

Grand Bahama Commissioner's Report 1918

The direct revenue amounted to £39.10.9. The Expenditure incurred amounted to £29.14.0. Travelling Expenses of Commissioner on Tour amounted to £45.14.10d.

King's Fines	£30 - 14
Fees	£3 - 16 - 19
Liquor license	£5 — —

Customs Duties

The Duties received was much less than formerly owing to I believe to the strict laws that were existing during the middle and latter part of the year.

Postal

Eight (8) Postal Money Orders were requisitioned during the year. Little or no ordering was done owing to the Great war that was then raging.

Savings Department

Few people have deposited money into the Savings Department. Those who deposited were principally the Scout Boys of the 11th Bahamas Troop.

Letters Dispatched

Interinsular 163. Foreign 1035

Mail service by Sloop "Charlotte" (the first part of the year) and by Schooner "Julia" (the latter part of the year) has been performed with satisfaction, considering the rugged coast with which she has to contend and the prevailing South and Southwest winds.

Imports

Foodstuffs, Liquors, Medicines, Dry goods, Crockery, and Building Materials – All from the Capital, Nassau. /

Exports

Sponge, shells, Grapefruit, Onions, Sisal, Cane-Syrup, Cattle, Peas, and Bark.

Shipping

Vessels cleared	no.	Tonnage	men
" Entered	80	1021	766
" Entered	105	1276	938

No Foreign Vessel Entered or Cleared from this Port during the year. A visit to Grand Bahama of two (2) Sea-planes in May caused quite a sensation among the people. Some time in June American Marines landed here and erected a wireless station, which made the Capital brisk for a time – Sub-Chasers and Steamers frequently calling to bring provisions, letters &c. to the Marines. These Marines

remained here until they were informed that hostilities had ceased between Germany and the Allies. An Oil-house was also put up at Barnett's Point by the "air men."

The four-masted Schooner Cecelia Dunlop laden with sugar ran ashore on the 21st April at Memory Rock.

Education

The District is very badly off for schools – there being only three (3) One Board school and two Grants-in-Aid. This island being large as few of the windward islands and though unpopular in many ways is treated according to its unpopularity which I think is not right. Then too, I might say that the natives evince very little interest in the affairs and welfare of the island as also in Education. Many of the parents appear to be praying for their little boys to reach the Compulsory age (14 years) that they might take them out sponging.

This is a shame on the natives. Some of the little boys hardly can profet propel the boat with an oar – especially in the wind. It is injurious to the little boys: it strains them / while we know a certain amount injures the system and the muscles – especially these young children that are taken from school to be sent sponging. It makes them unfit for work in later years.

The parents' mind is centered too much on that quick "six or eight week's dollar" of which they scarcely see of one of them. In very many cases before the voyage is completed or started the parents have already received the effects of the voyage.

Then, too, what little Reading, writing, Spelling and Arithmatic is learned by these boys between the ages of 6 years and 14 years is almost lost sight of by these boys if they are permitted to reach the ages 20 years or 25 years.

If the compulsory age was sixteen years or if it were compulsory for a boy to remain at school until he can pass a certain standard in learning before he could be at liberty to go, whether he was 14 years or not, I think better results would be obtained, and in many cases these young boys would not be found going sponging, and illiteracy would cease in this island, it being adequately provided for with schools.

Crime

On the whole the District is a quiet one, except West End and Moore's Island: the formerly is famous for disobeying Summons, and I believe ignorant of the power of the Law. The latter: the natives are of a quarrelsome nature and try to be stubborn. Praedial Larceny [stealing crops] is prevalent in this District.

Vital Statistics

Births	58 males,	52 females	Total 110
Deaths	27 "	19 "	" 46

Public Health

A few cases of Diarrhoea and Ordinary fever, otherwise, good. Sanitary conditions are fairly good, but can be improved. /

Climate

Rainfall 18.02 inches, covering 89 days.

Lowest rainfall was in January .08. Highest, in September 3.73. There was a small hail storm of the 18th March.

Temperatures

Lowest 58 in January Highest 86 in July.

Barometer

Lowest 29.43 in October; Highest 31.09 in May

The Hurricane Season passed quite favourably.

Agriculture

Improving; most of the people have done better this year than formerly, Chiefly on account of the scarcity of foodstuffs and the exorbitant prices asked for the same. The Great War has caused many of the indolent ones to start up something for themselves; yet there are many more indolent ones who are preying upon the fields of their neighbors.

As I again have to state, the natives complain about the poorness of the "soil." I am of the opinion that the soil is not so bad as the natives try to make it. It is evident that lazy people will find many excuses though the thing they try to excuse themselves from will be for their support and benefit

Then too people should learn to help the poor soil by applying "cave earth" and other fertilizers.

If they would get down to the soil wholeheartedly and also try many other things like the Eleutherans, I firmly believe that they would be able to conquer the "Hard Times" which so often attack them; and in many cases be in better circumstances.

Pauperism

Some 26 paupers received out door relief during the year. The number seem to be on the increase, yet all who are added are certainly worthy of relief. / Twenty persons received treatment at the Bahamas General Hospital during the year.

General Remarks

Great improvements are being made in the dwellings of some of the natives. Sisal is also being well attended to. The people of Water Cay Sweeting Cay and Peterson Cay also Smith's Point raise quite a quantity of Grapefruit but owing to being unable to find a market for the same, most of them drop from the trees simply to manure the ground.

The general state of the people at the end of 1918 is just an item better than at the end of 1917, which I hope will keep on the increase.

E. W. Saunders
Acting Commissioner
West End

Opened during the year 98 days
Highest Monthly av.: 74.8 in Nov.
Lowest " 63.3 " June
Average yearly attendance 34.8
No. on Register Decr 85

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