

1911 Encyclopædia Britannica, Volume 9 — Elisavetpol (government)



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ELISAVETPOL, a government of Russia, Transcaucasia, having the governments of Tiflis and Daghestan on the N., Baku on the E., and Erivan and Tiflis on the W. and Persia on the S. Area, 16,721 sq. m. It includes: (a) the southern slope of the main Caucasus range in the north-east, where Bazardyuzi (14,770 ft.) and other peaks rise above the snow-line; (b) the arid and unproductive steppes beside the Kura, reaching 1000 ft. of altitude in the west and sinking to 100–200 ft. in the east, where irrigation is necessary; and (c) the northern slopes of the Transcaucasian escarpment and portions of the Armenian plateau, which is intersected towards its western boundary, near Lake Gok-cha, by chains of mountains consisting of trachytes and various crystalline rocks, and reaching 12,845 ft. in Mount Kapujikh. Elsewhere the country has the character of a plateau, 7000 to 8000 ft. high, deeply trenched by tributaries of the Aras. All varieties of climate are found from that of the snowclad peaks, Alpine meadows, and stony deserts of the high levels, to that of the hill slopes, clothed with gardens and vineyards, and of the arid Caspian steppes. Thus, at Shusha, on the plateau, at an altitude of 3680 ft., the average temperatures are: year 48°, January 26°, July 66°; annual rainfall, 26.4; while at Elisavetpol, in the valley of the Kura, they are: year 55°, January 32°.2, July 77° and rainfall only 10.3 in. Nearly one-fifth of the surface is under forests.

The population which was 885,379 in 1897 (only 392,124 women; 84,130 urban), and was estimated at 953,300 in 1906, consists chiefly of Tatars (56%) and Armenians (33%). The remainder are Kurds (4.7%), Russians and a few Germans, Jews, Kurins, Udins and Tates. Peasants form the great bulk of the population. Some of the Tatars and the Kurds are nomadic. Wheat, maize, barley, oats and rye are grown, also rice. Cultivation of cotton has begun, but the rearing of silkworms is of old standing, especially at Nukha (1650 tons of cocoons on the average are obtained every year). Nearly 8000 acres are under vines, the yield of wine averaging $82\frac{1}{2}$ million gallons annually. Gardening reaches a high standard of perfection. Liquorice root is obtained to the extent of about 35,000 tons annually. The rearing of live-stock is largely carried on on the steppes. Copper, magnetic iron ore, cobalt and a small quantity of naphtha are extracted, and nearly 10,000 persons are employed in manufacturing industry—copper works and silk-mills. Carpet-weaving is widely spread. Owing to the Transcaucasian railway, which crosses the government, trade, both in the interior and with Persia, is very brisk. The government is divided into eight districts, Elisavetpol, Aresh, Jebrail, Jevanshir, Kazakh, Nukha, Shusha and Zangezur. The only towns, besides the capital, are Nukha (24,811 inhabitants in 1897) and Shusha (25,656).

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