

Grand Bahama
Commissioner's Report for 1910

VOTES
OF THE
HONOURABLE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF THE
BAHAMA ISLANDS.

SESSION COMMENCING ON
THE 10TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1911
AND ENDING ON
THE 13TH DAY OF JULY, 1911.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.
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1911.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Exuma and Cays areas 100 sq. miles.
Population (census of 1901) 3086.
Births during the year 132 (73 males 59 females.)
Deaths during the year 55 (28 males 37 females.)
Birth rate 42.9 Death rate 17.9

J. M. ARANHA.

Commissioner.

GRAND BAHAMA.

AGRICULTURE.

Taking the island as a whole, agriculture is an unprofitable trade, the people in general have no love for the work, the soil in most parts is poor, and the climatic conditions do not favour the farmer. This year especially has been a disheartening one, as the drought in the early part of the year made it impossible to make a summer crop, and the storm in October, destroyed practically every thing that had been planted in August and September.

Sisal has not made any progress. No new fields have been made, and if the prices for fibre do not improve, the old fields will be allowed to grow up in bush.

Experiments in Cotton were made at various settlements but the results were not encouraging, the yield of cotton was small, and the bugs or cotton stainer were numerous.

The Grape-fruit crop was a fairly large one, but the growers could not sell them at any price in Nassau or elsewhere. The only crops that made satisfactory cash returns were sugar canes and groundnuts. I am advising the people to plant them in preference to everything else, as they can be used as articles of food, if there is no demand for them in Nassau.

MANUFACTORIES AND FISHERIES.

There are 5 Cane-Mills (American) on the Island; these are used in the manufacture of syrup. The output this year was over 1200 gallons, all of which was disposed of at good prices. The demand for canes and syrup is encouraging the more industrious to extend their cultivations, as there is a large area of swamp land on the island suitable for the cultivation of the sugar cane.

FISHERIES. Sponging is the mainstay of the people of this Island, some go to sea in ships, the wise ones sponge along-shore in their open boats; the shore sponging in my opinion is the most remunerative as the active and industrious man can gather his sponge in fair weather and cultivate his piece of "crown land" when it is blowing. The prices for fine grass have been good throughout the year. There are 153 shore-boats distributed among the various settlements.

EDUCATION.

The Public School at 8 Mile Rock, shows marked improvement made by the scholars in the elementary subjects; the average attendance for the year was 154, an increase of 7 over 1909. It gives me pleasure to report that the Board of Education have at last decided to give the Teacher a residence, in keeping with the dignity of his position.

The Grant-in-Aid School at Water Cay and the Church Schools at West-End and Barnett's Point are not in a healthy state; the children do not attend regularly and the teachers lack energy.

Demands are still being made for schools at High Rock and Sweeting Cay and Freetown, but as there are no suitable local Teachers, I have not been able to help the people

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The year has been a very healthy one, and with the exception of the common ailments that are always with us, the island has been free from disease of a serious nature; even the itch has given us a rest. Sanitary conditons throughout the island are much improved.

JUDICIAL.

There were no serious cases reported during the year, but 46 trivial cases were heard on the criminal side. 38 were convicted 33 paid fines & were imprisoned and 1 whipped. Praedial larceny seems to be on the increase throughout the island, but only 1 case was reported during the year.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Roads at High-Rock, Water Cay, West-End and other settlements have been extended and very much improved. A new road nearly a mile long, across the land at West-End has been opened and partially macadamized.

The roads at 8 Mile Rock and its vicinity that damaged by the gale of October 18th have been put in fair condition again.

The Hawksbill creek bridge is nearly completed; only about 40 ft remains unfinished.

A few minor repairs have been done to the Residency and outbuildings, but much remains to be done in the way of improvements.

GENERAL.

The condition of the people of Grand Bahama during the year was fairly good, considering that we had a long drought from January to June and a hurricane in October.

Money was not super-abundant but there was enough "sponge-money" to keep everybody from want, if it had been used rightly. Several appeals were made for Government aid, but when they heard the words, "Work" and "Grits" combined they no longer wanted Government food.

The emigration of our young men continues to increase, and daily you hear the cry, "So and So" is gone to Florida. A large proportion of the men derive benefits from the trip, especially those who work on the farms; many of them come home richer in money, manners, and experience.

The Curator paid this Island a visit in May, he gave many interesting and instructive lectures at the principal settlements, which were not appreciated by the people in general.

W. G. B. STEVENSON,

Commissioner.