged in the Kiliya branch from the Polunochnoe entrance, and there is traffic as far up as Kiliya, consisting almost entirely of vessels plying regularly with passengers and goods to and from Odessa. The great sea-going traffic of the Sulina branch affects Bessarabia indirectly, as a good deal of the produce of the south-western district of the country is loaded at Galatz, in Rumania, for shipment abroad.

(c) *Railways*

The railways in Bessarabia form part of the Russian South Western Railway system, which is a State-owned concern. There are three sections of line in all:

(1) Bendery – Kishinev – Korneshti – Ungeni. The beginning of this line is at Razdyelnaya, a junction on the main line from Odessa to Kiev, from whence, passing Tiraspol, it enters Bessarabia at Bendery. The full length from Bendery to the Rumanian frontier at Ungeni is 104 miles.

(2) Bendery – Kainari – Kulinskaya – Trajan's Wall – Reni. This line was built in 1877 at the time of the Turko-Russian War for purely military purposes, and the full length of 178 miles was constructed in the record time of fifty-eight days. The line originally ran to Galatz, in Rumania, but the section Reni – Galatz was torn up by the Rumanians after the conclusion of peace.

(3) Ribnitsa – Byeltsy – Oknitsa – Nowosselizy. This line serves the north-western portion of Bessarabia, and carries the traffic to the Austrian frontier in Bukovina. It is connected with the main Odessa – Kiev line at Slobodka and with the Austrian railways at Nowosselizy. The line was built in 1892-1894, and is 245 miles long. It has an additional feeder coming from Shmerinka on the Kiev – Odessa main line, *via* Mohilev, to Oknitsa.

/33/ There are, therefore, some 550 miles of railway, all single line, in Bessarabia. The mileage is not large for the size of the country, but the fact that it is a boundary province accounts to some extent for the lack of railways, as the Russian Government has discouraged the building of a close network of lines on its western frontiers. Nevertheless, it is questionable if much extension of railways in so purely agricultural an area as Bessarabia would pay on a commercial basis, and the best means of improving communication would probably be the macadamizing of all main roads, so as to permit heavy motor traffic.

A new line is under construction from Leipzigskaya, on the Bendery – Reni line, via Berezinskaya, Pavlovka, Sarata, and Nikolaevka – Novorossiiskaya to Akkerman.

The Russian South Western Railway serves several provinces besides Bessarabia, and the following figures show the extent of its operations:

Length of Line	Gross Annual Receipts	Nett Annual Receipts	Weight of Traffic per annum
Miles. 2,604	Rubles. 73 millions	Rubles 30.4 millions	Tons 15 millions.

The Bessarabian mileage is one-fifth of the whole of this railway system, but the figures for traffic is probably about one-tenth, as the carriage of goods by rail in the province is on a small scale. There are two passenger trains daily for the whole system, with two additional trains between Bendery and Kishinev.

(d) Posts, Telegraphs, and Telephones

The postal and telegraph system in Bessarabia forms part of the Russian Imperial system. No special /34/ figures for the province are issued, but in general the agricultural districts of Russia are poorly served.

Kishinev and Akkerman have telephone systems, but there is no trunk working of telephones.

(2) EXTERNAL

(a) Ports

Although Bessarabia has a coast-line of some seventy miles on the Black Sea, it has no port of any size. Akkerman, on the Dniester lagoon, has a small traffic in barges to Odessa, and exports the local surplus of grain and wine which is brought in by road, but it has no railway or loading facilities. There is a daily passenger service between Akkerman and Odessa.

There are three towns on the Kiliya branch of the Danube on the Bessarabian side – Kiliya, Izmail, and Reni. The last named is the only one possessing a railway: none of them has any loading facilities: steamers tie up near the river-bank and load by means of gang-planks. The trade done is insignificant, consisting of the shipment to Odessa of local produce, brought by road, and the import of manufactured goods and colonial produce for local consumption.

The true ports of Bessarabia are Odessa and Galatz. The former supplies the imports via Akkerman or by rail via Bendery or Ribnitsa, and exports the surplus grain, wine, &c. from the southern and eastern parts of the province. Galatz acts as the port of export for the region near the Pruth.

(b) Shipping Line, and Cable Communications

The only line of steamers interested in Bessarabian traffic is the Russian Danube Steam Navigation Company, which provides regular services for goods and passengers from Odessa up the Danube to Reni.

Telegrams for abroad must be sent to Odessa or /35/ Petrograd for transmission, there being no cable in Bessarabian territory. There are no wireless stations in the country.

(B) INDUSTRY

(1) LABOUR

The only kind of labour which is required in any quantity in Bessarabia is agricultural labour. As so large a proportion of the cultivable area is owned by peasants, who, with the help of their families, work their own land, the question of supply of labour applies only to the working of the lands of the estate-owners and monasteries. Bessarabia has a fairly dense population for an agricultural region, and more than any neighbouring province. At the same time wages for agricultural work are lower than they usually are in the black-soil country. These two facts combined would suggest that supply of labour is not lacking; but, as the surplus labour is provided mainly by those Little Russians who are rendered landless, there is a probability that it is of inferior quality.

The conditions of agricultural labour would probably not be considered good when compared with Western European standards, but it must be remembered that good food is extremely plentiful and cheap, and is often included in the labourer's pay.

There is no record of any appreciable movement of the Bessarabian population away from the province, nor has there been any immigration since the early days of the nineteenth century, when colonies of various types, including Germans, were placed on the land to take the places of emigrating Turks and Tartars. Although of foreign origin, and, if Germans, not of the Orthodox Russian Church, these immigrants have been long enough in the country to become fairly well absorbed, and the Germans among them, having left their native land previous to its consolidation into /36/ an empire, have no political connection with the country of their forefathers. But the land is full of place-names like Leipzigskaya, Hoffnungsthal, Friedensthal and Wittenberg, which indicate the original home of these colonists.

(2) AGRICULTURE

(a) *Products of Commercial Value*

Bessarabia is one of the most fertile provinces of Russia, the surface consisting to a very great extent of black soil. On the higher lands there are some clay soils. For some distance inland from the coast there is a belt of sandy soil, and there is some alluvial soil near the Pruth and Dniester. About 67 per cent, of the total surface is cultivated, this being about the average for South Russia.

Some 23 per cent, of the agricultural land is stated to be under hay and pasture. South of Trajan's Wall, which runs from Leovo, on the Pruth, to Bendery, on the Dniester, is a famous pasture country known as the Budzhak steppes, which raises great numbers of cattle. There are ten staple farm crops:

Maize occupies the first place, providing on an average 32 per cent, of the total produce of the ten staple crops. It is grown mainly in the centre and north-west of the province.

Spring wheat accounts for 19 per cent, of the total produce, and autumn wheat for 16 per cent. These crops are grown all over the province, principally on the nobles' estates.

Barley is a valuable crop, accounting for 18 per cent, of the total produce. It is grown mainly in the south.

Rye is a much smaller crop than is usual in South Russia, and contributes only 8 per cent, of the total.

Oats also occupy a low place, being 3 per cent, of the total.

Potatoes, hemp, linseed, and buckwheat are also grown, but in very small quantities.

/37/ A *tobacco* crop is raised in the district north-east of Kishinev, but it tends to diminish.

Returns for the principal crops are as follows:

-	Mean for 1901-1910	Year 1914
	Tons	Tons
Maize	650,000	916,000
Barley	402,000	534,000
Wheat	607,000	403,000
Rye	182,000	138,000
Potatoes	91,000	128,000
Hay	205,000	124,000
Sugar-beet	14,812	6,785
Tobacco	2,309	2,450

In general the area under cereal crops is increasing, while that under hay and tobacco is decreasing. Sugar-beet is a small crop, and is decreasing. For the period 1901-1910 there was a yearly average of 5,500,000 acres sown with cereal crops. In 1914 6,100,000 acres were sown. The mean harvest of cereals for 1901-1910 was 1,856,000 tons; in 1914, 2,019,000 tons were reaped.

The average cereal harvest for the eighteen years from 1895 to 1912 places Bessarabia tenth on the list of the fifty provinces of European Russia, irrespective of their size, and of every 1,000 tons of cereals produced in European Russia Bessarabia produces 27.3 tons, a high figure considering its size.

Viticulture has for a long time been an important branch of agriculture in Bessarabia. In 1914 164,000 acres were bearing vines. The crop of grapes is mainly used to make wine, but the cultivation of dessert varieties is also conducted with success. (See also below, p. 42).

The introduction of *silkworms* was recently undertaken, and a certain success has been obtained, chiefly in the Izmăil district, but the result so far has been meagre.

Live-stock of all sorts is a great asset of the province, and cattle-breeding is carefully looked after, /38/ particularly by the German and Bulgarian colonists. Pedigree stock has been imported from time to time, and the present native breed is of good quality.

Horses are increasing in number, as they have supplanted cattle for farm-work.

The number of *horned cattle* is stationary, probably because the working breeds are not so much in demand.

The number of *sheep* also has remained stationary for some years past, but sheep-breeding, nevertheless, remains very important.

Pigs have greatly increased in numbers. Improved stock has been imported, and the herds are of great value. A surplus for export remains after supplying local wants, and commands a good market across the Austrian frontier.

Generally speaking, Bessarabia is in a better position than the neighbouring provinces in the matter of live-stock, the increase being not only actual but relative to the population, which is not the case generally in South Russia.

The production of *fruit* and *vegetables* occupies a large area of soil and a great deal of the activity of the population in Bessarabia. Gardening is universal, almost every peasant having a small plot. The larger landed proprietors often possess gardens of 35 to 40 acres in extent, and some of the monasteries have still larger gardens. In cases of fruit-culture on a large scale it is the practice to plant alternate rows of trees and grape-vines. The principal fruits are *plums*, *apples*, *pears*, *cherries* and *apricots*. Quantities of *melons* and *pumpkins* are also grown. The garden-land is spread all over the province, except in the district south of Trajan's Wall, which is pasture-land. A surplus of great value is exported, much of it in the form of dried fruits.

(b) *Methods of Cultivation*

The method of land tenure (described below, p. 40) has a great influence upon the quality of the cultivation. In general, the peasant of South Russia, working /39/ upon land of which he is the temporary owner, is principally concerned to secure a cereal crop, and his land is worked upon the three-field system, under which each unit of land is sown one year with winter-sown grain, the following year with spring-sown grain, and in the third year lies fallow. A continuance of this rotation is very exhausting to the soil, and only virgin black soil will stand it for any length of time. The peasant frequently owns no live-stock, and there is, therefore, a scarcity of animal manure. In these circumstances the *nadyel* land (see below, p. 40) tends to become less productive as time goes on. In 1906 an agrarian law was passed

which was to have the effect of transferring the ownership of land from the local commune (*mir*) to the individual, and making it permanent, with the hope that, by giving security of tenure, the method of cultivation could be raised to a more intensive system.

In Bessarabia the above-mentioned conditions are modified, since the peasants are in many cases of Moldavian, German, or Bulgarian origin; their methods are less reckless, and their thriftiness has enabled them to practise a more intensive rotation, and to become owners of a valuable farm live-stock.

The land owned by the nobles and religious institutions is rationally farmed on the whole, and is largely responsible for the great surplus crops of cereals.

The high level of cultivation in Bessarabia is shown by the figures for the production of cereals, which averages 1,505 puds *per* square verst, while the average in South Russia is 995 puds *per* square verst.

The introduction of up-to-date agricultural machinery has made exceptional progress, aided by the activity of the Zemstvo, and except in the north-west corner of the province the old wooden plough, flail, &c are extinct.

Irrigation is carried out on the alluvial soil near the banks of the rivers in order to produce vegetable crops, but only by individuals, and on a primitive system. No /40/ general scheme of irrigation is in existence or has been suggested.

(c) Forestry

The general character of Bessarabia is that of a treeless country, but one area in the centre, comprised in the districts of Kishinev, Orgyeev, and Bendery, is fairly well wooded. Beech, oak, and ash are the principal timber trees, and the best supply of building timber in South Russia comes from these districts. In all, 671,000 acres are under the care of the State forest authorities, and about 32,000 acres are entirely State-controlled.

(d) Land Tenure

The system of land tenure in Bessarabia does not differ much in principle from that which prevails in other provinces of South Russia. Nearly half the land (48.6 per cent.) consists of *nadyel*, that is, the land conveyed from the great estates of the nobles in 1861, when the serfs were freed, to distribute to the newly enfranchised peasants for cultivation. This land is not in general held by individuals, but by *mirs*, or local communes, who portion it out to individuals. The *mir* at intervals undertakes a redistribution of the *nadyel* in order to provide for the wants of a new generation, many of whose members would otherwise be landless.

The population has increased rapidly, and the result has been a gradual decrease in the amount of *nadyel* per head. It is possible to increase the amount of *nadyel* land by purchase from the estate-owners, and this has taken place in Bessarabia to a greater extent than in any other province of Russia. Peasant holdings have increased between 1863 and 1897 from 32,400 acres to 828,900 acres, that is, the acreage has been multiplied twenty-five times. The general average increase in Russia in the same period has been tenfold.

The explanation of this contrast lies in the fact that, although a Russian province, Bessarabia is inhabited by a majority of people of non-Russian race, who are /41/ considerably more industrious, thrifty, and less conservative in method than the Russian, and especially the Little Russian. Of the total population, 48 per cent are Moldavians. In the south of the province there are large and prosperous colonies of Germans and Bulgarians, introduced into the country and furnished with land subsequent to the Napoleonic wars, at a time when the country was deserted wholesale by the Turks and Tartars. These settlers are on a higher level of prosperity than the peasants of the neighbouring provinces or the Little

Russians of Bessarabia itself. They practise a more intensive system of farming, and exploit well the gardening and vine-growing possibilities of the province.

These colonists, together with a special class of peasants known as "State peasants," who were placed on the land about the same period, now rank as "peasants," and their land is classed as *nadyel*, although in some respects their system of tenure differs from that of the freed serfs. 43.2 per cent, of the soil is privately owned, mainly by the nobility, but there is an absence of the very large private estates so common in other parts of Russia. The average size of these holdings is 2,350 acres, while the average for Russia generally is 2,700 acres. The nobility in this province have parted with a great deal of their land to peasant owners of late years, and the indebtedness on their estates is the highest in all Russia, except in one province, Kursk.

8.2 per cent, of the soil is owned by the State and Church. More than half of this amount is owned by foreign, *i.e.*, Moldavian monasteries, which exist under the special condition that a portion of their revenue shall be used for the education and religious needs of the province.

(3) FISHERIES

Fishing is of importance only along the sea-coast and in the adjoining lagoons. At Akkerman, on the /42/ Dniester lagoon, there is a population which lives principally by fishing and fish-preserving. Mackerel, herring, and anchovy are the principal fish taken.

In the Danube, the waters above Vilkov are sufficiently valuable to be reserved and rented by the State. The principal centres are Vilkov and Kiliya. The chief fish taken are the beluga and sturgeon. Figures exist which show the value of the Russian Danube fishery as £42,000 annually, but the returns are admitted to be incomplete.

(4) MINERALS

No minerals of importance are, or have been, worked in Bessarabia. A small coalfield near Akkerman has not been exploited. Limestone, on the banks of the Dniester, and also a little granite are quarried for building purposes, the limestone being considered excellent.

(5) MANUFACTURE

Manufactures have attained no great importance in Bessarabia. The total annual value of manufactured products is under £300,000, and less than 3,000 people earn their living by factory labour.

Flour-milling is the principal industry, and employs the most hands. These are employed in 98 different mills, many of them attached to the various foreign agricultural colonies in the south of the province.

Wine is produced on a large scale in Bessarabia. The principal district is Akkerman, the presses being in the town of Akkerman and in the German colony of Shaba near by. The Bendery district comes next in importance, and after that Izmail. In the last-named district, Izmail town, the Bulgarian colony of Bolgrad and the town of Kiliya are the centres. Reni district also has some wine presses.

For a long time past efforts, both public and private, have been made to improve the quality of Bessarabian wine. Foreign experts have been introduced and a /43/ school of viticulture, with chemical laboratories, has been founded at Kishinev. The wine remains, nevertheless, an inferior product: it does not compete with foreign wines, and is never sold in first-class establishments in Russia, but only in special wine-bars of the cheaper sort.

There are four agricultural machinery works, all small.

Eight concerns are occupied in the leather, skin, and allied trades.

Five saw-mills are working; the principal one at Bendery is supplied with timber floated down the Dniester, and coming mainly from Bukovina across the Austrian frontier. The worked timber is despatched by rail.

A little wool is spun in four factories, but no weaving is done.

The domestic or *kustarni* industries are not specially well developed in Bessarabia on the whole, but one or two domestic industries are peculiar to the province. Carpet-making is the most notable. The Bessarabian *kustarni* carpet has a good sale locally and in the neighbouring provinces. Elaborate designs are undertaken. Tapestry is also made: some pieces, made by the workers on large estates working in concert, are valued at hundreds of pounds. The dyes are made locally from vegetable matter, and the secret of their production is jealously guarded.

The elaborate and highly decorative costumes worn by the German and Bulgarian colonists of both sexes are specially made by itinerant tailors working single-handed.

Harness-making is a speciality of the German colonists.

Coopering is done mostly by gypsies, who make the vats, troughs, and other vessels required in the wine industry, as well as barrels, pails, and wooden agricultural tools.

Basket-making and straw-plaiting are also *kustarni* industries of some importance.

/44/ (C) COMMERCE

(1) DOMESTIC

(a) *Principal Branches of Trade*

Bessarabia is so entirely devoted to agriculture that commerce only employs a very small proportion of the population. Such commerce as there is consists principally in the disposal of the surplus production of grain and flour, fruit, wine, and brandy. This takes place chiefly at Kishinev, and to some extent at Bendery and Akkerman.

The grain and flour trade is largely in Jewish hands. Small merchants in various centres buy up the surplus and despatch it by the most convenient route for foreign shipment.

The wine trade also is carried on by Jewish dealers, who travel round buying up the produce of small estates, and market the wine in Kishinev, Odessa, or Kiev.

The wants of the peasants that are not provided for by themselves are well supplied by a large army of pedlars, who purchase stores in Kishinev and cover the province in their wanderings.

(b) *Towns, Markets, and Fairs*

Kishinev is a busy centre for imported goods of all kinds, and has a number of large wholesale warehouses for dry goods, hardware, agricultural machinery, &c., some of them being branches of big Odessa houses. Trading is largely in the hands of Jews, who form nearly 50 per cent, of the population of Kishinev.

The principal live-stock market is at *Byeltsy*, whence cattle in great numbers are despatched to Austria and Hungary.

There were formerly a number of important fairs in Bessarabia, but these appear to have lost almost all /45/ their commercial importance of late years, and serve more as pleasure outings for the rural population.

(2) FOREIGN

(a) *Exports*

As no separate figures for the exports or imports of a separate Russian province are available, only a general idea of the subject can be given. Bessarabia shares with the other

black-soil provinces of Russia the advantage of being able to export a large surplus of staple breads tuffs after providing for the wants of the population, and in proportion to its acreage appears to contribute above the average to this export. There is no means of tracing the destination of this surplus, but, owing to the poorness of the means of communication, most of it undoubtedly takes the easiest and most natural route. This means that the produce of the south-western portion of the country is shipped *viá* the Pruth and Galatz to foreign destinations; that from the south-eastern portion goes to Akkerman and thence to Odessa, mostly for foreign shipment; and the remainder is mainly conveyed by rail route to the Odessa – Kiev Railway, and is not traceable further.

Fruit, both fresh and dried, is largely exported, finding its market in Russia.

There is an active export of cattle over the Austro-Hungarian frontier at Nowosseliza.

A great deal of wine is despatched from Bessarabia, but it remains mostly in the neighbouring provinces or goes to one or two large cities of Russia. It is not exported by sea. Of an average annual production of 32 million gallons of wine in the province, over half is despatched to other parts of Russia.

(b) Imports

The imports consist mainly of manufactured goods of all kinds, principally dry goods, agricultural /46/ machinery, and chemical manures. Much coal is also imported. It should be remembered that the overwhelming mass of the population are peasants, who provide for most of their own wants, and whose purchasing power is small.

(c) Customs and Tariffs

Bessarabia is subject to the conventional tariff of the Russian Empire, which is in general highly protective. There is a short free-list of imports which includes items of some importance to the province. These are certain specified types of agricultural machinery, live cattle, horses, and cattle-feed consisting of by-products of manufacture. Certain chemical fertilisers, and chemicals necessary in the tanning industry, are imported under low duties.

(d) Commercial Treaties

Various commercial treaties have been concluded between Russia and other European countries since 1893, which modify the conventional tariff of Russia in exchange for concessions. Those directly affecting Bessarabia appear to be the following:

(1) A treaty with Serbia which admits Serbian fruits at a lowered rate and thereby probably creates some competition with Bessarabian fruit.

(2) A treaty with Portugal by which the cork products of that country are admitted with a 20 per cent, rebate of duty. Bessarabia's wine industry probably benefits by this supply of cork for bottling.

(3) A treaty with Germany by which 135 articles of German manufacture have a preferential rate on entering Russia. The effect of this is not directly traceable in Bessarabia, but in general it stimulates the importation of German manufactures in all Russian centres.

/47/ (D) FINANCE

(1) Public Finance

The share of the Russian imperial revenue contributed by Bessarabia in two recent years was as follows:

1906 12,183,000 rubles.

1910 15,842,000 rubles.

The amount contributed shows a steady expansion under almost all headings for the five years 1906-1910 inclusive.

The total revenue of European Russia for the year 1910 was 1,522,800,000 rubles.

Bessarabia, although a frontier province, has a Zemstvo organisation, a somewhat unusual circumstance. The Zemstvo revenue was in 1906, 3,223,000 rubles and in 1910, 4,100,000 rubles. The bulk of this revenue is from land tax and is expended on local civil administration, the upkeep of district roads and bridges, and the health service. The Zemstvo has permission to make expenditure on public instruction and rural medical service. It also enters into trading operations in agricultural machinery, improved seed, and pedigree live-stock. The central and local committees of the Bessarabian Zemstvo had borrowed in 1910 about 1,400,000 rubles for these purposes.

The towns of Kishinev, Akkerman, Bolgrad, Izmail, and Kiliya have each a separate municipal administration and can raise taxes for urban purposes. There is a municipal debt of 3,545,000 rubles, of which the sum of over 3,000,000 rubles has been incurred by Kishinev. The revenue of the town of Kishinev in 1910 was 1,210,000 rubles.

The *mirs* or local communes raise some taxes for local purposes, such as the upkeep of roads, the building of granaries for the preservation of surplus supplies of provisions, and insurance against fire and inundation. For the building of churches, schools, and /48/ hospitals money may also be raised. These local taxes are collected and distributed very irregularly.

(2) Currency

Bessarabia has the coinage of Russia. The ruble before the war had the value of 2 s. 1 ½ d, with exchange of 9.45 on London. It is divided into 100 kopeks.

(3) Banking

The Imperial State Bank of Russia is the most important financial concern in the country, in that it controls the currency and note issue, being the only note-issuing bank. It undertakes general banking and bill-broking, besides having close relations with the Treasury for revenue, loan, and other purposes. The bank makes large loans to private banks: in 1910 the amount on loan was £189,000,000. It also advances money on merchandise, principally on grain, and thus does its share towards financing the surplus crop in Bessarabia. The bank has one branch in the province, at Kishinev.

The State savings banks carry out the function that their title suggests, and also undertake certain minor insurance operations. Branches can be opened in all towns and villages. Their management is supervised by a committee appointed by the Imperial State Bank. These banks are in general successful and show a fair working profit.

Other banks can be divided into those interested in land and agricultural finance, and those having commercial and industrial interests.

The Land Bank of the Nobility was founded after the liberation of the serfs in 1861 to assist the nobility, whose estates were partly expropriated at that time, with advances to enable them to cultivate the remainder of their estates with paid labour and generally to tide over the difficult period subsequent to the liberation.

/49/ The Peasants' Land Bank, founded in 1883, was designed to assist peasants and communities to purchase land to increase the *nadyel*. It also advances money for the purchase of agricultural machinery, livestock, &c.

There is a joint-stock agrarian bank, one of a series formed in the last 20 years. It is known as the Bessarabia-Taurida Bank and operates in the two provinces. Its resources are as follows: share capital £700,000, reserves £500,000, bonds in circulation £11,000,000. This

bank exists for the purpose of loaning money on agricultural security, and is a profitable concern.

Mutual credit associations also perform some of the operations of banking. There are two in Kishinev. Their function is the provision of local credit in order to finance crops, build granaries, and purchase agricultural machinery. The Imperial State Bank encourages these associations, and under a law of 1910 is empowered to advance money to them at 5 per cent, including sinking fund, the principal being repayable in 20 years.

The joint-stock trading banks have not the importance in Bessarabia that they possess in the neighbouring provinces. The following are represented in Kishinev: Russo-Asiatic Bank, Petrograd International Bank of Commerce, Union Bank, and Kishinev Town Bank. The Odessa Discount Bank has a branch at Akkerman. The Russian Bank for Foreign Trade and the Siberian Bank have one or two agencies.

Foreign capital does not appear to have been invested in Bessarabia, nor is there much to attract it, as manufacturing industry and commerce are almost absent, and, so far, no prospect offers beyond land investments, which are not profitable enough to interest the foreigner.

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