

GRAND BAHAMA  
Commissioner's Report for 1931

**BAHAMAS.**

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**VOTES**

OF THE

HONOURABLE

**HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

OF THE

**BAHAMA ISLANDS.**

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SESSION COMMENCING ON

THE 15TH DAY OF MARCH, 1932

AND ENDING ON

THE 13TH DAY OF JUNE, 1932.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.

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1932.

road leading to Forest settlement has been completed also. There are only a few spots on the main road to be improved and linked up. The macadamised roads are in very good condition and are of untold benefit to pedestrians and persons travelling on horseback.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

During the year the District was visited by Captain E. V. Solomon, M.H.A., and senior representative for the island, who is keenly interested in the development of the District, and his advice and words of encouragement to the farmers have been highly appreciated and gave fresh impetus to the people to stay at home and till the soil.

There are four Farmers' Unions in this District, three of which are in good financial standing and are able to make short term loans to members for agricultural purposes. These Unions have caused marked improvement in the District generally, and the Union at Roker's Point now boasts of nearly 300 members.

During the month of August Mr. Ralph Collins, M.H.A., visited George Town and Steventon and, after giving demonstrations with the new hand cleaning sisal machines, left three in the District at the request of various people. The Secretary of the Board of Agriculture also visited the island in the interest of the sisal industry.

H. F. PYFROM,  
Commissioner.

14th January, 1932.

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### GRAND BAHAMA.

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#### REVENUE.

The Revenue derived from King's Fines, Justices' Fees, Customs Duties, Liquor Licences, Crown Funds, Remittances from the Collector of Revenue, West End, and the Hon. Receiver General amounted to £1988 11s. 6d.

## EXPENDITURE.

The expenditure on account of Public Works, Salaries of Lightkeepers and Local Constable, Travelling Allowance and Remittance to the Hon. Receiver General amounted to £1975 0s. 10d.

## MAIL SERVICE.

Mails were brought in regularly by m. v. *Madam* up to the end of May, when she was put on the dock to be overhauled and painted and the *Patricia K.* was substituted to bring in mails arriving here on June 8th. In the middle of the month the service was awarded by tender to Bruce Bethell, Esq., captain and owner of m. v. *Midwest*; but in consequence of uncontrollable events his service was soon discontinued and mails were conveyed in the latter part of July by m. v. *F. A. Marie* and by m. v. *Marmaduke* in August and September. In October the m. v. *Castlerag*, built by F. H. S. Bowe, Esq., was placed on the line and continued till the end of the year. The *Castlerag* is beyond all doubt a fine vessel and well able to encounter the huge billows that often mount their hoary heads in this wild passage, especially during the winter season and much credit is due to Mr. Bowe for his untiring efforts to place in the service a vessel of this type. Although she is serving Exuma as well yet the mails are always in time.

## EDUCATION.

There are two Board schools in the District, one at Eight Mile Rock, and the other at West End, and a Grant-in-aid school at each of the following settlements: Freetown, High Rock, Sweeting's Cay, Smith's Point and Water Cay.

The schools at Smith's Point and Sweeting's Cay had been closed seventeen months and eleven months respectively, the former having been re-opened in October by Mrs. Presillita Smith, the latter in September by Mr. Rosemond A. Wilkgoose.

The attendance of some of these schools was marred by parents taking away their children with them to the adjacent Cays; while the attendance of others was good in the face of adverse circumstances.

A Grant-in-Aid school was opened at Crabbing Bay but owing to the incapability of the teacher it was closed in July.

Schools are urgently needed at other settlements but as the parents are scattered over such a wide area it is almost impossible to grant their request.

#### AGRICULTURE.

Arriving in the District in June I made a tour in July and August. At every settlement the people were summoned and a meeting was held in which I spared no pains in an attempt to instil into their minds the necessity of devoting more time to the cultivation of the soil in order to make themselves as far as possible self-supporting.

The remarks made to them had been thoroughly digested to their benefit as subsequent results indicated, but the farmers are handicapped to some extent by the attacks made on the cornfields by the cornbirds.

These destructive birds are always found lurking near some field watching for the earliest opportunity to begin the feast and in a few hours an ordinary patch is totally destroyed. As a defence against these attacks the farmers are compelled (1) to remain in the field every day from sunrise till sunset until the corn arrives to maturity (2) by beating upon an oil-tin or an old box throughout the day (3) by making a shouting noise at their approach.

During the early part of the year good results were obtained from the farms but in consequence of drought in the middle of the year the yield in December was next to zero.

#### STOCK-FARMING.

About 75% of the inhabitants from Hunter's to West End inclusive are engaged in stock-farming, but little is done along this line at the other end of the Island. There are over 250 cows, 240 pigs, 4 horses, 12 sheep, 8 goats, and 10 turkeys in District. A few of the inhabitants have extensive pastures, while others have none, consequently they are obliged to turn out their cows every morning and evening (except Sundays) to graze in some uninclosed spot under strict supervision.

Sufficient fodder is brought in on Saturday to serve on Sunday.

#### SPONGING.

This being the staple industry of the people it goes on all the year round as a means of defence against the attacks of the wolf. Few persons, apparently, are on tip-toe gazing into the future with a scrutinizing eye if happily they may discover something more remunerative to occupy their time, while others without the slightest scruple get on the job heartily.

85% of the men of the Island and a large number of the women of some of the windward settlements are engaged in sponging which is carried on chiefly along the Little Bahama Bank. During the summer months enormous cargoes were placed in the market but the prices were not very attractive. At the end of the year, in spite of the inclemency of the weather a handsome lot was brought in and sold at a more reasonable rate.

#### TRADE.

Imports chiefly consisted of foodstuffs, clothing and building material, while the exports were sponges, sisal, fruit, onions, tomatoes, etc

The exportation of liquor seems to be on the wane, but hopes are entertained that it will resume its former stage in the near future.

#### SOCIETIES.

There are five Burial Societies in the District with a membership of five hundred and twenty-six organized for the purpose of aiding the sick and burying the dead. These Societies are doing excellent work.

#### PAUPERISM.

During the year 38 persons received Government relief while a large number of sick ones was treated free at the Bahama General Hospital.

## PUBLIC WORKS.

In addition to the usual upkeep of wells, burial grounds, etc.:

A portion of the Residency grounds has been filled in.

The Residency has been painted.

Commissioner's office ceiled, repaired and painted.

Roads at West End cleaned and main street improved.

Roads leading from Headquarters to McClain's Town with little exception have been cleaned.

Wharf at Water Cay completed.

Bridge at Rocky Creek completed.

Road leading from Headquarters to West End, continued.

## TELEGRAPHS.

The amount received for messages despatched was as follows:

January	9	05	19	8
February		71	6	2
March		103	13	1
April		78	11	2
May		60	2	4
June		48	18	7
July		45	8	2
August		38	7	1
September		34	2	11
October		44	9	9
November		35	5	2
December		33	12	4
Total	£	724	19	5

## METEOROLOGICAL.

Highest reading of the barometer was 30.4 in January, and the lowest 29.33 in September.

Temperature. Highest, 89 in August, lowest 58 in February.

Rainfall. Highest 7.47 inches in September, lowest .29 in May.

SHIPPING.—*Coastwise.*

Inwards: 53 Vessels; 627 Tons; 568 Men.

Outwards: 56 Vessels: 1026 Tons; 769 Men.

*Foreign.*

Inwards: 98 Vessels; 1123 Tons; 829 Men.

Outwards: 96 Vessels 999 Tons; 784 Men.

## CRIME.

68 persons were brought before the court and dealt with as follows: 34 fined, 10 dismissed, 5 imprisoned, 9 bound over, and 10 cautioned.

Nothing of any serious nature appeared.

From June 8th (the date of my arrival in the District) to December 31st only 8 cases were reported at Headquarters.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

There were 80 births and 58 deaths recorded during the year.

## BOAT-BUILDING.

A vessel has been set up at each of the following places: Eight-Mile Rock by Mr. Samuel Pinder; Lewis Yard by Mr.

Bertie Russell and Bros.; Hunter's by Mr. Elijah Grant; Freetown by Mr. Emanuel Hield; Golden Grove by Mr. Victor Cooper.

The m. v. *Castlerag* was completed and launched in October by F. H. S. Bowe, Esq., Collector of Revenue, West End.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

This District has a need to thank the Omnipotent Father for shifting the hurricanes again this year so that the Island was not hit. During the hurricane months tropical disturbances were reported repeatedly but the weather conditions continued favourable throughout the season.

W. B. COOPER,  
Commissioner.

22nd January, 1932.

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#### HARBOUR ISLAND.

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#### REVENUE.

Revenue derived from Customs, Telegraphs, Licences, Water Rates, King's Fines and Justice's Fees, etc., amounted to £1655 13s. 3d. as against £1743 0s. 9d. in 1930.

#### EXPENDITURE.

The Expenditure for the year amounted to £2975 18s. 0d. as against £3088 8s. 10d., for previous year.

#### TRADE.

No trading during the year between this Port and foreign ports. The m.v. *Alma R.* made her usual trips from Miami, Fla., to this port in order that her crew, which are obtained from Harbour Island, might visit their families while on their voyages to Cuba for bananas.

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