

Grand Bahama Commissioner's Report 1957

THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
West End, Grand Bahama
7th. May, 1958.

Sir:-

Although belatedly, I am in the process of writing the Annual Report of this District for the year 1957, but I am running into one obstacle after another. Most embarrassing, of course, is the fact that no Annual Report was written for the year 1956. Then it is discovered that there is absolutely no record here of the arrival and departure of planes and air-cargoes and passengers to and from the United States for the year 1957, and none up to date for 1958. I was not aware of course, that such changes were made during the latter part of 1956, and that since then, ALL of the papers and records relating to these statistics have been and are being forwarded to the Customs and Immigrations Departments in Nassau and none are filed for records here. To write the chapters on COMMERCE and on TRANSPORTATION, Etc., I must now get the information from The Customs and Immigrations Departments in Nassau, or leave them out of the Report.

I feel that it is my duty Sir, to call your attention to – if you are not already aware of it – the fact that at the airport at West End, Customs and Immigrations Officers are under the direct jurisdiction of the Heads of their Departments in Nassau. If this is as it should be, then the Commissioner should be left out of these departments completely and not be asked nor expected to have anything to do with nor for them, except in his capacities as SubAccountant to the Treasury and Magistrate. How can he be expected to answer questions or make reports to Government, for which he has no answers, no information, nor jurisdiction?

I think Sir, that it should now be clearly defined as to what the positions of Customs and Immigrations Officers in this District are in relation to the Commissioner. Frankly, Sir, from a personal point of view, it does not matter very much one way or another, – and I'm sorry to bother you with this, – but I think that the relationship between the three Offices and the Officers concerned, should now be clearly defined.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant
S. R. Darville
Commissioner.
The Actg. C. O. I. Commissioner,
The Out Island Department,
Nassau, N. P.

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THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND
FOR
THE YEAR 1957
BY
COMMISSIONER S. R. DARVILLE

Chapter I.

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION.

GOVERNMENT.

The District of Grand Bahama, which comprises and includes the main Island of Grand Bahama and the adjacent Cays, including Sweeting's Cay, Water Cay and others, lies on the Southern edge of the Little Bahama Bank, one hundred and forty miles West North West of the Island of New Providence and sixty miles East South East of West Palm Beach, Florida. The District is represented in The Honourable House of Assembly by The Honourable Charles W.F. Bethell, M.H.A, M.E.C., who was returned unopposed to membership in The House in the General Election of 1956.

Courts of Navigation, for the Registration of Voters, were held in the three Divisions of this District during the months of April, September, and December, in accordance with the requirements of The General Assembly Election Act of 1946. A new Register of Voters

was started in October, 1955. At the close of the year under review, 1957, there were 475 Registered Voters in this District: 108 in Division No. 1, 256 in Division No. 2 and 111 in Division No. 3.

ADMINISTRATION.

The administrative duties of this District were performed by the Writer for one month (December) only during the year under review. During the remainder of the year the Office was filled by Commissioner W. Granger.

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The Commissioner was assisted in his administrative duties by one Clerical Assistant, one Post Office Clerk, one Collector of Revenue, with an Assistant, at Pine Ridge (including Hawksbill Creek and the Freeport area), another at Gold Rock Creek and another at Riding Point; members of the Nassau Constabulary stationed at West End, Pine Ridge and Freeport, two Grade 1. Local Constables, stationed at West End and Eight-Mile-Rock, two Grade 2. Local Constables, stationed at High Rock and Pelican Point; two senior Customs Officers, from Nassau, and two Temporary Customs Officers and one senior Immigration Officer, all at West End and five Sub-Postmasters, one at West End, Eight-Mile-Rock, Pine Ridge (until May, when this Post was closed), High Rock and Sweetings Cay.

I do not think that it is necessary to reiterate in this report, the many and varied duties of an Out Island Commissioner, as it is expected that by now, most of those in authority over him, who may read this Report, know that he is not just a drill-cased, brass-bound effigy glued to an Office chair, nor a stooge as he is sometimes portrayed or believed to be.

It might be of interest to quote here, in connection with the administrative duties of an Out Island Commissioner, the views of an American Columnist, Hal Boyle, as expressed in a column written by him early this year and which appeared in scores of newspapers all over the United States. "An American bureaucrat would shudder at the multiple duties of (Mr. X) a political odd-job man in a warm climate.

"(Mr. X) is one of twenty-one Commissioners who handle government chores in some 2,000 Bahamas Islands and Cays, ranging over 70,000 Sq. Miles of ocean. He is ... assigned to ... one of the Islands, and you can't be around here long without running into the ... smiling (x)-year-old Official.

"British Colonial Governments act on the same principle as the U. S. Army, "A trained Officer can handle any job". If (Mr. X) wore a special hat for each of his jobs, he'd need at least ten in his wardrobe.

"When you land here, (Mr.X) as Customs Officer oversees the

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[The published column is, unsurprisingly, about Mr. Stanley R. Darville himself: "He is one of three commissioners assigned to Andros, largest of the islands, and you can't be around here long without running into the chubby, smiling, 43-year-old official"]

checking of your baggage. If you are caught smuggling in anything, he will (as Police Chief) have you arrested, and then (as Magistrate) hear your case.

"If you wreck your yacht on a reef, (Mr.X) has to open an inquiry as wreck investigator. If your home should go up in flames, he will drop around as fire inspector to be sure you didn't touch a match to it to collect the insurance.

"If you mail a letter, you'll find that (Mr.X) is also Postmaster. If you want to get married quickly in a civil ceremony, who says the binding words? Nobody but (Mr.X). If you die, (he) will issue the death certificate as coroner. If you are born here, (he) will register your birth. If you

want to settle here permanently, (Mr.X) will handle your application as immigration officer.

'We are the only government officials who don't wear a uniform,' says (Mr.X). 'when you get down to it, what uniform could we wear?'

The commissioner ... is Official shepherd for several thousand Bahamian Natives dwelling in a tangled pine and sweet margaret wilderness covering many hundreds of square miles.

"Despite all his duties, (Mr.X) has but a small staff to help him. He works around the clock many days and enjoys a seven-day work week.

"The pay scale would hardly tempt an American politician into migrating here.

"'But I like this life,' said (Mr.X). 'You can help many people with their problems – and the feeling of satisfaction this gives you is a big part of your income.'"

The duties of administration in this District has [sic] increased tremendously during the year under review and the Commissioner, in spite of the assistance that he has in his Office, finds himself working long hours during the day and often far into the night in order to keep his work up to date as much as possible and to try to meet the demands of the various Departments of Government to which he is responsible.

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CHAPTER II.

POPULATION.

The estimated population of the District for the year 1957 is 5,000. The estimated total is distributed among various settlements as follows

| | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----|
| West End | 750 | Water Cay | 180 |
| Dead Man's Reef | 10 | Pinder's Point | 300 |
| Holmes Rock | 154 | Hunters | 160 |
| Eight-Mile-Rock | 520 | Lewis Yard | 75 |
| Smith's Point (inc. Mather Tn., Williams & Russell Town) | 160 | High Rock | 265 |
| Sweetings Cay | 210 | Crabbing Bay, Rocky Creek and McClellan's Town | 115 |
| Pelican Point | 85 | Pine Ridge | 354 |
| Marco City | 1,150 | Freeport | 510 |

The following is a record of Births and Deaths in the District during the year:

There was a total of 236 Births; of these 113 were males and 123 Females. Of these 9 were Still Births, 4 Males and 5 Females.

The Birth rate for 1957, according to the population of Grand Bahama, is little less than 5%.

There were 38 Deaths, including the 9 Still Births, 22 of which were males and 16 females which makes the mortality rate for 1957, according to the population, of 0.85 per cent. This makes the natural increase for the year under review 4.55 percent.

Infant Mortality.

Of the 36 deaths recorded, 18 of them were infants under one year of age, including 9 Still Births.

Cause of Deaths.

One person died from accident during this year and one of drowning. One died of epilepsy and three of hypertension; one of intestinal obstruction, one of heart disease, two of general debility, one of cancer, one of pneumonia, three of paralysis, two of infirmity, three premature, one of nausea, two of tuberculosis, one of fever and one of deformity.

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CHAPTER III.

HEALTH AND SANITATION.

The general health condition of the District has been very satisfactory during the year under review. Most diseases encountered were successfully treated by the District Medical Officer and the Private Medical Officer of The Abaco Lumber Company and the Freeport Authority at Pine Ridge and Marco City.

All Public Wells, THE ONLY SOURCE OF Public water supply yet available in the District, have been cleaned regularly this year.

Another important step was taken in the Public Health progress. All children, in the whole Island, up to ten years of age, were given the necessary injections of Salk's Polio Vaccine against Infantile Paralysis. Not only were the results of this effort very satisfying but so was the response and co-operation of the many parents in seeing that their children got this immunisation [sic].

The problem of nutritional deficiency, – malnutrition, – was again successfully and satisfactorily dealt with by the extensive use of substitute vitamins [sic] in the form of vitamin "B" complex tablets. Many cases were treated and the results were very pleasing indeed. The problem of getting fresh vegetables and fruits, the natural source of these necessary vitamins, still faces the people of this District, with little hope of any improvement in the immediate future.

Alcoholism has been and still is our main unsolved health problem, and little, or nothing, has been done during the year to change of [sic] alter the conditions reported in previous years. It is still a menace to the social well-being and mortality of almost every community. The health-destroying 'pleasures' of excessive drinking should be supplanted [sic] by some other more healthy and helpful recreation. A good community social centre may be the answer.

Alcoholism is a social as well as a public health problem. Truly it is a disease of terrific magnitude and terrible consequences, about which something should be done to warn the Victims, and the would-be

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Victims, of its dangers if the population is to survive in any degree of health. But it should not be looked upon as only a matter of medical or personal concern. The cure, or the salvation, of the individual victim, does not lie solely in a better comprehension of the physical and psychological nature of alcoholism and the study of his drinking patterns. The cure lies as well in better social services. As long as these social services are poor, – as they most certainly are here, although some improvements were made in this direction during the year, – and as long

as there is nothing to satisfy the inner emptiness and loneliness of the individual, as long will alcoholism remain on the winning side and the cancer of both Family and Community life.

SANITATION.

While there have been some improvements in the settlements of West End, Marco City and The Freeport Area, sanitation remains an unsolved problem on Grand Bahama. In most of the settlements the conditions are still primitive. Because of this condition, and the present 'open-well' public water supply system, there is always present with us the possibility of an out-break of some epidemic of typhoid or other virus disease, especially in the event of a hurricane or very heavy rainfalls. One thing that would go a long way in helping to remedy and improve this condition would be the installation of hand water pumps in closed wells to replace the present open well water supply system. It is about time that this matter be given some serious consideration especially in respect of the more thickly populated settlements.

I wish to mention, in this connection and under this chapter, that a new residence for the District Medical Officer and a Clinic and Nurse's quarters are nearing completion. These are long overdue, – but better late than never. It is hoped that ere long these will be completed and ready for occupancy.

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CHAPTER IV.

HOUSING.

The Houses throughout the District, with the exception of West End, Pine Ridge and Riding Point, are constructed principally of local stone, lime and cement, and, more recently, of concrete blocks. In West End they are mostly of wood, although recently, that is in 1956 and 1957, a number of them have been constructed of concrete block, manufactured in this Island, and those in Pine Ridge and Riding Point are entire of wood, milled at Pine Ridge.

I am pleased to report again this year that there has been quite a number of new houses built and considerable improvements made in the existing ones. In almost every settlement one can see new houses springing up, especially in the Eight-Mile-Rock and Pine's Point area, and many of them are well built. Quite some improvements in appearance are being made as well, but there is still a lot to be desired in this respect.

A number of fine houses and business places were built in West End, Eight-Mile-Rock and Pinder's Point, and some in a few of the other settlements. Constructed mostly of stone or concrete blocks, they are on separate plots; there is, however, still some disorderly pattern of ever-crowding of buildings on small plots of land.

There is still the problem of over-crowding of large families in small houses, but this, I am afraid, will remain unsolved for a long time to come. In fact it is to be expected to become even worse as the demand for rooms increase with the expected large scale developments in the Island. Most of the houses comprise from two to four rooms, some from four to six rooms and in a few of these there are eight or more rooms. Some of the newly constructed houses, as well as a few others, are equipped with modern sewerage and electricity. Houses built at Marco City and Freeport, by the Freeport Authority, are all of modern designs and well built and equipped with all modern conveniences.

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CHAPTER V.

PRODUCTION.

Forests and marine products are the natural resources of this District.

FOREST.

A vast pine forest, covering more than four hundred and thirty square miles of the island's surface, from which millions of feet of lumber, formerly the principal product of this District, were milled annually up to 1956 when this industry was discontinued and The Abaco Lumber Company finally closed its doors to production, Labour and export. Owned and operated by Mr. Wallace Groves, this Company sold its exclusive rights to all the Crown's timber in this Island and the Island of Abaco, to The Owens Illinois of The Bahamas, Ltd.

This Company, The Owens Illinois of The Bahamas, Ltd., is engaged in the collection of timber for pulpwood to be used in its factories for the manufacture of paper and paper products in the United States of America. Except for the cutting of this wood, the work is done mostly by machinery, including the loading of barges. More than a hundred people are employed, a good percentage Americans, by the Company at Riding Point, the location of its operations. Wages paid to all employees are reported to be very satisfactory. Accommodation for all employees is provided by the Company at Riding Point and 'The Gap'. Many thousands of tons of this pulpwood have been exported by this Company to its mills in Jacksonville, Florida. At the present rate of production, the Company estimates that it has another eighteen months to two years of operation to exhaust the timber supply in this island (that is on Crown Lands of course) when it will move to Abaco.

MARINE PRODUCTS.

The principal marine products are fish, conchs and crawfish. Sea-shells, corals and star-fish are also gathered and sold to

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Markets in the United States.

Fish.

Edible and sports fish, of numerous varieties and quantities, abound in the waters of this District. apart from the many pleasure boats which came to this Island in 1957 to fish in these waters, thousands of visitors came by air to join in the fun and frolic with the champions and fighters of the deep.

The edible fish is caught mostly for the local market where the demand has been ever increasing and so has the price. Very little of this fish is now exported to the United States as in former years, as the price on the local market is much better than can be gotten for fish for export. Hand-lines, fish-pots, (or traps) and nets are used to catch the fish, and a considerable number of smacks, and small dinghy boats are continuously used in this fishing business. If and when the fish is preserved, it is either salted or frozen. Although there is no scarcity of fish around this island, it is by no means the cheapest food. This, of course, is true all over the Colony.

Conch.

The only reason why this product is not exported in large quantities is because it is illegal to do so. It appears, however, that it might be beneficial to allow the export of the conch since the export of the shell is permitted and in this way, hundreds of thousands of conchs are destroyed each year for the sake of the shells.

Conchs are still quite numerous on the banks North and East of West End, where there seems to be an inexhaustible supply.

Like fish, the price of this food has gone up very much to what it was some years ago. Then, it was difficult to give away conchs, now, it is sometimes difficult to buy them.

Crawfish.

Crawfish may be caught for export during the open season which covers the periods from the 1st. of January to the 15th., March and from the 1st. of October to the 31st., December of each year. Crawfish may be taken, in limited quantities, for personal food consumption at any

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time, but they are not easily found after the close of the season. The first part of this season, that is from the 1st. October to the 31st. of December was not at all good. Prices were good and the fish considered plentiful, but very bad weather prevailed most of the time. Considerable quantities however, were exported to the United States during this period, both by boats and aircraft.

Stone-crabs.

These are still on the increase and can be seen in fair quantities on the banks North and East of West End. The capturing or taking of these crabs is prohibited by law.

AGRICULTURAL.

I regret to report again that there has been no increase in agricultural development in the District during the past year. Those who have been doing something in this direction are still carrying on, but with no increased enthusiasm. They continue to cultivate some of the general food crops such as corn, peas, potatoes, cassava and some fruits such as avacado [sic] pears, mangoes, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes and bananas. This, of course, does not apply to all the settlements in the District because in some of them very little or no effort is made in this direction. I do not think that there has been any increase in the acreage cultivated either; there are about 200 acres more or less, under cultivation in one way or another.

STOCK AND POULTRY.

The number of cattle in this District is ever decreasing s no special effort is made to halt it or to improve and increase the stock. A few of these are being slaughtered for food each week, and with the increase of traffic on the main roads and the fact that the cattle are not properly pastured, a number of them are being killed by vehicles.

Efforts in poultry-raising on a commercial basis have continued and have proven rather successful especially in Pine Ridge and also in Pinder's Point. This of course, is not yet large enough to take {care} of all the needs of the District, but it has helped considerably in the supply of dressed poultry and eggs for the local market.

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A fair estimate of what may be found in this District, in the way of poultry and livestock, is as follows:

Cattle 90.

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Hogs | 110. |
| Sheep | 40. |
| Goats | 95. |
| Chickens | 8,000. |

CHAPTER VI.

COMMERCE.

56,460 crawfish, 6,600 pounds of shellfish, 15,800 sea-shells, a quantity of other marine products, including sea-fans and tiny sea-shells, and a quantity of scrap-iron, were exported to markets in Florida. The approximate value of this export was over £5,000. United States dollars were presented to this Office and at the West End Branch of the Barclays Bank, for exchange by the exporters. It must be noted, however, that although these exports were cleared at this Port, the boats taking them, do not necessarily re-enter The Colony through this Port. The dollars brought back in return for them are often presented for exchange at Hope Town, Green Turtle Cay, Walkers Cay and sometimes at Nassau.

Customs duties collected on imports at West End, amounted to £28,100. 9. 7. This is a substantial increase over previous years.

The Foods, clothing, building material and liquors are imported from and through Nassau as well as directly from the United States, while fresh meats, vegetables and fresh milk were imported only from the United States, which was brought in both by boats and aircraft.

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CHAPTER VII.

WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

Government basic wage for the casual worker was changed to £1. per day for men and 14/ – per day for women, but it was found necessary, in order to obtain labour in certain places, to pay the casual or common labourer as much as £1. 8. 0. per eight-hour day. This rate, and more, I am informed, was paid for common labour by the Companies and their Contractors operating in this district. It is said that as much as \$1.70 or 12/ – per hour has been paid to some of these labourers by American employers. It is not unusual however, for common labourers working of the cutting and gathering of pulp-wood for the Owens Illinois of the Bahamas at Riding Point, to make a weekly wage of from £21. to £28.

The following wages prevailed generally in the District, except in the case of employees at the Guided Missile Base where wages are at the bare minimum, – during the year: –

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Common labourers (men) | 3/ – to 4/ – per hr. |
| Common labourers (women) | 1/8 – to 3/6 per hr. |

| | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------|
| Semi-skilled labourers (helpers to carpenters, masons, plumbers, etc.) | | 3/6 – to 5/ – per hr. |
| Carpenters and masons | | 5/ – to 8/6 per hr. |
| Plumbers and Electricians | | 6/ – to 10/ – per hr. |
| Painters and chauffeurs | | 4/ – to 8/ – per hr. |
| Domestic workers | | 1/6 to 3/ – per hr. |

Hours of work are generally from 7.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with a half hour off for lunch. This varies under certain circumstances, but the day is still reckoned at eight working hours.

Again it must be said that the cost of living has increased over that of the previous year, – as, I suppose, can be said of every other Island in the Colony. On almost all commodities, prices have increased and still are continuing to do so. One wonders how any man with a family, or with his wife only, for that matter, can

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even provide the bare necessities of life for them on a wage of one pound, four shillings (£1. 4. 0) per day.

I am not aware of the cost of living in many of the other Islands of the Colony, but I feel that it is exaggeration at all to say that the cost of living here equals, and in many cases surpasses, that of any island in the group including New Providence, Bimini and Inagua.

CHAPTER VIII.

EDUCATION AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS.

Established and conducted in the largest settlements of the District, are four Board of Education Public Schools, and in addition to them are seven Grant-in-Aid Schools. I list hereunder, the locations, kinds, and Headmasters of these schools: –

| | | |
|------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| West End, | Board, | C. Fountain. |
| Eight-Mile-Rock, | Board, | W. Sturup & W. Ferguson. |
| Holmes Rock, | Board, | W. Parker. |
| Pine Ridge, | Board, | H.W. Campbell. |
| Water Cay, | Grant-in-Aid, | M. Thomas. |
| High Rock, | Grant-in-Aid, | R.A. Wildgoose. |
| Sweetings Cay, | Grant-in-Aid, | N. Russell |
| Smith's Point, | Grant-in-Aid, | Closed. |
| McClean's Town, | Grant-in-Aid, | F. Laing. |
| Pelican Point, | Grant-in-Aid, | L. Laing. |
| Free Town, | Grant-in-Aid, | C. McIntosh. |

Schools are conducted as well, at Riding Point, where a new school building is being erected by the Owens Illinois of The Bahamas, and at Marco City in the Freeport Area. I am not in a position, at present, to say whether these schools are under the supervision or control of the Board of Education, or whether they are Public Schools. There are indications however, that the one at Riding Point is Public, but

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this cannot be said of the one at Freeport, as this is strictly limited to the children of white employees only.

The school at Smith's Point remained closed again this year – it was closed in 1955 – as nothing was done in the way of providing a teacher for it.

The school building at McClean's Town was rebuilt to provide better accommodation for the children. This school is still very much in need of seating accommodation, and either furniture or material.

The Red Cross Milk Scheme, which provides a glass of milk daily for each child, has been discontinued in most of the schools. Efforts are being made however, through the various school Committees and the newly organized Junior Red Cross Links, to try and get this scheme going again.

All of these schools, with the exception of Smith's Point, have been conducted regularly during the year under review. Much is to be desired however, in these schools. In most of them the seating accommodation is entirely inadequate and miserably uncomfortable. In some schools, the children sit on improvised benches. In West End the conditions have improved some, but there is still a lot of room for additional improvements. Some of the buildings are in desperate need of major repairs. With regards the school in Smith's Point, I can only say again, that it is hoped a teacher will be found so that this school can be re-opened in the not very distant future, and especially so in view of the fact that the school in Pine Ridge will be closing permanently early in 1958.

In spite of all the inconveniences and disadvantages in our Educational facilities in this District, the parents of our children are very grateful to Government and The Board of Education for them and for the proposed development of these facilities in 1958. We wish also, to say a sincere 'thank you' for the very capable teachers provided by The Board of Education for some of these schools.

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WELFARE INSTITUTIONS.

Friendly and Burial Societies, including a few branches of several Service Orders, are operating throughout the District. These comprise a total membership of several hundreds of men and women, and are established in every settlement of the Island. These institutions are established primarily to aid the sick and bury the dead of their members and also the family of members. They also render assistance to the families of deceased members when the necessity arises, and they contribute in some way to the improvement of the social life of the Communities in which they are located. Their funds, with very few exceptions, are deposited either with the Post Office Savings Bank or with one of the Banks in Nassau. Some of these accounts are quite substantial.

The praises of these institutions may well be sung for the good they have done in fulfilling the purposes for which they are established. Many widows and orphans have been aided and relieved by their philanthropy, and many a burden lifted from the shoulders of the bereaved of their members.

The membership of many of these institutions is rapidly increasing and some of them are building new and better 'Temples' and

meeting-houses. On the whole, they are making marked improvements both among themselves and in the Communities in which they operate.

CHAPTER IX.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT.

MAIL SERVICE.

The regular Mail Service was performed by the Motor Vessel Richard Campbell, during the year. Again it must be stressed that while this service is very much appreciated by the people of this District, I must emphasise [sic] again, that THIS VESSEL and the accommodation and facilities it provides, are entirely inadequate and completely un-

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satisfactory. With the increased demand and requirements of this service, this vessel should be replaced by a larger one with more and better passenger and freight accommodation. Apart from the passengers and mails, this service provides transportation of foodstuff and other commodities to each port of call in the Island including Sweeting's Cay, High Rock, Smith's Point, Eight-Mile-Rock, and West End. This District depends almost entirely upon this mail-boat for these services, with only the occasional shipment by some other local vessel. The only settlements in the Island which have some small degree of local service between Nassau and this District, are Sweeting's Cay and Water Cay. Too often this mail-boat has proven that the needs and requirements of the District have long out-grown its capacity and type of service both in passenger and freight accommodations. It is impossible to import fruits, vegetables, fresh meats and fresh milk from Nassau, as the service provided no form of refrigeration and the trip from Nassau to ports in Grand Bahama is so long, that these goods [sic] arrive in almost, if not completely, useless condition. Fortunately, for some of the people of this Island, – who are not an agriculturally-inclined people, – a passenger and freight service exists between West End and Freeport and ports in the United States, so that those who can, have turned to markets in the States for these necessary foods.

In addition to this weekly service of this mail-boat, there was also an air service between Nassau and West End, operated and maintained by Bahamas Airways Limited. This service has been extremely helpful and very much appreciated by all the people of this District who made regular use of this service.

As stated above, passenger and freight air-services were maintained and operated by Bahamas Airways Limited and Mckey Airlines, between airlines, between West End – Bimini – Fort Lauderdale – West Palm Beach, Florida. These services transported thousands of Tourists and residents and has proven of invaluable assistance to these people and those engaged in the Tourist business, but to the whole Island and all the inhabitants including Gold Rock Creek and Freeport.

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Apart from any other Revenue that may have been derived from these services, the sum of £5,585. 12. 0. was collected in Departure and Passenger Ticket Taxes during the year.

252 vessels reported, or entered Inwards from Ports outside of the Colony. Of these 204 were in Ballast and 48 with cargoes of foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, and building and other material. 163 vessels cleared from this Port for ports outside of the Colony. Of these 136 were in Ballast and 27 with cargoes of Crawfish, Scalefish, sea-shells, other marine products and quantities of scrap-iron for markets in the United States. Most of the vessels entering in Ballast were sports-fishermen and pleasure cruisers. These figures do not include vessels entering at Freeport and Gold Rock Creek.

ROADS.

All public roads in this District, including the Grand Bahama Min Road, have been maintained.

POST OFFICE.

There were five sub-postoffices in this District, until May, when the Pine Ridge Post Office was closed. These are located at West End, Eight-Mile-Rock, High Rock, Sweeting's Cay, and Pine Ridge (which has been closed permanently). There are now only four. Three sub-postoffices, except the one in the West End, handle only mails and parcels. Each of the sub-postmasters hold an imprest of stamps from the District Postmaster at West End. All of these sub-postoffices have been in operation for quite a number of years. The traffic in most of them has increased especially during the year under review.

Again I wish to point out in this Report, that the establishment of a sub-postoffice at Water Cay is long overdue. It has been many years, and still is, an outstanding need for this settlement, which is about thirty miles, removed by water, from West End, where letters are, at present, received and posted. It is hoped that the Postmaster of the Bahamas will arrange for its establishment in the not very distant future.

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The following is a detailed statement of the financial transactions of this District Post Office for the year 1957.

REVENUE.

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Post Office Savings Bank Deposits | £9,460. 15. 2 |
| Sale of Telegraph and Domestic Money Orders | 25,360. 6. 9. |
| Sale of U.K. and Jamaican Money Orders | 193. 15. 8. |
| Sale of U.S. & Canadian Money Orders | 3,357. 14. 3. |
| Sale of Postage Stamps | 1,334. 5. 0. |
| Parcel Post Duties collected | 431. 18. 6. |
| Short paid Postage collected | 3. 19. 3 |
| Total Revenue | £40,150. 15. 7 |

EXPENDITURE.

| | |
|--|----------------|
| Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank | £7.281. 8. 10. |
| Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders paid | 2,531. 1. 5. |
| United States Money Orders paid | 600. 3. 0. |
| Total Expenditure | £10,412.13. 3 |

TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

The three telegraph stations in this District are located at West End, Pine Ridge and Sweeting's Cay. Overseas telephone services are available at West End and Pine Ridge. These stations are all reported to have operated satisfactorily during the year. The equipment at West End has been replaced with some new parts and instruments, but in spite of this, it is felt that replacement of many more parts and instruments are long overdue. The operators here, are to be complimented for keeping up this service as they do.

The local telephone system, installed in 1956, has operated well, with minor upkeep, and has been of invaluable service to all within its reach.

The total Telegraph Revenue during the year under review, – at West End, – was £1,360.19. 8. And Telephone Revenue was £1,298. 3. 8. Making a total of £2,659. 3. 4.

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COMMUNITY RADIO.

The people of the communities in which these Radios are located are very appreciative of this service through the Telecommunications Department. They are invaluable in places like Water Cay, and especially as during the hurricane months. It is hoped that this service can be extended to McClean's Town, Pelican Point and Free Town in the not very distant future.

CHAPTER X.

FINANCE.

The following is a detailed statement of Revenue and Expenditure in this District during the year 1957.

BANK ACCOUNT.

The Bahamas Government (West End, Grand Bahama)

In Account with the Barclays Bank (D.C. & O.) West End Branch)

| | |
|---|-----------------------|
| BANK BALANCE 31/12/56, (AS SHOWN IN Cash Book.....£ 5,939, 13. 9. | |
| Total Deposits during 1957 | <u>50,581. 11. 5.</u> |
| Total | <u>£56,521. 5. 2.</u> |

Withdrawals from Bank Account during 1957 £51,057. 13. 7.

BANK BALANCE 31/12/57, (as shown in Cash Book) 5,463. 11. 7.

Total £56,521. 5. 2.
 BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD 1/1/58 £5,463. 11. 7.

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[dots omitted below]
 1957. REVENUE. 1957.

£ 1,993.11. 7.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Revenue & Deposits Balance 31/12/56 | | |
| Parcel Post Duties | £ 431.18. 6 | |
| Motor Car & Drivers licenses | 1,096. 0. 1 | |
| Liquor Licenses | 251.11. 0. | |
| Shop Licenses | 3. 5. 0. | |
| Fines & Forfeitures | 896. 0. 0. | |
| Fees of Office | 14. 9. 0. | |
| Royalty on Crawfish | 259.10. 6. | |
| Telegraph Revenue | 1,360.19. 8. | |
| Telephone Revenue | 1,290. 3. 8. | |
| Passenger Ticket Taxes | 1,316. 5.10. | |
| Profit on Exchange | 30.10 1. | |
| | Total Revenue | 6,958.14. 0. |

Deposits, Etc.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| Post Office Savings Bank Deposits | £ 9, 460.15. 2. |
| Sale of Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders | 25,368. 6. 9. |
| Sale of U. S. & Canadian Money Orders | 3,357.14. 3. |
| Sale of U. K. & Jamaican Money Orders | 193.15. 8. |
| Sale of Postage Stamps | 1,334. 5. 0. |
| Comptroller of Customs (Import Duties) | 28,100. 9. 7. |
| Comptroller of Customs (Departure taxes) | 4,296. 6. 0. |
| Payment on Dinghies | 116. 4.10. |
| Crown Land Rentals | 5. 6. 4. |
| Out Island Court Deposits | 739.10. 4. |
| Library Subscriptions | 1.10. 9. |
| Remittances and sale of Drafts | 24,404. 4. 9. |
| Short Paid Postage | 3. 9. 3. |

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Cash Found Over | 71. 8. 5. | |
| Cash Refunds | 9.13. 9. | |
| Customs Deposits | 29. 2. 1. | |
| Total Deposits, Etc. | | 97,465. 3. 1. |
| Grand Total | | £106,417. 8. 8. |

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1957. EXPENDITURES. 1957.

On Account of: -

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| | £ 3.10. 0. | |
| The House of Assembly | | |
| Customs Department | 1,698.13.10. | |
| Judicial Department | 219.16. 9. | |
| Registrar General Department | 28. 4. 0. | |
| Education Department | 1,032.12. 3. | |
| Police Department | 6,304. 3. 9. | |
| Post Office Department (salaries) | 197. 6. 0. | |
| Prisons Department | 164.12. 3. | |
| Telecommunications Department | 493. 5. 4. | |
| Audit Department | 4. 0. 0. | |
| Medical Department | 839. 7. 6. | |
| Public Works Recurrent (O. I.) | 3,511. 8. 3. | |
| Public Works Non Recurrent (O. I.) | 11,905.17. 0. | |
| Out Island Department | 752.19.10. | |
| Government Messages (O. I. Dept.) | 94. 0. 4. | |
| Pensions | 304. 2. 5. | |
| Immigrations Department | 52. 0. 6. | |
| Agricultural & Marine Products Board | 11.14. 0. | |
| Total Expenditure | | £29,653.14. 8. |

Payments of Deposits, Etc.:

| | |
|--|----------------|
| | £ 7,281. 8.10. |
| Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank | |
| Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders Paid | 2,531. 1. 5. |
| U. S. Postal Money Orders Paid | 600. 3. 0. |
| Out Island Court Deposits | 632. 2. 6. |
| Family Allowances | 2,063.10.10. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Deposits made to Bank Account | 50,581.11. 5. | |
| Remittances to The Treasury | 10,456. 1. 4. | |
| Refund to Customs Deposits | 16.12. 1. | |
| Cash Found Over | 39.14. 6. | |
| Miscellaneous Deposits | 596.15. 2. | |
| Libraries | 57.16. 0. | |
| Total Deposits, Etc | | £74,829.17. 1. |
| Total | | £104,483.11. 9. |
| Balance C/F. 31/12/57 | | 1,933.16.11. |
| Grand Total | | £106,417. 8. 8. |

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The Financial Statements submitted on pages 20 and 21 do not include Telegraph Revenue, Telephone Revenue and Customs Duties, Etc., collected at Pine Ridge, Freeport and Riding Point. These are paid to and accounted for by the Collector of Revenue at Pine Ridge.

CHAPTER XI.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Under Head 31 and Items 58 to 62 inclusive, which provide for the General Upkeep of the District, under four separate Boards of Work, and the maintenance of the Grand Bahama Main Road, the sum of £3,000. was allotted for the upkeep of Public Roads, Wells, Burial Grounds, Buildings and landing-places. Of this amount, £2,992.12. 8. was spent. In addition to the works mentioned above, this allocation provided also for the collection and disposal of garbage and the maintenance of a garbage truck at West End.

Further expenditure under Head 31 was made from Item 63 for the supply of electricity in Government Buildings (from a small gasoline generator) to the sum of £139.12. 4. £135 was allotted under Item 97 to defray cost of completing Police Headquarters and of partitioning the Commissioner's Office at West End and £243.17. 6. under Item 100 for the maintenance of Oil Navigation Lights.

Under Head 33, Public Works, Non-Recurrent, Out Islands, and the Out Island and General Improvement Act, the sum of £19,030. was granted for the following works: –

1. Repairs and renovation of certain Government Buildings.
2. Reconstruct and pave the Pinder's Point – Hunters Road.
3. Improve Cross-roads in various settlements.
4. Complete Doctor's House and Clinic, West End.
5. Complete construction of Police Quarters, West End.
6. Construction of Engine House for Government Light Plant.

- 7. Repair Government Dock, West End.
- 8. Erecting Channel-markers at West End.
- 9. Construction of Warehouse, Sweetings Cay.

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- 10. Repair Government Building, Sweetings Cay.
- 11. Extend Public Dock and Roads, Water Cay.
- 12. Complete Causeway, Rocky Creek.
- 13. Extend Cross-road, Water Cay to Free Town.

Of the total amount allocated under this Head, and the Out Island and General Improvement Act, the sum of £11,905.127. 0. was paid through this Office and £5,000. through the Out Island Department, making a total of £16,905.17. 0.

CHAPTER XII.

JUSTICE, POLICE, AND PRISONS.

JUSTICE.

In spite of a general unsatisfactory labour situation at the Freeport and in the Eight-Mile-Rock and Pinder's Point area, Peace and good order were effectively maintained throughout the District. 171 cases were heard, including 5 sent to the Sessions of the Supreme Court. The following table shows the number and nature of the various offences, and persons dealt with in these case [sic], and how they were disposed of:

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Assaults | 12 |
| Abusive Language | 39 |
| Praedial Larceny | 6 |
| Wounding | 15 |
| Other Offences | 45 |
| Indictable Offences | 5 |

158 persons were involved. 143 Males. 15 Females and Juveniles.

These cases were disposed of as follows:

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| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Fined | 116 |
|-------------|-----|

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Imprisoned | 9 |
| Cautioned | 14 |
| Bound Over | 8 |
| Dismissed | 14 |
| Sent to Supreme Court | 5 |
| Juvenile | 1 |
| Others | 4 |

Fifty-seven (57) Civil Cases were heard during the year. No cases were disposed of by Justices of the Peace.

A varying number of members of the Nassau Constabulary was stationed in the District during the year. At the beginning of the year there was still quite a number of these men here in view of the labour uprising near the end of 1956. By the end of the year however, only five were left here, three of whom were stationed at the Freeport, one at Riding Point and one at West End. There was also, two first grade Local Constables, stationed at West End and Eight-Mile-Rock respectively and two second grade Local Constables, one at High Rock and the other at Pelican Point.

It is pleasing to note again this year, that the close cooperation between the Military Police or Security Officers, at the Guided Missile Bas[e] at Gold Rock Creek, and our Police, has been effectively maintained, and thus the good relationship between the American employees at this Base and the people of the settlements that they quite frequently visit, has continued to be very good. Our Police have encountered or dealt with a very few incidents in which any of these Americans were involved.

In addition to the very satisfactory and efficient services performed by the members of the Bahamas Police Force and the four Local Constables, the District Constables, in most of the settlements, have proven themselves very helpful in the successful and peaceful administration of this District during the year under review. In fact a few of these men are to be complimented for the way in which they have helped

by their time and efforts, to maintain peace and good order in their respective Communities.

The following men have been appointed as District Constables for the year 1958, in the settlements under which their names appear:

| | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>West End.</u> | <u>Smith's Point.</u> | <u>Eight-Mile-Rock.</u> |
| Clifford Davis. | Riley Nesbitt. | Edward Rolle. |
| Bernard Hanna. | Henry Adams. | Alfred Johnson. |
| Hiram Johnson Jr. | | Albert Rolle. |
| Granville H. Garvey. | <u>Hunters.</u> | |
| Benjiman W. Smith. | James Russell. | <u>Hanna Hill.</u> |
| Alexander Rolle. | Roland Bevans. | Urial Smith. |
| Ivan Russell. | | Percy Barr. |
| George Forbes. | <u>Lewis Yard.</u> | |
| Wilbert Roberts. | Henry Russell. | <u>Brady Point.</u> |

Dennis Hall.
Benjiman Pinder.

Martin Hill.
Arthur Martin.

Holmes Rock.
John Rolle Sr.
Horatio Stuart.
Derrisis Rolle.

High Rock.
Elrich Kemp.
Isaac Smith.
James Roberts.

Samuel Russell.

Pinder's Point.
Leon Pinder.
Alphonse Cooper.
Hansel Moore.

Sweetings Cay.
Peter Feuster.
Wellington Bevans.
Rupert Bevans.

Free Town.
Ormond Laing.
William Mather.

Arnold Martin.
William Martin.

Rocky Shore.
Marris Russell.
Elmore Stuart.

McCleans Town.
Jeremiah Thomas.
Bertram Davis.
William Pinder Jr.

Water Cay.
Walter Hield.
Locksley Hield.
Osias Lewis.
Bernice Rolle.

PRISONS.

The three-cell prison at West End was renovated during the year. It is however, often too small to meet the needs of this District. The lock-up at Eight-mile-rock [sic], which has only two cells, is used only in emergencies.

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There is a two-room lock-up also at Riding Point, used by the Police there, for custody detention. No prison terms are served other than in West End.

During the year 1957, 13 persons were sent to prison, 8 of whom were committed to serve sentences in Nassau while the remainder served terms from two weeks to three months in the prison here at West End. Five prisoners were dismissed during the year. No prisoners were awaiting trial at the end of this year, and there were no casualties among the prisoners.

CHAPTER XIII.

LEGISLATION.

The Taxi-cab Act was extended to this District and special Rules under the Street Traffic Regulations (of 1950) and the Penal Code were made for this District. These Rules are known as The Street Traff[f]ic Regulations (Grand Bahama) 1957.

CHAPTER XIV.

TAXATION.

There is no direct form of taxation in this District. The Real Property Tax Act has not yet been applied to Grand Bahama.

CHAPTER XV.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PAUPERISM.

Pauper Rations were issued by the Government, through the Princess Margaret Hospital, which included grits, flour, sugar, milk and occasionally cheese, were helpfully distributed to 56 paupers throughout this District were issued by the Government, through the Princess Margaret Hospital, which included grits, flour, sugar, milk and occasionally cheese, were helpfully distributed to 56 paupers throughout this District. Two of these paupers died during the year

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and three others were added to the list.

RELIGION.

Baptist, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Brethren, Church-of-God and Jehovah's Witnesses are the systems of religious worship followed by the people of this District. The Baptist faith embraces about 50% of the population and they are followers of and under the direct supervision of the Xion [sic] Baptist Mission of Nassau and The Bahamas. The Superintendent of this Mission pays periodical visits to all of these churches and congregations here, which are scattered throughout td, which are scattered throughout this District, including Water Cay and Sweetings Cay. – the settlement of Water Cay is of course totally Baptist. These Churches are, for the most part, self-supporting and their Ministers are paid from the funds of the various churches. A new church building of this Sect was built and dedicated during the year, at the settlement of Eight-Mile-Rock.

Followers of the Anglican Faith number about another 30% of the population, and churches are to be found in the settlements of West End, Eight-Mile-Rock, Smith's Point, High Rock and Sweetings Cay. The priest's residence or "Rectory" is at Eight-Mile-Rock from where the resident priest pays periodical visits to the other churches in the Island. There is not always a resident priest in the Island, but in this respect we have been very fortunate this year.

Followers of the Roman Catholic Faith are almost all of the settlements of Hunters and Lewis Yard and for many years the only church building in the District was in the settlement of Hunters. During this year however, a very fine church building was erected at West End. there are a number of followers of this Religion at the Guided Missile Base at Gold Rock Creek, – Americans, of course, – and services are conducted for them, by the resident priest, in a fine little Chapel, in one of the Administration Buildings on the Base, provided for this purpose.

The Interdenominational church at Pine Ridge, constructed and maintained by Mr. Wallace Groves for the convenience and accom-

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dation of his employees, was closed and abandoned with the closing of the lumber mill at Pine Ridge.

The Church-of-God, or "The Jumpers", has increased in the number of members during the year. Their Chapels are located at West End, Hanna Hill and Riding Point. The largest congregations are at Riding Point, consisting mainly of Turks Islanders, and at Eight-Mile-Rock (Hanna Hill).

Although some small start has been made in the direction of establishing the Jehovah's Witnesses in one of the settlements, the progress made thus far is not worthy of mention.

VISITS BY OFFICIALS.

There is no record of any visits made by Officials in this District during the year.

Commissioner's Visits.

All of the various settlements of the District were visited regularly during the year. The settlements of Water Cay Sweetings Cay, Crabbing Bay and McCleans Town, were visited less often than the others as they are so far from headquarters. The other settlements, Pelican Point, High Rock, Gold Rock Creek, Free Town, Smith's Point, Marco City, Pine Ridge, Freeport, Pinders Point, Lewis Yard, Hunters, Eight-Mile-Rock, and Holmes Rock, were visited monthly or quarterly and some of them weekly or more often when occasions warranted it. All of these visits were made, chiefly, to hear cases, to organize and supervise public works, to pay family allowances of the dependents of recruited workers and for the Registration of Voters in the three Divisions of the District. Transportation was affected by boats, hired cars and Government Land-rover. Transportation to Water Cay was always made by boat and to Sweetings Cay partly by boat and partly by car.

GENERAL REMARKS.

At the close of the year the outlook for the anticipated 'boom' at Freeport was not very optimistic. Few of the natives were

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employed, at this, the largest of all, Industrial developments ever undertaken in this Island, at the close of the year. Work continued on this development however, throughout the year, and it is expected that the dredging of the harbour and some docking areas will be completed early in 1958.

Capital expenditure on this development 1957, was £1,084, 185. and in 1956, it was £1,061,700. These figures included capital expended on wharves, Harbour, buildings, plants and machinery, water-supply and air-field.

The Bahamas Natoon [sic] Company (or Owens Illinois of The Bahamas Ltd., as it is now known) operating in the pulp-wood industry at Riding Point, provides employment and good wages for a considerable number of persons, but unfortunately, most of these are imported from Turks Islands.

The Grand Bahama Club, at West End, has continued to operate very satisfactorily and to improve its accommodations for visitors. Hundreds of persons can be, and very often are, accommodated at this ideal, and largest, Out Island Tourist Resort. Many attractions have

been added and bookings throughout the year have been continuous and very satisfactory, the management reports. This operation provides continuous employment for quite a number of native men and women. Key personal [sic] however, are brought in from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom.

This year, at long last, saw the complete reconstruction of the Pinder's Point Hunters main road. I am very pleased to report that this job was thoroughly and very satisfactorily done and this is now one of the best, if not THE best, road in this Island. It covers a distance of about three-and-one-half miles and was done at cost of £7,500.

The construction of the District Medical Officer's home and Clinic, which was started in late 1956, was not completed and indications are that these will not be ready for occupancy until sometime in June or July of 1958.

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Police quarters in West End, was completed during the year. This building, equipped with modern conveniences, provides very good accommodation for members of the Bahamas Police Force stationed in West End.

A building for the housing of an electric generator, to supply electricity to Government buildings in West End, was also completed and the installation of the generator is expected early in 1958. Street lights will be installed, along the main Public Road, between these Government buildings.

A total of 205 cars, 76 trucks and 22 motor cycles were licensed during the year, as compared with a grand total of 147 of these vehicles licensed in 1955.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant.
[signature – S. R. Darville]
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.