

Grand Bahama Commissioner's Report 1955

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.		PAGE.
I. GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION	.....	1 - 3
II. POPULATION	.....	4 - 5
III. HEALTH	.....	5 - 7
IV. HOUSING	.....	8
V. PRODUCTION	.....	8 - 12
VI. COMMERCE	.....	12 - 13
VII. WAGES AND COST OF LIVING	.....	13 - 14
VIII. EDUCATION AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS	.....	14 - 17
IX. COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT	.....	18 - 22
X. FINANCE	.....	22 - 25
XI. PUBLIC WORKS	.....	25 - 27
XII. JUSTICE, POLICE AND PRISON	.....	27 - 30
XIII. LEGISLATION	.....	30
XIV. TAXATION	.....	31
XV. MISCELLANEOUS	.....	31 - 38

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DISTRICT OF GRAND BAHAMA
FOR THE YEAR 1955
BY
COMMISSIONER S. R. DARVILLE

CHAPTER 1. GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT

The District of Grand Bahama, which comprises and includes the main Island of Grand Bahama and the adjacent Cays, including Sweeting's Cay, Water Cay, Sandy Cay, Wood Cay, Northwest Cay, and others, lies on the Southern edge of the Little Bahama Bank, One hundred and fifty miles West North West of the Island of New

Providence and sixty miles East South East of West Palm Beach, Florida. It is represented in the Honourable House of Assembly by The Honourable Charles W.F. Bethell, M.H.A., M.E.C. who was re-elected to membership in the House in the General Election of July, 1949.

Courts of Revision, for the Registration of Voters were held in the three Divisions of this District during the months of April, September, and December, in accordance with the requirements of The General Assembly Election Act of 1946 1950 and Amendments of 1948 thereto. The Register of Voters, which started in 1950 was terminated or 'died' in September 1955. As a result and in view of the forthcoming Election (General) in 1956, Courts of Revision were held also in October and November. There are now only 137 [figure written in] Voters registered so far.

While no changes or amendments were made in the necessary qualifications for electors as laid out in Sections 15, 16, 17 & 18 of The General Assembly Act of 1946, a new interpretation of the Act has seemed to come about, and a 'letter of the Law' qualification is required. /

– Page – 2

Many persons whose names appeared on the old Register will not be inserted on the new Register, – unless or until they obtain the necessary qualifications – as they are Tenants on Crown Land and do not pay the annual rental as required by the Act, in spite of the fact that they all have homes built on the land they rent from the Crown and they have Registered and Voted in many General Elections.

ADMINISTRATION.

The administrative duties of this District were performed by the Writer during the year under review, with the exception of the period from the 1st., August to the 15th., October when he was on vacation. During this period the Office was filled by Commissioner M.I. Hepburn. The Commissioner is assisted in the performance of his administrative duties by one Clerical Assistant and one Post Office Clerk, One Collector of Revenue at Pine Ridge and another at Gold Rock Creek, Three members of the Nassau Constabulary, one stationed at West End and the other at Eight-Mile-Rock, two Grade Two Local Constables at High Rock and Pelican Point, Two Customs Officers at West End, and five Sub-Postmasters, one each at West End, Eight-Mile-Rock, Pine Ridge, High Rock, and Sweetings Cay.

The two clerks mentioned above, the Clerical Assistant and the Post Office Clerk take care of all Postal transactions, that is, the sale of Telegraph, Domestic, United Kingdom, United States of America, Canadian and other Money Orders, Deposits and Withdrawals of Post Office Savings Bank accounts and the receipt and despatch of Registered articles.

They are also very helpful to the Commissioner in caring for and keeping up to date the ever increasing amount of Clerical and General Office Work, connected with the many and varied administrative duties of the Commissioner. They also manage very well the Clerical and General routine work in the Commissioner's Office during his absence on Tours of the District or on short visits to Nassau and elsewhere.

The Collectors of Revenue are responsible for the collection of all Revenue accruing in their respective Districts and so assist in a more or less independent way the administration of the District. /

The members of the Nassau Constabulary and the Local Constables, as well as the District Constables in their various settlements, have been very cooperative and helpful in the maintenance of peace and good order throughout the District in general.

I do not think it is necessary to reiterate in this report, the many and varied duties of an Out Island Commissioner, as I expect that most of those who are in authority over him, should be somewhat acquainted with his duties.

The duties of administration in this District has increased considerably during the year under review and the Commissioner, in spite of the clerical assistants that he has in the office, finds himself working long hours during the day and far into the nights in order to keep his work up to date as much as possible and to try to meet the demands of various Departments of Government, I find myself having to take time off in order to spend some time with my family.

Administration in this District during the past year, is considered to have been very successful. A lot has been achieved, which will be shown in the other chapters of this Report, that will help this Island and its people tremendously and be beneficial to the Colony in general. This Success is due largely to the whole-hearted cooperation, support, consideration and advice of the Head of our Department. /

CHAPTER II.

POPULATION.

The population of the District in December, 1952, according to the Census taken at the time was 3,912. The estimated population for 1954 was 4,300 and the estimated population for this year 1955 is 4,600.

This total estimated population is distributed among various settlements as follows

West End	620	Water Cay	180
Dead Man's Reef	14	Pinder's Point	228
Holmes Rock	148	Hunters	140
Eight Mile Rock (and Hanna Hill)	425	Lewis Yard	75
Smith's Point (inc. Mather Tn., Williams & Russell Town)	165	Free Town	85
Sweetings Cay	194	High Rock	255
Pelican Point	85	Crabbing Bay, Rocky Creek and	
Pine Ridge	1,876	McClellan's Town	110

The following is a record of Births and Deaths in the District during the year:

There was a total of 239 Births; of these 121 were males and 118 Females. Of these 6 were Still Births, four Males and two Females.

When compared with the figures of the previous year an increase of 54 is shown. The Birth Rate for 1955 according to the population of Grand Bahama is about 5%.

There were 36 Deaths, including the 6 Still Births, 20 of which were Males and 16 Females which makes the Mortality rate for 1955, according to the population, of 0.84 per cent. When compared with the figures for the last year a decrease of 13 Deaths is shown. This makes the natural increase for this Island in 1955, 4.50 per cent according to population.

Infant Mortality.

Of the 36 Deaths recorded 15 of them were infants under one year of age, including 6 Still Births and 9 from 1 day to 2 months old. /

– Page – 5

Cause of Deaths.

Nine persons died of accidents during the year, Five in Truck accidents Four from drowning. 1 died from Burns, 3 of Hypertension, 1 of Cerebral Haemorrhage, 1 of Heart Disease, 2 of General Debility, 2 of Cancer, 1 of Pneumonia, 3 of Gastritis and 12 of unknown causes.

CHAPTER III.

HEALTH.

The general health condition of the District has been very satisfactory during the year under review. Most diseases encountered were successfully treated by the District Medical Officer and Private Medical Officer of the Abaco Lumber Company at Pine Ridge. All public Wells which is the only public Water supply system yet available in the District, have been cleaned regularly during the year. Major repairs to and reconditioning of most of these Wells were undertaken during the year. No new ones were added.

I am very pleased to report again this year that the fight against Tuberculosis and Venereal Disease is continuing very successfully and a very marked improvement is seen in the number of Settlements. Only four new cases of Tuberculosis were discovered in 1955. One of these cases were sent for treatment to Princess Margaret Hospital. This was done because the environment in which the person lived had presented a threat to the health of the general public. The three other cases have received and still are receiving the proper Medical care and supervision necessary for their recovery.

Two cases of Typhoid were diagnosed and treated. Both of them recovered. One of these cases was brought here for treatment from Abaco and the other from Bimini. No cases of Typhoid were diagnosed in Grand Bahama proper.

An epidemic of Measles occurred in the months of February and March and was still found in all the

Settlements of the District. 50 cases were recorded and treated by the Medical Officer in Pine Ridge. Many others did not receive treatment /

– Page – 6

No complications developed in many of these cases and no deaths were recorded as a result of this epidemic.

Another very important step was taken, during the year, in the public health program. All infants in West End, Holmes Rock, Eight-Mile-Rock, Pinder's Point, Lewis Yard and Hunters, were immunized against Whooping Cough, of which not a single case was diagnosed or reported during the year. Not only were the results of this effort very satisfying, but it was also very gratifying to see the response of the parents to the immunization Campaign.

The problem of nutritional deficiencies, or malnutrition, was successfully and satisfactorily dealt with by the use of a Vitimin [sic] "B" complex treatment. Over Two hundred and Fifty cases were treated in connection with this Nutritional problem during the year and the results are very pleasing indeed. The problem of getting fresh Vegetables and fruits, the natural source of these necessary Vitamins, is still unsolved but much improved over the previous year, with bright prospects of a permanent solution in, I hope, the not very distant future.

It is pleasing to note that the death rate this year is well below that of the previous year; regrettably though, the main cause of deaths this year is again accidents; exactly one quarter of the total deaths. I cannot but point at here too, that not one single death has been recorded as the result of Tuberculosis.

Alcoholism has been and still is our main health problems, and nothing has been done during the past year to change the condition report in 1954. It still remains a menace to the social well-being and mortality of almost every community. The health destroying pleasures of excessive drinking must be supplanted [supplanted] by some other more healthy and helpful pleasure. A good community social centre may be the answer. It is one of the inevitable laws of nature to give something for something. So, if a man give up drinking he usually wants something to substitute for or replace it. There are only a very few people who would consider the moral satisfaction of a victory over a weakness a good enough recompense.

Alcoholism is a social as well as a public health problem. Truly it is a disease of terrific magnitude and terrible consequences about which /

– Page – 7

something must be done to warn the Victims and the would be Victims of its dangers if the population is to survive in any degree of health. But it should not be looked on only as a matter of medical or personal concern. The cure or the salvation of the Victim does not lie solely in a better comprehension of the physical and psychological nature of alcoholism and the study of drinking patterns. The cure lies as well in better social services. As long as these social services are poor, – as they most certainly are here, – as long as there is nothing to satisfy the inner emptiness and loneliness of the individual, so long will alcoholism remain on the winning side and the cancer of both family and Community life.

SANITATION.

While there has been some small improvements in the Settlement of West End, Sanitation remains an unsolved problem on Grand Bahama. In most of the Settlements the conditions are still primitive. Because of this condition, and the present "Open-Well" public water supply, there is always present with us the possibility of an out-burst of some epidemic of Typhoid or other Virus diseases, especially in the event of a hurricane or heavy rains. One thing that would go a long way in helping to remedy and improve this situation would be the installation of hand water pumps in closed wells to replace the present open-well water supply. This matter should be given some serious consideration especially in respect of the more thickly populated settlements.

A step in the right direction and a positive sign of improvement is the supply of a Garbage Truck for the West End, which came about in November of this year.

I wish to mention in this connection and under this chapter, that there is no appropriate Clinic and Doctor's (or Nurse's) accommodation for the District Medical Officer. Apparently it is only the sense of duty and his regards for the medical welfare of the people of this Island, – and of others who came to seek his care, – that have compelled our present District Medical Officer to work under the present, more than unsatisfactory conditions. He is too, very ably assisted in his work by an industrious nurse who, by her conscientious and devoted efforts, has kept the present dilapidated [sic] building used as a Clinic here in the West End, in some Shape and a good standard of cleanliness. /

– Page – 8

CHAPTER IV.

HOUSING.

The houses throughout the District, with the exception of West End and Pine Ridge, are constructed principally of local stone, lime and cement. In West End they are mostly of wood and in Pine Ridge they are entirely of wood, that is, locally milled native pine lumber.

I am pleased to report again this year that there has been a number of new houses built and considerable improvements made to the existing ones. In almost every Settlement one can see new homes springing up, and many of them are well built. Some improvements in appearance are being made as well, but there is still a lot of room for additional improvements in this respect in many places.

A few fine homes and business places were built in West End, some in Eight-Mile-Rock, and Pinders Point and some in a few other settlements. These are almost all constructed on separate plots of land, but still, in West End and Pine Ridge, there is some disorderly pattern of over-crowding of buildings on small plots of land.

There is still the problem of over-crowding of large families in small houses, but this problem will probably remain unsolved for a long time to come. In fact it can be expected to become even worse as the demands for rooms increase with the expected large scale developments in this island. Most of the houses comprise of two to four rooms,

some from four to six rooms and in a few or [sic] them there are eight or more rooms. Some of the newly constructed houses, as well as a few others, are equipped with modern sewerage and electricity.

CHAPTER V.

PRODUCTION.

Forest and marine products are the natural resources of this District.

FOREST.

A vast pine forest covers more than four hundred and thirty square miles of the island's surface from which millions of feet of lumber, the principle product of this District, is milled annually. This product is manufactured by the Abaco Lumber Company at their mills in the lumber /

– Page – 9

Camp Settlement of Pine Ridge. Owned and operated by Mr. Wallace Groves, this Company holds exclusive milling rights to all the Crown's Timber in this Island. He is also given or sold the right to log and mill privately owned timber as well.

During the year under review, 9,384,034 feet of lumber were manufactured by this Company. Of this amount 9,297,024 feet were shipped and exported from the Island during the same period. Well over a million feet went to England and Germany. The largest market for this lumber, however, is found in Trinidad, Barbados, and other islands of the West Indies. During 1955, more than five million feet went to these markets, while approximately three and a quarter million feet were shipped to Nassau during the same period. All of these figures show considerable increase over the previous year.

The National Coal Board of Great Britain is regularly supplied by Pit Props Limited, subsidiary of the Abaco Lumber Company, with Pit Props for use in the Coal Mines of Great Britain. These pit props are made from Pine Logs which vary in sizes and are from four to nine feet in length. A total of 10,753 fathoms of these pit props were exported to England, including a small shipment to Germany, in 1955. This is a trifle over 2000 fathoms more than the previous year. In the Pit Prop industry most of the work is done by contracts, piece work and jobs. In this way every one profits. As many people as wish to are employed, they work in their own time and produce more per working hour. Hence the employees make a better wage and the Employers get more Pit Props produced in a shorter period of time. Both men and women are employed in this industry and earn an average weekly wage of from £5 to £12. Together, The Abaco Lumber Company and Pit Props Limited employed an average of 820 men and women at all times during the year under review.

MARINE PRODUCTS.

The principal marine products are fish, conchs, and crawfish. Scale fish, Sea shells, Corals and Star fish are also gathered and sold to markets in the United States.

A. FISH.

Edible and sport fish of numerous varieties and quantities /

– Page – 10

abound in the waters of this District, and the fact is fast becoming known [sic] to more and more sports fishermen. Apart from the more than one hundred pleasure boats that came here in 1955 to fish in these waters, more than three thousand visitors came by air to join in the fun and frolic with the champion and fighters of the deep. All of them went away satisfied and anxious to return for more of it.

The edible fish are caught mostly for the local market where the demand has been ever increasing and so has the price. Very little of this fish is now exported to America, as the price on the local market, from 1/ to 1/6 per lb, – is much better than can be gotten for fish for export. Handline, fish pots, or traps, and nets are used to catch the fish, and a considerable number of smacks and small dinghy boats are continuously engaged in the fishing business. As I said above, the local market is very good, and fish is always in demand. If and when the fish is preserved, it is either salted or frozen. Although there is no scarcity of fish, it is no longer the cheapest food in the Island.

B. CONCHS.

The only reason why this product is not exported in large quantities is because it is illegal to do so. It appears that it would be beneficial to allow the export of conch since the export of the shell is permitted, and in this way hundreds of thousands of these conchs are destroyed every year for the sake of their shells. A lot of this conch is used, of course, but not nearly as much as is wasted. Conchs are very numerous on the banks North and East of West End, in fact there seems to be an inexhaustible supply. It is a much appreciated food supply and a well recognized marine food which goes into the making of a number of very popular native dishes. Like the fish, the price of this commodity [sic] has gone up very much to what it was years ago. Then, it was a very difficult to give away conchs, now it is sometimes difficult to buy them.

C. CRAWFISH.

Crawfish may be caught for export but the open season which covers the period from the 1st, January to 15th, March and from 1st, October to 31st, December of each year. Crawfish may be taken for /

– Page – 11

Personal food consumption at anytime, but they are not found after the close of the season. The first part of the season 1955-1956, that is from the 1st. October to the 31st. December, was not bad at all. Prices were good, and the fish was considered plentiful most of the time. Many more of these fish were caught and exported this year than in 1953 and '54 together.

STONE CRABS.

These are still on the increase and can be seen in some fair quantities on the banks North and East of West End. The Capturing or taking of these crabs is prohibited by law.

SPONGE.

The Sponges on the banks and in other areas around the District are continuing to revive, and could probably be opened to fishing in the not very distant future.

AGRICULTURAL.

Again I regret to report that there has been no noticeable increase in agricultural development in the District during the past year. Those who have been doing something in this direction are still carrying on, but with no increased enthusiasm. They continue to cultivate some of the general food crops such as corn, peas, potatoes, cassava, and some fruits such as Avocado pears, mangoes, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, and bananas. This, of course, does not apply to all the settlements in the District because in some of them very little or no effort is made in this direction. I do not think there has been any increase in the acreage cultivated either; there are about 240 acres more or less, under cultivation in one way or another.

STOCK AND POULTRY.

There is an ever increasing number of cattle in this District, as no special effort is made to stop it of [sic] to improve and increase the stock. A few of these are being slaughtered for food each week, and with the increase of traffic on the main road and the fact that the cattle are not properly pastured, a number of them are being killed in this way.

Efforts in poultry-raising on a commercial basis have continued /

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– Page – 12

And have proven rather successful especially in Pine Ridge. This stock, of course, is not yet large enough to take care of all the needs of the District, but it has helped considerably in the supply of poultry and eggs for the local market.

A fair estimate of what may be found in this District in the way of poultry and livestock is as follows:

Cattle.	110
Hogs.	140
Sheep.	40
Goats.	90
Chicken.	8,000

CHAPTER VI.

COMMERCE.

Milled lumber, Pit Props, (peeled pine logs in lengths from 4 to 9 feet), Crawfish, Seashells and other marine products, were exported from the District during the year 1955.

A total of 6,165,193 feet of manufactured lumber was exported to Britain, Germany and a number of West Indian Islands, and Cuba, and 3,131,831 feet were shipped to Nassau for Bahamian market.

126,238 Crawfish, 460 barrels of coral, 212 barrels of Sea Stars, 190,800 sea shells and a quantity of other marine products, including Sea-fans, and tiny sea shells, were exported to markets in Florida. The approximate value of this export neared the £10,000 mark. U.S. dollars presented at this office for exchange by the exporters amounted to \$13,782.00. It must be noted here, that although cargoes of crawfish etc., are cleared through this post, the boats do not necessarily reenter the Colony through this Port. The dollars are therefore, often presented for exchange either at Green Turtle Cay, Hope Town, Walker Cay and even Nassau.

In addition to dollars exchanged for exporters, \$34,183.50 were presented here for the general purchase of exchange to sterling by various companies and individuals. Remittances of these dollars to the Public Treasury were made regularly, a total of \$33,140.00 having been remitted. /

– Page – 13

Of the total of dollars purchased, that is, \$47,965.50, \$11,585.50 were sent to Companies and to persons travelling from West End to the United States on business and holidays, and to cash Import licenses approved by the Essential Supplies Committee.

Customs Duties collected on Imports at West End, amounted to £11,377.11.6d. This is again an increase over the previous year.

Most of the food, clothing, building materials, (except lumber) and liquor is imported through Nassau, and a considerable amount of clothing, foods, – including meats, vegetables and milk – and building materials came directly from the United States by boats and aircraft.

Figures obtained from the Collector of Revenue at Pine Ridge show a total of £ [blank] was collected as Customs Duties War Tax and stamp tax on imports entered at Hawksbill Creek. These imports consisted chiefly of machinery and parts and other equipment for the Lumber and Pit Props industry as well as foods and supplies for the general stores of the Abaco Lumber Company at Pine Ridge.

CHAPTER VII

WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

During the year under review, a number of "Labor strikes" were staged for better wages especially to Stevedores, but these were settled satisfactorily to all concerned. It can be said then, that satisfactory wages were paid. In some instances, that is, in the Pit Props industry especially, the casual worker earned from £5 to £12 per week.

Government basic wages for the casual worker has not changed, but it was found necessary, in order to

obtain labour in some places, to pay the casual worker as much as £1. per 8 hour day. This rate, I am informed, has made the minimum wage, for the casual labourer, by the newly formed Labour Unions in Eight-Mile-Rock, and West End.

The following wages prevailed generally in the District, – except in the case of employees at the Guided Missile Base, – during the year: /

– Page – 14

Common Labourers.	2/-6 to 3/- per hour.
Stevedores.	4/- per hour.
Semi-skilled labourers (helpers to Carpenters, Masons, Plumbers etc.)	3/- to 4/- per hour.
Carpenters and Masons.	4/-6 to 8/- per hour.
Plumbers and Electricians.	5/- to 9/- per hour.
Painters and Chauffeurs.	3/-6 to 8/- per hour.
Domestic Workers.	1/-6 to 3/- per hour.

Hours of work are generally from generally from 7.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with an hour off for lunch. This vary [sic] under certain circumstances, but the day is still reckoned at 8 working hours. There is only part day work on Saturday and the hours worked over on the other days o go to make a six days week.

I regret to report again that the cost of living has increased again over that of the previous year. On almost all commodities, prices have continued to show increases, and this applied to every Settlement in the District. I cannot say what is the cause of this continuous increase in the cost of things, or that it is justified, except that as the needs or demands increase so does the cost to consumers. I cannot see how any man with a family of any size, can even provide toe bare necessities of life for them at a wage of £1. per day.

I am not aware of the cost of living of many of the other Islands of the Colony, but I feel it is no exaggeration at all to say that the cost of living here equals, and in many cases, surpasses, that of any Island in the group including, New Providence, Bimini, and Inagua.

CHAPTER VIII.

EDUCATION AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS.

Established and conducted in the largest settlements of the District are four Board of Education Schools, and in addition to them there are seven Grant-In-Aid Schools, one of which was added in the year 1955. I list hereunder, the locations, kinds, and headmasters of these schools:

West End,	Board,	H. N. Pratt.
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Eight-Mile-Rock, Board, W. Sturup.

- Page -15

Holmes Rock,	Board,	W. Parker.
Water Cay,	Grant-in-Aid,	M. Thomas.
High Rock,	Grant-in-Aid,	R.A. Wildgoose.
Sweetings Cay,	Grant-in-Aid,	N. Russell.
Smith's Point	Grant-in-Aid,	Closed.
McCleans Town,	Grant-in-Aid,	F. Laing.
Pelican Point,	Grant-in-Aid,	L. Laing.
Free Town,	Grant-in-Aid,	C. McIntosh.

The Grant-in-Aid school at Free Town was opened this year by the efforts of the people of that Settlement, and was acknowledged by the Board of Education in September at Which time the teacher received her appointment. These people are very grateful to the Board of Education for the help it has given in bringing about the opening of this school. The school at Smith's Point remained closed as nothing was done in the way of providing a teacher for it.

The school building at McCleans Town is being rebuilt to provide better accommodation for the children. Funds were provided with which was purchased all the necessary material for the building, and although the inhabitants are going on with the work, it is hoped that some further assistance will be given to help the people as they work on the building. The school buildings at Sweetings Cay, Water Cay, Pelican Point and High Rock, were repaired and where necessary, the construction was completed, as was the case with those at Water Cay and Pelican Point. The grounds of the school at West End, were enclosed with a wood picket fence. The money for the material, and some of the material as well, were contributed by parents and well-wishers of the children. In addition to the building and painting of the fence, enough was contributed and a new and large platform was built in the school and twelve new desks were made and given to the school. These desks were designed and built especially to accommodate the children of the kindergarten division. All the labour on the building of the fence, platform and desks were given free of charge. Many people of this settlement took an active interest in this work which was most encouraging indeed. In addition to this, funds were allotted by the Chief Out Island Commissioner to replace the delapidated [sic] and overflowing /

- Page - 16

pit-latrines (three of them) with a new one. This new building is of wooden construction and is divided into three rooms; two for the children and one for the teacher whose house is on the same lot.

I am surprised to learn that the "milk scheme" which provides a glass of milk daily for each child, has been discontinued in most of the schools, but I cannot ascertain why it has. An effort will be made through the various School Committees, however, to try and get the scheme going again.

All of the schools with the exception of Smith's Point's have been conducted regularly during the year under review. Much is to be desired, however, in these schools. In Most of them seating accommodation is entirely inadequate and

miserably uncomfortable. In the school at McCleans Town, for instance, there is not a desk in the school; the children sit on improvised benches. In West End, one is somewhat ashamed to have visitors go to this school because of the delapidated twisted and broken condition and most of the desks and other furnishings. The same condition applies to the school at Eight-Mile-Rock. As are the furnishings so are the buildings in both of these settlements. They are both falling apart and are in desperate need of major repairs.

With regards the school at Smith's Point, I can only say as I did in my report for 1954, – It is hoped that a teacher will be found so that this school can be reopened in the not very distant future.

Complete rebuilding of the Teacher's Residence at Eight-Mile-Rock, has started and, at the time of writing this report, has progressed very satisfactorily. A very good and thorough job is being done.

Arrangements have been made for the purchase of a plot of land on which to construct a Teachers Cottage in West End, and work is expected to be started on the building early in 1956.

While I do not intend, in this report, to make any detailed exposition of this situation, I feel that I will not be justified in closing this Chapter without directing attention to the very inadequate and extremely insufficient Staff of the school in West End. This is one of the largest schools in the District with more than 130 children on Roll, and the Teacher has no assistant, one Pupil Teacher with little experience as such, and a /

– Page – 17

few Monitors and Monitres who should be spending at least 3 or 4 more in their classes. Why does this condition exist? Is the Board of Education aware of it? Or, is no one particularly interested?

WELFARE INSTITUTIONS:

Friendly and Burial Societies, including a few branches of several Secret Orders, are operated throughout the District, another of which was organized in 1955. These comprise a total membership of several hundreds of men and women, and are established in every settlement of the Island. These institutions are established primarily to aid the sick and bury the dead of their members and also family of members; They also render assistance to the families of their deceased members when the necessities arises, and they contribute in some way to the improvement of the social life of the Communities in which they are located. Their funds, with very few exceptions, are deposited in either in with the Post Office Savings Bank or with one of the Banks in Nassau. Some of the accounts are very substantial.

The praises of these institutions may well be sung for the good they have done in fulfilling [sic] the purposes for which they were established. Many a Widows and orphans have been aided and relieved by their philanthropy and many a burden lifted from the shoulders of those who are left to mourn their loved ones.

Some of these institutions are growing rapidly in membership and are building new and better meeting houses. On the whole, they are making marked improvements both among themselves in the Communities in which they operate.

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CHAPTER IX.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT.

MAIL SERVICE.

The regular mail service was performed by the Motor Vessel "Richard Campbell" during the year. Again I regret to report that while this service is appreciated by everyone in this District it has not been nearly as satisfactory as it might have. Apart from passengers and mails, this Vessel brings foodstuff and other commodities to each port of call in the Island including Sweetings Cay, High Rock, Smith's Point, Eight-Mile-Rock, and West End. This whole District depends entirely upon this Mail boat for these services, with only an occasional shipment or transportation by some other local Vessel. The only settlement in the Island that has some small degree of local service between Nassau and Grand Bahama are Sweetings Cay and Water Cay. There is a service between Hawksbill Creek and Nassau but this is limited to the Abaco Lumber Company. Too often this mail boat has proven that the demands and needs of the District have long outgrown its service both in passenger and freight accommodation. Although it has been tried many times over by a number of people in this Island to import fruits, vegetables, fresh meats and fresh milk from Nassau, it has proven a failure every time as there is no refrigeration service of any kind on this vessel and the trip is usually so long that the goods arrive in almost, if not completely, useless condition. Hence, those who can, have turned to the American market in Miami and West Palm Beach from which places there is a daily passenger and freight plane service.

In addition to this weekly service of the mail boat, there is also a twice weekly air service between Nassau and West End operated and maintained by Bahamas Airways Ltd.,. This service has been extremely helpful and very much appreciated by the people of almost all of the District who make regular use of this service.

As stated above, a daily (except Tuesdays) passenger and freight air service was operated and maintained by Midet Aviation Corporation of West Palm Beach, between Miami, West End and West Palm Beach, Florida. This service has proven of invaluable assistance to the people of this Island, and especially of West End and Pine Ridge, and was patronized.

During the year under review, 638 commercial and other aircraft entered the Port of West End from various ports in the United States. 353 of these were in Ballast 285 with small cargoes mostly of foodstuffs, clothing and machinery parts for the Abaco Lumber Company, The Grand Bahama Club and other private persons. 616 aircraft cleared from this port for ports in the United States during the year. 585 of them were in Ballast and 31 with cargo which consisted mostly of Crawfish, with some machinery parts for repairs in the United States during the year. It might be of interest to note that 3,750 passengers arrived and 3750 [written in] from this port to and from the United States via these aircraft.

172 vessels reported or entered inwards from ports outside of the colony. Of these 138 were in Ballast and 33 with cargoes of food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and building and other material. 121 Vessels cleared from

this port for ports outside of the colony. Of these 98 were in Ballast and 23 with cargoes of crawfish, seashells and other Marine products for markets in the United States. Most of the Vessels entering and clearing in Ballast, were sport fishermen and pleasure Cruisers. These figures do not include vessels and aircraft entering at Hawksbill Creek and Gold Rock Creek.

ROADS.

I am very pleased, and indeed, very grateful, to report this year that the entire 75 miles of road from West End to Pelican Point is now in very good condition. The section of this road, between West End and Hawksbill Creek, a distance of a little over 18 miles, was completely rebuilt during the year under review, and what a difference this has made in the economic condition of this end of the Island must be seen to be believed. This road was reconstructed with a width of 24 feet with 16 feet centre pavement to be asphalt surfaced, – which started prior to the writing of this report. Because this road was not [written in] covered with asphalt soon after its construction, and the fact that very heavy rains fell on it before the asphaltting got started, a considerable portion of it was washed out and has to be regraded and rolled, before it is oiled. Some sections of it, – not very much, – will require rebuilding in order to do a good asphaltting it [sic]. More will be said about this road in another chapter of this

– Page – 20

report.

During the year under review, the main Road at Sweetings Cay was further extended along the settlement. The Cross Roads at High Rock, Free Town and Holmes Rock were completed and sections of the main streets in High Rock and Holmes Rock were repaired. Improvements to both the Main Road and the Cross streets in Water Cay were made and the Cross Road on the Main land, to approach to Water Cay from one point, was also improved. Two other Cross Roads in Eight-Mile-Rock were widened and improved, as well as a portion of the front street in this settlement. Improvements to roads were made also in Pinder's Point, Hunters, Smith's Point, Pelican Point and Rocky Creek and McClean's Town. The surfacing of most of those roads was done with quarry earth, but some is still being done, – where there is no vehicular traffic, – with mud from the creeks.

The bridge connecting McClean's Town with the main land was almost completed and is now in service. Not sufficient funds, however, were available to complete the job. In addition to these improvements mentioned above, all the country roads have been cleaned regularly and some of them received minor improvements also.

POST OFFICE.

There are five Sub-Post Offices in this District of Grand Bahama, which are located at West End, Eight-Mile-Rock, Pine Ridge, High Rock, and Sweetings Cay. With the exception of Pine Ridge, which sells Telegraph and United States Money Orders and handles Deposits and Withdrawals of the Post Office Savings Bank, these Sub-Post Offices handles only mails and parcels. Each of the Sub-Postmasters hold an Imprest of Stamps from the District Postmaster West End. All of these Sub-Post Offices have been operated for quite a number of years now. The traffic in most of them has increased considerably in recent years and especially during the year under review. The establishment of a Sub-Post Office at Water Cay is long overdue. It has been an outstanding need for many years,

and again I say that it is hoped that the Postmaster of Bahamas will permit it in the not very distant future. The following is a detailed statement of the financial transactions of the Post Office in this District for the year, 1955.

– Page – 21
WEST END.
REVENUE.

Post Office Savings Bank Deposit	£ 3,066. 18. 0.
Sale of Telegraph and Domestic Money Orders	24,307. 7. 10.
Sale of U.K. Money Orders	32. 10. 5.
Sale of United States and Canadian Money Orders	2,586. 13. 0.
Sale of Jamaican Money Orders	71. 11. 11.
Sale of Postage Stamps	587. 4. 9.
Parcel Post duties collected	216. 16. 9.

EXPENDITURE.

Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank	
Payments Telegraph and Domestic Money Orders	1,684. 0. 0.
.....	976. 17. 11.
Payments United States Money Orders	363. 6. 11.

PINE RIDGE.

REVENUE.

Post Office Savings Bank Deposits	7,205. 7. 5.
Sale of Telegraph Money Orders	12,728. 8. 7.
Sale United States Money Orders	NIL.
Parcel Post duties collected	144. 1. 7.

EXPENDITURE.

Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank	5,181. 6. 5.
Payments telegraph Money Orders	3,074. 0. 0.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

The three Telegraph Stations in this District are located at West end, Pine Ridge and Sweetings Cay. Overseas Telephone services are available at West End and Pine Ridge. These stations have all given very satisfactory services during the year. The equipment at West End has been deteriorating since the close of the Butlins Vacations Village in

1950, and it has been almost a case of "dog eat dog" to keep it going in present months. A thorough over haul and replacement of many instruments and parts are long overdue. The operator here must be complimented for keeping it going as he does.

– Page – 22

The total telegraph revenue at West End for the year under review was £457. 1. 9d, and telephone (overseas) revenue was £489. 9. 5d. making a total of £946. 11. 2d. which is an increase over the previous year of £285.

Radio Licensing was discontinued during the year but £3. 0. 0. Was collected before the notice was received. £1. 10. 0. of this was refunded, Government Telegrams and telephone calls amounted to £82. 1. 0d.

The totals for Pine Ridge were as follows: Telegraph and overseas telephone receipts were £[blank] Government telegrams and telephone calls were £[blank]

COMMUNITY RADIOS.

These have again served a very useful purpose in the Communities in which they are placed. A new Radio, – a dry cell battery set, – was supplied to Water Cay to replace the old storage battery set, which hardly ever worked because they could not get the batteries charged. The people of the several Communities in which these radios are placed are very appreciative of this service by the Telecommunications Department. These radios are invaluable in places like Water Cay, and especially so during the hurricane months.

An inland telephone line, between Eight-Mile-Rock and West End, was started in December of this year. This service will not only prove of tremendous benefit to the people in these and nearby settlements, but I feel, will serve to increase the telegraph revenue considerably. Everyone looks forward to this time, which we hope is in the not very distant future, when this line will be completed and in operation.

CHAPTER X.

FINANCE.

The following is a detailed statement of Revenue and Expenditure in this District for the year 1955.

– Page – 23

<u>1955</u>	<u>REVENUE.</u>	<u>1955.</u>
Revenue and Deposit Balance 31/12/54	£.....	£4,794. 3. 9.
		216. 3. 9.
Parcel Post Duties		
Motor Car and Drivers Licenses		387. 5. 6.
Liquor Licenses		219. 15. 0.

Shop Licenses	3. 5. 0.	
Fines and Forfeitures	597. 0. 0.	
Licenses for wireless sets	3. 0. 0.	
Fees of Office	21. 4. 3.	
Royalty on Crawfish	173. 18. 0.	
Telegraph Receipts	457. 9. 0.	
Overseas Telephone Receipts	489. 9. 5.	
Passenger Ticket Taxes	557. 3. 5.	
Profit on Exchange	62. 2. 0.	
Bicycle Licenses	80. 12. 0.	
Miscellaneous Petty Receipts	7. 14. 9.	
Total Revenue		3,276. 8. 8.

Deposits, etc.,

Post Office Savings Bank Deposits	£3,066. 18. 0.	
Sale of Telegraph and Domestic Money Orders ...	24,307. 7. 0.	
Sale of U.S. and Canadian Money Orders	2,586.13. 0.	
Sale of U.K. Money Orders	32. 10. 5.	
Sale of Jamaican Money Orders	71.11.11.	
Sale of Stamps	587. 4. 9.	
Comptroller of Customs (Import Duties)	11,377.11. 6.	
Comptroller of Customs (Imigration [sic] Taxes)	1,119. 0. 0.	
Comptroller of Customs (Sales of Ship Reports) ...	63.18.0.	
Payment on Dinghies	210. 7. 0.	
Crown Land Rentals	68. 0. 6.	
Payment on Plane Charters	2. 0. 0.	
Deposit of Hospital Expenses	13. 0. 0.	
Out Island Court Deposits	273.12. 8.	
Commissioner's Overtime Fees	184. 0. 0.	
Library Subscriptions	1. 3. 0.	
Remittances and sale of Drafts	12,201.13. 5.	
Short Paid Postage	5. 5.	
Deposit on Bill of Sight	44. 10. 0.	
Total Deposits.		£57,211.7. 1.
Grand Total.		£65,285.19.6.

On Account of: -

The House of Assembly	£ 37.10. 0.	
Customs Department	590. 12. 0.	
Judicial Department	166. 14. 0.	
Registrar General's Department	89. 12. 0.	
Education Department	103. 3. 0.	
Police Department	2,600. 4. 5.	
Post Office Department (Salaries)	351. 1. 1.	
Prisons Department	333. 10. 0.	
Telecommunications Department	247. 15. 0.	
Public Libraries	47. 15. 0.	
Audit Department	16. 0. 0.	
Medical Department	58. 18. 6.	
Public Works Recurrent	2,320. 13. 4.	
Public Works Non-Recurrent (O.I.)	6,790. 9. 8.	
Out Island Department (including Govt. Telegrams)	50. 18. 0.	
Licenses for wireless sets refunded	1. 10. 0.	
Pensions and Gratuity	340. 4. 0.	
School funds for Princess' Visit	37. 11. 6.	
Major Public Works Act, 1955 (Grand Bahama Road)	9,250. 13. 3.	
Total Expenditure		£24,027.9. 0.

Payments of Deposits, etc.,

Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank	1,684. 0. 0.
Exchange Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders ...	967. 7. 1.
Exchange U.S. Postal Money Orders	363. 6. 11.
Commissioner's Overtime Fees	184. 0. 0.
Out Island Court Deposits	201. 8. 8.
Family Allowances & Returned Workers Pay	3,439. 1. 3.
Remittances to the Public Treasury	31,395. 6. 6.
Customs Duty Refunded	17. 11. 2.
Refund of Bill of Sight Deposit	44. 10. 0.

Total	£38,296.12.5.
Balance 31/12/55.....	2,961.18.1.
Grand Total	£65,285.19.6.

– Page – 25

According to figures submitted by the Collector of Revenue at Pine Ridge, the sum of £10,088. 7. 11d. [written in] was collected for Customs Duties etc., and £144. 1. 7d. [written in] as parcel post duties.

CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Under Head 31 and Item 50, which provides for the General Upkeep of the District, the sum of £1,500. was allotted for the upkeep of Public Roads, Walls, Burial Grounds, Buildings and Landing Places. Of this amount £1,353. 12. 8d was spent. In addition to the works mentioned above, this allocation provided for the operation of a garbage Truck in West End, which was not supplied until in November, hence the unspent balance under this head and item.

Further expenditure under head 31 was made from Items 51 for maintenance of the Grand Bahama Min Road to the sum of £577. 4. 0. £50. was allocated under item 83 to help defray overexpenditure on extension of the Commissioner's Office at West End and £170. under item 84 to complete construction of Cross Road at Holmes Rock.

Under Head 33, Public Works Non-Recurrent, Out Islands, the sum of £3,855. was granted to the following works:

–

1. Minor Works, Grand Bahama.
2. Repair Government Dock, West End.
3. Construct Warehouse at Government Dock.
4. Purchase of Garbage Truck for West End.
5. Improve Roads Grand Bahama District.
6. Minor Works (To provide new pit-latrines for the Public School, West End).
7. Furniture for Commissioner's Residences.

Of the total amount allocated, under this head, the sum of £3,850 4. 7d. was spent.

The sum of £800. 0. 0d. was allocated to this District under the Out Island Improvement Act of 1947-1953 for the following works: –

1. Complete Cross Road, Holmes Rock.

– Page – 26

2. Complete Bridge at Hawksbill Creek (later transferred to extend Commissioner's Office West End).

Under the Out Island Improvement Act of 1955, the sum of £2,500. was allocated for the following works in this District of which amount the sum of £2,492. 5. 9d. was spent:

1. Sweetings Cay.

- (a) Reshingle and repair School house.
- (b) Erect landing mast and boom on deck.
- (c) Build public latrine.
- (d) Supply and install pump in school yard.
- (e) Repair and extend public roads.

2. McCleans Town.

- (a) Complete construction of bridge.
- (b) Rebuilding school House.
- (c) Build public latrines.

3. High Rock.

- (a) Repair School house.
- (b) Major repairs to public walls.
- (c) Repairs to Teachers residence.
- (d) Repair front street.

4. Rocky Creek.

- (a) Widen and repair Causeway.

5. Free Town.

- (a) Complete construction of Cross Road.

6. Hunters.

- (a) Complete and repair wall of Public Burial ground.

7. Pelican Point.

- (a) Complete construction of school house.

8. Water Cay.

- (a) Complete construction of school house.
- (b) Improve roads in settlement.
- (c) Improve Cross Road on Mainland.

9. Pinder's Point.

- (a) Repair and improve burial ground road.

All of these works were undertaken and in most cases, satisfactorily

completed.

Under the Major Public Works Act of 1955, the sum of £9,250. 13. 3d. was spent on the reconstruction of the West End-Eight-Mile-Rock road. This amount paid for local labour, cost of gasoline, diesel fuel and motor oils used by the road-building machinery of the United States Army Engineers, – who undertook this reconstruction, – and repairs to the tires of the equipment, and salaries of the Watchmen of the Colas deposit, and of the Engineers' equipment during the reconstruction.

CHAPTER XII.

JUSTICE, POLICE AND PRISONS.

JUSTICE.

Peace and good order were effectively maintained throughout the District. 177 cases were heard including 1 sent to the sessions of the Supreme Court. The following table shows the number and nature of the various offences and persons dealt with in these cases and how they were disposed of:

Assaults	26
Abusive language	47
Predial Larceny	12
Police Cases	86
Other Offences	5
Indictable offences	1
Total	<u>177.</u>

218 persons were involved. 175 Males and (43) Females.

These cases were disposed of as follows:

Fined	150
Imprisoned	18
Cautioned	19
Bound Over	9
Dismissed	8
Sent to Supreme Court ..	2
Pending	1

– Page – 28

Others	12
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Sixty-nine (69) Civil Cases were heard during the year under review. No cases were disposed of by the Justices of the Peace.

Four (4) Inquests were held into the deaths of 5 men all the results of truck accidents, and two children by drowning.

POLICE.

Three members of the Nassau Constabulary were stationed in the District during the year. Two were stationed at Pine Ridge and one at West End. There were also two first grade Local Constables stationed at West End and Eight-Mile-Rock respectively.

I am very pleased to report that a long felt need of the District met this year, in the appointment of a second Grade Local Constable at High Rock and one at Pelican Point, and already the difference in the maintenance of peace and good order, in these and other near-by settlements, can be observed. As these settlements are far removed from Police headquarters in Pine Ridge or West End, these men, as I have pointed out several times before, will be of great assistance in successful administration of the District. In this connection I would like to point out that it is apparently not very far in the future when the need of another first or second grade Local Constable will be needed at Sweetings Cay. This need is fast asserting itself and should be taken care of as soon as there is a possibility to do so.

I am also very pleased to report again this year that the close cooperation between the Military Police or Security Officers at the Guided Missile Base at Gold Rock Creek and our Police, has been effectively maintained, and thus the good relationship between the American Employees at this Base and the people of the surrounding, and other, settlements has continued to be very good. Our Police have encountered or dealt with a very few incidents in which any of the U.S. men were involved.

In addition to the very satisfactory and efficient services performed by the members of the Bahama Police Force and the four local Constables, the District Constables in most of the settlements, have proven themselves very helpful in the successful and peaceful administration of this District during the year under review. In fact, a few of these men

– Page – 29

Are to be complimented for the way in which they have helped, by their time and effort, to maintain peace and good order in their respective Communities.

The following men have been appointed District Constables for the year, 1956 in the settlements under which their names appear:

Pine Ridge.

Thomas Williams.
Wellington Ingraham.
Paul Higgs.
Lea Penn.
Christopher Gardiner.

Lewis Yard.

Samuel Russell.
Buddy Russell.

Eight-Mile-Rock.

Albert Rolle.

Pelican Point.

Smiley Laing.

Hanna Hill.

Ural Smith.
Eleazer Grant.

West End.
Clifford Davis.
Reginald Hield.
Hiram Johnson Sr.,
Bernard Hanna.
Benjamin W. Smith.
Benjamin A. Pinder.
Alexander Rolle.
Henderson Smith.
George Forbes.
Granville Garvey.
Ivan Russell.
Henry Russell.

High Rock.
Erich Kemp.
Isaac Smith.
James Roberts

Mather Town.
Nathaniel Mather.

Alfred Johnson
Roland Bartlett.

McClellan's Town.
William Pinder Jr.,
Jeremiah Thomas.

Water Cay.
Walter Wield.
Locksley Wield.
Bernice Rolle.
Caias Lewis.

Sweetings Cay.
Peter Feaster.
Wellington Bevans.
Rupert Bevans.

Free Town.
Emmanuel Hield.
Ormand Laing.

Braudie Point.
Elmore Sturat.
Arnold Martin.

Hunters.
James Russell.
Prince McIntosh.

Pinder's Point.
Hamon Pinder.
Albert Pinder.
Havard Cooper.
Arahaha Laing.

Holmes Rock.
John Rolle Sr.,
Horatio Stuart.

Sea Grape.
Arthur Martin.

Smith's Point.
Fred Mather.
Henry Edden

– Page – 30

PRISONS.

The three-cell prison at West End is in good condition and I suppose it is needless to say again that it is very often too small to meet the needs of this District, and to emphasize something should be done, ere long, about this situation.

The lock-up at 8mis in good condition and I suppose it is needless to say again that it is very often too small to meet the needs of this District, and to emphasize something should be done, ere long, about this situation.

The lock-up at Eight-Mile-Rock, which has only two cells is used only in emergencies. The ground on which this building stands, – and the building, – has been transferred to the Free Port Authority who, in consideration of this, will build another in the Government Compound at Eight-Mile-Rock, according to the specifications submitted to them by the Local Board of Works. This proposed new building will have three cells.

There is a two room Lock up at Pine Ridge used regularly by the Police there, for Custody and detention. No prison terms are served other than in West End.

During the year 1955, 18 persons were sent to prison, 8 of whom were committed to serve sentences in the

Prison at Nassau while the remainder served terms of from two weeks to three months in the prison here at West End. Eleven prisoners were dismissed during the year under review, including one that was in the prison on the 1st., January, 1955. One prisoner was serving sentence on the 31st., December, 1955. None were awaiting trial at the end of the year. There were no casualties among the prisoners during the year and most were in good health at all times.

CHAPTER XIII.

LEGISLATION.

An Act to authorize the entering into of an Agreement with a Company to be incorporated in the Colony by Wallace Groves for the dredging of a deep water harbour and the establishment of an industrial area at and in the Vicinity of Hawksbill Creek, Grand Bahama, and cited as "The Hawksbill Creek, Grand Bahama (Deep Water Harbour and Industrial Area) Act , 1955 was enacted in August of this year. This Act provides for, – as is intimated by the name, – a deep water harbour and an industrial area. Preparations are being made for the starting of the work on this enterprise.

– Page – 31

CHAPTER XIV.

TAXATION.

There is no direct taxation in this District. The Real Property Tax Act is not applicable here.

CHAPTER XV.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PAUPERISM.

Pauper rations issued by the Government through the Princess Margaret Hospital, which include grits, flour, sugar and milk, were helpfully distributed to 53 paupers throughout the District. One of these Paupers died during the year and three others were added to the list.

RELIGION:

Baptist, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Brethren, Church of God and Jehovah's Witnesses are the systems of religious worship followed by the inhabitants of this District. The Baptist faith embraces about 50% of the population and they are all followers of and are under the direct supervision of the Zion Baptist Church in Nassau, the Pastor of which pays periodical visits to the various churches and congregations here. These congregations and churches are to be found throughout the District including Water Cay and Sweetings Cay, – the Settlement of Water Cay, of course, is totally Baptist. – These churches are for the most part selfsupporting and their Ministers are paid from the funds of the various church or churches over which he presides. Two new church buildings of this sect were built and dedicated during the year 1955, one in High Rock and another in West End.

Followers of the Anglican religion number about 30% of the population, and churches are to be found in West End, Eight-Mile-Rock, Smith's Point, High Rock and Sweetings Cay. The priest's Residence or "Rectory" is at Eight-Mile-Rock and the resident priest, when there is one, pays periodical visits to the other churches. For most of during the year under review, the District was without a resident priest, but the congregations were visited by priests from Nassau. Although His Lordship, The Bishop of Nassau, visits the District occasionally to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation in

– Page – 32

In the various churches here, we were not favored by one of these visits during the past year.

Followers of the Roman Catholic Faith are almost all of the Settlements of Hunters and Lewis Yard; the only church in the District is in Hunters. There is a small Chapel and a few followers at West End. There are also followers in Pine Ridge, where services for the faithful are held in the interdenominational church of the Abaco Lumber Company there. There are a number of followers in this religion also, at the Guided Missile Base at Gold Rock Creek, Americans of course, and services are conducted for them by the visiting priest in a fine little Chapel, in one of the administration buildings on the Base, provided for this purpose. There is not a resident priest of this denomination in the District but frequent visits are made by one from Nassau.

The Church of God or "Jumpers" has increased notably in number of members during the past year. Their Chapels are located in West End, Hanna Hill and Pine Ridge, the largest congregation being in Pine Ridge and consists mostly of Turks Islanders.

The interdenominational church, mentioned above, at Pine Ridge, was constructed and furnished and is maintained by Mr. Wallace Groves for the convenience and accommodation of his employees. While this church may be, and is used by any visiting priest or minister of religion who may have followers at this settlement, it is used primarily by the followers of the Brethren Faith, a considerable number of whom live and work in the mills in Pine Ridge. There is a local resident Pastor and Marriage officer of this religion in Pine Ridge.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have driven an entering Wedge in one of the settlements but progress made thus far is not worthy of mention.

VISITING BY OFFICIALS.

Early in the year, The Honourable Colonial Secretary and some members of the Labour Board visited Hawksbill Creek, in connection with some labour disputes. This, unfortunately, was during one of the writer's brief absences from the District. I was later informed of the very disrespectful manner in which some of the inhabitants, present at the place of meeting, conducted

– Page – 33

themselves in addressing the Honourable Colonial Secretary, and members of the Labour Board. I feel that there was not nor could be any justification for this misdemeanor, and I wish, on their behalf to offer my humble apology for this most regrettable occurrence, and hasten to assure his successor in office of the loyalty and humble devotion to Her

Majesty, and her representatives, of the many well-thinking law-abiding and patriotic subjects of Her Majesty in this Island.

The District was visited during the year by the Commissioner of Police and again during the writer's absence on vacation from the District. periodical visits of this kind could be very helpful especially to the members of the Force stationed here.

Immediately after the writer's return from vacation in October, the Chief Out Island Commissioner, Mr. H.P. James, visited the District and inspected a number of settlements as well as the reconstruction of the Eight-Mile-Rock West End Road, which was going on, and the new addition to the Commissioner's Office in West End. This visit, like all the others he has made, which has given him first hand knowledge of conditions and the needs of the Island, together with the support and cooperation given by him, have gone a long way in bringing about the successful administration of the District, and for which the writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation.

COMMISSIONER'S VISITS.

All of the various settlements of the District were visited regularly during the year under review. Sweetings Cay and Water Cay were visited periodically, but Sweetings Cay more often. Water Cay was visited three times while Sweetings Cay was seven times. Pelican Point, Gold Rock Creek, and Free Town Nine times. Smith's Point five times, Hunters and Lewis Yard five times. Pinder's Point ten or twelve times. Pine Ridge, Eight-Mile-Rock, and Holmes Rock were visited weekly and sometimes more often when occasions demanded it.

All of the visits were made chiefly to hear cases at Pine Ridge and Eight-Mile-Rock, – and several at Sweetings Cay, – to organize and supervise Public Works, to pay Family Allowances of recruited Workers and for the

– Page – 34

registration of Voters in the three Divisions of the District. transportation was effected by boat, – in some instances small dinghies using the same power that propelled Columbus across the Atlantic in 1492, – by hired cars and the Government's Land Rover, or what was left of it. Transportation to Water Cay is partly by Car and partly by boat.

GENERAL REMARKS.

As the year closed all are in good spirits with high hopes of another, and the greatest "Boom" in the Island of Grand Bahama. Because of what is written on the pages of the Island's History, some are pessimistic. One reassuring fact, however, seems to be that, unlike those that are only memories now, the investors seem to be exercising some caution, and are not going at break-neck speed into their ventures.

In February of this year the former Butlins Vacation Village at West End, re-opened under a new name, – The Grand Bahama Club, – and under the management of Midet Aviation Corporation, on rent from the owners – Cape and General Finance Ltd., of London. Accommodations for guests was limited to 64 and then increased to one hundred and twenty-eight, – although I am not sure that there were ever this many at any one time, – the trial proved very successful and in September, the rental to Midet Aviation Corporation was discontinued and the operation of the Club was taken over by The Grand Bahama Properties, Ltd., – a subsidiary of Cape and General. New staff replaced the old, and general reconstruction and rehabilitation started. By the end of the year and during the Holidays, the

Club presented a very encouraging picture. All concerned are pleased with the success made thus far and considerable optimism about its ultimate success is maintained in which the writer shares. This venture is providing employment for quite a goodly number of the natives and as reconstruction progresses and more accommodation is provided, more and more labour will be required. In this connection I am pleased to say that satisfactory wages are being paid.

The Hope Bight Fishing Lodge owned and operated by Mr. George Dessler, with the help of a Hotel manager, was opened for business during the year. This "Lodge" operating under a Hotel license, provides "Deluxe" accommodation for guests – twelve to sixteen of them, and boats and tackle for

– Page – 35

both deep sea and reef fishing. There seem to have been some difficulty in obtaining or maintaining proper staff and therefore this Lodge has not been as successful as it might have. With proper management, however, I have no doubt of it [sic] ultimate success.

The Angler Guest House, opened and operated by the DeGregory brothers, under a Restaurant and Guest House License, has proven very popular and helpful in this Community (West End). It is well run and well patronized.

Because of the accommodation and service provided by these places, the number of visitors to the Island for the year, has gone well over the 3,000 mark.

In October of this year news was released of the proposed construction of a Deep water harbour and commercial area at Hawksbill Creek by Mr. Wallace Groves and others. This news was like new wine to the people of the whole Island but especially to those in the immediate vicinity. As the year closed some of these people are, as it were floating on clouds in their anticipation of what is coming to pass. Very little was done in the way of making a start, before the close of this year, but as I said before we are all waiting, and watching and hoping.

Because of this proposed development, the price and sale of land all over the Island went up almost over night. Large Acreages have been and are being sold, as fast as titles can be cleared, for very good prices. This is almost a "boom" in itself.

At the Guided Missile Base, further construction of large buildings was continued. The enlargement of the landing field for aircraft has been completed to accommodate jet aircraft. The construction of a steel dock at the entrance of the Creek has also been completed. I regret to report again however, that there still exists that unsatisfactory wage situation at this Base as reported in 1954. It is hoped that something definite will be done in the not very distant future to bring about a more satisfactory rate of pay at this Base. Most of the men now employed here, are members of the newly organized Labour Unions, and those who are not members will probably be members before long. These Unions have staged several "strikes" already, but they were settled satisfactorily to all concerned.

The Reconstruction of the West End – Eight-Mile-Rock Road, eighteen

– Page – 36

and a half miles, was completed in December, by the men of the United States Army Engineers Corps. This road was constructed 22 feet wide, that is a 16 foot wide finished road with three foot shoulders. It was opened however to a

width of 30 feet and more. This road was completed in very good condition, but some sections of it were washed out by heavy rains falling on it after completion and before the Colas was applied. These sections have to be rebuilt before they can be oiled.

The reconstruction of this road, including the cost of landing of Colas, employment of local labour in removing bushes and widening road [sic] to 30 feet or more, labourers assisting Engineers in construction, Watchmen of the Colas at Hawksbill Creek day and night, night watchmen for the machinery and equipment of the engineers, supply of diesel fuel, gasoline lubricating oils and some small part for this machinery and equipment, and the cost of repairs to tires of this equipment, involved a total expenditure of £9,358. 5. 7d. No charges were made by the U.S. Army for the time labour and use of their machinery and men.

Except for two or three very minor incidents this work was done without any disturbance or interferences from the inhabitants, in fact I wish here to express to property owners along the road, my sincere appreciation for the very fine way in which they have cooperated with the engineers and the Commissioner, and for the help they have given from time to time.

I wish to quote here, from a letter written to me by the Commanding officer of Company "C" of the 806th Engineer Aviation Battalion (the men who worked on the road), on the eve of their departure from this Island, and my reply thereto. He wrote in part: As our unit is preparing to move, having completed its assigned projects, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and assistance in making our job easier to accomplish.

"I would like to thank all the people on Grand Bahama Island for the nice treatment extended to both my men and myself. This has made our stay here a most pleasant one, I assure you. Again, my sincerest thanks for all you have done." To which I replied: "I am very sorry to learn that you and your men are leaving our Island, and so soon it seems, but I realize

– Page – 37

that such must be the case. On behalf of the people of Grand Bahama, my family and myself, I wish you and your men God-speed and success in all of your undertakings.

"I wish to assure that you and your men of the 806th Engineer Aviation Battalion, will be long remembered by all of us. While we try to express in words our thanks for what you have done for us, there will always linger with us a deep feeling of gratitude for the accomplishment of a task that was no easy one, and which means so much to us. Twenty miles of the only highway in this Island will stand as a memorial of you and your men which will always remind us of your unfailing cooperation with us, your patient and persistent efforts to see this job well done and the very friendly relationships created and maintained throughout your stay with us.

"As you leave our Island, let me remind you of our most sincere gratitude for all you have done. You have probably not thought of how much you have made possible for us, but I trust you will be content with the knowledge that you have done a "good deed" for a great many people.

"On behalf of our Government, I want to thank you and your men most sincerely for your assistance, your time and untiring efforts to see a job well done."

I think it is very much in order in this connection to express in this report, on behalf of all concerned, our sincere gratitude to: Group Captain Tyndall, British Liaison Officer at Patrick Air Force Base, Colonels Jones and Polick,

commanding officers of the of the 806th Engineer Aviation Battalion, Lt. McNabb who supervised the first one-third of the reconstruction of this road, Mr. Russell A. Reed, Base Manager at Gold Rock Creek and the Abaco Lumber Company at Pine Ridge for the invaluable assistance they have rendered in making it possible for this work to be done by the Army Engineers. Our thanks too to all who have contributed in any way to make such an enjoyable "Thank You" party for the Engineers was given them on the 15th., December last.

A total of 147 cars, trucks and motor cycles were licensed during the year 1955. This does not include most of the trucks of the Abaco Lumber Company and the trucks and other vehicles of the guided Missile Base and their Contractors. There is every possibility, and evidence, that this number will

– Page – 38

more than double in 1956.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant.
S. W. Darville [signature]
Commissioner.

Transcribed from the original by James Baker as a reference so that these past "snapshots" of the Island's economic and social history are available.