

GRAND BAHAMA
Commissioner's Report for 1917

BAHAMAS.

VOTES

OF THE

HONOURABLE

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

OF THE

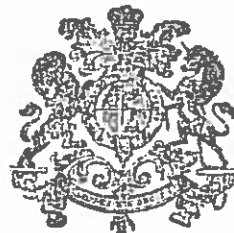
BAHAMA ISLANDS.

SESSION COMMENCING ON

THE 26TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1917

AND ENDING ON

THE 4TH DAY OF JULY, 1918.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF "THE NASSAU GUARDIAN."

BY THE PRINTER TO THE LEGISLATURE.

1918.

(Enclosure in Governor's Message No. 60.)

GRAND BAHAMA.

The revenue for the year amounted to £18 15s., excluding Board of Works remittances from Nassau. The expenditure was almost double £31 19s. 11d., Board of Works omitted.

POSTAL.

Taking into consideration the rugged coast with which the mail has to contend, the mail service was performed satisfactorily by schooner *Hazel Dell* from Nassau.

POST OFFICE.

The amount of money received from parcels seems to be much less than formerly. Perhaps more money would be had if there were one or two more Post Offices. There are some people on this island who have to walk 25 miles to post a letter and the same distance to receive parcels and letters. If it were possible one Post Office should be at West End and one at High Rock.

TRADE.

Imports and Exports. All this trade is done with Nassau. Foodstuffs, liquor, clothing, lumber and shingles. Conch-shells, grape-fruit, sisal, onions, cattle, peas. It is customary for the sponging boats to go direct from the "Mud" to Nassau except those that sponge on the north side of the Island.

MANUFACTORIES AND FACTORIES.

None. The sisal grown here is hand cleaned. A little cane syrup is made here but the mill is worked by hand also.

Sponge. The vessels here are all engaged in the sponge trade; also quite a number of small open boats are engaged in sponging around the north part of the Island.

As far as has come to my knowledge, the spongers have done fairly well during the year. Shells are gathered here in large quantities and shipped to Nassau.

AGRICULTURE.

Grand Bahama has some good land (mostly in the off cays) but the men being seamen by trade give farming little or no attention. But since the scarcity of foodstuffs from America and the high prices, both male and female have turned to the soil and some are doing well. Yet there is room for improvement. Vegetables grown—corn, peas, beans, potatoes, cabbages, arrowroot, cassava, pumpkins and bananas.

Sisal. This industry is not attended to as it should be. Many people who complain about the hardness of the times would have little room to complain if they had sisal fields.

Ground crops have not been raised with good results owing to the drought during the early part of the year.

STOCK RAISING.

Cows and Pigs. The former are occasionally consumed here. The latter are raised entirely for home consumption.

EDUCATION.

The District is very badly off for schools. There is only one Board school at 8 Mile Rock with a number on books of 158 and an average for the year of 117. A better attendance can hardly be got owing to the way in which the natives have settled.

Two Grant-in-Aids. One at High Rock and one at Water Cay. One Church of England School at West End. Water Cay School—number on books 49, High Rock School—number on books 56. It is a pity to see so many children at Moore's Island growing up in dire ignorance.

METEOROLOGICAL RECORD.

The highest in the shade in June was 93. The lowest in February was 50.

The Rainfall for the year was 21.19, covering 72 days.

Storms. No severe storms have occurred and the hurricane season passed off quite favourably.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Roads in the township have been weeded. Some minor repairs are needed which will be done in the succeeding year. Country roads are in a fairly good condition, but open to improvement.

SHIPPING.

One vessel entered here from Norfolk, Virginia.

Intrinsular:

Cleared 74
Entered 100

Boats and Ship-building. Few small boats have been built and some repairs to larger vessels have been done during during the year.

CRIME.

The District is a quiet one and the people law-abiding. One shooting case occurred in August by an accident. The boys were acquitted.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births	58.	Females 29.	Males 29.
Deaths	43	Females 27.	Males 16.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The Health of the District has been good throughout the year—there were a few cases of ordinary fever, not resulting in death. Consumption seems to be the chief disease. The natives are not careful in nursing the consumptives, in many cases not destroying the excrement from the consumptive, thereby causing more deaths from consumption than any other disease.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

All in good condition except the Commissioner's residence. A few minor repairs are needed for the Teacher's residence and the School-room and closet.

SOCIETIES.

There are two with a total membership of 130. Their chief object is to care for the sick and bury their dead.

Emigration to Florida has ceased to a great extent, owing chiefly to the strict laws that are now on.

ACCIDENTS.

Two accidents occurred during the year. One on the 2nd October in the eastern part of the District, in the capsizing of a small boat with three occupants—two of whom were drowned. One in the Western part of the District which resulted in the blowing up of the motor cruiser *Coraline*. No lives lost. The occupants seemed to be injured slightly.

GENERAL.

The general condition of the people at the end of the year was not satisfactory. Hard times prevailed during the months of October and November. Most of the people complain about no good land to work, but I think that they are too ready and willing to depend on the proceeds from the sponge. If the Grand Bahamians attended to the soil a little more they would not be so badly off.

E. W. SAUNDERS,
Acting Commissioner.