

Grand Bahama Commissioner's Report 1949

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE DISTRICT OF GRAND BAHAMA FOR THE YEAR 1949. GEOGRAPHY.

The District of Grand Bahama comprises a chain of Islets, Cays and rocks lying one hundred and forty miles West North West of New Providence and sixty miles East South East of West Palm Beach Florida, extending from 21° 48' and 27° 34' North latitude and between 79° 30' West longitude.

This Island was a rendezvous for "bootleggers" during the prohibition era or the enforcement of the 18th Amendment of the Volstead Act in the United States of America, and so American influences commercially took a great hold on West End in particular which still remain.

The Island is 83 miles long and 4 miles wide, total area 430 square miles. Headquarters of this district was first established at Golden Grove and was transferred to Eight Mile Rock about fifty years ago and later removed to

West End.

There are twenty two settlements within a radius of 83 miles with Settlement Point at extreme West End and Sweeting's Cay lying to East. Conditions prevailing in most of the settlements are primitive and rustic. The Island is covered with vegetation with an enormous pine forest. The land is low and flat, the greatest elevation being about 40 feet. The soil is shallow. There are three different kinds of soil a red coloured soil, a white sandy soil and a dark soil. The water is excellent. Water is obtained from wells at a depth of eight or ten feet throughout the district. The principal settlements are:

	Settlement Point, West End
Smith's Point	
Free Town	Eight Mile Rock
Water Cay	Pine Ridge
McCleans Town	Pinder's Point
Sweeting's Cay	Hunters.
High Rock	

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II. CLIMATE.

The climate is equable, being warmed by the Gulf Stream in winter, and the south easterly trade winds in summer make it an ideal tourist resort. The highest temperature for the year was 94 recorded during the month of September and the lowest 51 recorded during the month of February. Sandflies are numerous whenever the wind falls off or during light winds from the South-east to South-west. Mosquitoes are very numerous during the rainy months which extend from July to October. The rainfall for the year was 27.94 inches.

III. - HISTORY.

Grand Bahama was first settled by a few Loyalists in 1787. The Grants, Feasters, Heilds and Wilchcombes were the first settlers. The Wilchcombes made their homes at Settlement Point, West End; the Grants at Eight Mile Rock and environs; the Heilds at Free Town and the Fensters at Sweeting's Cay. These loyalists married manumitted slaves and so in addition to the descendents of African origin; the present inhabitants include a large percentage of mixed Creole and African parentage.

Land was granted to the inhabitants and their descendents during the year 1847 is still in their possession except for a large area at Settlement Point, West End, sold to the Butlin (Bahamas) Ltd.

IV.-GOVERNMENT.

There was no change in Government during the year under review. The writer administered the affairs of the District. The District is represented in the House of Assembly by Mr. C.W.F. Bethell who was returned in the General Election in July, 1949. Under the General Assembly Voters Act 1946, Courts of Revision were held during the months of September and December. Qualifications for registration as a voter are set out in section 16 of the Act.

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V.-POPULATION.

Settlements	Area in Square Miles	Population
West End	1 ½	1590
Eight Mile Rock	2	360

Pine Ridge	1 ½	900
Pinder's Point	½	141
Holmes' Rock	½	165
Brady Point	½	134
High Rock	1	190
Sweeting's Cay	½	160
Water Cay	½	248
Free Town	½	82
McCleans Town	1	<u>134</u>
	Total	4104

The following are small settlements with sparse population: Deadman's Reef, Hanna Hill, Lewis Yard, Hunters, Russell Town, Hepburn Town, Smith Point, Mather's Town, Pelican Point, Crabbing Cay, and Rocky Creek. Owing to the development at West End, there has been a marked increase in population, this increase is only temporary and will return to normal whenever the building programme of the Resort is complete. However a number of persons purchased small lots and built houses thereon and have now established permanent residences.

Births: 84 Male 43 Female 41

Deaths: 46 " 23 " 23

Infant Mortality : 14 children under one year died during the years.

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VI.-HEALTH.

The general health of the community has been remarkably good. There have been many cases of vomiting and diarrhoea but these have never reached epidemic proportions in spite of very poor sanitation of the people. Such things as flyproofing of latrines seem to be unheard of and indeed many houses are apparently without latrines at all. All public wells have been regularly cleaned throughout the District. On the whole sanitary conditions are quite primitive, and improvements are urgently needed. A comprehensive list of Health Rules has been submitted to Government for approval with a view to remedying this situation. A mosquito and sandfly eradication campaign has been organized by Butlin's and conducted by Dr. Harland. The entire settlement has been regularly sprayed and at the close of the year the mosquito and sandfly nuisance has been abated. No cases of leprosy or other contagious disease have been reported in this District. In all parts of the District malnutrition is noticeable, it is believed that with the present improvement in economic conditions some progress will take place in this respect.

VII.-HOUSING.

Houses in the District are built mostly of native pine. About 25% are built of coral stone and lime. Dwelling houses comprise 2 to 4 rooms with kitchens adjacent thereto. About 20% are provided with pit latrines on the outside. Most houses are built on privately owned land and some on rented Crown Land. Due to the employment given by Butlin's (Bahamas) Ltd., many new houses have been constructed during the year. There is much overcrowding of houses at West End in consequence of the large influx of labourers from other parts of the Colony. Rental of a 2 room house

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is approximately £2. Per week. Lodging houses accommodating as high as 27 persons per room charge 10/- weekly per person. In this respect the housing situation is deplorable, and so a slum exists at West End.

VIII.-COMMERCE.

Maritime products and lumber are the only commodities exported. Imports consist of foodstuffs, clothing and other miscellaneous items. Customs duties collected on direct imports amounted to £593. 19. 3. Imports for Butlin's Vacation Village consisted of building material and machinery free of duty. 395,798 crawfish were exported to West Palm Beach. Royalty amounting to £180. 5. 10 was collected at this port. Lumber exported foreign 10,168,512 feet.

IX.-PRODUCTION.

The principal resource of Grand Bahama consists of vast pine forests. The Abaco Lumber Company (owned and operated by Mr. Wallace Groves) reported a total production of 10,105,072 feet at the mills at Pine Ridge. Lumber was exported to Cuba, Jamaica and Barbados. Great improvements have been made in the production of lumber at Pine Ridge and the demand has been greater than output.

A new portable mill has been in the vicinity of Eight Mile Rock, and a road constructed from Pine Ridge to this site. Several such portable mills are already in operation at various other sites. This is an improvement in lumber milling in the Colony and in consequence the production is higher.

The crawfish season is from the first October to the 15th March, and 395,798 crawfish were exported. The prices paid for crawfish fluctuated, and the foreign market showed a marked decline as compared with previous years.

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Several motor vessels operated regularly from the Cays in this trade, entering and clearing out of West End for the purpose of exchanging dollar currency into sterling so as to purchase crawfish from the fishermen at the Cays and crawfish grounds. The dollars are then remitted by the commissioner to the Treasury in Nassau.

Forty American yachts called at West End on cruises for reef and deep sea fishing.

Due to the Butlin development, which absorbed all local labour, scalefishing fell off and exports of scale fish were negligible. Agricultural production is secondary, as apart from the lumber industry, marine resources are more lucrative and consequently the greater number of the population is attracted to marine occupations. Farming is carried out in all localities on a very small scale as good arable land is not within easy reach of the larger settlements and roads are non-existent. In consequence, plots of land near bearing settlements have been worked continuously for a number of years without fertilization and results have not been so good.

Water Cay is the most productive of all settlements and several good crops of corn have been raised during the year.

The island is adaptable to the growing of fruit and in my opinion the natural habitat for the cultivation of citrus.

A good crop of onion and other vegetables were raised in kitchen gardens at Eight Mile Rock and environs and a good effort was made in preparing gardens and the sowing of seed during the latter months of the year.

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Much effort has been displayed in the raising of poultry, as it is the ambition of every householder to raise a number of chickens. Several male birds of pedigreed stocks were distributed to interested persons from personal stock raised by the writer on Residency Grounds.

Livestock: In locality of Deadman's Reef to Hunters, goat herding and cattle raising are carried out extensively as good pasturage are to be found. At the end of the year there were 213 goats, 224 cows and 529 swine.

X.-WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

There has been a raise in wages generally, but the rise was by no means commensurate with the high cost of living; at West End. In particular there has been a great demand for labour. The following are the rates of wages paid to various trades: Carpenters from 35/- to £2.10.0 per day; Masons from 36/- to £2. 10. 0. per day; unskilled

labour: Male from 9/- to 12/- per day; Female 5/-6 to 8/- per day.

Living conditions are exceedingly high due to the fact that all items of foodstuffs consumed at West End and Pine Ridge are imported. Very little or no farming is done at these places. Conditions are somewhat better at other settlements where a fair amount of farming is done in a pot pourri manner. No effort is being spared in encouraging the people of this district to increase home production and to raise the economic standard of the community.

XI.- EDUCATION AND WELFARE INSTITUTION.

Board schools are established in all the larger settlements and the attendance has been satisfactory. There are three Board and five Grant-in-aid schools located as follows:

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Settlement.	Name of Master.
West End	Mr. Hugh Campbell
Eight Mile Rock	" F. H. Boafield
Pine Ridge	" A. C. Sweeting
Water Cay (Grant-in-aid)	Mrs. H. Thomas
Holmes' Rock " " "	Mr. W. Parker
High Rock " " "	R. A. Wildgoose
McCleans Town" " "	Mr. Herman Holle
Sweeting's Cay " "	Mr. N. Russell

There are six Friendly Societies whose objects are to aid sick members and bury their dead. These Societies are not registered, and are in a good financial state.

XII.- COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT.

Frequent communication with Nassau was maintained during the year.

The mail vessel "Richard Campbell" performed a very efficient fortnightly service, and the master is to be congratulated for his patience and courtesy to all concerned.

In addition to the mailboat Butlin (Bahamas) Ltd., employed their boats in traffic to Nassau as well as Miami. Frequent trips by Bahamas Airways and Bennett Aviation Aircraft were made between Nassau and West End, and this service was greatly appreciated. Midet Aviation Corporation also operated 3 planes weekly between West Palm Beach and West End.

During the year 188 aircraft aggregating 444 tons reported inwards and 167 vessels of 8422 entered from foreign ports. 210 persons arrived and 178 departed for foreign ports during the period 1st July to 21st December.

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XIII.- FINANCE.

REVENUE		EXPENDITURE	
Parcel Post Duty	£57 .8. 9	Out Island Lights	£112. 16. 6
Motor Car & Drivers Lic ...	143. 6. 8.	House of Assembly	137. 6. 8
Liquor Licenses	135. 0. 0.	Customs Department	29. 0. 0
Shop Licenses		Judicial Department	3. 15. 0
Licenses for Wireless Sets		Megastar General's Department	
			13. 12. 0

Fees of Office	
Miscellaneous Petty Receipts -- -- --	
Telegraph Receipts	1760.14.9

Education Department ...	15. 0. 0
Police Department	797. 19. 7
Prison Department	91. 4. 6
Post Office Department (Deliveries, etc.)	
	72. 7. 6

Telecommunications Department	
	112. 2. 10
Public Libraries	88. 7. 10
Medical Department	44. 12. 0
Public Works (Recurrent)	687. 12. 9
Public Works (non-Rec)	2704. 14. 2
Agric. & M. P. Board	10. 0
Out Island Department ...	124. 11. 8
Miscellaneous	472. 5. 3
Total Expend.	5501. 8. 3

£2287.3.11

DEPOSITS, ETC.

Post O. S. Bank	£6687.12. 0
Sale of Money Orders	41666. 15. 9

Sale of Stamps	472. 7. 6
Public Library Subscriptions	110. 10. 2
Comptroller of Customs for Import Duty	593. 19. 2
Commissioner's overtime Fees	104. 10. 0
Crown Land Rentals	76. 0. 0
Civil Suits Deposits	49. 3. 1
Cash Found Over	21. 5. 8
Fees Merchant Shipping Act	1. 12. 0

...	
Crawfish Bulk Exporters -- -- --	
General Court Deposits ...	5. 13. 9
Remittances from Public Treasury	
	133. 4. 4

Part Payment Dinghies ...	99. 10. 9
Sale of Exchange	43. 12. 3
Crawfish Royalty	180. 5. 10
Total	£50077. 2. 7
Grand Total	£52364. 6. 6

Withdrawals, P.O. S. B.	£1409. 12. 1
Exchange Domestic Money Orders	
	826. 2. 9

Commissioner's Overtime Fees	103. 10. 0
Civil Suits	53. 7. 7
Fees Merchants Shipping Act	1. 12. 6

Family Allowances	345. 12. 6
Drafts & Remittances	44619. 9. 7

Total	£47459. 6. 6
	£52860.14. 9

Balance on 31st December, 1949
£3,934. 6. 2
Balance shown also includes Currency [illegible].

XIV.- ROADS.

The main arterial road extends from West End to Eight Mile Rock, a distance of 20 miles. This road is in daily use and traffic is exceedingly heavy and in many respects hazardous to vehicles travelling to Eight Mile Rock and environs. There are trucks, jeeps, buses and tree cars apart from other heavy motor vehicles. Several bad sections were repaired during the year within a radius of West End and Eight Mile Rock altogether about ten miles of this road is in very state of repair. Road leading from Hawksbill Creek to settlements south of Eight Mile Rock are in a primitive state and many bad sections were repaired and improved.

Improvements have been made to roads at the following places: Sweeting's Cay, McCleans Town, Crabbing Bay, High Rock, Smith Point, Hunters, Pinder's Point, Eight Mile Rock, Holmes Rock, West End, and Water Cay.

XV.- POST OFFICE.

The District Post Office at West End conducted an unusual amount of business during the year and it was necessary to engage the services of three clerks regularly in addition to a Sub-Postmaster so as to meet the demand of patrons and maintain a high state of efficiency in the various branches of postal work.

Deposits Post Office Savings Bank	£6,627.	12.	0
Withdrawals	1,409.	12.	1
Sale of Money Orders	41,666.	10.	0
Money Orders Paid	1,001.	12.	0
Sale of Postage Stamps	772.	7.	6

In addition to the District Post Office there are two Sub-Offices at Eight Mile Rock and Pine Ridge respectively.

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Savings Bank and Money Order business were conducted at Pine Ridge for the first time which proved to be a great convenience to labourers employed in the lumber industry. Information with respect to Deposits, Withdrawals and sale of Money Orders is not available.

XVI.- TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

Apart from the Wireless Station at West End, another is located at Pine Ridge. These stations have given good and efficient service. Communication by Telephone from West End was established direct to Miami and Nassau during the year. Revenue collected at West End amounted to £1872. 17. 7.

XVII.-COMMUNITY RADIOS.

The Radios at Sweeting's Cay and High Rock maintained their usefulness to the people who have been able to listen to local broadcasts daily and thus keep abreast of local events by reports over Z.N.S. It is to be regretted that the receiver at Water Cay is not working as this is the most isolated place in this district, being cut off from the main land of Grand Bahama.

XVIII.- FAMILY ALLOWANCES.

The sum of £345. 12. 6 was paid to dependents of workers recruits for labour in the United States of America. No complaints were lodged by dependents or returned workers during the year.

XIV.- PUBLIC WORKS.

The following were the works undertaken in this district during the year under review:
Wells around Public Buildings at Eight Mile Rock, rebuilt.

Damage to road at Eight Mile Rock by hurricane in 1948 repaired.
Repairs to main road between West End and Eight

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Mile Rock. Road improvements to the following settlements:
Sweeting's Cay, Crabbing Cay, High Rock, Smith Point, Hunters and Water Cay. In addition to this, a bridge was constructed at McCleans Town, and wharf rebuilt at Water Cay. All country roads and Public wells have been cleaned and repaired.

XX.- JUSTICE, POLICE AND PRISONS.

120 Cases were brought before the Magisterial Court mostly for Miscellaneous Minor Offences. There were 125 Males and 12 Females, total number of persons 139. Total number convicted summarily 136. Imprisoned 20, Fined 71, Bound over 44, whipped 1 and 3 dismissed. 2 cases were committed for trial at the Supreme Court at Nassau. 35 Civil Cases were adjudicated on and no cases were disposed of by Justices of the Peace.

XXI.-POLICE.

ONE Non-Commissioned Officer and two Constables are now stationed at West End. These are members of the Bahamas Police Force. There are also three local Constables; one at West End, Pine Ridge and Eight Mile Rock respectively. The Police have been kept quite busy during the year due to the large number of labourers recruited from various parts of the Colony to work on the Butlin project. On the whole the Police have done a splendid job in maintaining peace and good order.

XXII.- PRISONS.

There are three prisons in the district and are located at the following places: West End, Eight Mile Rock and Pine Ridge. It is an indisputable fact that the prison at West End is too small, having only two cells, making it difficult to accommodate the criminals sentenced to imprisonment.

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During the year 13 persons served terms of imprisonment in the gaol at West End and were discharged at the expiration of their terms, which did not exceed three months.

XXIII.- LEGISLATION.

There was no legislation during the year under review affecting the District of Grand Bahama.

XXIV.-TAXATION.

Apart from Customs Duty levied on imports there is no other taxation in this district.

XXV.- SYSTEM OF WORSHIP.

The chief religious persuasions are Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic. The Baptist numbers about 60% of the population; the Anglican about 35%, and Roman Catholic 5%. The Baptist minister is supported entirely by the congregation and is chosen by the elders from all the churches in the district. Zion Baptist Church in Nassau is the mother church and the pastor of this church pays periodic visits. Anglican churches are located at Eight Mile Rock, West End, Smith Point, High Rock, and Sweeting's Cay. A priest is in residence at Eight Mile Rock and

visits the various churches under his churches as occasion warrants. Periodical visits made by the Bishop of the Diocese to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation.

There is one Roman Catholic Church, a very beautiful edifice at Hunters settlement. There is no resident priest but visits are made frequently by a priest from Nassau.

The people of the district are keenly interested in their religious duties and appear sincere as they all embrace the Christian Faith.

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XXVI.- MISCELLANEOUS.

On February 12th His Excellency the Governor and Lady Murphy visited Pine Ridge, they were welcomed by the Manager and the Commissioner of the district. His Excellency also paid a visit to West End on the 3rd May and made a tour of the constructional work in progress at the Butlin Vacation Village.

On the 30th May the Acting Chief Out Island Commissioner, the Crown Lands Officer and the Assistant Inspector of schools visited West End.

On the 20th September, Group Captain Wodehouse, R.A.F., Captain Smallwood, U.S.N. with several other officers called on the Commissioner in connection with official business. On the 19th November His Excellency visited West End together with various Heads of Departments to discuss with company executives plans for the proper administration of the Vacation Village.

On the 7th December His Excellency accompanied by the Honourable the Attorney General, made a tour of the district arriving in H.M.S. "Sparrow", a guard of honour was mounted on the public wharf from the ship's company. This was the first time in the history of the island that a military or naval parade was seen and it certainly aroused the admiration of the entire population.

His Excellency also visited the lumber mill at Pine Ridge. During the year I visited the following out-lying settlements:

January 8th Pine Ridge. January 9th Eight Mile Rock. February 11th-12th Pine Ridge. March 29th to 30th Eight Mile Rock, Pinder's Point, Lewis Yard and Hunters: 13th 14th May Pine Ridge 24th May Eight Mile Rock. 28th-29th May High Rock, McCleans Town, Sweeting's Cay. 1st August

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Eight Mile Rock, 2nd to 4th August Pine Ridge and Water Cay. 15th September Eight Mile Rock, 19th to 20th September High Rock Sweeting's Cay. 11th October Eight Mile Rock December Pine Ridge. On the 29th August, 1949, a Hurricane passed over this district causing damage to roads, landing places and fruit trees, the highest wind was estimated at 120 miles per hour from the East South East at 4 p.m. The Barometer reached a low of 29.22 inches. The wind was accompanied by heavy rains but fortunately for the settlement of we wind was accompanied by heavy rains but fortunately for the settlement of West End the strong wind was from the East South East and at that time the tide was ebbing which in my opinion kept out a tremendous amount of sea water. About 7 p.m. the wind shifted to the South East and during this time the sea front road and landing place at Eight Mile Rock was washed out and large stones piled on the road by huge waves from the ocean. The landing place at Eight Mile Rock was just recently improved and is now only a pile of rubble.

I estimate the damages to public property and roads to be as follows:

Public Road West End	£500. 0. 0
Public Road Eight Mile Rock	400. 0. 0
Landing Place Eight Mile Rock	200. 0. 0
Landing Place Water Cay	50. 0. 0
Bridge McCleans Town	<u>50. 0. 0</u>
Total.	£1,200. 0. 0

XXVII.- BUTLIN'S VACATION VILLAGE.

Work on the construction of a Vacation Village for Butlin's (Bahamas) Limited started at West End, Grand Bahama, in November 1948 with the arrival of the first small party of the contractors' European Staff. The work has been supervised for an [sic] on behalf of Butlin's (Bahamas) Limited by A. J. Clark F.R.I.C.S., who established offices at Nassau and West end for this purpose. The main contractors for the construction work were Reed and Mallick Limited of Salisbury England but the actual work on site was carried out by their associate Company Reema Construction (Bahamas) Limited of Nassau N.P. Sub-contractor for plumbing mechanical and electrical installations were A. F. Snelling and Company of Hull England and S.C. Alden was the Sub-contractor for masonry and plastering work.

W.E. Reed Esq., M.Inst.C.S. and R. H. Kirkpatrick Esq., A.M.I.C.E. are the consulting engineers for the civil engineering and structural work and A. F. Snelling Esq., is the consulting engineer for mechanical and electrical services. The original layout and details were prepared by Lionel H. Fewster and Partners, architects of London but in April 1949, Carlos B. Schoeppl of Miami took over the preparation of architectural details. The construction work has been supervised for Messrs Butlins by Mr. A.J. Clarke himself and by his assistant Mr. P. R. Kilbay. Mr. J. I. Castle was in charge of the first party of constructors' Staff and has acted as sub-agent throughout the construction period. Messrs Reema appointed Mr. S. Hove as agent in charge in December 1948 but he was taken ill and died in February 1949, following which Mr. Reed took charge of the works until the appointment and arrival of a new agent, Mr. J. Hollingshead in July 1949.

The scope of the whole construct consisted of a holiday village occupying a site approximately half-a-mile square to accommodate 2000 guests, an international class airport consisted of three runways and all subsidiary services such as water and electricity supply, sewerage disposal etc. The first phase of the works was to be completed by 15th January, 1950 and was to provide accommodation for 1000 guests, but due to various unforeseen difficulties this target date was deferred to 28th January, 1960 and the accommodation to be provided in the first phase reduced to 400 guests.

The residential accommodation is in the form of dormitories or chalets in two storey blocks. The first design of chalet block comprised 44 double suites each suite having its own bathroom etc., but only one block was built to this pattern. The design was later amended to include 64 double suites in each block and the second and succeeding blocks were constructed thus. It was the intention to use the patented "Reema" method of construction in pre-cast concrete units for the whole of the chalet blocks. This is a construction method devised by the engineering consultants and used with great success by the contractors for house building in England. It has lately been accepted for the construction of hospitals and other buildings on a large scale in India and also in Australia. The Butlin Project at West End is the first instance of the use of this method for buildings other than ordinary private dwellings, but it has been an outstanding success and has resulted in a valuable economy in both cost and time. The concrete building units have been cast using stone aggregate quarried and crushed on the site and beach sand and extensive tests were carried out with these materials before

mass production of the concrete units could commence. Due to this and the changes in design production of concrete panels did not commence until July 1949 and building in "Reema" construction started on 5th September. Meanwhile in order to advance progress construction of 5 chalet blocks was put in hand in traditional blockwork construction leaving 4 chalet blocks only to be completed in "Reema" during the first phase. The blocks were manufactured on the site again using local materials.

The supply of construction materials has been a major problem throughout the job. All materials have been ordered and shipping arrangements made by A.J. Clarke F.R.I.C.S. The bulk of the material has been obtained from the United Kingdom and shipped to Nassau. At Nassau it has been transhipped and conveyed to the

island in tank landing barges owned by Messrs Butlins or chartered from local shippers. In view of the availability and good quality of local timber, timber was used in the designs to the maximum extent by the architects and engineers. Lumber has been supplied throughout by the Abaco Lumber Company of Pine Ridge Grand Bahama and during the first phase they supplied nearly 8,000,000 board feet.

Most of the contractors' plant and machinery was obtained by item from England, supplemented by some items from the U.S.A. supplied mainly through Plato Cox of Auto-Marine Engineers Inc. of Miami. The main items in this fleet of machines were 7 caterpillar industrial tractors with bull dozers or scraper attachments, 4 bucket type excavators, 3 trench excavators, 4 large dumpers, 32 lorries, 10 concrete mixers of various sizes and a stone crushing and screening plant. A well equipped joinery mill has been installed and all building joinery, together with a large proportion of the furniture, has been manufactured on the site.

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A factory for the production of "Reema" concrete building panels and other pre-cast concrete units was constructed on the site and an engineers' machine and fitting shop was established for the maintenance of the contractors' machinery.

Butlin's (Bahamas) Limited acquired the factory previously operated by Sea Foods Ltd., approximately 1 ½ miles from the Vacation Village site. The diesel driven generating plant in this factory consisting of one 175 K.W. set and one 65 K.W. set has been overhauled and supplemented by the installation of a further 300 K.W. set and provides the electricity supply for the project. The ice making plant and cold storage rooms in the factory have been overhauled and are used for vacation village requirements. Supplies of domestic water are obtained by pumping from boreholes spread over an area of 150 acres, of which the installation on 50 acres was completed during 1949 and is adequate for initial requirements. A 250,000 gallon service reservoir is to be constructed but as a temporary measure a 100,000 gallon storage tank has been provided during the first phase. The foul drainage system for the whole camp was virtually complete by the end of 1949, the sewage falling by gravity to a swamp at the South West corner of the village site whence it is pumped to a sea outfall on the west shore. Approximately 2 miles of roads have been constructed within the vacation village area and between the village and the airport.

During 1949 the first runway of the airport has been completed. This consists of a graded strip 5000 feet long with a 200 feet over-run at each end. On this length a width of 300 feet has been graded off to exact crossfalls, the centre width of 150 feet being surfaced with a bituminous carpet and forming the airstrip proper.

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Unexpected difficulty was encountered in digging and leveling the rock but eventually a rock plough was designed by Mr. Reed which proved to be successful. In addition to the runway a sea ramp and parking circle has been constructed at one end for the use of amphibian aircraft and a parking apron 450 feet by 150 feet provided for land planes. A new radio transmitting station has been built and equipped and an airport control tower has been constructed near the parking apron containing the radio receiving equipment and providing the usual airport facilities.

On the vacation village site, four chalet blocks have been completed for the use of guests. A further block has been finished for the accommodation of the administrative staff for the village and four more blocks making nine in all, and structurally complete and only require furnishings and decorations to provide additional accommodation for guests. Watering and amusement facilities for guests are provided by a main building group, comprising central kitchen, two dining rooms, four luges, four bars, swimming pool and gardens. This group including the swimming pool is structurally complete, and the kitchen, ballroom and half the total lounge and bar accommodation is complete and in use. Two other main building groups have been substantially completed during 1949 apart from finishings and equipment which is still in progress. The first is the administration group which contains the reception hall and staff offices and the second is the theatre group.

The first European construction staff were quartered in the Sea Foods Ltd. factory and staff house and the first task was land clearance, survey work and the construction of timber living quarters for the balance of the

construction staff who were to follow on. although a certain amount of work has been done, large scale operations on the permanent buildings and on the airport did not commence until June 1949.

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From this point the labour force was built up to a peak strength of 165 Europeans and 1050 Bahamians, this maximum being reached in October 1949. Apart from the delays in getting started which were due to factors outside the contractors' control, progress on the works was held up by the United Kingdom dock strike of June and July, the hurricane of 26th August and the heavy weather in December 1949 which held up local shipping. A considerable volume of finishing works remain to be completed after the end of 1949 but the main task has been successfully completed. For a project of this size the work has progressed with exceptionally few labour troubles and disputes and the co-operation between European key-men and native workers has been excellent.

In conclusion I have to report that the construction of a Vacation Village has been a veritable boon to the people of Grand Bahama and West End in particular. Due to this construction, the work of this office has been tremendously increased and required many extra hours daily (including Sundays) beyond the regular hours of duty so as to maintain efficiency.

[signature perhaps "Herman Pyform"]

Senior Commissioner.

Transcribed from the original by James Baker as a reference so that these past "snapshots" of the Island's economic and social history are available.