

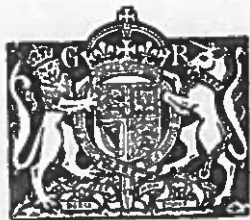
*1902.*  
GRAND BAHAMA  
Commissioner's Report for 1932

**BAHAMAS**  

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

SESSION COMMENCING ON  
THE 1ST DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1932  
AND ENDING ON  
THE 25TH DAY OF MAY, 1933.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.  
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1933.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

The Farmers' Unions and Credit Societies are functioning satisfactorily and valuable assistance has been given to members by way of small loans to extend their cultivations and improve their holdings.

His Excellency the Governor visited the District on the 19th May, and this visit was highly appreciated by every member of the community. The advice given by His Excellency to the farmers of Exuma created fresh impetus in the agricultural development and in consequence produce and stock of the highest quality rather than quantity is now the main object of the farmers so as to ensure a good market.

Captain E. V. Solomon, M.H.A., visited the District during the month of October, and gave good advice to the people, outlining the policy of the Government and the urgent need for retrenchment on all sides.

The District suffered a serious setback during the year. First the drought and near the end of the year a hurricane which did serious damage to property and crops. In consequence of this difficult times are being experienced by the people of this District, who are bearing the hardships with fortitude. The visit of the Assistant Colonial Secretary and Mr. Dalgarno after the hurricane was much appreciated.

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GRAND BAHAMA.  
EIGHT MILE ROCK.

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W. B. COOPER. COMMISSIONER.

## REVENUE.

Revenue derived from King's Fines, Justices' Fees, Customs Duties, Crown Funds, Remittances from Collector of Revenue, West End, and from the Hon. Receiver General amounted to £1489 6s. 11d.

## EXPENDITURE.

The Expenditure on account of Public Works, Travelling Allowances, Salaries of Light-Keepers and Local Constable, and remittances to the Hon. Receiver General amounted to £1316 4s. 5d.

## POSTAL.

Sales of Stamps and Money Orders totalled £48 11s. 6d. Number of parcels received was 74. Registered letters received 38. Interinsular and foreign letters received 2809. Number despatched was 2911.

## MAIL SERVICE.

Mails were brought in regularly by m. v. *Castleroy* till the first of October in spite of adverse circumstances. In the middle of the month she was chartered to go to America while the service was continued by m.v. *Alice Mabel* to the end of the year. It is to be hoped that this type of vessel will be kept on the run for an unlimited period, but in view of the financial depression, the outlook along this line is somewhat gloomy.

## AGRICULTURE.

As compared with other Islands of the Colony the amount of land for cultivation here is small. About 90% of the surface is covered with pine forests interspersed with honey-comb rocks, so that farming is chiefly carried on along the coast on narrow strips of white land. Owing to the heavy South winds during the winter months, the seawater is sent vehemently against the rocky coast, flinging its spray over farm and garden and conveying instant destruction to crops, and in particular at Headquarters and High Rock.

I have spared no pains in giving the people object lessons on Agriculture throughout my District. I have impressed upon them the necessity of devoting more time to the cultivation of the soil in order to make themselves as far as possible self-supporting.

Extensive cultivations were carried on at Great Sales Cay by the inhabitants of Water Cay, but the hurricane of

September swept over the land so that no trace of plants has been left.

At Golden Grove, Smith Point, Black Land and other neighbouring settlements ample crops of guinea corn were harvested in December; among those concerned I may mention Mr. Fred Cooper and Mr. Victor Cooper, his son, at Golden Grove, who took in 19 bushels and 17 bushels respectively.

At West End, farming is going on and receiving more attention than heretofore as the bootlegging seems to be on the wane.

#### SPONGING.

The Little Bahama Bank has been scoured repeatedly during the year by the sponging fleet here, so that immense cargoes of sponges were conveyed to Nassau market in the early part of the year, midsummer, and at the end.

Although the prices obtained did not keep pace with those of former years yet the results were satisfactory. A few vessels from the upper end of the Island went to the Mud in November but they miscarried in their expectations as the cargoes placed on the market compared unfavourably with those of the Little Bahama Bank.

Sponging is the staple industry of this Island and in spite of rain or sunshine it is carried on with unabated force. About 95% of the men are spongers; and in some settlements the women, too, are seen in the bow of the boat with staff in hand wending their way towards the nearest sponging grounds with a view of rendering some assistance to the men.

The majority of the parents seem to be on tip-toe, watching the approach of their boys' fourteenth year in order to secure berths for them on board of some sponging craft.

#### EDUCATION.

There is a Board school at each of the settlements of Eight Mile Rock and West End and a Grant-in-Aid school at Smith's Point, Freetown, High Rock, Sweeting's Cay and Water Cay.

The attendance was marred in September and October by the scarcity of food as the farms had been devastated by the hurricane; otherwise it was satisfactory on the whole.

There are over 60 children growing up in ignorance at Black Land, Pelican Point and McClain's Town, but as the parents are scattered over such a wide area it is almost impossible for the Government to reach them. On my last visit to McClain's Town I tried to devise some scheme that would facilitate the attendance of the children at Sweeting's Cay school as the distance between these two settlements is only three miles; but owing to the fact that they would have to cross Romer Creek in a boat, and as the current runs at such a rapid rate, it was eventually considered to be rather dangerous.

A Grant-in-Aid school had been opened there some time ago by one William Pethel, but owing to unfavourable conditions the Board closed it up. The school at Sweeting's Cay which had been closed eleven months and re-opened by Mr. R. A. Wildgoose in the early part of the year, is doing well.

#### CITRUS FRUITS.

There are extensive orchards at Golden Grove, Roely Creek and Sweeting's Cay, owned by Messrs. Fred Cooper, Joseph Bevans and James Mounts respectively.

On my last visit to these places in the early part of September, I found the trees over-laden with oranges and grape fruit, so that it was necessary to place supports under branches. Two days after leaving, the hurricane attacked the trees and rid them of their heavy burdens at a great loss to the owners, as the fruit was immature.

#### STOCK RAISING.

There are over 250 cows in the District and the remarks made in my report in 1931 in connection with the raising of them are applicable in this report.

There are no pastures of any consequence except those at Set-and-be-Damned, owned by the Martin, family, in which is kept a fine lot of cows. The ancient custom of driving the

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cows out to some uninclosed land under close supervision where they might graze a few hours daily and returned to the yard at night being placed in small enclosures, still exists. They are not turned out on Sundays but the owners accumulate sufficient fodder for them on the previous day which is thrown to them at certain intervals.

#### CASUALTIES.

On November 19th Theophilus Laing was drowned at Hall's Point—a distance of 44 miles from Headquarters.

Paul Laing with his brother Charles Laing left Pelican Point (South Side) on a fishing route down the shore, when they espied a small boat drifting not far from Hall's Point. They immediately hurried to the spot but found nothing inside except a staff and oar.

A messenger was despatched to the settlement to make enquiry in regard to the missing man, and he was informed that Theophilus Laing left on the previous morning in the same boat from the North Side with a view of conveying her by way of Carrion Crow Harbour to the South Side of the Island but that he never returned.

Captain David Kemp, Jr., passing by at the time on his way from Nassau was invited to assist in a search for the missing man, and in a few minutes his body was discovered at the bottom of the sea not far from the boat.

#### CRIME.

Eighty-two cases appeared before the court during the year and were dealt with as follows: 40 fined: 14 sent to local prison: 6 sent to Nassau prison: 10 cautioned: 5 dismissed and 7 bound over.

About 75 per cent of these were heard at West End.

Nothing of any serious nature appeared.

#### TELEGRAPH.

Revenue collected from the Telegraph Department was £555 Cs. 4d., as against £724 19s. 5d. for the previous year—a decrease of £169 13s. 1d.

No. of messages sent was 1888.

No. received was 1409.

#### PAUPERISM.

32 persons received relief from the Bahamas General Hospital during the year.

#### PUBLIC WORKS.

The usual Work under Head 25, Item 23. was carried on, namely, cleaning roads, wells, public and burial grounds.

(1) In addition to this, the road leading to West End was continued.

(2) A kitchen was erected in the Commissioner's yard.

(3) The bridge at Hawk's Bill Creek (South), damaged by the hurricane in September, was repaired.

(4) Road leading from West End settlement to Landing Field at Sand Bay was repaired.

#### METEOROLOGICAL.

Barometer: Normal reading, 30.00.

Highest reading, 30.4 in June, and lowest, 29.70 in September during the hurricane.

Thermometer: Highest temperature in shade at 8 a.m. was 89. Minimum 54.

Rainfall: 25.68 inches, covering a period of 31 days.

#### BIRTHS AND DEATHS.

There were 102 Births and 44 Deaths recorded during the year.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH.

This was exceptionally good throughout the District.

During the latter part of the year a few cases of whooping cough, which soon disappeared, were in evidence among the children.

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## GENERAL REMARKS.

The inhabitants are exceedingly grateful to the Omnipotent Father for shifting the centre of the burricane so that this Island was not badly hit, though some of the adjacent cays were not so fortunate.

Farmers living there at the time report that they barely escaped with their lives by clinging to the stumps of trees, bare-headed and practically naked while they were battered by the winds and waves till daylight.

Thanks also to the Government for responding to their call so readily after the storm.

Gloom and sadness prevailed throughout this Island on the receipt of the news which flashed with lightning speed, telling of the ill-fated vessel *J. W. Hull*, which foundered in Nassau harbour on the night of Nov. 2nd, when Messrs. Thomas Wilehcombe, Eustace Forbes, Melvin Sturt, John Jones, Samson Hield, Henry Williams and Hilton Bowleg were suddenly plunged into the Great Tide of Eternity.

These men left their homes in good spirits on the 28th of October with cargoes of sponges for Nassau market which they had gathered during the hurricane months with a hope of returning with food and clothing for their families.

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HARBOUR ISLAND.

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DEWEES O. JOHNSON, COMMISSIONER.

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## REVENUE.

Revenue derived from Customs, Telegraphs, Licenses, Water Rates, King's Fines and Justices' Fees, etc., amounted to £888 17s. 7d., as against £1655 13s. 3d. in 1931.