

*(Transmitted during Recess.)*

**REPORTS OF THE OUT ISLAND COMMISSIONERS  
FOR THE YEAR 1938.**

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 ABACO
 

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 CLAUDE SAUNDERS, AST. COMMISSIONER.
 

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 REVENUE.
 

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The Revenue derived from King's Fines, Justices' fees, Sale of Stamps, Sale of Money Orders, Liquor, Radio and Shop Licences, Telegraphs, Customs Duties, Marriage Fees, Royalty on Crawfish and, other sources including Remittances from the Treasury, amounted to £3358 7s. 6d.

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 EXPENDITURE.
 

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Expenditure made on account of Public Works, Salaries of Constables, Lightkeepers, Librarians, Telegraphists, Game Wardens, etc., amounted to £3304 10s. 4d.

Balance of Cash on hand December 31st 1938, £357 13s. 2d.

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 TRADE.
 

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As in former years trade has been carried on with the port of Nassau, from whence food-stuffs and various other things are imported. Shipments of hides, lumber, sponge, fish and other agricultural produce have been made to Nassau during the year.

Direct trade with foreign ports is also carried on during the crawfish season. Large shipments of crawfish, lumber, fish, coral etc., were made from parts of Abaco to the U.S.A., Cuba and Jamaica.

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## GRAND BAHAMA.

S. B. ARCHER, COMMISSIONER.

## 1. FINANCIAL.

The following is a detailed statement of Revenue and Expenditure during the year:

## REVENUE.

	Cash in hand 1st January, 1938 . . . . .	£110 11 10
	Customs Import Duties . . . . .	504 7 11
	Parcel Post Duties . . . . .	50 15 1
	Harbour Dues . . . . .	48 16 0
	King's Fines and Justices' Fees . . . . .	12 19 0
	Fees of Office . . . . .	3 0
	Licences, Liquor . . . . .	15 0 0
	Licences, Shop . . . . .	15 0
	Licences, Radio . . . . .	1 0 0
	Royalty on Crawfish . . . . .	342 4 8
	Telegraph Revenue . . . . .	154 16 9
	Library Subscriptions . . . . .	1 11 4
	Rental Crown Lands . . . . .	2 0 6
	Sale of Stamps . . . . .	42 19 0
	Sale of Money Orders . . . . .	16 14 10
	Postage on Taxed Letters . . . . .	4 2
	Post Office Savings Bank Deposits . . . . .	52 0 0
	Drafts and Remittances . . . . .	1041 11 2
	Deposits, Overtime Fees . . . . .	10 0 0
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		£2408 10 3

## EXPENDITURE.

	House of Assembly . . . . .	£ 3 1 6
	Customs Department . . . . .	33 6 0
	Registrar General's Department . . . . .	11 14 0
	Police Department . . . . .	149 14 0
	Prison Department . . . . .	17 0

Telecommunications Department . . . . .	£ 2 8 6
Cost of Government Telegrams . . . . .	38 8 0
Conveyance Official Telegrams and Remittances	2 18 0
Public Library . . . . .	28 9 2
Education Department . . . . .	15 5 0
Medical Department . . . . .	31 17 0
Public Works . . . . .	1032 14 11
Maintenance Lights . . . . .	62 6 0
Agriculture and Marine Products Board . . . . .	81 16 7
Out Island Administration . . . . .	59 16 0
Remittances to Public Treasury . . . . .	697 17 6
Payment Money Orders . . . . .	2 8 1
Post Office Savings Bank Withdrawals . . . . .	39 16 0
Repayment Overtime Fees . . . . .	10 0 0
Miscellaneous . . . . .	2 16 0
Cash in Hand 31st December, 1938 . . . . .	101 1 0
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	£2408 10 3

## 2. TRADE.

*Foreign—Imports.*

Continued building operations at Walker's Cay and West End resulted in a substantial increase in Customs Import Duties, over the previous year. Goods, chiefly furnishing and building supplies, to the value of £2420 13s. 0d. and paying £504 7s. 11d. in Customs Duties were imported from Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida, while Imports per Parcel Post resulted in additional Customs Duties to the amount of £50 15s. 1d.

Compared with imports for the previous year, this shows an increase of £1237 10s. 9d. in value, and £184 3s. 6d. in Customs Duties on goods imported direct, and £4 16s. 6d. in Customs Duties on importations per Parcel Post.

*Foreign—Exports.*

Goods to the value of £2645 10s. 6d. were exported to the United States of America, and were as follows:

345813 lbs. Live Crawfish valued at . . . . .	£2232 15 6
20075 Shells valued at . . . . .	144 7 0

10300 Starfish  
800 Sea Fans  
1300 lbs. Co  
19700 lbs. F  
7 Lots Mari

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Item

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149 vessels,

128 vessels,

8 6	10300 Starfishes valued at.....	£ 46 16 0
8 0	800 Sea Fans valued at.....	4 4 0
18 0	1300 lbs. Conch Meat valued at.....	6 0 0
9 2	19700 lbs. Fish valued at.....	93 16 0
5 0	7 Lots Marine Curios valued at.....	117 12 0
17 0		
14 11	Total Value.....	<u>£2645 10 6</u>

Compared with exports for the previous year this shows a decrease of £772 12s. 4d. The following statement shows increase or decrease on various items:

Item	Amount.	
	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>
Crawfish		£990 18 0
Shells	£88 19 0	
Starfishes		4 0
Conch Meat		12 5 4
Fish	27 0 0	
Marine Curios	114 12 0	
Other	4 0	
	<u>£230 15 0</u>	<u>£1003 7 4</u>
		230 15 0
Excess of decrease over increase		<u>£772 12 4</u>

#### INTERINSULAR.

Sponge, turtles, firewood, fish, shells and agricultural produce to Nassau were the chief items of export, while imports consisted mainly of dry goods, provisions and building materials from Nassau, and lumber from Abaco.

#### 3. SHIPPING—FOREIGN.

##### *Inwards.*

149 vessels, totalling 2631 tons, with 489 men.

##### *Outwards.*

128 vessels, totalling 2269 tons, with 400 men.

## 4. SHIPPING—COASTWISE.

*Inwards.*

128 vessels, totalling 1956 tons, with 1063 men.

*Outwards.*

137 vessels, totalling 2018 tons, with 1117 men.

## 5. MAIL SERVICE.

With the installation of a more powerful motor in the mail vessel *Alice Mabel*, the mail service, already highly satisfactory, has been made even more so, with the added assurance of more consistent regularity and safety at sea in times of bad weather.

In Captain John Carey we have a man whose unfailing dependability has won him the respect of the people of this District, among whom it would be difficult to find one who has not at some time made use of his services.

## 6. POSTAL.

The opening of a Sub-Post Office at Sweeting's Cay has brought the total number to three, the other two being at Eight-Mile Rock and West End. The following are Postal statistics for the year:

Sale of Stamps.....	£42 19 0
Postage on Taxed Letters.....	4 2
Customs Duties on Parcels Received.....	50 15 1
Sale of Money Orders.....	16 14 10
Savings Bank Deposits.....	52 0 0
Savings Bank Withdrawals.....	39 16 0
Number of Post Office Savings Bank Deposits	7
Number of Post Office Savings Bank Withdrawals.....	24

Efforts to bring before the people the benefits of a Post Office Savings Bank Account have not been unrewarded, and of particular interest is the greatly increased use of this Department, which this year handled business totalling £91 16s.0d. as compared with £3 4s. 8d. for the previous year. Of this

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amount, Deposits amounted to £52 0s. 0d., while Withdrawals amounted to £39 16s. 0d., showing an excess of Deposits over Withdrawals of £12 4s. 0d.

#### 7. RADIO TELEGRAPH.

Telegraph Revenue amounted to £143 5s. 1d., with 1005 messages transmitted, and 494 received. This service, uninterrupted throughout the year, has as usual proven of the greatest benefit to the inhabitants, who fully appreciate its value.

#### 8. CRIMINAL STATISTICS.

12 cases involving 16 persons, 9 males and 7 females, were brought before the local court. Of these persons, 2 were charged with offences against the person, 1 with praedial larceny, 2 with offences against property, and 7 with miscellaneous minor offences.

There were 14 convictions and 2 discharges. Of the convictions, 2 were imprisoned, 9 fined, and 3 bound over.

No cases were committed for trial in the Supreme Court.

#### 9. EDUCATION.

The very sparse manner in which this District is settled tends to make the educational problem a somewhat difficult one. While all of the larger settlements have schools, there being 2 Board schools, 5 Grant-in-Aid, and 1 Church of England, there are many little settlements ranging from 2 to 6 houses dotted along the coast, too far from the larger settlements to benefit by the use of their schools, too small to warrant their own separate schools, and too widely scattered for one centrally located school to serve a number of settlements.

After the hurricane of 1935 the inhabitants of several of these settlements moved into some of the larger ones. There were however many who preferred to remain as they were before, and who today are quite content to have their children grow up to be, as in most cases they themselves are, illiterates.

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10. LIBRARY.

There is a Public Library at Eight-Mile Rock. 34 new books were added this year, making a total of 340, while the usual fair supply of local and foreign newspapers and periodicals has been maintained. There are 28 subscribers, and subscriptions amounted to £1 11s. 4d., as compared with 23 subscribers and £1 0s. 0d. in subscriptions for the previous year.

An effort is being made to start a similar institution at West End, and already several dozens of books have been gathered from various sources, chiefly the Nassau Public Library, the librarian of which has generously assisted with books no longer required by that institution.

11. SOCIETIES.

The three Friendly Societies continued their good work in providing aid for their sick and burial for their dead members.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Public health has been normal with no serious epidemics.

As regards sanitation, there is room for much improvement. Public sanitary conveniences are non-existent, and in many of the smaller settlements even private ones are few and far between. It is hoped to remedy the former to some extent within the coming year by the building of public sanitary conveniences at West End and Eight-Mile Rock, the two principal settlements.

There is a fairly large number of public wells that, cleaned as they are every three months, provide a plentiful supply of good water at all settlements other than West End. It is hoped to provide West End with a public well within the coming year.

13. VITAL STATISTICS.

Births: Males 48; Females 46; Total 94.

Deaths: Males 20; Females 19; Total 39.

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This shows a decrease of 13 in the number of births, and an increase of 8 in the number of deaths on the previous year.

#### 14. CASUALTIES.

On September 7th Daniel Hield, age 22, was drowned when a boat in which he and a companion were sailing in the neighbourhood of High Rock capsized.

#### 15. PAUPERS.

40 paupers were aided with food from the Bahamas General Hospital, and in view of the lack of District Medical Service, several were sent to Nassau for medical treatment.

#### 16. METEOROLOGY.

The total rainfall for the year was 29.83 inches for 55 days, with the greatest fall 9.40 inches in June, and the lowest 20 inches in May. This shows a decrease of 5.52 inches on the previous year.

The highest temperature recorded at 8 a.m. was 84 degrees in May, June, July, and September, and the lowest was 54 degrees in January.

The highest barometric reading was 30.30 in January, and the lowest was 29.75 in April.

#### 17. PUBLIC WORKS.

Expenditures on account of Public Works under Heads 25, 27, and Out Islands Improvement Act 1938 amounted to £1032 14s. 11d. In addition to the usual expenditures on account of upkeep of Public Properties, the following Non-Recurrent items were undertaken:

1. Provide Burial Ground, Smith Point.
2. Improve Roads, Eight-Mile Rock.
3. Deepen Channel to Landing Place, Eight-Mile Rock.
4. Improve Roads, West End.
5. Reshingle and Paint Commissioner's Office and Gaol.
6. Improve Roads, Sweeting's Cay.
7. Complete School House, High Rock.



At West End and Sweeting's Cay, experiments in the use of asphalt for road making have been conducted, with very encouraging results.

#### 18. INDUSTRIES.

*Sponging.* To at least 90% of the men of this District the sponge fishing business provides, directly or indirectly, a means of livelihood. 30 vessels, 54 open boats, and approximately 420 men are actively engaged in this pursuit.

Sales at the Nassau market, starting off quite encouragingly at the beginning of the year, declined rapidly, and during the Summer voyages seemed to suffer an almost total collapse. During this period sales rarely covered the cost of stores used, and it was a fortunate man who was able to bring home to his family a half sack of flour as his share of the proceeds from a three months voyage.

*Crawfishing.* This industry during the previous year surpassed in order of revenue only by the sponge fishing business, this year stepped into the lead with sales at Red Shank Cay and West End totalling 345,813 lbs. valued at £223 15s. 6d., and paying £353 13s. 6d. in Government Royalties. Compared with sales for last year however, this shows a decrease of 273,790 lbs. in weight, £990 18s. 0d. in value, and £267 18s. 1d. in Royalties.

The crawfish cannery at West End did not operate this year, and this venture may now be considered as definitely abandoned.

*Turtle Fishing.* Several shipments of green turtles were made to Bimini and the Nassau market, where fairly good prices were obtained. One shipment of turtle shell was made direct to England, but prices obtained were so low as to discourage any further efforts in this direction.

*Fishing.* Considerable fishing for the Nassau market is done in the adjacent waters by fishermen of this and other islands. 7 native smacks with 57 men are at present engaged in this business. There has also been a ready demand for fish in the Florida markets, 19,700 lbs., valued at £93 16s. 0d., having been cleared out of West End for Florida ports.

*Shipbuilding.* 1 new schooner and 2 sloops were launched, and 3 sloops are in course of construction.

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## 19. AGRICULTURE.

As regards agricultural activities, this has been a lean year for the District. The bright outlook for a successful season, so evident at the beginning of the year, was blasted by a succession of severe droughts throughout the Summer months that time and again rendered void all efforts at cultivation.

For months prepared lands lay baking in the merciless sun awaiting the seasonal rains that never came. Time and again, following intermittent showers, crops were set out only to perish in the parched earth.

Forest fires, some of accidental origin, others undoubtedly intentionally started by persons who illegally employ this means in their hunt for Bay Rush, raged from time to time throughout the pine forests, fed by the tinder dry underbrush and dead pine trees, and causing extensive damage not only to the valuable forest, but also, by the destruction of the rich topsoil, to possible farm lands. Efforts have been made to check these annual fires, both by drawing to the people's attention the great loss occasioned by them, and by special instructions to District Constables to keep a sharp lookout for possible offenders.

Experiments at West End with Irish Potatoes have not been successful, high winds and salt spray no doubt contributing to their failure. During the coming year it is hoped to conduct further experiments in the Eastern section of the island where it may be possible to find suitable lands further removed from the sea.

Onions did fairly well, and approximately 2,000 lbs. valued at £15 were shipped to the Nassau market.

With about 450 acres under cultivation, there has been barely sufficient general produce taken in for local consumption. Sweet potatoes, as usual, formed the chief crop. Approximately 350 bushels corn, 160 bushels peas, and 50 bushels beans were grown and used within the District.

*Stockraising.* While there are many indications that stock raising was at one time one of this island's foremost industries,

there is today but very little done. Altogether there are 4 horses, 250 cows—all at Eight-Mile Rock—1 sheep, 90 swine, 7 goats, and approximately 750 chickens within the District.

20 cows valued at £100 were sold at Nassau and Bimini.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

The inhabitants of this District number approximately 2500 persons. Of these there are about 1,200 at Eight-Mile Rock, 400 at West End, 270 at Water Cay, 200 at Sweeting's Cay, 200 at High Rock, and 230 scattered around in small communities. The men are primarily seafaring. The women of the central and western sections are generally housekeepers, but those of the Eastern section help materially with the farms, and are moreover apparently equally at home afloat as ashore.

Compared with other islands, prices of local produce are relatively high, which accounts in a large measure for the lack of shipments to the Nassau market, as generally better prices are obtained locally.

Skilled labour is rather scarce, with a total of 27 carpenters and 8 masons, few of whom are capable of doing really high grade work.

In the absence of large scale farming or other industrial enterprises, there is, except on Government works, very little hiring of common labour, and consequently there are no standardised wage scales. Occasional farm help is generally rewarded with a portion of produce.

There are no motor vehicles, carts, nor pack animals, all transportation being by head or boat.

Big game fishing continues to attract visitors from Florida to these shores. 244 tourists, mostly fishing parties out of West Palm Beach, paying £48 16s. 0d. in Harbour Dues visited West End, where there is now a fishing camp under the management of Mr. Jack Russell. Money put into circulation by these parties during their stay, goes far towards relieving the annual Summer depression.

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There is no doubt but that were the channel and harbour at Sand Bay in the western end of the island dredged in order to provide a safe anchorage for the larger yachts, the present number of visitors would be greatly increased, to the general benefit of the District.

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### HARBOUR ISLAND.

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W. P. ROBERTS, COMMISSIONER.

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#### REVENUE.

The revenue derived from King's Fines, Justices' Fees, Licences, Telegraphs, Water Rates, Crown Rentals and remittances from the Treasury, amounted to £4551 15s. 2d.

#### EXPENDITURE.

Expenditure on account of salaries to Local Constables, Citrus and Sanitary Inspectors, Telegraphists, Librarians, Pensions and Public Works amounted to £2665 11s. 1d.

Detailed statement of Revenue and Expenditure annexed.

#### MAIL AND POSTAL FACILITIES.

Regular service has been performed by the m.v. *Endion* (Harbour Island, Spanish Wells and The Bluff) and the *Dolly May* (Current and Lower Bogue).

A new mail boat is being built at Harbour Island, to replace the *Endion*; this boat is not only larger, but special attention is being paid to passenger accommodation; when completed, this boat will meet the requirements of the district and will be a valuable asset in developing the tourist business.

By shipping mails on local boats, sloop *Merle* (Harbour Island) and aux. sloop *Shamrock* (Spanish Wells), these settlements have received a weekly service, which has been highly appreciated.