

Grand Bahama  
Commissioner's Report for 1919

**BAHAMAS.**

**VOTES**

OF THE

HONOURABLE

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

OF THE

**BAHAMA ISLANDS.**

SESSION COMMENCING ON

THE 3RD DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1920

AND ENDING ON

THE 26TH DAY OF AUGUST, 1920.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF "THE NASSAU GUARDIAN"

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1920.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

The awful and bloody war came to an end on the 11th November, 1918, when the Peace Terms were signed at Versailles, but although that gigantic and world-wide struggle is over living has increased rather than decreased. This Island seems to be entirely cut off from the metropolis. The mail service has been most irregular and defective during the short time that I have been here and to see any other sail besides the mail come here would be one of the wonders of the day. The people (and there are some) could afford to have a small craft of their own for freight hauling, but they (as most of their class) do not pull together, being afraid to trust one another. If a schooner had not come here (being sent by Mr. R. J. A. Farrington of Nassau) in the month of October I am certain that there would have been starvation on the place. The prospects of the winter crops seem promising and the people as a whole appear to be in a prosperous condition. The Commissioner has made two visits around the District since coming here.

ANDREW S. M. O'BRIEN,  
Commissioner.

## GRAND BAHAMA.

## REVENUE.

King's Fines.....	£ 20 13 6
Fees of Court.....	4 3 0
Liquor Licences.....	15 0 0
Miscellaneous.....	6 0 8
	<u>£ 45 17 2</u>

## EXPENDITURE.

Public Works.....	£ 179 5 0
Judicial.....	34 9 7
Separation Allowances to dependents of soldiers	14 10 0
Peace Celebrations.....	10 0 0
Police.....	6 14 4
Prisons.....	3 12 6
Registration of Births and Deaths.....	2 17 0
Miscellaneous.....	2 10 0
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## POSTAL.

Making due allowance for the "raw shore, the service has been very slovenly and badly performed owing largely to being insufficiently manned.

Parcel Post Customs Duties.....	£ 3 5 0
Stamps sold.....	7 6 0
Postal Orders sold.....	5 9
Money Orders.....	Nil
Ordinary letters received.....	1758
Registered letters received.....	60
Ordinary letters sent.....	689
Registered letters sent.....	111

## TRADE.

Imports (via Nassau)—Groceries, alcohol, dry goods, hardware, crockery, lumber, medicines.

Exports—alcoholics.

Exports (via Nassau)—Sponge, sisal, grapefruit, conch-shells, cane-syrup, peas, cattle, groundnuts, onions, etc.

## AGRICULTURE.

It is estimated that an increase of about 25% in the area placed under cultivation with ground produce has been made during the year, while that in sisal was about 10%. Local buyers of sisal are badly needed and I have persuaded some of the leading men to become such.

The Great War, now happily over, has had one good result anyhow, viz., it has made the people more industrious and self-reliant. Agriculture, of course, in this District, is only of very small importance compared with sponging. (See my reports for 1914 and 1915.)

## FISHERIES.

The prices realized for sponge during the latter part of the year have, I have been informed by the spongers, been unprecedentedly good. They also inform me that the sponge beds of this District show no signs of exhaustion—rather that sponge is becoming more plentiful owing to the fact that so many men have ceased sponging and gone to Florida.

## CATTLE-RAISING.

The industry has been declining for many years and the past year has been no exception in this respect.

## EDUCATION.

This is the crying need of the vast majority of the people of this District. There is a Board School at Headquarters (Eight Mile Rock), a Grant-in-Aid at Water Cay and at High Rocks, and Church of England at most of the other settlements, but the

teachers themselves are badly in need of education, with the exception, of course, of the teacher at Eight Mile Rock. Owing, no doubt, to emigration the attendance at the Eight Mile Rock School has decreased from 235 in 1912 to 174 in 1918. The average percentage of passes at the yearly examinations has increased from 59% in 1912 to 79% in 1918.

**PUBLIC HEALTH.**

There has been no serious epidemic during the year.

**METEOROLOGICAL.**

Rainfall 23 inches, spread over 105 days. Temperature in shade—highest 98, lowest 46.

**VITAL STATISTICS.**

Population at last Census (1911) .....	2170
Deaths during the year .....	55
Births during the year .....	50

**CRIME.**

OFFENCE.	No.	RESULT.
Concealment of Birth	1	Convicted in Supreme Court
Wounding	4	4 fined
Common assault	3	2 fined, 1 bound over
Prædial larceny	7	3 discharged, 4 imprisoned
Police Regulations, Breach of	7	4 fined 2 discharged, 1 bound over
Other offences	4	1 discharged, 3 fined.

**EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.**

The emigration during the year has been very excessive, whole families going in many cases; many young women have gone to Florida to get married. A few have returned.

**GENERAL REMARKS.**

I feel safe in saying that the District has never been so well off as it was at the close of the year under review. Besides reaping large crops of peas, guinea corn, sweet potatoes, etc., which fetched good prices in Nassau, more of the inhabitants now go in for sisal than did in former years. Sponge, the procuring of which occupies 9% of the adult and adolescent males of this District, has been sold at much higher prices than heretofore, so much so as to offset present high cost of living.

Large agricultural and tourist schemes are afoot for the development of the western portion of Grand Bahama proper.

F. A. C. DUNCOMBE,  
Commissioner.