

GRAND BAHAMA  
Commissioner's Report  
for 1927



**BAHAMAS**  

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**VOTES**  
OF THE  
HONOURABLE  
**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
OF THE  
**BAHAMA ISLANDS.**

SESSION COMMENCING ON  
THE 8TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1927  
AND ENDING ON  
THE 6TH DAY OF JUNE, 1928.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.  
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1928.

GRAND BAHAMA.  
EIGHT MILE ROCK.

## REVENUE.

The receipts during the year, including remittances from the Honourable Receiver General, amounted to £3,314 1s. 3d.

## EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure on account of Public Works, Salaries, Hurricane Relief, Travelling Expenses, Criminal Expenses, etc., amounted to £3,242 9s. 2d.

## POSTAL STATISTICS.

Sale of Stamps	£	76	3	10
Postage collected			1	0
Money Orders		21	1	3
Parcel Post duty		34	7	9
Total	£	131	13	10

Registered Letters received 181: despatched 628.

## MAIL SERVICE.

The motor vessel *Alice Mable* started to run on August the 11th and since that time there has been a decided change for the better in the mail service.

The trips have been performed more regularly; there is considerably more accommodation for passengers as well as more cargo space for foodstuffs than before; and the entire crew from the captain down are extremely courteous and reliable.

## TRADE.

The imports consisted chiefly of foodstuffs, clothing, building material and liquors.

Exports: Sponge, sisal, oranges, grapefruit, firewood.

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## FISHERIES.

Nearly all the men and boys of the District are engaged in the sponging trade. It is difficult to ascertain the exact amount realized during the year, as over so large an island it is not always possible to get the necessary information.

There are eight schooners and sloops at this settlement and the sales of their cargoes in February, September, October and December, amounted to £2,600.

The average sales of the boats from West End, High Rock and Sweeting's Cay were about the same.

There is an additional fleet of small boats which sponge 'along shore' and make excellent trips at times. These usually sponge one man to a boat and sell their catch after working for three or four weeks, for from £10 to £20. With neither outfit nor advance to pay for, these men find themselves financially better off in the end than the men on the larger boats.

## SHIPPING.

*Coastwise.*

	Vessels	Tons	Men
Inwards	210	2943	1275
Outwards	253	4002	1344

*Foreign.*

	Vessels	Tons	Men
Inwards	206	1497	763
Outwards	181	1288	697

## CRIME.

65 cases were reported during the year and 94 persons were summoned or apprehended.

They were disposed of as follows: 8 discharged for want of evidence; 20 dismissed on the merits; 51 fined; 3 imprisoned; 5 whipped; 7 bound over and 2 cautioned.

With the exception of one case of murder, there was no serious crime, and the cases were considerably less than during the previous year.

The peace and good order have considerably improved.

#### VITAL STATISTICS.

Births 67. Deaths 56.

#### METEOROLOGICAL.

	Barometer.		Temperature.		Rainfall	
	Highest	Lowest	High- est.	Low- est.	Inches	No. of rainy days.
January	30.54	30.18	85	54	.24	6
February	30.39	29.90	83	63	1.32	9
March	30.43	30.00	82	56	.44	4
April	30.37	30.10	86	69	.25	4
May	30.29	30.01	89	73		3
June	30.29	30.13	91	77	.32	5
July	30.31	30.12	91	74	.36	9
August	30.24	30.12	91	77	.40	11
September	30.20	29.90	91	73	.88	11
October	30.14	29.85	87	69	.23	17
November	30.25	29.82	81	68	.19	4
December	30.36	29.86	86	67	.73	6
					5.36	89

Usual range  
Usual range 30.20

#### SOCIETIES.

There are six societies in this District with a membership of 360, which have continued their good work of aiding the sick and burying the dead.

#### AGRICULTURE.

At every settlement there has been greater activity especially since the rainy seasons started.

The acreage under cultivation has more than doubled that of the previous year, and the amount of peas, beans, potatoes, corn and other ground produce raised has increased in the same proportion.

The merchants at West End must not be overlooked. They, too, are setting a worthy example to the poorer classes at that settlement by starting farming on a fairly large scale. In this, Mr. Maury and Mr. Crawford are taking the lead.

As an incentive to farmers, jottings of farm topics have been posted at the various settlements, giving useful information in agricultural matters; and the people on the whole have responded nobly to the appeals made and the advice given them from time to time.

#### LIVE STOCK.

Horses 3; horned cattle 200; swine 200; goats 12.

Stock raising could be made a very profitable industry here, if the farmers gave it more attention. There is plenty of good pasture land and yet there is not a sheep to be seen anywhere.

The cows produce plenty of milk which finds a ready sale; but the breed of cows needs improving, judging by the poor specimens sometimes seen.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH.

In April there were a number of fever cases of a rather severe nature, but no deaths occurred. There were also some dysentery cases in September, but the number was very small when compared with the cases for the previous year. Apart from the above, the public health and sanitary conditions have been good.

#### PAUPERS.

30 persons received aid in this District from the Bahamas General Hospital, Nassau, during the year.

## PUBLIC WORKS.

In addition to the usual weeding and cleaning of roads and streets, wells, burial grounds and public grounds, and the cutting and clearing of several miles of new road, the following work has been done:

1. Repairs to the landing at Eight Mile Rock.
2. A causeway around Hawks Bill Creek, partly built.
3. Dredging of the channel for Hawks Bill Creek.

## EDUCATION.

There are two Board schools and six Grant-in-Aid schools in the District which have been attended during the year by 527 pupils. The public school at West End was closed from July to December, the teacher having been called in to Nassau for a few months by the Board of Education. The Eight Mile Rock school was opened 206 days during the year and the average yearly attendance was 139. Number on register 31st December was 179.

Under existing circumstances I consider the school at Eight Mile Rock has made fairly good progress for the year, while, as a matter of course, there is plenty of room for improvement. The majority of parents evince a pronounced indifference towards the school life of their children, and consequently, the progress of the school is retarded. At Sweeting's Cay, a new schoolroom was completed, which was taken over by the teacher in November. This is a fine building and meets the requirements of the children of this settlement.

## RADIO TELEGRAPH.

This station was damaged during the year, a fire having occurred which necessitated a portion of the machinery being shipped to Nassau for repairs. The total receipts collected for the year amounted to £321 3s. 5d., which amount indicates the patronage this station has received. A 'Telephone Line' from the wireless station at West End would prove a great boon to the District if extended only as far as Eight Mile Rock.

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## GENERAL REMARKS.

His Excellency the Governor visited West End on July 18th, and was welcomed at the public dock by a large gathering who followed on to the schoolroom, where the Commissioner introduced him to the people. In his remarks His Excellency expressed his sorrow for the existing hard times as a result of the prolonged drought; he nevertheless encouraged them to do their utmost along agricultural lines.

On my tour to the Eastern end of my District in November, I was informed that a party from Norman's Castle (Americans), had been for three weeks investigating the pine forests between McLain Town and Free Town. I went on shore at Sharp Rock to confer with these men but they were out in the forest, and I could not get in touch with them without the loss of time I could not well spare from my work at headquarters. I was informed that they were trying to locate the best timber lands in connection with the most suitable shipping points with a view to business.

I was also told they were favourably impressed with all they saw of the timber both as to quantity and quality. It might not be generally known, but Grand Bahama possesses an excellent pine forest stretching over an area of 40 miles in length and varying in breadth from four to seven miles and its time as an important lumber centre will surely come.

At one time a large quantity of cane syrup was manufactured, but for the last two years or so the industry has been greatly neglected. This is rather a pity, but efforts are being made to revive if not place it on a more satisfactory basis than ever.

Several experimental plots of tomatoes have been put under cultivation with a view to ascertaining the possibilities in connection with agricultural effort in that direction. The agents in Nassau who handle our fruit have pronounced it as excellent in quality.

With only 60 miles distance between this island and Florida it would seem a foregone conclusion that it is destined to hold the premier place in the tomato industry among all the islands, for with whatever other obstacles it may be confronted,

the distance between it and the markets of the United States must be conceded to be the principal factor in success or failure.

There are a number of fine groves of oranges, limes and grapefruit to be seen at the various settlements East of Eight Mile Rock, and some of the growers may be seen clearing, pruning and manuring their fruit trees, while others allow them to die without making an effort to save them. The citrus industry could easily be revived here on a large scale if the growers were to receive some expert advice occasionally.

Early in May the new residence was started which was completed in August. This building is large and comfortable and is a decided improvement on the former commissioner's residence at this settlement.

R. N. THOMPSON,  
Commissioner.

4th February, 1928.

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## HARBOUR ISLAND.

### REVENUE.

Revenue derived from Telegraphs, Customs, Licences, King's Fines, Justice's Fines, etc., amounted to £410 16s. 11d., as against £290 4s. 1d. in 1926.

Remittances from Treasury and Drafts drawn on Treasury on account of Public Works, payment of salaries, etc., amounted to £5,230 16s. 6d., as against £3,134 16s. 9d. in 1926. This increase was due to extensive repair work caused by hurricanes in 1926.

### TRADE.

During the year there was no trading between this Port and other foreign Ports as in past years.