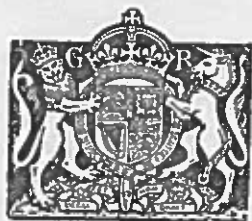


GRAND BAHAMA  
Commissioner's Report for 1934

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

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SESSION COMMENCING ON  
THE 4TH DAY OF APRIL, 1935  
AND ENDING ON  
THE 22ND DAY OF APRIL, 1935.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.  
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1935.

## EDUCATION.

There are six Board Schools and four Grant-in-aid Schools. The average attendance was fair throughout the year except during those months when children were needed to assist their parents in the farms.

## PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The George Town Public Library was very much appreciated by the inhabitants of the District. A good supply of literature, newspapers and magazines was always available to the public.

## METEOROLOGY.

The total rainfall for the year was 42.17 inches for 85 days.

Barometer: Highest reading 30.18 in March, lowest reading 29.60 in December.

Temperature: Highest 98 in July, lowest 60 in December.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

As far as I have been able to ascertain, a greater number of people devoted more time and care to the planting of food crops during 1934 than in previous years; as a result of this, the year under review was a comparatively prosperous one despite the fact that the District did not escape the effects of the prevailing economic depression.

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 GRAND BAHAMA.
 

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J. E. RUSSELL, COMMISSIONER.

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## FINANCIAL.

|                                      |            |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Balance on hand on 1st January, 1934 | £ 62 5 11  |
| Local Revenue                        | 809 13 4   |
| Remittances from the Treasury        | 325 0 0    |
| Drafts on Hon. Receiver-General      | 33 9 10    |
|                                      | <hr/>      |
|                                      | £ 1230 9 1 |

|                                           |              |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Local Expenditure                         | £ 1057 19 11 |
| Cash Remittances to the Treasury          | 80 18 2      |
| Drafts in favour of Hon. Receiver General | 31 15 10     |
| Balance in Local Chest on 31-12-34        | 53 15 2      |
|                                           | <hr/>        |
|                                           | £ 1230 9 1   |

The Revenue was derived from Customs Duties, King's Fines, Motor Truck and Drivers' Licences, Liquor Licences, Telegraph Station and Sale of Stamps, whilst the Expenditure was on account of Public Works, Administration of Justice, Lightkeepers' salaries, Travelling expenses of the Commissioner and Constables, Police and Local Constables' salaries and other miscellaneous items.

#### TRADE.

The greater part of the trade was carried on with Nassau by the various mail vessels and local sloops which took to that port native produce, cattle, sponge and turtle and brought back food-stuffs, dry-goods, building material and liquors. Several local and foreign boats were engaged in the freighting of marine products from Eight-Mile-Rock and West End to Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida, during the very early and very last parts of the year. These products consisted of crawfish, sea-fans, sea-feathers and shells. When the freighters returned, certain importations, chiefly in the line of food-stuffs, were entered and duty collected. The greater part of these were handed out to some of the men as part payment for their fish, etc.

One vessel owned by the Maury-Roberts Co. of West End made periodical trips to Florida for distillate, oil and gasoline for the benefit of their own vessels and certain planes. It is not possible at the moment to give the exact amount of duty collected on Imports in the District but there was always sufficient cash in the local chest to meet the expenditure during the first half of the year without having to make requisitions on the Treasury and even during the latter half, Import Duties have helped considerably in meeting the expenditure.



## MAIL SERVICE.

There were five vessels employed during the year, viz.: *Madam Queen*, *Paddy Halferty*, *Isle of June*, *Marmaduke* and *Alice Mabel*. This abnormal number of boats was a direct result of the sale of the *Madam Queen* during the month of June. The second, third and fourth in the above list were put on the run only as substitutes, until the owners of the *Alice Mabel*, who were also the contractors, were able to refit her for the service. The captain and crew of the *Alice Mabel*, several of whom were also on the *Madam Queen*, are very kind and courteous and the vessel, although fairly small, performed the service very satisfactorily. As a matter of fact, no complaints were made against the service rendered by either of the boats, with the exception of the *Marmaduke*, which came here and left very soon afterwards without even taking the mails from the two Post Offices, which resulted in the outgoing mails for that particular trip arriving in Nassau several days after schedule. With the sale of the *Madam Queen*, this District lost the very best mail boat it ever had and, during these days of depression, they cannot look forward to anything better than the present one which is far and away more desirable than a sailing schooner, as perhaps, only one person here and there would enjoy what is commonly termed "beating" to Nassau, a distance of over 120 miles, across a rough North West Providence Channel.

## POSTAL FACILITIES.

*Eight-Mile-Rock.*

|                                        |          |
|----------------------------------------|----------|
| Sale of Stamps                         | £ 13 8 2 |
| Savings Bank Deposits                  | 3 10 0   |
| Sale of Money Orders                   | 10 4 4   |
| Savings Bank Withdrawals               | 7 19 4   |
| Money Orders cashed                    | 10 2 6   |
| Parcel Post Duty collected             | 14 8 8   |
| No. of Parcel Post Packages received   | 105      |
| No. of Parcel Post Packages despatched | 9        |
| No. of Registered letters received     | 41       |
| No. of Registered letters despatched   | 137      |
| No. of mails received                  | 26       |
| No. of mails despatched                | 26       |

*West End.*

|                                      |             |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| No. of mails received                | 26          |
| No. of mails despatched              | 26          |
| No. of Parcel Post Packages received | 105         |
| Parcel Post Duty collected           | £20 2s. 2d. |

There was an increase of £2 15s. 11d. in the sale of Postage Stamps during the year as against that for 1933 (£10 12s. 3d.) This can be traced directly to the increase of Postage Rates which became effective during the early part of the year. The usual number of ordinary letters was received at both Postal stations. From East End to Smith's Point, including Water Cay on the North side, there are no Post Offices and letters, etc., for those places are left in the care of some person, chiefly the school teacher, who signs the Way-bill for the master of the mail boat on his way downshore and receives letters from the public, during the interval, always handing them to the captain on his way to Nassau a day or so later.

## RADIO TELEGRAPH.

The station has rendered very satisfactory service. I cannot recall a single breakdown of any consequence during the year. It was very much patronized but on account of the decline in the once very prosperous liquor trade, the traffic was not as great as that for 1933 as will be seen from the following comparative statement.

|                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| 1933.                      |                |
| No. of messages despatched | 2553           |
| No. of messages received   | 2356           |
| Revenue collected          | £361 11s. 10d. |
| 1934.                      |                |
| No. of messages despatched | 1522           |
| No. of messages received   | 1387           |
| Revenue collected          | £336 7s. 11d.  |

The Operator has always been on the alert and my comments in the report for 1933 with respect to Government messages and weather reports being several days old when they are received at Headquarters are not applicable to this report.

## JUDICIAL.

Ninety-three persons were summoned or apprehended and dealt with as follows: Discharged for want of prosecution, 6; Fined 34; Imprisoned, 4; Whipped, 3; Bound over or otherwise disposed of, 46. This number is in excess of that for last year (88) but, after taking into consideration the fact that 25 of this year's cases were Breaches of the Compulsory Education Act (Chapter 233) it will be seen that the number for other offences is far below that for last year. The tendency to violate the law has decreased with the wane of the liquor business and a consequent shortage of money, in many instances. The people are now very law-abiding.

## METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Normal range of Barometer, 30.00; highest, 30.20; lowest, 29.82.

Highest Thermometer, 86, lowest, 60.

25.47 inches of rain fell on 51 days.

Fortunately, there were no hurricanes during the year.

## SHIPPING.

Inwards (foreign): 8 vessels, 145 tons, 26 men.

Outwards (foreign): 8 vessels, 170 tons, 27 men.

Inwards (coastwise): 86 vessels, 2815 tons, 813 men.

Outwards (coastwise): 84 vessels, 2849 tons, 862 men.

These figures were recorded at the port of Eight-Mile-Rock. Up to the time of writing this report, I have received no report from West End, but, from personal knowledge, I can report that a fair number of boats entered and cleared coastwise and foreign.

## MANUFACTURES.

A little cane syrup was made during the year but, as the settlements in which it was manufactured are widely scattered, I am unable to state exactly how much has been produced.

Between the 1st January and the 30th April, some crawfish were canned at West End by one Mr. Wallace, an American, and it was believed at that time that this particular branch of the crawfish business would develop into a profitable industry but, for some reason, nothing in this line was done after the season re-opened at the beginning of October.

#### SOCIETIES.

There are two at Eight-Mile-Rock and one at Holmes' Rock with a membership in excess of 200, which still continue their good work of burying the dead and making donations from their funds to the families of departed members.

Unfortunately, the Agricultural Society that was formed here some years ago has ceased to exist.

#### PAUPERS.

There are 41 names on the register in this office but, owing to a lack of funds, rations from the Bahamas General Hospital were discontinued in the very early part of the year. Twenty-five persons were sent to the Hospital for treatment during the year, several of whom paid their passages but were unable to pay for the treatment received. Medicines requisitioned for by the Commissioner were issued to the poor and indigent persons in the District and were appreciated.

#### EDUCATION.

There are seven schools in the District under the control of the Board of Education, two of which are Board schools and the other five Grant-in-aid schools. Owing to the resignation of Mr. Rufus L. Grant, the teacher at High Rock, during the month of March, Mr. R. A. Wildgoose, the then teacher at Sweeting's Cay, was transferred to High Rock and Mr. W. L. Parker, then a monitor in the school at headquarters, was placed in charge of the school at Sweeting's Cay. Apart from these changes, the teachers are the same as for last year.

The average attendances at all the schools were as good as could be expected until the month of November when an epidemic of whooping cough broke out among the children at Eight-Mile Rock and West End and lasted until December.

At all of the schools, the children attend fairly punctually but the great drawback to the school at Eight-Mile-Rock is that the pupils live over such a scattered area. In some instances their homes are two or three miles distant from the school-house and this makes it almost impossible, particularly during inclement weather, for them to arrive at school right on the stroke of nine o'clock.

The type of education imparted to the children in the Grant-in-aid schools is, naturally, only very elementary, whilst that in the two Board schools is of a very much higher standard.

Discipline in all of the schools is satisfactory. I have had the pleasure of visiting them all during the year and of examining the five Grant-in-aid ones at the request of the Inspector.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION.

The usual local colds, fever, etc., were in evidence during some part of the year but these occur every year, therefore it cannot be safely said that the health of the District was marred to any great extent thereby. Whooping cough was very prevalent among the children in certain settlements during November and December and there were several cases of diarrhoea, one of which was very stubborn and refused for a while to respond to treatment. Apart from these causes, the general health was very fair.

During the rainy season, the low-lying areas are filled with water which remains for weeks in some places and an ample crop of mosquitoes is the result. These, however, quickly disappear as soon as the dry weather comes on.

In some settlements there is a scarcity of latrines but, with the exception of these facts, the sanitary conditions were fairly good.

#### FISHERIES.

Sponging is the premier branch of this industry, but does not pay as well as it did in years gone by. The signs of depletion, reported on last year, on the Little Bahama, developed





to such a point during 1934 that it became necessary for some of the leading men to represent the case to the Commissioner who, in turn, after getting the individual opinions of those interested, recommended to the Marine Products Board that the North-western portion of the Bank, known locally as the Mangrove Cay Lake, be closed. The recommendation was approved and Rules were passed prohibiting fishing in that area for one year, effective from the 1st July. As a direct result of this closure, practically every sponging vessel owned at this Island left for "The Mud" in the early part of November. Up to the end of the year, they had not returned but it is understood that they are not doing well. Several boats which did not go to "The Mud" fished in the vicinity of Great Sales Cay but, here again, the prices realized were not very remunerative, due to the sponge being young and small and very little demand for them in the Nassau market.

During the spring, a fair number of boats was engaged in turtling on the Cay Sal Bank and made the best voyage for the year. One or two vessels fished around Grand Bahama and disposed of the meat here and the shell in Nassau.

From January to April and from October to the end of the year, a very large number of men was engaged in the crawfish trade and, despite the fact that the prices offered ranged only from 1½ to 2 cents per pound, this paid as well, and probably better, than any other kind of fishing. All crawfish are sold in the American markets, being freighted there by local and foreign boats. The extension of the closed season from the middle of May to the end of September will do much good as far as the protection of the stock is concerned, which is a very important point, as is also the condition which prohibits the taking of these fish under a certain size. To leave this important business in the hands of the indiscriminate man would mean that there soon would be no fish for himself and others more considerate than he. The appointment of an Inspector and Deputies for this business and the provision, by the Marine Board, of scales for use at the various weighing centres are appreciated as the people concerned feel that more protection is offered them now than hitherto.

A small amount was also realized from the sale of shells, fans, stars and feathers. These were purchased by foreigners, who regard them as curios.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

There were 103 births and 35 deaths during the year.

There was one marriage performed by the Registrar.

## LIBRARIES.

Due to the fact that authority to expend a portion of the Grant under Head 18, Item 16, was not received until the 11th November, it was not possible to open the institution before the end of the year but a little more than one-third of the grant was spent for furniture, etc., and an order was placed for books with the hope of receiving them in time to open the building to the public on the first of the New Year.

## SHIPBUILDING.

Several sloops and dinghies were built for the fishing trade and a number of boats were repaired during the year. The type of carpentry performed by the men of this District speaks volumes in their favour when one considers that they have never been apprenticed out to learn their trade.

## PUBLIC WORKS.

As far as funds would allow, the roads, burial grounds, wells and wharves have been cleaned and repaired as usual. Along with these works, considerable improvements have been made to roads, wharves, etc., as detailed hereunder.

- (a) Construction of cross-road at Eight-Mile-Rock.
- (b) Repairs to wharf at Water Cay.
- (c) Re-construction of wharf in North Hawksbill Creek.
- (d) Improvements to back road at Pinder's Point.
- (e) Improvement to landing place at Eight-Mile-Rock.
- (f) Repairs to the Residency, Eight-Mile-Rock.
- (g) Repairs to the Causeway leading to the bridge at Hawksbill Creek.
- (h) Improvements to the Main road at West End.

With no hurricane to damage them, these improvements should last for years, as they are of a permanent nature.

## AGRICULTURE.

Sweet potatoes were grown for home consumption by quite a few persons but, as reported last year, improved stock and larger cultivations are essential.

Indian and Guinea corn receive a large portion of the peasants' time as it felt that the soil is more suited to the cultivation of these commodities than to any other. At Water Cay there was a bumper crop during the summer. On the mainland, too, those who had planted corn reaped a harvest sufficient to justify the time and labour expended.

Cow peas and beans made a good showing during the summer months and helped very largely with the food supply.

Onions were cultivated on a fair scale but it was difficult for the growers to get rid of their surplus crop. It is generally felt that Grand Bahama can raise them in profusion if only the farmers knew where they would be able to dispose of all they produced, over and above local requirements. I encouraged the growers to allow their onions to mature and dry thoroughly and put them by with the hope that the market prices would improve, but, ere better prices were offered, much of their crop spoiled on their hands. Nevertheless, I have further encouraged them to produce a larger crop during 1935 with the hope that a market may be found somewhere for any surplus produced.

Citrus fruit were grown by a number of persons, some of which were sold and used locally and the rest shipped to the Nassau market. There are numbers of trees in this District and, with proper care and a good market, they would pay well. The trees, as far as can be seen, need new life and, at the suggestion of the writer, the Board of Agriculture has very kindly promised to send Mr. Jervis to the District, as soon as possible, to give us a helping hand along these lines.

Other crops, such as bananas, melons, yam, eddoes, peanuts, bennie, etc., have been grown by some and, in many instances, used by the same people as the small production did not warrant the sale of any portion of it. I fear that these crops cannot be grown on a very lucrative scale because the accessible lands that may be otherwise useful are altogether exposed to the ocean-spray and the blighting South and Southwest winds.

## CASUALTIES.

A girl, seven years of age, by the name of Viola Adderley, was accidentally drowned in a pond at Holmes' Rock on the afternoon of the 28th May.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

This District was honoured by a visit from His Excellency the Governor on the 11th January, which was highly appreciated by all.

We are very thankful that hurricanes made themselves conspicuous by their absence. Had there been one, I am unable to say just what would have happened to some of the inhabitants, particularly in the middle of the Island, where in the better times they sometimes complain of a shortage of food and clothing.

Fortunately, I was able to dissuade them from making any petitions to the Government for relief, pointing out that they should endeavour to become more self-supporting by giving their attention to the soil as there appeared to be very little else for them to do and even if there was, I felt that a living could be made from it if properly cultivated. Words of encouragement helped them, so much so, that some of them admitted to me later that their corn and other crops were in advance of those for the previous year.

The District is very grateful to the Board of Agriculture for their kindness in supplying a very fine corn mill for free use.

Visits to the out-stations have been made as often as the travelling allocation would allow. It is, perhaps, worthy of mention here that turing this District is often a difficult matter as the southern side of the Island, on which all of the settlements except West End and Water Cay are situated, is bound by the Atlantic Ocean from one extremity to the other and only when the wind is from the North can travelling be done in any degree of comfort in the type of boat at the disposal of the Commissioner. On more than one occasion, I have found it necessary to pull the boat on the beach in order to avoid swamping and trudge miles and miles of heavy sand so as to reach the next settlement by nightfall and avoid being away from headquarters too long.

I desire to place on record my appreciation of all help which has been rendered to the District during the year under review. The people are indeed thankful to the Government for their timely aid in sanctioning the expenditure of various grants made to the District. To those who were unable to find employment elsewhere, it was a real blessing.

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### HARBOUR ISLAND.

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MICHAEL GERASSIMOS, COMMISSIONER.

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Revenue derived from Customs, Licences, King's Fines and Justice's Fees, Postal and Telegraph Revenue and other sources amounted to £696 15s. 5d.

Remittances and Drafts on the Treasury totaled £1767 4s. 0d.

The expenditure for the year was £2386 4s. 2d.

### MAIL AND POSTAL FACILITIES.

The motor vessel *Endion* maintained a very satisfactory mail service throughout the year.

A new boat has been built for the Current and Bogue Mail Service, and is in operation. This vessel is excellently suited to the service for which she was built.

In addition to the District Post Office at Harbour Island, there are four Sub-Post Offices throughout the District.

### TRADE.

There was no direct trading with foreign ports during the year under review, commodities being imported through Nassau, and these consisting in the main of foodstuffs and clothing.