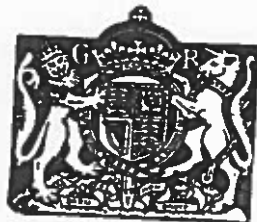


GRAND BAHAMA
Commissioner's Report for 1928

BAHAMAS

VOTES
OF THE
HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY
OF THE
BAHAMA ISLANDS.

—
SESSION COMMENCING ON
THE 19TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1929
AND ENDING ON
THE 17TH DAY OF MAY, 1929.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.
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1929.

GRAND BAHAMA.

EIGHT MILE ROCK

REVENUE.

Revenue derived from Kings Fines, Justices Fees, Customs Duties, Licences, Crown Funds, Remittances from Collector of Revenue, West End, and from the Hon. Receiver General, amounted to £2,237 5s. 8d.

EXPENDITURE.

The Expenditure on account of Public Works, Travelling Allowances, Hurricane Expenditure and Remittances to the Hon. Receiver General, amounted to £2,153 18s. 11d.

POSTAL STATISTICS.

Sale of Stamps and Postage	£	88	1	0
Money Orders		61	2	9
Postal Revenue		140	10	10
		<hr/>		
Total	£	289	14	7

Registered Letters received and despatched 963.

FISHERIES.

Sponge fishing still forms the chief employment of the majority of the male population; but the year cannot by any means be regarded as a successful one, due in a great measure to bad markets and unfavourable weather conditions from February to November.

Conditions improved in December, when larger cargoes were sold which realized good prices.

TRADE.

The Imports consisted chiefly of foodstuffs, clothing, building material, liquors from Nassau; and lumber from Normans Castle. The Exports were sponge, sisal, fruits, peas and beans, onions, tomatoes etc.

The foreign Imports amounted to about £1140, and the foreign Exports £100 (liquors not included). Liquors are still exported on a large scale, but no reliable figures can be obtained as to the exact amount exported.

SHIPPING.

Coastwise.

	Vessels	Tons	Men
Inwards	233	5820	1399
Outwards	241	4679	1409

Foreign.

	Vessels	Tons	Men
Inwards	229	4126	838
Outwards	234	1659	799

CRIME.

There were 88 offences reported, and 102 persons summoned or apprehended. They were disposed of as follows:—22 dismissed, 54 fined, 12 imprisoned, 2 whipped and 12 bound over.

Two cases were committed for trial to the Supreme Court.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births 47. Deaths 44.

Casualties:—There were 3 deaths by drowning. 1 at High Rock, and 2 at West End.

METEOROLOGICAL.

Highest reading of Barometer 30.46 in February. Lowest reading 29.20 in October. Temperature (8 a.m.) highest, 89 in July. Lowest 53 in February.

Rainfall 22.15 inches. Highest 7.23 inches in September, lowest 13 in February.

SOCIETIES.

There are six societies in the District with a membership of 418. These are still doing their good work.

PAUPERS.

42 persons received aid from the Bahamas General Hospital during the year.

PUBLIC WORKS.

In addition to the usual upkeep of roads, wells, burial grounds etc. the following were done:—

1. Repaired hurricane damage to streets in West End.
2. Reconstructed front street Eight Mile Rock to Braudie Point.
3. Improved over a mile of the new road to West End.
4. Reconstructed front street Pinder Point.
5. Improved School Landing.
6. Improved Residency Grounds.
7. Repaired Radio Station.
8. Improved Bridge McLain Town.
9. Improved Streets Sweetings Cay settlement.
10. Started new landing at Water Cay.
11. Constructed 3 new wells at Eight Mile Rock, Holmes Rock and Gold Rock.
12. Repaired old Bridge Hawks Bill Creek.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

From January to September the health conditions in the District were good but in October diarrhoea was epidemic in all the settlements. Fever was also prevalent at the same time; and in December there were a large number of influenza cases.

RADIO TELEGRAPH.

Revenue collected was £742 16s. 9d. an increase of £421 13s. 4d. over that for the previous year. The station was damaged during the hurricane, but the necessary repairs were speedily effected. A new receiving set has been installed since the hurricane.

MAIL SERVICE.

From January to March, the service was performed satisfactorily by the motor vessel *Skipper Eill*, the *Alice Mable* having gone to Jacksonville, Fla., for repairs. There were several complaints after the latter vessel resumed her sailings, that for several trips certain of the places of call were omitted. The captain gave as his reasons that unfavourable weather conditions were entirely responsible for these omissions. Any one acquainted with the south coast of this island can realize the danger of being caught by a heavy south wind along these shores; and except a captain, at such times, act with the greatest caution, he may seriously jeopardize life and property. I feel justified in saying that the present captain, John M. Carey, is doing all in his power to improve this service to the highest possible standard of efficiency.

CITRUS FRUITS.

I was greatly amazed at the fine groves of orange and grapefruit which I saw at Rockie Creek and Sweetings Cay during my tour including these two places in October last. The trees were all heavily laden, despite the ravages of the storm of the preceding month. Mr. Mount's orchard at Sweetings Cay alone can easily yield from 8000 to 10000 fruits yearly under favourable conditions, and there are a few other groves in that district nearly as large. I advised all growers against gathering immature fruit as well as how to pack.

If the orchards in the island were properly cared for and the fruit carefully shipped, the major portion of the demand of the Nassau market for this commodity could well be supplied with an article of superior quality all around than that brought into the colony from Cuba and Florida. This important industry should be by every possible means fostered here, as it would mean greater prosperity for our District in a few years hence. The trees thrive excellently in the rocky cavities along the pine forest.

EDUCATION.

Apart from the Grant-in-aid schools at Smith's Point and Free Town, all the schools in the District have been regularly conducted during the year. The school at Eight Mile Rock

has made considerable improvement. Discipline is good and the pupils evince greater interest in their work. The teacher is greatly devoted to his duties and is exerting every possible effort to raise the status of the school to a higher level. His objective would be more easily attained if the parents (as stated in last year's report) displayed a greater interest in the education of their children. At West End, too, the school has made good progress.

The amalgamation of the Grant-in-aid schools into two or more Board schools under more efficient teachers would give the children greater educational advantages; but the vast distance over which the population is scattered would render the adoption of such a scheme impracticable.

SHIP BUILDING.

At Pinder Point the *Irene P.* (an 18 feet sloop) was built by William Pinder. At Water Cay, one sloop was built by Zaccheus Cooper. At Black Land, one sloop was built by Hezekiah Roberts. A number of smaller boats were also built at Eight Mile Rock. Two marine slipways have been erected at West End and quite a number of motor boats, small and large have been hauled up and repaired. The 190 tons motor vessel in course of construction is nearing completion. The work speaks volumes for the mechanical skill of Mr. F. H. S. Bowe the designer and builder. The building of this boat and the repairs to others have furnished an unusual amount of work for both skilled and unskilled workmen who earn from 10s. to 26s. per day. It has served too as a training centre for apprentices. I have observed in this ship-yard a few young chaps who a year ago, could not rip in a straight line, and today are fairly good workmen. They have learned too the use of a variety of modern tools which they never even saw before.

GENERAL REMARKS.

Up to July the agricultural prospects were encouraging at every settlement as signified by the unusual quantity of ground produce to be seen; but a storm passed over this island in August causing some damage to the farms. The hurricane that blew from September 16th to the 17th left an enormous amount of destruction in its wake. Many houses were blown down and damaged, many miles of road were obliterated,

thousands of fruits and practically all farms were destroyed especially in lands near the coast that were subjected to a blighting baptism of salt water. The only alternative was to go freshly to work in keeping with His Excellency's timely message to the people. The inhabitants have cheerfully done what they could in repairing their homes, and the relief from the Government to the most destitute sufferers has been a great help in improving their condition. Conditions may be regarded as quite normal again judging by the amount of farm, produce everywhere in evidence.

The Coopers at Golden Grove were trying to make 1928 a record year for syrup in which they would very probably have succeeded had their extensive cane cultivation not suffered such a setback by the hurricane. I am encouraging them as well as others to set out larger fields than ever this year, with a view of reviving this industry.

The Honourable the Acting Colonial Secretary visited this District on August the 6th. Other visitors to the island were Major Andrew Holt and Mr. Robert Holt and a party of ladies from Montreal, Canada, in January; Colonel Brinkman; Count Felix von Luckner and Countess von Luckner of Germany in February; and Mr. Fitzpatrick of the Grand Bahama Development Company in May. Several fishing parties from Florida have also visited West End.

R. N. THOMPSON,
Commissioner.

HARBOUR ISLAND.

REVENUE.

Revenue derived from Customs, Telegraphs, Licenses, Water Rates, Kings Fines and Justices Fees etc. amounted to £653 17s. 11d. as against £410 16s. 11d. in 1927.