

GRAND BAHAMA  
Commissioner's Report for 1936

**BAHAMAS.**

**VOTES**

OF THE

HONOURABLE

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

OF THE

**BAHAMA ISLANDS.**

SESSION COMMENCING ON

THE 4TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1936

AND ENDING ON

THE 18TH DAY OF JANUARY, 1937.



NASSAU, NEW PROVIDENCE.

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1937.

## METEOROLOGY.

The total rainfall for the year was 63.84 inches for 65 days, this being an increase of 36.34 inches on rainfall of the previous year.

Heavy rains occurred from May to October.

The maximum temperature recorded was 86 and the minimum 70.

The highest barometric reading was 30.20 in January and the lowest 29.60 in June.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

At the beginning of the year concessions were made to tenants of the Crown and facilities afforded them to purchase their house lots.

From August to October the administration of the District was carried on by Mr. Gerald Fitzgerald, J.P., of Little Exuma.

The rainfall has been general and adequate crop prospects for the coming year are good. On the whole the District has been progressing slowly but steadily and the results of the year's work indicate that given normal prices and stable conditions the development of the resources of the District should go forward.

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GRAND BAHAMA.

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R. H. CULMER, ACTING COMMISSIONER.

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## REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

The Revenue and Expenditure during the year were as per itemized account hereunder:

*Revenue Receipts.*

Balance Cash on 1/1/36.....	£83	16	6
Remittances from Collectors.....	422	16	0
Liquor and Shop Licences.....	15	10	0
Import Duty.....	1	12	0
Parcel Post Duty.....	17	12	3
King's Fines and Justice's Fees.....	6	12	0
Marriage and Notice Fees.....	11	0	
Refunds.....	13	3	
Post Office Savings Bank Deposit.....	12	0	
Sale of Stamps.....	12	18	6
Sale of Drafts.....	144	14	0
Sale of Money Orders.....	37	17	2
Remittances from Treasury.....	1045	0	0
Crown Land Rental.....	1	9	0
Subscriptions, Public Library.....	1	12	6
	<u>£1793</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>

*Payments.*

Public Works, January to March.....	£ 182	11	3
Public Works, April to December.....	904	0	11
Telegraph Department.....	51	13	3
Police Department.....	286	6	7
Public Works Department.....	64	9	3
Judicial Department.....	4	19	6
Prison Department.....	21	0	3
Agricultural and Marine Products Board.....	44	0	0
Medical Department.....	18	1	8
Education Department.....	8	3	0
Registrar General's Department.....	12	6	0
Public Library.....	35	15	4
Porterage Telegrams, etc.....	36	6	0
Withdrawal, P.O.S.B.....		2	0
Produce Exchange.....	1	6	1
Out Island Administration.....	58	15	0
Miscellaneous.....	28	17	3
Balance on 31/12/36.....	34	12	10
	<u>£1793</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>2</u>

The Collector of Revenue, West End, had on hand a balance of £16 7s. 0d. on the 31st December, 1936.

#### TRADE.

This, as usual, was carried on with Nassau, and on a small scale with a few ports of Florida.

#### IMPORTS.

The principal imports comprised foodstuffs, gasoline, dry goods, liquors, building materials, ice and empty cans. Imports of wearing materials, etc., were carried on through the Post Office from the United States and the United Kingdom.

#### EXPORTS.

The principal exports to Nassau were sponge and firewood. Canned and live crawfish were exported to the United States.

#### MAIL SERVICE.

A very satisfactory and efficient service was maintained by the motor vessel *Alice Mabel* again during the year. One of the most remarkable features to be noticed on this ship, is the discipline which has been displayed both by the officers and sailors. Passengers have expressed admiration of the treatment given them on trips aboard with Capt. John M. Carey.

#### POSTAL FACILITIES.

There are two Post Offices in the District; one at Eight-Mile Rock and the other at West End. Efficient services have been rendered to the public by these postal stations.

#### RADIO TELEGRAPH.

The only Wireless Station in the District is at West End. Very prompt and efficient services were given by the Operator, L. G. Bethell, and his Student, Eric Wilhombe. Except that in November when the Condenser of the Transmitter was burned, there were no defects in the operation, neither was there any necessity for replacing any other parts, or effecting repairs.

The status for messages received and transmitted and revenue derived therefrom is as under:

*Messages.*

<i>Month.</i>	<i>Received.</i>	<i>Transmitted</i>	<i>Amount.</i>
January	43	93	£21 14 5
February	31	80	12 8 3
March	36	87	14 17 8
April	22	64	9 8 10
May	25	46	9 8 0
June	34	45	9 1 2
July	17	41	4 10 9
August	23	43	7 16 10
September	20	51	8 4 4
October	31	71	8 7 3
November	25	61	9 8 3
December	32	57	10 12 11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>739</b>	<b>£125 18 8</b>

*SHIPPING.*

	<i>Vessels</i>	<i>With Cargoes</i>		<i>In Ballast.</i>	
		<i>Tons</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Tons</i>	<i>Men.</i>
Coastwise Inwards	84	1851	848	321	221
Coastwise Inwards	34				
Coastwise Outwards	82	1219	817		
Coastwise Outwards	30			977	220
Foreign Inwards	51	1420	248		
Foreign Inwards	58			852	213
Foreign Outwards	82	1798	357		
Foreign Outwards	19			354	63
<b>Totals</b>	<b>440</b>	<b>6288</b>	<b>2270</b>	<b>2504</b>	<b>717</b>

*JUDICIAL.*

18 cases of a trivial nature were reported during the year and 22 persons summoned or apprehended. Of these, 7 were imprisoned, 6 fined and 9 bound over or otherwise disposed of. 1 case was sent up for trial at the Supreme Court.

So far as the peace and good order of the District were concerned, I am pleased to say that the behaviour in general was splendid, compared with other years past.

#### EDUCATION.

There are two Board schools and five Grant-in-Aids in the District. The attendances suffered as a result of the prevalence of mumps, flu fever and coughs and colds. Only two cases for breaches of The Compulsory Education Act were reported in the whole District, thereby showing that the attendances were as good as circumstances permitted.

At the request of the Inspector of Schools the Acting Commissioner intended examining all the schools, but as time did not allow, only the Board school at Eight-Mile Rock was examined; the results of this examination were fairly pleasing.

From the headteachers of the other schools came reports that steady progress had been made along educational lines.

#### MANUFACTURES.

The Crawfish Canning Factory, under the management of the Hansen-Cobb Company at West End, continued operations on a fairly satisfactory scale to the 31st March, but did not open any more during the year.

#### SOCIETIES.

There are three Burial Societies in the District, with a roll of 205 members. These continue the work of aiding the sick and burying the dead.

#### LIBRARY.

The Public Library at Eight-Mile Rock is the only institution of its kind in the District. New books have been added and increased the number of volumes from 145 to 209. Newspapers and magazines, both local and foreign, have been supplied during the year. The number of subscribers was increased during the year from 18 to 29. Revenue derived therefrom amounted to £1 12s. 6d.

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND SANITATION.

Due to the prevalence of Mumps in February, Measles in June, Chicken Pox in July, Coughs and Colds and Fever in October and November and Flu Fever in December, the health of the District was not good during those months. At other times it was in general normal.

The rules of Sanitation were strictly adhered to in the majority of the settlements, but in the others, much room is left for improvement.

## PAUPERS.

Forty-six persons received relief in foodstuffs from the Bahamas General Hospital and a goodly number received medical aid. Expenses incurred in the District by the Medical Department for the interment of destitute paupers and other incidentals amounted to £18 1s. 8d.

## FISHERIES.

Sponging continues to be the chief of fisheries. During the year fairly large and good catches have been made from the "roller" bottom. At the end of the year, reports have been made that this area on the Little Bahama Bank showed signs of depletion, from the fact that many spongers had to resort to the bars, where the sponge are handy but not as big. The prices obtained during the year were not as good as was expected in some instances. In January, 4 vessels sold their cargoes for £237. In May, 7 vessels sold their cargoes for £661, which was considered a remunerative trip. In June 11 vessels sold their cargoes for £761. In July, 10 vessels realized only £301 and in December, 16 realized £1044. Intervening between these trips, 12 dinghies sent up their cargoes and realized £71 10s. 0d.

I think it an ideal suggestion to effect the closing of the deep water to the gathering of sponges for about a year to allow fresh growth to take place on what is thought to be the most fertile area on the Bank.

Crawfish is becoming popular in the District although it has not proved itself as paying as the sponge fishery on ac-

count of the fishermen oftentimes not being able to sell their catches which eventually die, to the loss of the men concerned. This is particularly true when one considers the conditions in this industry at the weighing station at West End. At Redshank Cay reports are more favourable. In November alone, the export was 138,000 lbs.

Green turtle and loggerheads of fairly large sizes have been taken from the waters in Hawksbill Creek and have been sold and consumed locally.

#### PUBLIC WORKS.

In addition to the usual upkeep of roads, wells, public burial grounds, public buildings and grounds and ferry boat the following works were undertaken and charged to the Non-Recurrent vote of The Appropriation Act 1936 under Head 27:

- Item 87. Repair Wharf at Hawksbill Creek.
- Item 57a. Build a Cargo Shed, Eight-Mile Rock.
- Item 57b. Complete Mother Brinyard's Creek Channel.
- Item 58. Repair Wharf, Water Cay.
- Item 59. Construct Road between Eight-Mile Rock and West End.
- Item 60. Repair Wharf, Sweeting's Cay.
- Item 68. Extend Breakwater, Hawksbill Creek.
- Item 68a. Build Wharf, West End.
- Item 134. Construct Road between Eight-Mile Rock and West End.
- Item 63. Construct Road between Eight-Mile Rock and West End.

From Hurricane Relief Funds the following works were undertaken:

- Improvements to street, West End.
- Provide a new Ferry Boat.

Under the Out Islands Improvement Acts of 1934 and 1936 the following works were done:

- Improvements to Street, West End.
- Construct Road between Eight-Mile Rock and West End.



The task of constructing a road between Eight-Mile Rock and West End seemed to have been a very difficult problem in the past, from the fact that work was started on many occasions and ended in marked failure and disappointment. The various sums voted for this work amounted to £525. Work was started on the 20th October, and I am much pleased to say that during Christmas week, I have been able to report success at opening, clearing and stumping the whole road. The amount spent on this work was £524 7s. 6d. One can now enjoy a pleasant walk from Headquarters to Eight-Mile Rock, and quite soon, should a similar appropriation be made, the road will be so improved that vehicular traffic can use it with comfort.

#### METEOROLOGY.

Barometer: Normal, 30.00; highest, 30.20 in February' lowest 29.78 in May.

#### THERMOMETER.

Highest, 89 in December; lowest, 60 in December.

Rainfall: 32.31 inches in 37 days.

There were no hurricanes during the year; high winds were experienced in May and December.

#### AGRICULTURE.

The results obtained from the practical part of Agriculture were much more creditable during the year than formerly. Although the people in the District do not work on a large enough scale, they were able to support themselves to a large extent with food from the farms. Large quantities of potatoes, cassavas, and groundnuts have been raised and sold or consumed locally. It is hoped that the people will take advantage of the excellent farming lands along the new road leading to West End, and try to extend their cultivations for the production of a larger supply of foodstuffs during 1937.

During the year a large quantity of onions has been grown for market, but as the farmers were disappointed in the prices which were then being offered, very little has been done in preparation for the production of this commodity next year.

## CASUALTIES.

The following persons were drowned in the District after the dinghies in which they were had capsized on the dates opposite their names:

Jeremiah Cooper	10th February.
James Cooper	10th February.
Malehus Field	7th August.
Andrew Laing	24th December.

## VITAL STATISTICS.

Births 74, Deaths 44.

## GENERAL REMARKS.

The District has been extremely proud of the visit paid by the Honourable J. H. Jarrett (then Administrator) on the 24th to 26th June, and wishes to express gratification to the Government for same. Although his advice relative to the crawfish and agricultural industries was fondly cherished by all, the news of the removal of Headquarters from Eight-Mile Rock to West End was very disappointing to the inhabitants from Eight-Mile Rock to Sweeting's Cay.

We are also thankful to Providence that we have escaped the ravages of a hurricane and that conditions so far as hard times were concerned were much better than last year due to the production of crops and the circulation of money for government work.




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HARBOUR ISLAND.

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W. P. ROBERTS, COMMISSIONER.

## REVENUE.

The revenue derived from King's Fines, Justice's Fees, Liquor and Radio Licences, Telegraphs, Water Rates, Crown Rentals, Remittances from the Treasury and other sources amounted to £2631 2s. 3d.