

Grand Bahama
Commissioner's Report for 1920

BAHAMAS.

VOTES
OF THE
HONOURABLE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF THE
BAHAMA ISLANDS.

—♦—
SESSION COMMENCING ON
THE 15TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1921
AND ENDING ON
THE 16TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1922.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.
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1921-22.

EMIGRATION.

The Florida attractions continue to draw the men from this district—all those who are able to read and write go. Few remain longer than a year. The majority during their absence from home make regular remittances to their families. I reckon about \$15,000 have been received in this way during the year.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Salt and logwood abound but there appears to be no demand for either at present.

Proper mail and passenger service between Nassau and this island is a pressing need. We can never hope to receive visits from foreigners until the existing passenger accommodations are improved.

No storms of a destructive nature occurred during the year.

JOHN A. BOWE,
Commissioner.

GRAND BAHAMA.

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
Grand Bahama,
3rd May, 1922.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit herewith my Annual Return for the District of Grand Bahama for the year ending 31st December, 1920.

REVENUE.

2. The Revenue was £385 8s. 9d. as compared with £45 17s. 2d. in 1919, the increase being chiefly due to customs duties on groceries.

EXPENDITURE.

Travelling by Commissioner.....	£	54	19	9
Police.....		5	14	0
Customs.....		29	3	6
B. G. Hospital.....		7	13	9
Registration of births and deaths.....		3	19	0
Judicial.....		8	6	0
Public Works.....		228	11	3
Miscellaneous.....		7	12	5
Empire Day Celebration.....		6	0	0
Prisons.....		1	13	0
Separation Allowance (War).....		6	4	3
Total.....	£	359	16	11

POSTAL.

Ordinary letters received	1300
Registered letters received	74
Books and papers received	663
Ordinary letters despatched	658
Registered letters despatched	83
Sale of Postage Stamps, etc.	£53 3 5

4. For a few months in the middle of the year there was no regular mail boat. During the first two or three months of the year she failed to stop at certain ports of call, the reason given being that they had nothing to stop for; which, of course, is no excuse at all.

5. Postal facilities were granted to Water Cay in the latter half of the year, but as they were very poorly appreciated, they were withdrawn at the end of the year.

6. A Post Office was established at West End about the middle of the year.

AGRICULTURE.

7. Very fair crops of Indian corn, sweet potatoes, red peas, pigeon peas, ground nuts and cassava were taken in, in spite of somewhat prolonged droughts, for which crops very good prices were obtained both in Nassau and locally.

8. About five acres were planted out with tomatoes and about one acre with onions at West End as an experiment; should the venture prove a success the planter (Mr. H. N. Wilhecombe) intends to go in largely and ship direct to the U. S. A. in his own vessels. Sisal is still on the increase.

FISHERIES.

9. Large catches of turtle were made which sold extremely well. Sponging was prosecuted with the usual vigor, but the prices realized were very disappointing. A flourishing industry in the catching and preserving of sharks and other fish usually considered inedible was started at Sweeting's Cay. The beche de mer industry was started at Sandy Point.

CATTLE-RAISING.

10. The number of cattle is steadily diminishing the reason for which is that the owners find difficulty in pasturing them and also keeping them from damaging their neighbour's fields.

EDUCATION.

11. I must repeat what I said in my report for last year that education is the great want of the bulk of the population. The Board school at Head Quarters—(Eight Mile Rock)— has a very efficient teacher and is making steady progress. Owing to emigration the attendance decreased from 235 in 1912 to 174 in 1918. The average percentage of passes at the yearly examinations increased from 59% in 1912 to 79% in 1918.

12. There are Grant-in-Aid schools at Water Cay and High Rocks which are better than no schools at all.

13. I understand that the Board has made a grant for a school at Mose Island, the population of which is large enough to justify a full Board school, being also fairly dense.

14. West End is sadly in need of a regular school; here, as at many of the other settlements where not even a grant-in-aid is, the Church of England has maintained schools; but it is time that these should be superseded by better.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

15. In the early part of the year there was an epidemic of itch in the vicinity of Head-Quarters, which in many cases were accompanied by malignant ulcers. Fortunately Dr. Knight was present, otherwise deaths would probably have taken place. Influenza was prevalent throughout the whole district in the early part of the year, and in one case it wiped out the entire family. Coughs, colds and diarrhoea were prevalent in the last part of the year.

METEOROLOGICAL.

16. Rainfall was 20 inches spread over 134 days. Temperature in shade 8 a.m.: highest, 86; lowest, 54.

VITAL STATISTICS.

17. Population in 1911:	2170
Births	60
Deaths	55

CRIMINAL.

18. Offence.	No.	Result.
Pradial larceny	4	4 imprisoned
Assault	9	7 fined, 2 acquitted
Police Regulations	11	10 fined, 1 acquitted
Other offences	14	11 fined, 5 acquitted

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

19. Emigration has not been quite so excessive as in the previous year and a fair number returned.

GENERAL REMARKS.

20. Although sponging, which, as I pointed out in my report for the previous year, occupied 90% (owing to a typographical error, I believe, it appears in last year's report as "9%" instead of "90%"—) of the adult and adolescent males of the District, has not been very remunerative, the people profiting by past experience, did not carry all their eggs in one basket and consequently did almost as well as in the previous year.

F. A. C. DUNCOMBE,
Commissioner.

HARBOUR ISLAND.

FINANCIAL.

Revenue. The Revenue derived from King's Fines, Fees of Office, Customs, Liquor Licenses, Real Property Tax etc., amounted to £207 7s. 1d., as compared with £218 14s. 10d. in 1919.

Expenditure. Local expenditure on account of public works, salaries, pensions, rents, travelling allowances, administration of justice etc., amounted