

GRAND BAHAMA
Commissioner's Report for 1930

BAHAMAS.
—
VOTES
OF THE
HONOURABLE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF THE
BAHAMA ISLANDS

—♦♦—
SESSION COMMENCING ON
THE 17TH DAY OF MARCH, 1931,
AND ENDING ON
THE 28TH DAY OF MAY, 1931.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.

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1931.

an Agricultural Show was given by the George Town Farmers' Union in honor of the visit. Mr. Sampson, Agriculturalist from the Colonial Office, visited George Town, Rolle Town and Hartswell in May, and inspected many of the farms and stock pastures.

The Farmers' Unions at George Town and Rolle Town held regular monthly meetings and every meeting was well attended.

During the month of December a Farmers' Union was formed in the Steventon District and the attendances at these meetings have been encouraging.

The scope of the peasant farmer for improvements is somewhat restricted in this island; the reason being, that the land is owned by so few people and the majority of the farmers are tenants. The landowners are stock farmers and naturally the tenant must do "bird of passage farming" so as to make pasture for his landlord.

If land could be acquired by the Government and rented or sold to the peasant farmers, who possess no lands, I am confident that it would improve the condition of the people and the District in particular.

With the present scheme of the Farmers' Unions in Exuma, in establishing a Farmers' Loan Bank in this District, I feel confident that should the people continue as they have started recently, their condition will be much more improved in the near future.

H. PYFROM,
Commissioner.

GRAND BAHAMA.

REVENUE.

Revenue derived from all sources, including remittances from The Honourable Receiver General, amounted to £1847 1s. 0d.

EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure on account of Public Works, Police and other salaries, Commissioner's Travelling Expenses, Remittances to the Treasury, etc., amounted to £1800 2s. 9d.

MAIL AND POSTAL FACILITIES.

From January to July the schooner *Huron* performed the mail service. There were numerous complaints with regard to the service performed by this vessel, most of which were not without a cause, her sailings being very irregular, and the passenger accomodation very poor. Since July, the service has been performed very satisfactorily by the motor vessel *Madam*.

The Carrier service between Eight Mile Rock and Water Cay has been satisfactorily performed.

POSTAL REVENUE.

Sale of Stamps £68 18s. Money Orders, £69 1s. 6d. Customs Duties on parcels £36 2s. 10d.

RADIO TELEGRAPHS.

The station has been in excellent working condition throughout the whole year. The Revenue collected from this source amounted to £886 15s. 7d.

SHIPPING—Coastwise.

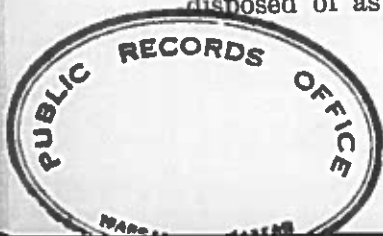
	Vessels	Tons.	Men.
Inwards	228	4888	1359
Outwards	291	6101	1393

Foreign.

Inwards	321	2364	841
Outwards	312	2087	719

CRIME.

120 persons were summoned or apprehended; they were disposed of as follows: 13 imprisoned; 63 fined; 1 whipped;

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10 bound over; 28 dismissed; and 2 committed for trial in the Supreme Court.

HEALTH.

During the month of May, many of the children at settlements from High Rock going eastwardly, suffered from chicken pox. Fever, cold and grippe were prevalent at most settlements in October and November, but during the remainder of the year the health of the District has been normal. Sanitary conditions continue to improve.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	Males	Females	Total
Births	50	48	98
Deaths	17	19	36

EDUCATION.

There are two Board and five Grant-in-aid schools in the District. The average attendance has been good, except during October, when many of the pupils were suffering from fever and colds.

A new teacher was placed in charge of the Eight Mile Rock school in January; the Grant-in-aid school at Free Town has been reopened; the Grant-in-aid teacher at Smith's Point was transferred to High Rock in March, and the former school has been closed.

The teacher at West End is doing creditable work in the school garden there and the school garden at Eight Mile Rock is beginning to make a good showing. Nothing worth mentioning is done in gardening at the other schools. I have visited the schools frequently, and from all I have seen, it appears that the pupils are making steady progress.

FISHERIES.

The sponge industry is still flourishing here. There are at present 46 schooners and sloops, besides 40 along-shore boats, employed in sponge fishing. These carry a total of 442 men

and boys. From February to May large cargoes were taken to market and good prices were realized. The next two or three months experienced a decline both in quantities and prices. In November, however, conditions suddenly brightened, and the December voyages have been very good indeed; large cargoes have been gathered for which good prices have been obtained. In February, a large quantity of star-fish was gathered and sold locally to foreigners. These were exported to Florida. This industry furnished a number of men at West End and the adjacent cays with steady employment, and it was a paying business while it lasted, but unfortunately it was shortlived.

AGRICULTURE.

Considerable improvement has been made during the year. The encouraging remarks of The Honourable Colonial Secretary to the people, during his visit here in May, have proven a wonderful incentive to all farmers. The seasons have been good, and large crops of potatoes, peas, beans, etc., have been reaped. Bananas, which had to be bought from Nassau two years ago to supply local requirements are so plentiful now, that there are some for export. A larger quantity of sugar canes has been raised this year than during any year of my stay here. Syrup is being manufactured in several settlements and on the adjacent cays, yet there are thousands of canes sold locally, and exported. At West End can be seen regularly, boats laden with fruits and other farm produce, lying at some of the wharves. There, a ready market is very often found among the number of strangers and visitors always to be found at that settlement. Very often too, the local stores buy in large quantities for their retail trade; and in this way the larger growers have succeeded in disposing of a large portion of their crops.

The Indian corn crop has not been so good; this is due in most cases to the havoc caused to this crop by blackbirds and rats. These infest the fields in great numbers. Whole fields of corn have been destroyed in a single week. The rats not only destroy the corn, but they cause havoc to the root crops as well. Nothing has yet been found to successfully cope with these pests. The Guinea corn crop will be much better.

STOCK FARMING.

At the end of the year there were 208 cows, 4 horses, 235 swine and 25 goats in the District. It is claimed that sheep will not thrive well here. These are imported regularly from Nassau to West End, to supply the local demand for mutton.

TRADE.

Apart from the usual trade carried on with Nassau, there have been a few boats trading between West End and Florida. The principal imports were foodstuffs, clothing, building material, etc., from Nassau; general merchandise from Florida.

The principal exports were sponge, fruits, sisal and marine curios. Customs duties collected on imports from Florida amounted to £249 0s. 6d.

PUBLIC WORKS.

A new causeway at Eight Mile Rock is being constructed and nearly completed; improvements have been made on the new road between Eight Mile Rock and West End; and the usual weeding and cleaning of country and township road and burial grounds have been carried on.

METEOROLOGICAL.

Barometer.	Normal	30.09
	Highest	30.30 in January.
	Lowest	29.88 in October.
Temperature.	Highest	90 in August.
	Lowest	58 in March.
Rainfall.	Inches	21.05.
	Rainy days	51.

SOCIETIES.

There are six societies in all with a membership of 431. These still continue their very useful work.

PAUPERS.

At the end of the year, there were 34 paupers receiving aid from the Bahamas General Hospital.

CASUALTIES.

On January 29th, Reuben Kemp, age 19 years, was drowned while sponging in an open boat off the north shore of High Rock. The body was found and buried at Water Cay.

An American bootlegger was drowned in the harbour at West End on the night of February the 6th. The body was shipped by plane to his relatives in Florida.

Luther Martin, age 45, a native of Braudie's Point, was drowned on the 6th of November, opposite Holmes' Rock.

Evelyn Bevans died suddenly, after childbirth, at Sweeting's Cay on December 24th.

GENERAL REMARKS.

On May the 12th, the District was honoured by a visit from The Honourable Colonial Secretary, who called both at West End and at Eight Mile Rock. At both places, His Honour received a cordial welcome, and he very ably addressed the inhabitants, encouraging them along agricultural lines!

Several yachts have called at West End during the year with tourists; but the planes which ply regularly between here and Florida have brought in the larger number of passengers. I have seen as many as three planes arrive in one day, some of which have had to make double trips in order to accommodate the passengers.

One twin-screw motor boat, about 20 tons, and three small racing boats have been built at West End for export to the U.S.A. The inhabitants are all unanimous in their sincere expressions of thankfulness and praise to the good Lord for being spared from hurricanes.

Every thing has moved along in harmony during the year. The people on the whole have tried more than ever to co-operate with me in all matters tending to the well being of the District.

It is my pleasant duty to record my appreciation of the valuable assistance rendered me at all times by Mr. F. H. S. Bowe, J.P., West End, in my work at that section of the island.

R. N. THOMPSON,
Commissioner.