

GRAND BAHAMA
Commissioner's Report for 1929

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

LAW LIBRARY
BAHAMAS

—
SESSION COMMENCING ON
THE 18TH DAY OF MARCH, 1930
AND ENDING ON
THE 7TH DAY OF JULY, 1930.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.
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1930.

tenant and landlord; who meet together at these meetings and discuss the many problems common amongst them in farming.

During the short period the association has been formed it has done much good, and almost every householder in George Town is a member. Meetings are held monthly and it is proposed to extend branches to the outlying settlements at an early date. The Jamaican teacher stationed in George Town, has done much good work in assisting at these meetings; also in giving object lessons etc., to the people in his spare time.

H. F. PYFROM,
Commissioner.

GRAND BAHAMA.

EIGHT MILE ROCK.

REVENUE.

The Revenue derived from King's Fines, Liquor Licences, Justice's Fees, Remittances from Collector at West End, and other sources amounted to £1956 12s. 7d.

EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure on account of Public Works, Constables' salaries, Light-keepers' salaries, Criminal expenses, Travelling expenses, Remittances to Treasury etc. amounted to £1943 9s. 4d.

TRADE.

The usual number of motor boats from the Florida coast has carried on a fairly brisk trade in liquors whenever conditions were favourable. Several thousand star fish have been exported to Florida.

Imports: Food-Stuffs, clothing, building material, liquors etc.

Exports. Sponges, fruit, sisal, sugar-canes, cane-syrup, sweet-potatoes, cattle. Marine curios to Florida.

MAIL SERVICE.

This service was satisfactorily performed by the motor vessel *Alice Mabel* up to the middle of July. She was substituted in August by the motor vessel *Nelly Leonora* which was badly damaged during the September hurricane and put out of commission. From then to the present time, the service has been performed by the schooner *Huron*. The two latter vessels made their trips quite regularly; but otherwise the service rendered has been inferior to that given by the *Alice Mable*.

POSTAL STATISTICS.

There are two Postal stations in the District, one at West End and one at Eight Mile Rock.

Number of registered letters received, 159; number despatched, 772. Value of Postage Stamps sold, £75 15s. 4d.

Customs Duties collected on parcels amounted to £178 9s.

Mcney Orders issued including poundage amounted to £142 10s. 7d.

From Eight Mile Rock £1 9s. 10d. Total from West End not yet received. Will send slip with amount from West End to be inserted, as I do not wish to detain this report longer.

RADIO TELEGRAPH.

The Radio Station at West End has given good service during the year. No repairs have been necessary. The convenience of this station to the business community cannot be over estimated, and it is greatly patronized. The Revenue collected was £827 7s. 9d. an increase of £84 10s. 11d. over that of the previous year.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

The Health of the District has been good during the whole year. The local Board of Health have been very vigilant in

regard to sanitary matters, and there has been considerable improvement of the premises throughout the District.

VITAL STATISTICS.

Births 81. Deaths 31.

METEOROLOGICAL.

The normal range of barometer was 30.12. Highest, 30.25; lowest, 29.98.

The highest temperature was 88 in July and the lowest, 64 in February.

Rainfall 22.50 inches. Number of rainy days 62.

SHIPPING.—*Coastwise.*

	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
Inwards	217	4484	1410
Outwards	246	5457	1326

Foreign.

	Vessels.	Tons.	Men.
Inwards	313	1788	790
Outwards	297	1339	722

CRIME.

117 offences were reported, and 146 persons were dealt with as follows:— 11 imprisoned; 71 fined; 4 whipped; 23 bound over; 37 dismissed.

Three cases were sent for trial to the Supreme Court, and apart from these, there were no very serious offences reported during the year.

SOCIETIES.

There are six societies in all, with a membership of 395. These still carry on their work of aiding their sick, and burying their dead.

THE SPONGE INDUSTRY.

Five sloops have been added to the sponging fleet during the year, 3 of which were purchased by natives. These make a total of 36 sloops and 5 schooners engaged in the trade, nearly all of which are locally owned. The number of men and boys on these vessels amounted to about 400. There are besides, about 70 smaller boats which sponged along-shore. The best voyages were made during the months of February, May, September and December, when the cargoes were fairly large, and prices good. With a few exceptions, the moral tone of the men engaged in the industry is above that of the average sponger. These men are, as a rule, a very industrious lot, and do not waste their earnings in drink, but look carefully after the needs of their families. Not so much turtle shell was sold, nor were prices so good as during the previous year.

SHIPBUILDING.

One 25 ft. motor boat (cruiser type) and three smaller boats have been built at West End; also about fifty motor boats have been repaired. One 45 ft. motor boat is in course of construction.

At High Rock, two sloops, each of 22 ft. keel, have been built by two brothers, James Kemp and David Kemp. From all appearances, it seems evident that this District will figure very prominently in this particular industry, in the near future.

AGRICULTURE.

Unlike most of the other islands, the greater part of the land area is covered by an extensive pine forest, and at some settlements, suitable farming land is not available except on narrow strips along the coast. In spite of this, agriculture is receiving more attention than ever. Not only has the acreage under cultivation largely increased, but a larger variety of ground produce is grown. The seasons have been fairly good and large crops of guinea corn, peas, beans, potatoes etc. have been harvested. Many farmers have worked on the off cays, where the land is more productive. Some of these farm on a large scale and their fields have been very productive. The output in sweet potatoes alone from 8 of these farmers amounted

to 1600 lbs. Peas, beans, sugar-canes etc., are grown on these cays in the same proportion.

STOCK FARMING.

At the end of the year there were 190 cows, 20 goats, and 356 swine. About 12 head of cattle were shipped to Nassau and sold for good prices, and 20 others were slaughtered for home consumption.

MANUFACTURES.

Cane-syrup has been manufactured by farmers on the mainland and on the off cays. When all have finished grinding the year's crop of canes, the output of syrup is estimated at 150 tins or 750 gallons. I have seen several samples, and the quality is very good. A ready market is found for this product locally and at the adjacent islands, at 16s. to 20s. per 5 gallon tin.

PUBLIC WORKS.

A new bridge across Hawks Bill Creek has been constructed. This bridge is a very substantial affair, and a great improvement on the previous wooden structure. A new road between Louis Yard and Hunters settlements has been made inland, to replace the old foot-path along the coast which was impassable since the September hurricane of 1928. Various sections of township roads have also been repaired or improved.

EDUCATION.

There are 8 schools in the District, 2 Board and 6 Grant-in-aid. There has been a change of teachers at West End and at Sweeting's Cay. The school at Free Town has remained closed during the whole year; and there has been considerable falling off in the attendance of the Smith's Point school. The school at West End appears to be making satisfactory progress, and the inhabitants seem greatly pleased with the new teacher and his work. This school has the finest school garden in the District. A new wing has been added to the school at Eight Mile Rock, to meet the requirements of the increasing number of pupils.

PAUPERS.

48 persons received aid from the B. G. Hospital during the year.

GENERAL REMARKS.

We have great need to be thankful to Providence for sparing us from the ravages of the September hurricane, which caused so much destruction and distress to Nassau and the adjacent islands, to whom we offer our deepest sympathy. Apart from the flooding of farms, and a few wash-outs to roads by abnormal tides, this District suffered no damages worth mentioning.

While the year has not been a very prosperous one, there is little cause for complaint. The successful sponging voyages, the wages earned by carpenters and others at West End, as well as the increased amount of farm produce and cash from sales of same, have kept the wolf from the door.

Much valuable time has been wasted in years past by many of the inhabitants who have loafed around from day to day waiting on the long expected foreign developments; and much effort has been exerted on my part during my tours throughout the district endeavouring to denounce this folly and to impress them with the importance of carrying out His Excellency's advice *re* agriculture on a more extensive scale, and to develop their own local resource.

I am confident today, that this District gives promise to a greater future. Apart from the evident increase in its local industries, its proximity to, as well as the regular intercourse with Florida, is an important factor which might, at any moment, turn the tide of fortune in its favour.

The Roosevelt Flying Corporation started operations here in December, making quite frequent trips in their twin motor flying boats, and bringing in an unusual number of visitors. This too, may be regarded as a favourable omen towards future development.

R. N. THOMPSON,
Commissioner.