

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.

Council Paper No. 42 of 1929.

MINES DEPARTMENT.

Administration Report of the Inspector of Mines for the year 1928.

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19th April, 1929.*

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HONOURABLE COLONIAL SECRETARY,

I have the honour to submit for the information of His Excellency the Governor the following report on the work of the Mines Department for the year 1928.

2. The year under review has been marked by the low prices obtainable for petroleum products in the world's markets ; but, in spite of this, there has been considerable activity in the Colony's oil industry and a large increase in production as compared with the previous year. The increased refining capacity of the Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd., at Pointe-a-Pierre, mentioned in my last report has been completed with the result that the Company has been able to cope with a much larger throughput and as a consequence has ceased the restriction of production mentioned in my last report.

3. There have been no new shipping or refining depots constructed during the period under review, but at the time of writing the Trinidad Oil Fields Operating Co., Ltd., are making preparations for the erection of a refinery adjacent to their shipping depot near La Brea Point. The shipping depots are now five in number as follows :—

Claxton Bay	....	....Trinidad Central Oilfields, Ltd.
Pointe-a-Pierre	....	....Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.
La Brea	....	....Trinidad Oil Fields Operating Company, Ltd.
Brighton	....	....Trinidad Lake Petroleum Co., Ltd.
Point Fortin	....	....United British Refineries, Ltd.

at each of which ocean going vessels can be loaded.

4. The increase in production during 1928 was much greater than ever recorded before being 2,303,986 barrels greater than that for 1927, or an increase of nearly 43 per cent.

5. The exports of petroleum products have naturally also shewn a large increase compared with the previous year, the figures being 222,600,000 gallons as against 155,900,000 gallons for the year 1927. The value of petroleum products exported remains greatly in excess of the value of the products of any other industry and formed 37 per cent. of the total exports of the Colony.

The value of the exports of the leading staples of the Colony and their relation to the total exports is shewn below :—

	<i>Value.</i>	<i>Percentage of</i>
	£	<i>total.</i>
Petroleum products	2,493,290	37.29
Cocoa	1,651,179	24.70
Sugar, Molasses and Rum	1,230,547	18.40
Asphalt	402,564	6.02
Coconuts and Copra	262,379	3.91
Other exports not enumerated	646,496	9.68
Total domestic exports	6,686,455	100.00

From which it will be seen that the value of exports of petroleum products exceeded that of cocoa, which is the leading industry of the Colony, by over £800,000.

6. The following table shews the number of feet drilled and the quantity of oil produced during 1928 as compared with the years 1926 and 1927:—

	YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1926.		YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1927.		YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1928.	
	<i>Feet drilled.</i>	<i>Oil won Brls. of 35 galls.</i>	<i>Feet drilled.</i>	<i>Oil won Brls. of 35 galls.</i>	<i>Feet drilled.</i>	<i>Oil won Brls. of 35 galls.</i>
Crown Lands	126,339	2,976,227	119,284	2,362,150	130,630	4,141,816
Private Lands	73,739	1,995,243	121,440	3,018,341	114,010	3,542,634
	<u>200,078</u>	<u>4,971,470</u>	<u>240,724</u>	<u>5,380,464</u>	<u>244,640</u>	<u>7,684,450</u>

7. The total number of wells drilled in the Colony to 31st December, 1928, is 1,452 of which 899 are on Crown Lands. During the year under review 140 new wells were drilled of which 76 were on Crown Lands and 64 on private lands, a decrease of 18 compared with 1927. In 102 of these wells oil was struck.

8. The number of Companies engaged in the winning of oil at the close of the year was 15 as against 14 at the end of 1927.

9. ROYALTY.—The Royalty collected in respect of oil won from Crown Lands shewed a considerable increase as compared with the previous year, the figures being £54,573 6s. 11d. and £39,965 3s. 7½d. respectively.

10. WAYLEAVES.—The revenue obtained from this source during 1928 has shewn a considerable decrease. This is due to the fact that the Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd., completed the laying of the 10-inch line from Fyzabad to Pointe-a-Pierre during the year and that this line has been laid along roads instead of along the Trinidad Government Railway, the wayleave in the former case being at the rate of 2d. per ton and in the latter 5d. per ton. The amounts for the years 1927 and 1928 are as follows:—

	<i>Trinidad Government Railway.</i>			<i>Roads.</i>		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1927	10,381	0	5	4,179	4	6
1928	7,453	11	8	5,157	11	10

11. FEES.—Fees charged for crossing the foreshore, the Railway and the public roads amounted to £98 5s. 0d.

12. One lease and two licences were issued during the year as follows:—

Mining Lease to Trinidad Petroleum Development Company, Ltd., over 249 acres the surface of which was alienated subsequent to 16th January, 1902—Reg. No. 2415 of 1928.

Prospecting Licence to Trinidad Petroleum Development Company, Ltd., over 1,711 acres the surface of which was alienated subsequent to 16th January, 1902—Reg. No. 2716 of 1928.

Prospecting Licence to Apex (Trinidad) Oilfields, Ltd., over 1,755 acres of Crown land—Reg. No. 4159 of 1928.

The new mining lease to the Trinidad Central Oilfields, Ltd. over some 7,000 acres, as mentioned in my last report, has not yet been executed, but the surveys are now nearing completion and it is expected that the deed will be completed at an early date.

13. The various returns required to be furnished by the oil companies have been regularly submitted and, after being carefully checked, filed with the records of the department.

14. A large number of inspections have been carried out by the officers of the department in connection with the operations taking place on the fields and I have great pleasure in placing on record that close co-operation exists between the officials of the various companies and the department in carrying out the various ordinances and regulations.

15. ACCIDENTS.—I regret to have to record that by far the worst accident in the history of the oil industry of the Colony occurred during the year. Well No. 3 of the Fyzabad Dome Oilfields, owned by the late Mr. Ralph Sammy, came in some time in the afternoon of the 8th December last with a very large flow of oil. At about midnight it became ignited and the owner, Mr. Ralph Sammy, several of his relatives, the driller, Mr. R. A. Wade, and a number of workmen, sixteen persons in all, were either burnt to death on the spot or succumbed shortly after. As the Coroner's enquiry into the matter has not yet been completed it is not possible to make further comment.

SAN FERNANDO BRANCH OF THE DEPARTMENT.

16. This branch of the department, which deals with the conservation of oil and gas, was under the charge of Mr. C. A. P. Southwell, M.C., B.Sc. with the exception of the time when he was on leave out of the Colony from 28th July to 30th November, during which period his duties were performed by Mr. H. W. Reid, B.Sc., Deputy Inspector of Mines. Before going on leave Mr. Southwell submitted a series of reports which were forwarded to His Excellency the Governor and the Companies concerned.

17. During the period under review 95 factories in Trinidad and 14 in Tobago were worked. I am pleased to be able to report that the provisions of the ordinance were, on the whole, carefully observed.

During the year a serious explosion occurred at the Match Factory of Messrs. Alston & Co., Ltd. Subsequent to manufacture and prior to boxing, the matches at this factory were stored in a large room and in the course of his duties an employee, according to his own account, allowed a ruler to fall on a container full of matches thereby causing them to ignite. An explosion of all the rest of the matches followed, the roof of the room was blown off and the flames burnt eighteen persons in the vicinity, five of whom succumbed to their injuries. Since the occurrence the storage of matches in this room has been abandoned and new arrangements made by which comparatively few matches are stored in any one place in order that any accidental ignition may be localized.

In delivering his verdict the Coroner, *inter alia*, made the following remarks :—

“ A considerable part of the cross-examination of witnesses was directed
 “ to management of this factory and its suitability for its purpose
 “ and after careful consideration I am of opinion that this factory
 “ is up-to-date in every respect and well managed. It was entirely
 “ re-conditioned a few years ago on the advice and under the
 “ supervision of a German expert who was sent out for this purpose
 “ by the manufacturers of the machinery.”

“ I am of opinion that all the deaths were due to burns received from
 “ the explosion of matches in the match room due to the act of
 “ the deceased Hackshaw in either permitting his wooden rule to
 “ accidentally fall on a punt of matches or allowing a punt to fall
 “ to the ground when removing it from its place on the rack.”

QUARRIES.

18. The number of quarries worked during the period under review was 76 as compared with 81 in 1926. With few exceptions they are relatively unimportant.

PETROLEUM ORDINANCE, CAP. 145.

19. In all, 457 licences to store and sell petroleum products were issued during the year.

ASPHALT INDUSTRY ORDINANCE, CAP. 147.

20. No asphalt has been dug on the village lots at La Brea since 1914.

APPENDICES.

21. Appendix A shows the list of oil companies operating in the Colony during the year 1928.

22. In Appendix B will be found the daily average number of persons employed in oilfields and quarries and the quantity and value of minerals obtained during the period under review.

23. A comparative statement of the oil produced, refined and exported is shown in Appendix C.

24. Appendix D consists of a series of charts depicting in graphical form the progress made in various industries during the past few years.

25. Appendix E shows the relation of Mineral Exports to Agricultural Exports.

STAFF.

26. There has been no change in the staff during the year.

4th April, 1929.

A. P. CATHERALL,
Inspector of Mines.

APPENDIX A.

No.	Companies.	Nature of tenure of lands on which operations took place.	Disposal of Oil.	Remarks.
1	Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.	Crown lands under lease. Private lands	Fyzabad, Barrackpore Guayaguayare. Fyzabad and Barrackpore.	Pumped to the Company's refinery at Pointe-a-Pierre, and there refined. Most of the production is exported in bulk The most important Company in the Colony. An active programme has been undertaken on its fields in the Fyzabad area during the past year resulting in a very large increase of production. The development of the Barrackpore fields has proceeded as in previous years whilst at Guayaguayare operations have been on a small scale during the whole of the year. The extensions to the refinery and shipping depot mentioned in my last report were completed during the year.
2	United British Oilfields of Trinidad, Ltd.	Crown lands under lease. Private lands	Point Fortin, Morne L'Enfer Reserve Los Bajos. Point Fortin.	Sold to the United British Refineries, Ltd. The majority of the production was obtained from the Parry Lands field. Small quantities of oil still continue to be obtained from the old Point Fortin field and that at Los Bajos.
3	Trinidad Central Oilfields, Ltd.	Crown lands under lease.	Tabaquite, Guapo and Lizard Springs.	Production from Tabaquite refined, sold locally and exported; that from Cruse area sold to Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd. A moderate production continued to be obtained from the Tabaquite field. Some work was done on the Cruse area and production obtained. The Company also commenced to develop the Lizard Springs area but the production was negligible.
4	Trinidad Lake Petroleum Company, Ltd.	Private lands	Brighton	The bulk of the production is exported to the United States of America. Producing only.
5	Petroleum Development Company, Ltd.	Crown lands under lease.	Morne L'Enfer Forest Reserve.	Sold to Trinidad Lake Petroleum Company, Ltd. Drilling on Crown oil rights near the Pitch Lake. Satisfactory production. Development of the area sub-leased from this Company by the Trinidad Oilfields Operating Co., Ltd., under deed dated 19th December, 1927—No. 4072 of 1927—has commenced but so far no oil has been produced.
6	Apex (Trinidad) Oilfields, Ltd.	Crown lands under lease and Prospecting license and Private lands.	Fyzabad and Siparia	Sold to Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd. Very active programme during the past year, production only second to that of the Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.

7	Kern Trinidad Oilfields, Ltd. . .	.. Crown lands lease	under La Brea	.. Sold to United British Refineries, Ltd.	Development of Perseverance Estate, Guapo, continued during the whole of the year. Operations were continued on Crown lands near Guapo. A satisfactory production was obtained.
		Private lands	.. Guapo and Rousillac		
8	New (Oropuche) Trinidad Oilfields, Ltd.	Private lands	.. Fyzabad and San Francique.	Sold to Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.	This Company is owned by the Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd. A certain amount of drilling has been done and a moderate production obtained.
9	Trinidad Petroleum Development Company, Limited	Private lands	.. Naparima, Palo Seco, Cedros.	The bulk of this Company's production is exported in the crude state, the remainder of it is sold to the United British Refineries, Ltd., and the Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.	A very active development programme has been undertaken in the Palo Seco district and from the middle of the year the production was very largely increased. Some drilling has also been done in the Fyzabad, San Francique and Cedros districts and a small production obtained from the Fyzabad area.
		Crown Lands	.. Palo Seco, Cedros, Guapo, Erin and Siparia.		
10	Petroleum Options, Ltd. . .	.. Private lands	.. Fyzabad ..	.. Exported by Trinidad Oilfields Operating Co., Ltd.	The properties of this Company have now been leased to the Trinidad Oilfields Operating Company, Ltd.
11	Venezuelan Consolidated Oilfields, Ltd.	Private lands	.. Fyzabad. ..	.. Sold to Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.	Drilling on private lands in the Fyzabad area and a fair production obtained.
12	British Controlled Oilfields, Ltd.	.. Crown lands lease	under Oropuche ..	.. Sold to United British Refineries, Ltd.	Drilling operations have been suspended since January, 1926, and a very small production is obtained from existing wells.
13	Palo Seco Oilfield (C. C. Stollmeyer)	.. Crown lands lease	under Palo Seco ..	.. Sold to Trinidad Petroleum Development Co., Ltd.	Drilling continued during the period under review, and a small production was obtained.
14	Trinidad Oilfields Operating Company, Ltd.	Private lands	.. Fyzabad, San Francique and Palo Seco	Exported	The drilling operations of this Company have been curtailed during the year but the production has not greatly lessened. The Company is now owned by the West India Oil Company.
15	Fyzabad Dome Oilfields ..	.. Private lands	.. Fyzabad ..	.. Sold to Trinidad Leaseholds, Ltd.,	This Company commenced operations during the early part of the year on a small area of private lands and a moderate production was obtained until nearly the close of the year when a very prolific well was drilled.

APPENDIX B.

Daily average number of persons employed in Oilfields and Quarries and the quantity and value of minerals obtained during the year ended 31st December, 1928.

Minerals.	Daily average number of persons employed.		Total.	Quantity.	Approximate Value*.
	Males.	Females.			
Oil	5,339	63	5,402	7,684,450 Barrels.	£1,557,250
Asphalt	938	8	946	195,980 Tons.	122,487
Private Quarries (Limestone, Gravel, &c.)	302	129	431	135,888 Tons.	15,958
Government Quarries (Limestone, &c.)	294	88	382	56,677 Tons.	9,613

* N.B.—The values in this column are those returned by owners and managers, and represent the value at the place of production.

APPENDIX C.

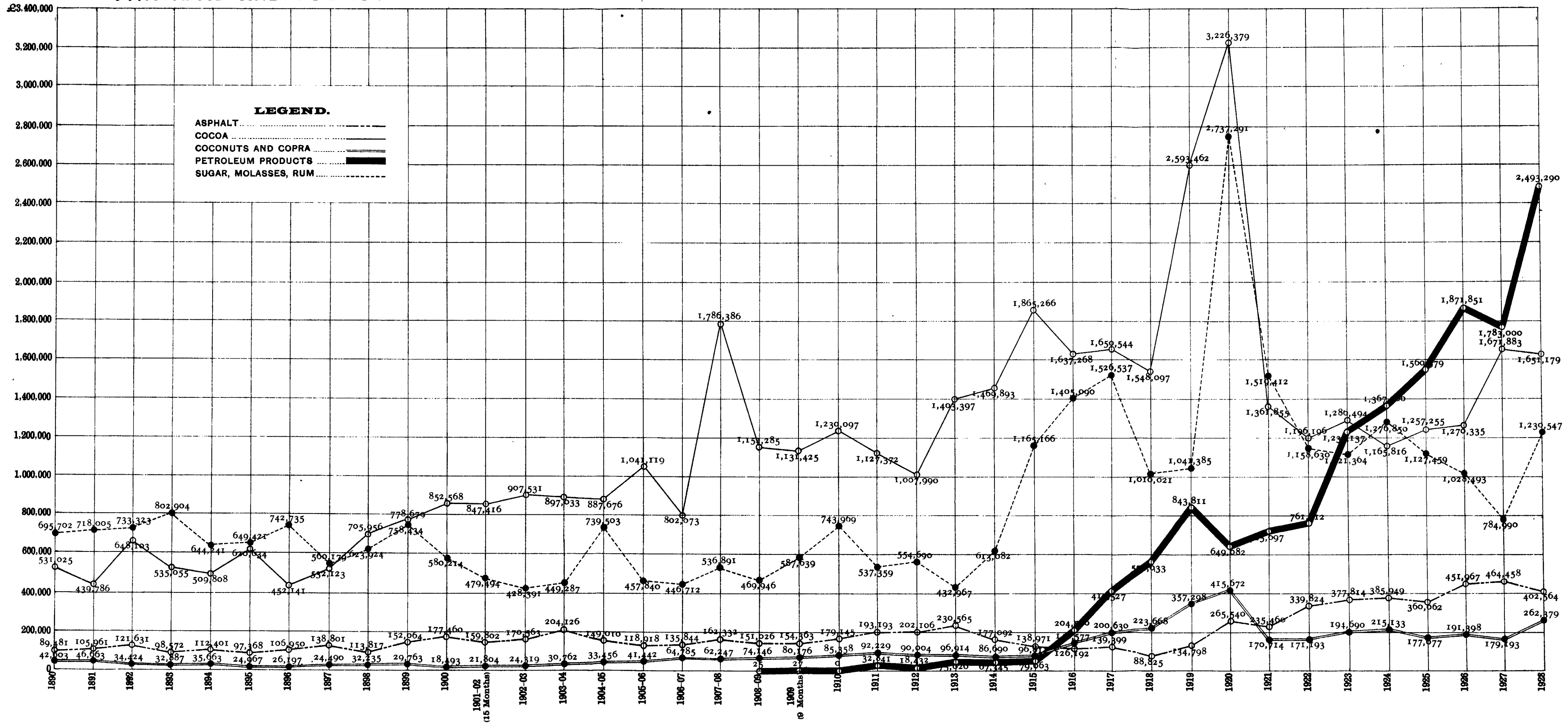
Comparative Statement of oil produced, refined and exported year by year since the inception of the Petroleum Industry in the Colony.

Year.	Production in barrels.	Quantity of Crude Oil refined in barrels.	Quantity of Crude oil and refined oil exported in barrels.
1905 to 31st March, 1910 ..	10,541	—	—
1910-1911	225,112	—	—
1911-1912	285,307	Previous to 1912-1913	37,842
1912-1913	503,616		9,484
1913-1914	643,516		35,061
1914-1915	1,050,112		41,413
9 months ended December, 1915	671,125		58,437
1916	927,877		107,822
1917	1,602,312		505,002
1918	2,082,068		2,106,369
1919	1,841,047		1,149,943
1920	2,083,027		1,395,487
1921	2,354,160		1,806,016
1922	2,444,752		1,820,018
1923	3,050,872		2,360,279
1924	4,056,612		3,433,902
1925	4,386,507		3,790,343
1926	4,971,471		3,786,876
1927	5,380,464		4,796,223
1928	7,684,450		6,725,383
	46,154,948		33,965,900
			34,197,109

A

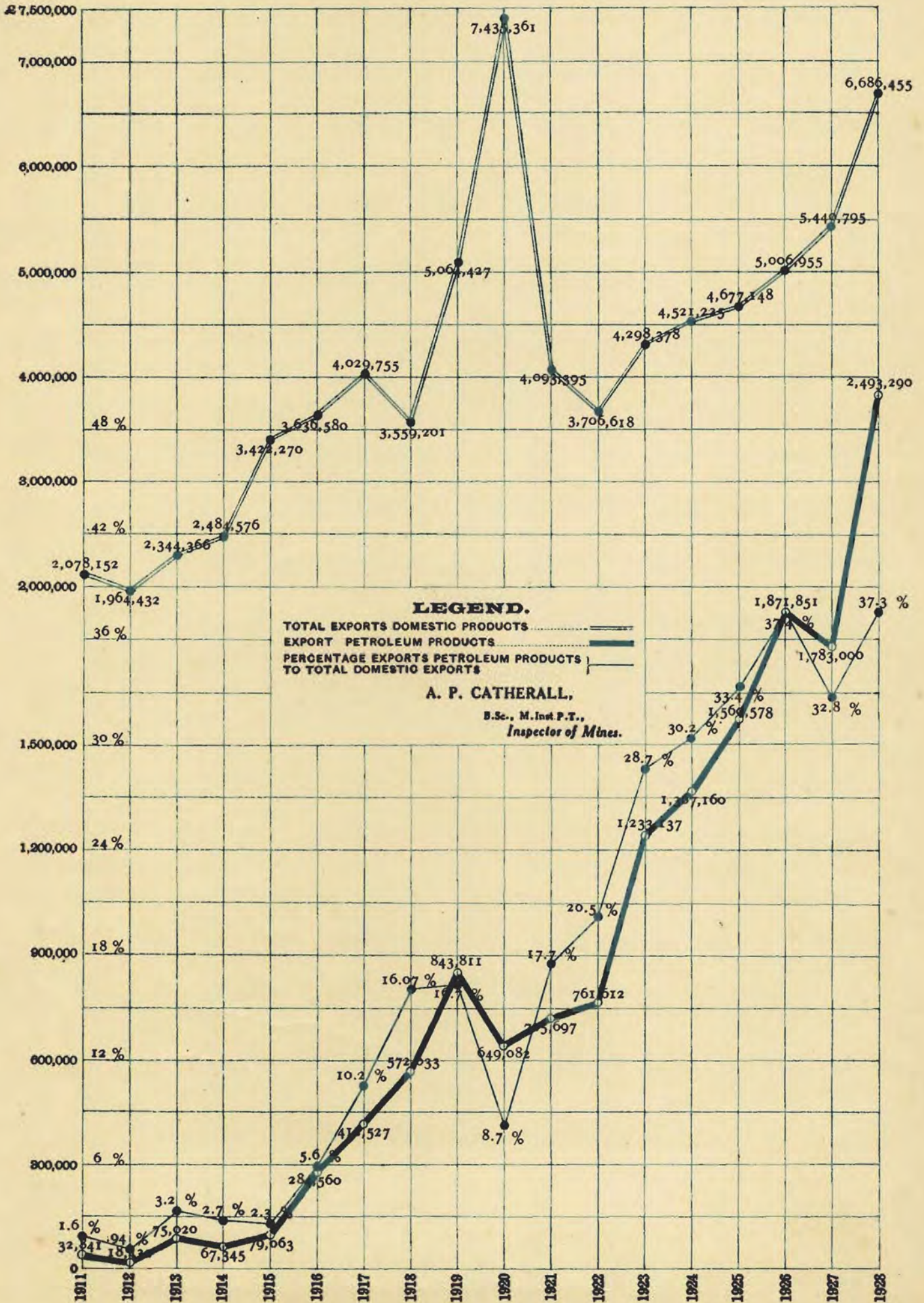
EXPORT OF LOCAL PRODUCE.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.



B

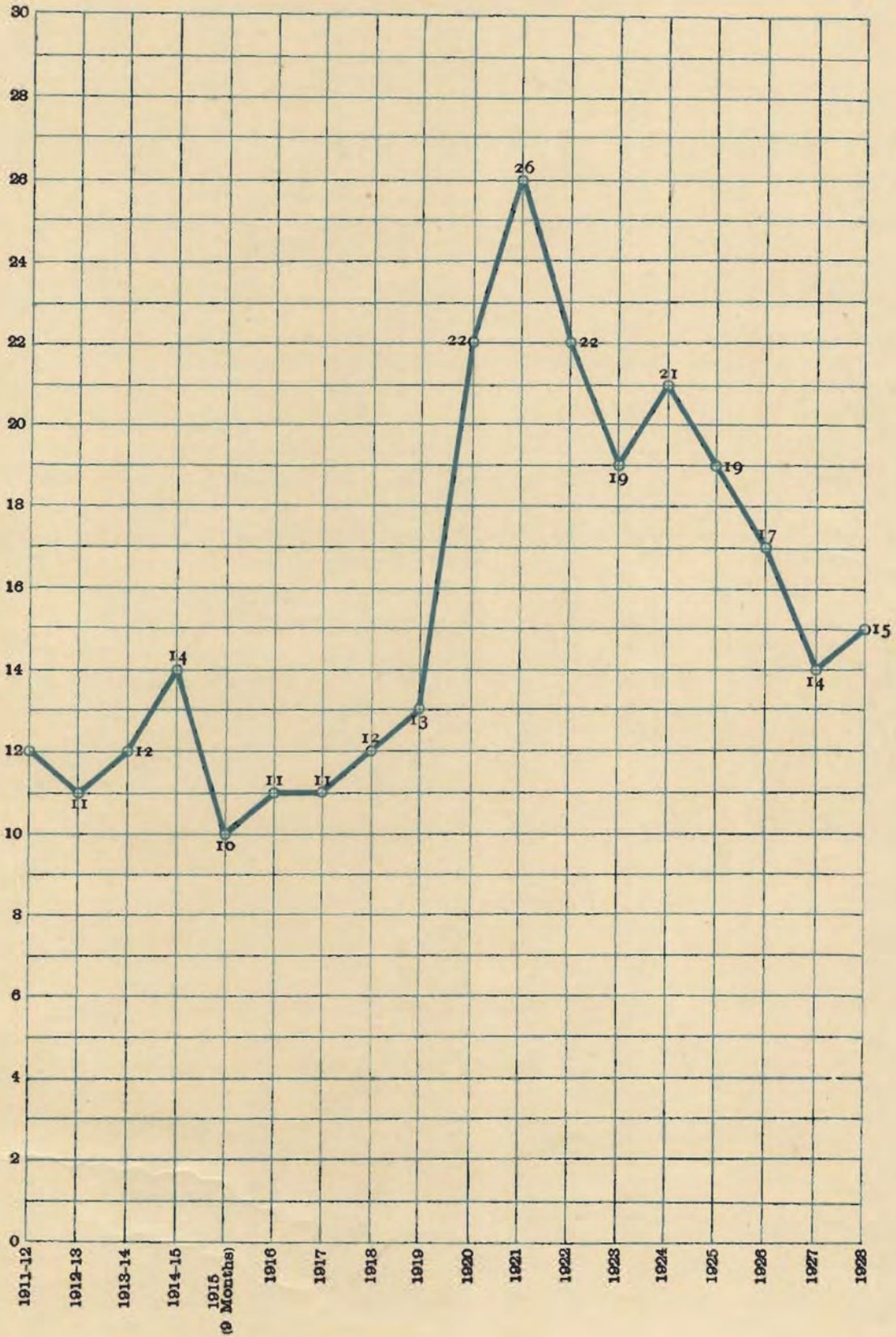
TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO.



APPENDIX - D.

C

Curve showing the number of Oil Companies that have operated annually in the Colony from, 1st April, 1911 to 31st December, 1928.

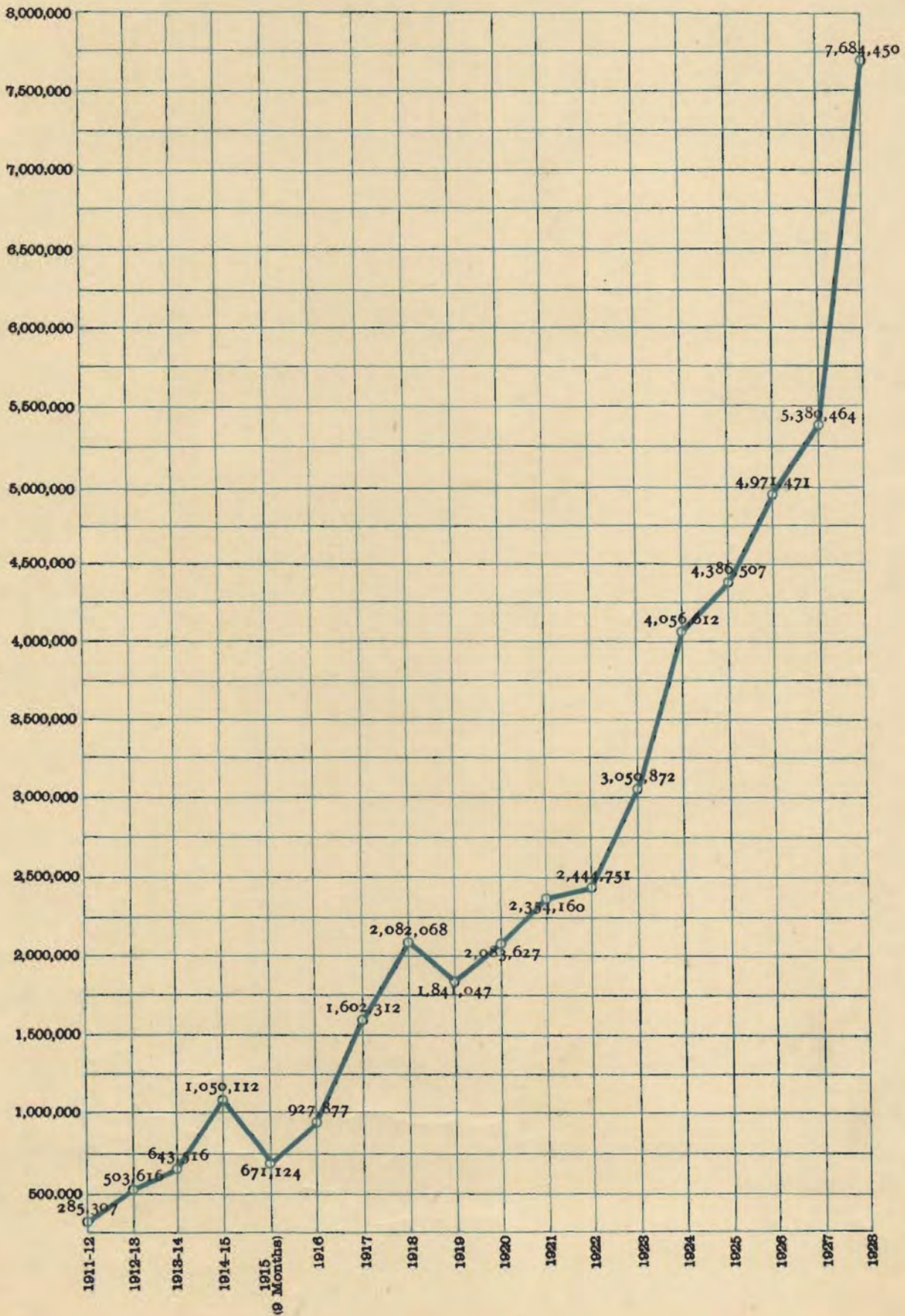


APPENDIX--D.

D

TOTAL ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF CRUDE OIL IN BARRELS.

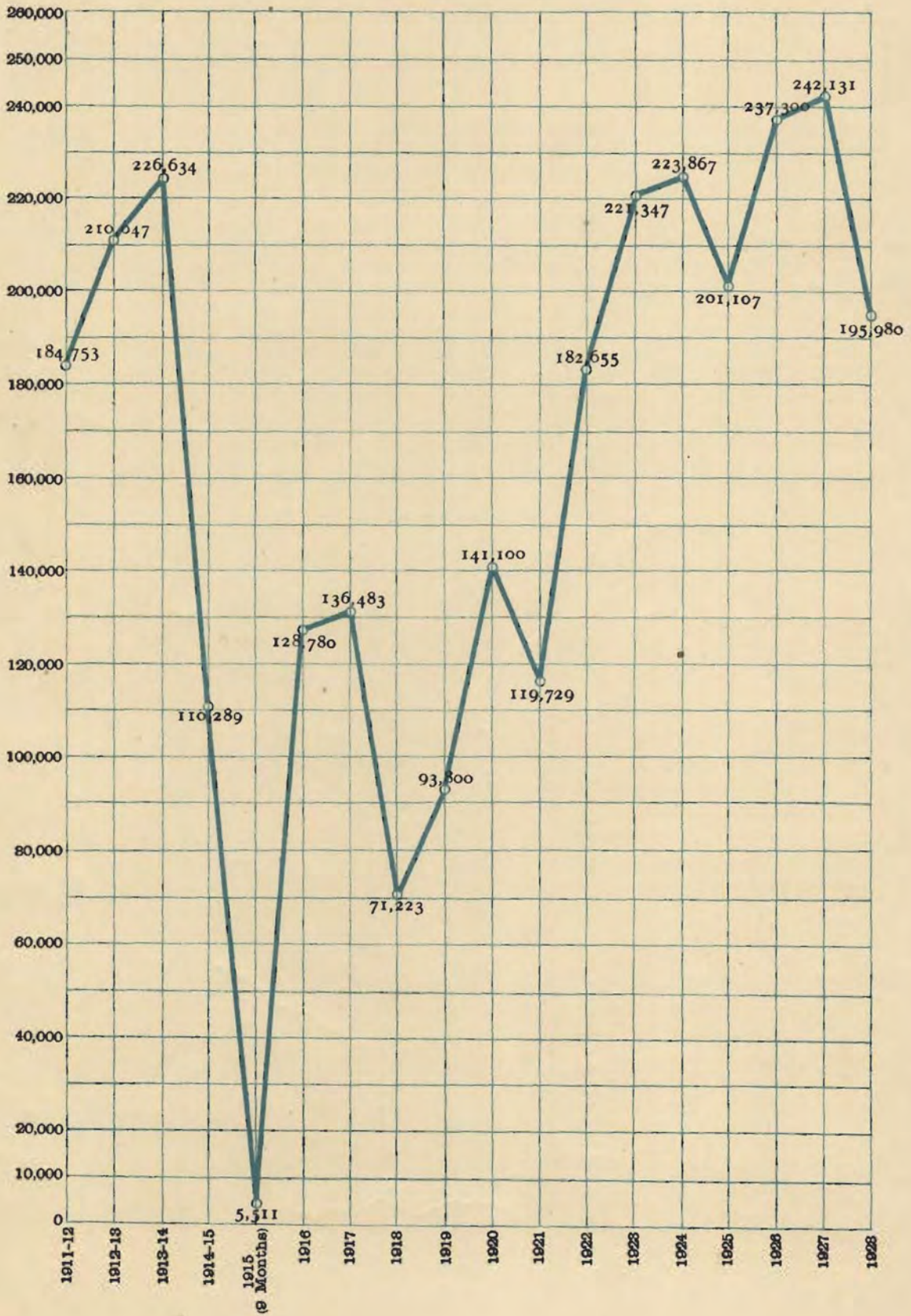
One barrel = 35 gallons.



APPENDIX-D.

E

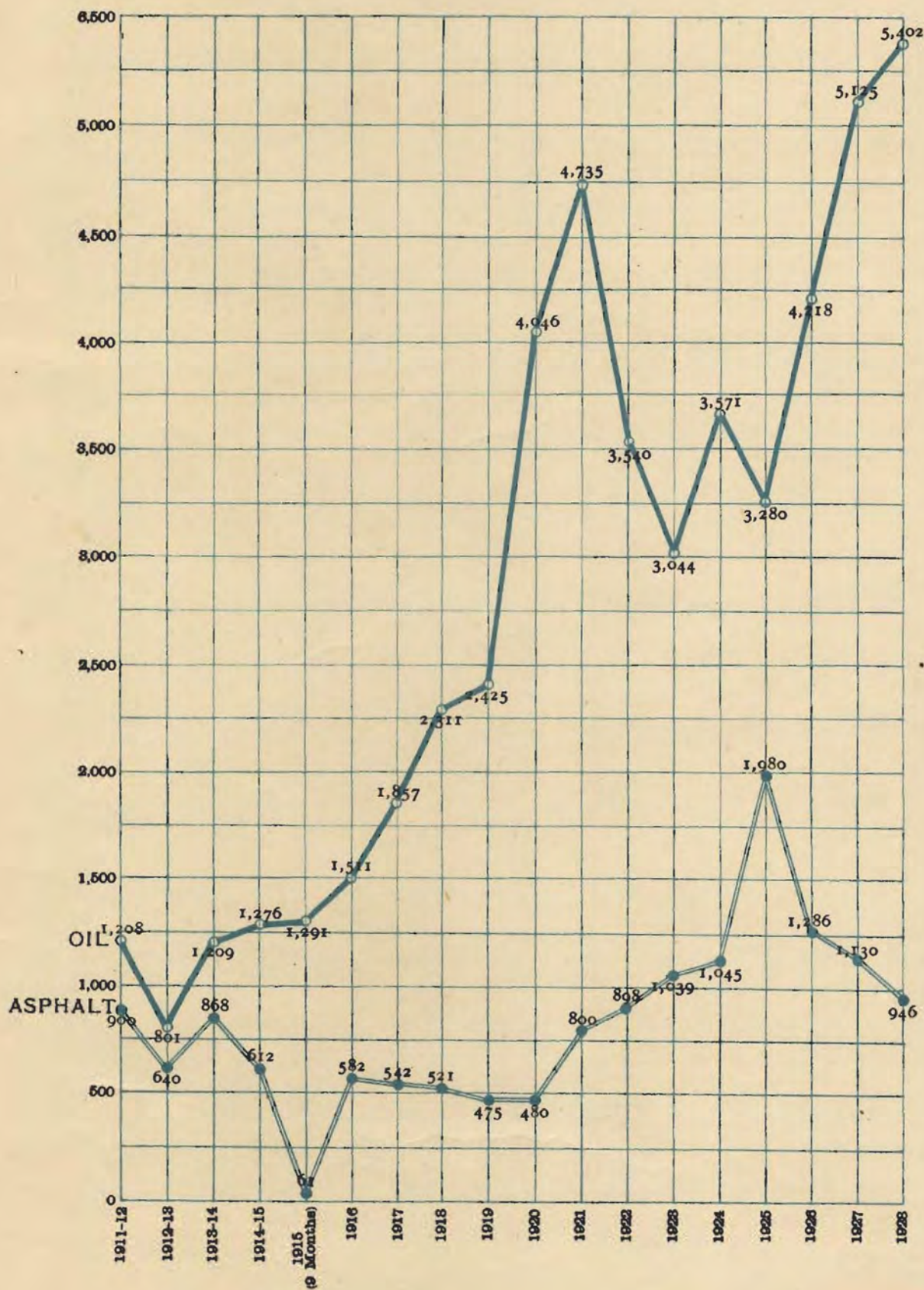
Curve showing yearly output of Asphalt from the Colony in Tons, from 1st April, 1911 to 31st December, 1928.



APPENDIX-D.

F

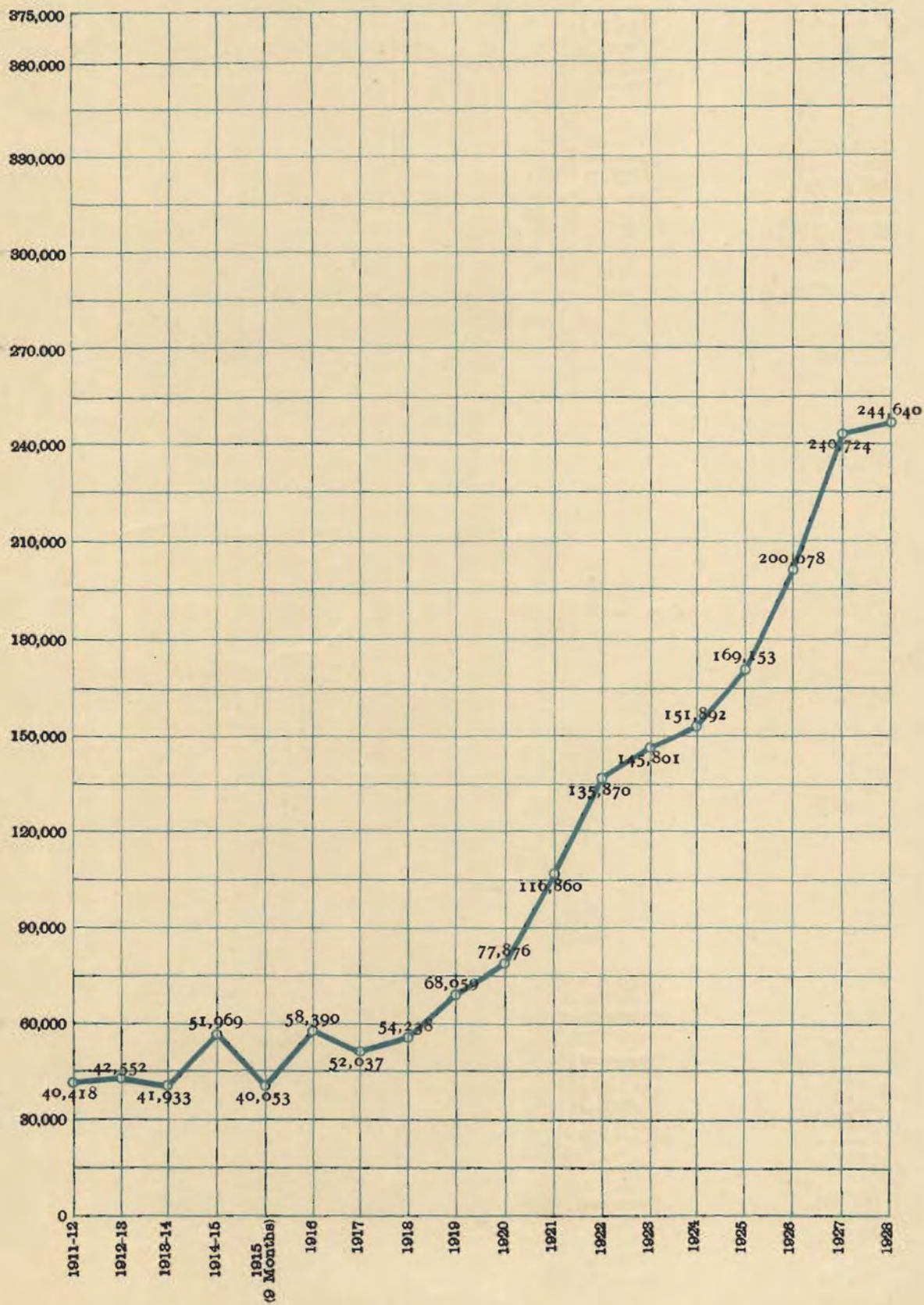
Curve showing comparison of daily average number of persons employed in the Oil and Asphalt Industries of the Colony from 1st April, 1911 to 31st December, 1928.



APPENDIX-D.

G

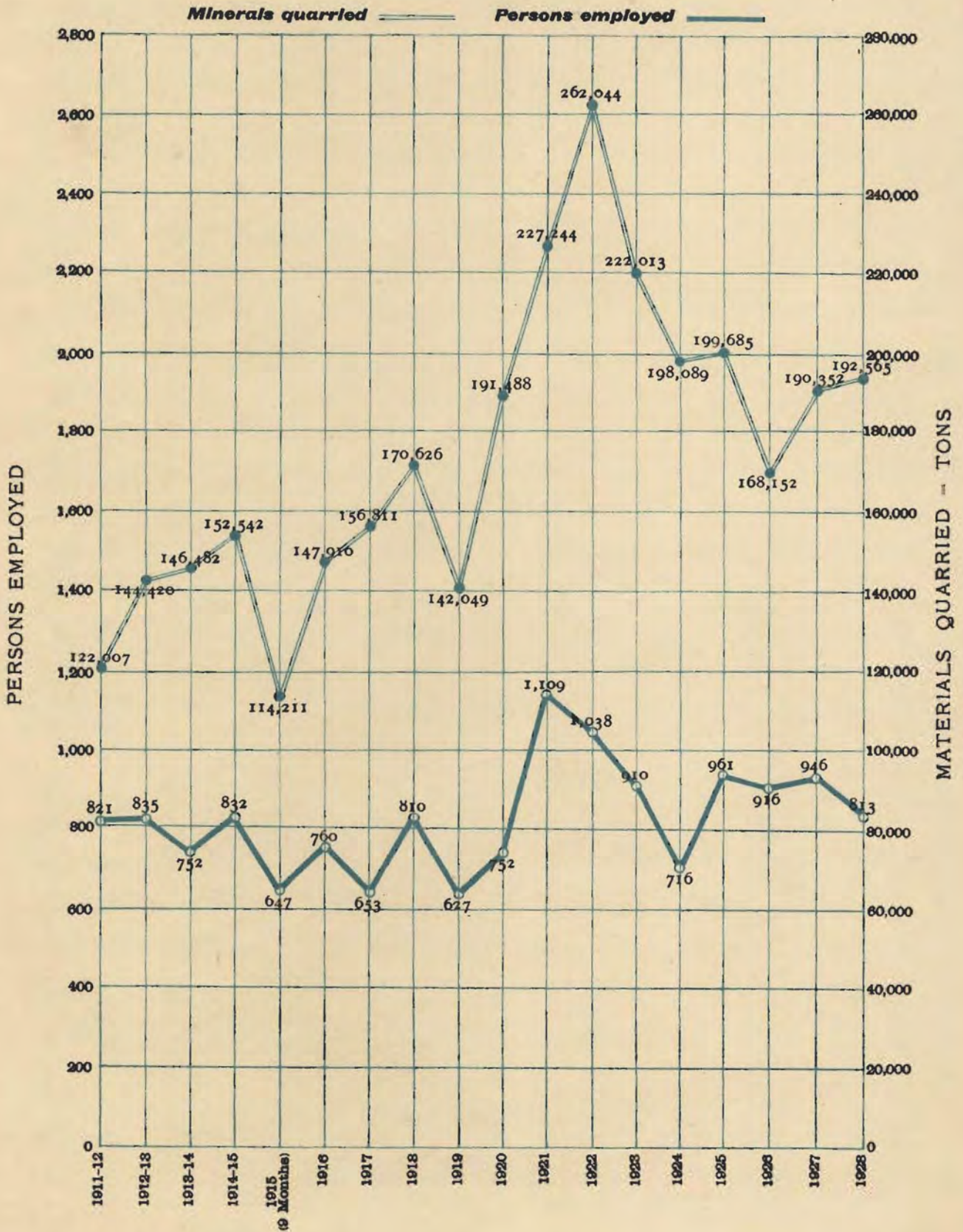
Curve showing yearly total number of feet drilled in the Colony from 1st April, 1911 to 31st December, 1928.



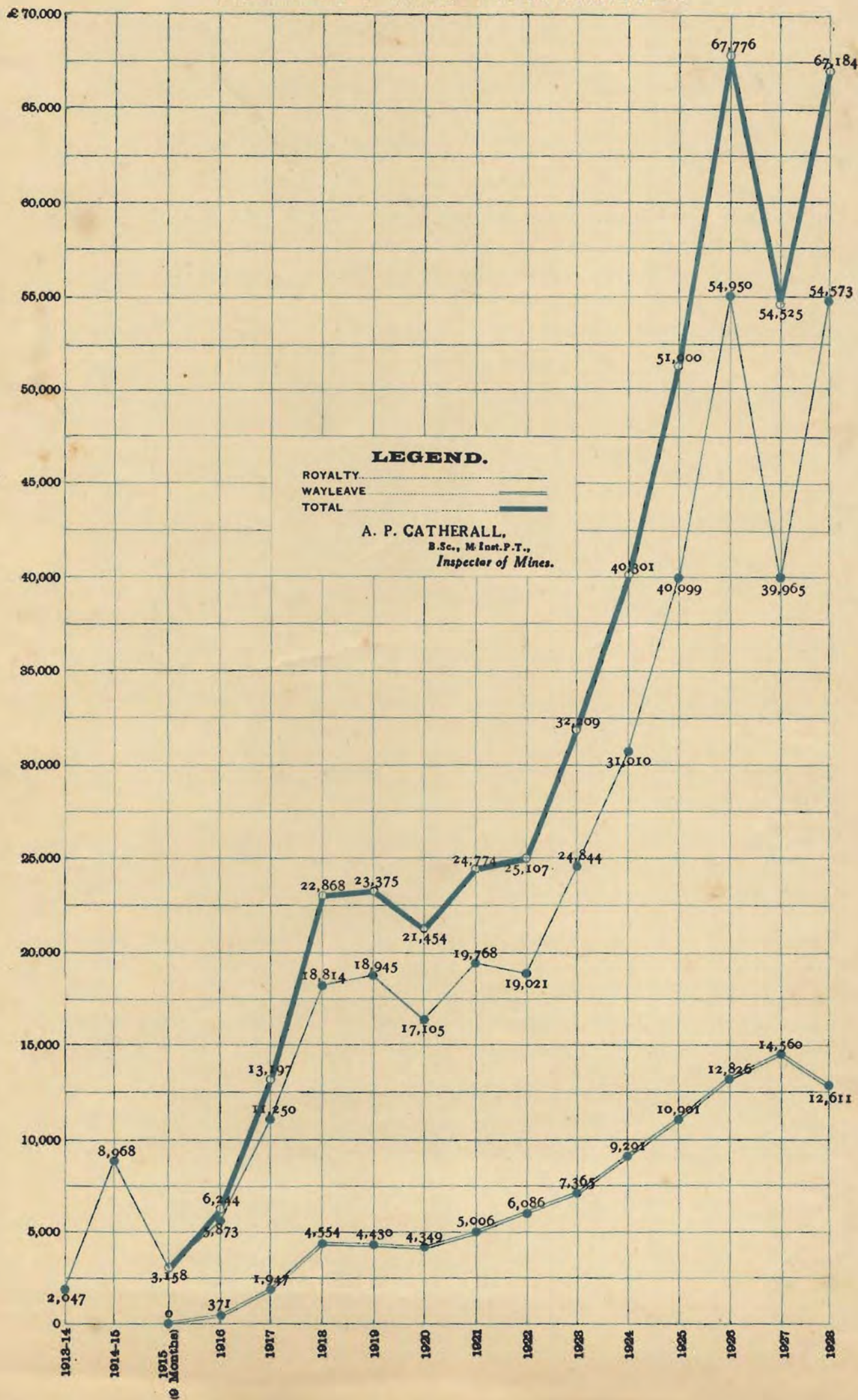
APPENDIX-D.

H

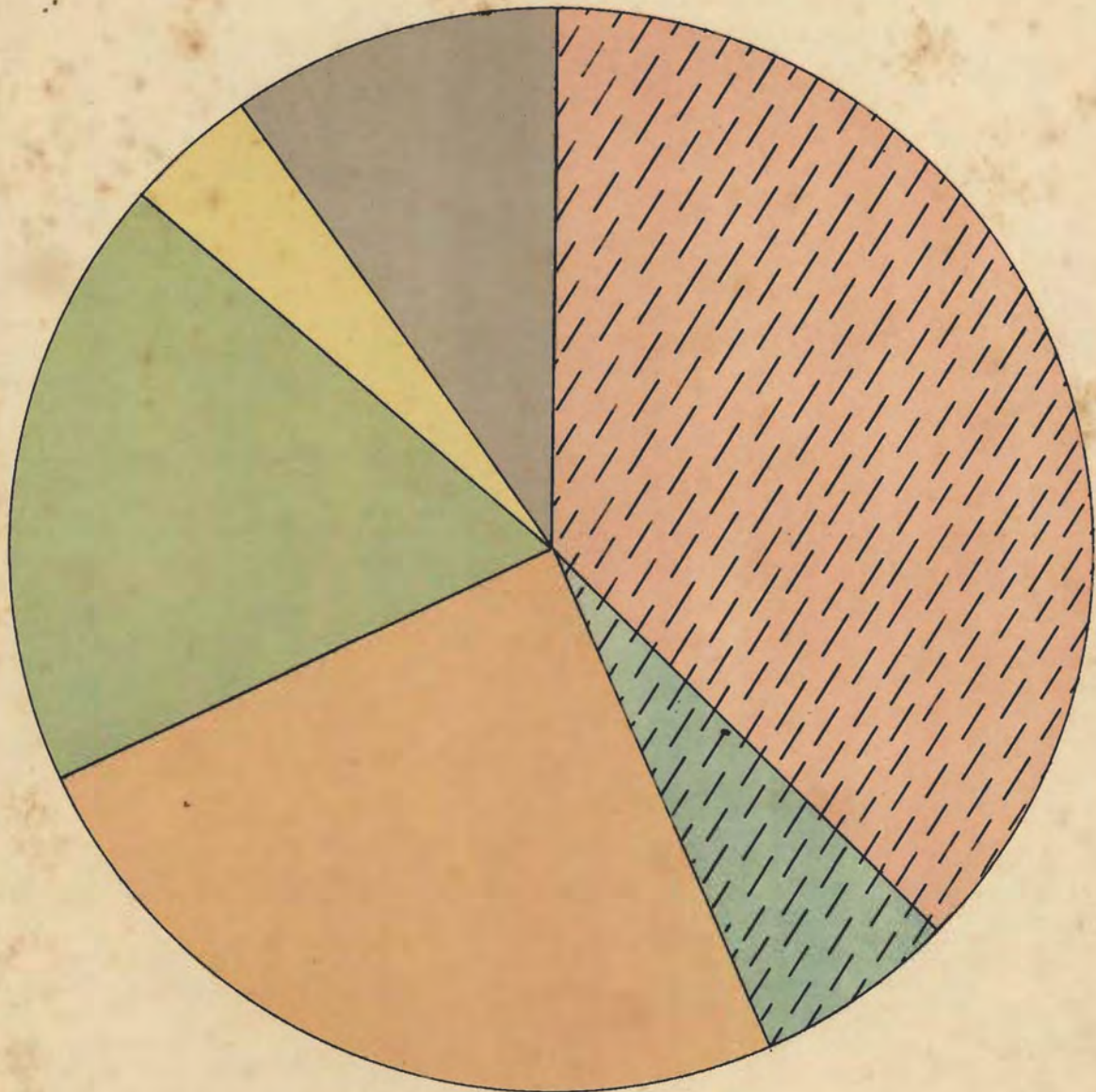
Curve showing the yearly total quantity of Minerals quarried and a comparison of the daily average number of persons employed in Quarries in the Colony from 1st April, 1911 to 31st December, 1928.



ROYALTY AND WAYLEAVE.



APPENDIX-E.



MINERAL EXPORTS 48.3%

Petroleum Products 37.3%

Asphalt 6%

AGRICULTURAL AND OTHER EXPORTS 56.7%

Cocoa 24.7%

Sugar, Molasses, Rum 18.4%

Coconuts and Copra 3.9%

Other Exports 9.7%