

Grand Bahama Commissioner's Report 1958

The Commissioner's Office,
West End, Grand Bahama,
12th., October, 1959

Ref. No. 3/39

Sir:—

I have the honour to forward herewith four (4) copies of my Annual Report, for the District of Grand Bahama, for the year 1958, and to beg to offer my humble apology for so long a delay in getting it to you.

Nothing will actually justify so long a delay of this Report and I will not tire you with lengthy excuses; I will say only Sir, that the delay was caused by a number of circumstances over which I had no control.

Again Sir, I beg that you will accept my sincere apology for so long a delay.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your Obedient servant,
S.R. Darville
Commissioner

The Actg. Chief Out Island Commissioner,
The Out Island Department,
Nassau, N. P.
SRD.

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FOR
THE YEAR 1957
BY
COMMISSIONER S. R. DARVILLE

Chapter I.

GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY AND CLIMATE.

GEOGRAPHY.

The District of Grand Bahama, which comprises and includes the main Island of Grand Bahama and the adjacent Cays, including Sweetings Cay and Water Cay as well as many others that are not inhabited, lies on and forms a part of the Southern fringe of the Little Bahama Bank, separating [sic] the deep water of the Atlantic Ocean from the shallow water covering the Little Bahama Bank, and is situated West North West from the Island of New Providence and sixty miles East South East of West Palm Beach, Florida. The main Island of Grand Bahama is about eighty-three miles long and from about one-half to ten miles wide with an area of about four hundred and thirty square miles. There are twenty-three settlements or villages in the District, including Sweetings Cay and Water Cay. The Main Island, as well as the inhabited Cays, is covered with vegetation with an enormous pine forest covering more than two-thirds of the area. The land is generally low with only traces of many hills rising to a height of not more than forty feet above low-water level. These hills are composed of crossbedded limestone of presumed Pleistocene age, the depths of from three to thirty feet throughout the District, and rainfall averages from thirty to fifty inches annually.

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OF
THE DISTRICT OF GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND

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CLIMATE.

The Climate in the District is subtropical and the humidity is high. It is salubrious and equable being warmed by the Gulf Stream in Winter and cooled by the South-easterly Trade Winds in the Summer, making it an ideal Tourist Resort. The yearly average Winter temperature ranges from 56 to 72 degrees F., and the yearly average Summer temperature is from 79 to 83 degrees F.

HISTORY.

Grand Bahama was first settled in the year 1787 by a few Loyalists, among them were the Grants, Feasters, Hields and the Wilchombes. The Wilchombes made their home at Settlement Point, West End; the Grants at Eight-Mile-Rock; the Hields at Free Town and later at Water Cay, and the Feasters at Sweetings Cay. These Loyalists married natives and as a result the present inhabitants, that is the natives, are of Creole and African parentage.

In the year 1847 Grants of large acreages were made by The Crown to these early settlers and most of it has remained in the possession of their descendants up to the present time; some of it has now been sold to foreign investors.

Headquarters of this District was first established at Golden Grove (now known as Gold Rock Creek) and was later transferred to Eight-Mile-Rock about sixty years ago, and then later removed to West End.

This Island, and especially the settlement of West End, was a rendezvous for "Bootleggers" during the prohibition era or during the enforcement [sic] of the Eighteenth Amendment of the Volstead Act in the United States of America. American influence in the commercial life of the Island, but much more so in West End, became and remains quite strong. Many of the men engaged in this "industry" are still with us and are always delighted to recall the good old days of the "Rum-runners".

CHAPTER II.

GOVERNMENT AND AMINISTRATION.

GOVERNMENT.

The District of Grand Bahama 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 in Membership to The House, in the General Election of 1956.

Courts of Revision, for the Registration of Voters, were held in the three Divisions of the District during the months of April, September and December, in accordance with the requirements of The General Assembly Election Act, Chapter 4. At the close of the year under review, there were 470 Registered Voters in this District.

ADMINISTRATION.

The Administration duties of this District were performed by the writer during the year, with the exception of about six weeks, when he was on special sick leave, and the duties were taken over by Mr. H. W. Campbell, Justice of the Peace.

Assisting the Commissioner in his Administrative duties during the year were, one Clerical Assistant, one Post Office Clerk, one Collector of Revenue at Freeport, and another at Gold Rock Creek, and yet another at Riding Point, two senior Customs Officers from Nassau, with two assistants or temporary Officers and one senior Immigration Officer. These were all stationed at West End, and greatly relieved the Commissioner of the pressing duties of these offices. Members of the Nassau Constabulary were stationed at West End (one man) at Freeport (one to two men) and at Riding Point (one man). Two First Grade Local Constables, one at West End and the other at Eight-Mile-Rock, two Second Grade Constables, one at High Rock and the other at Pelican Point. Three sub-postmasters, one each at Eight-Mile-Rock, High Rock and Sweetings Cay.

Work in connection with the duties of Administration in this District has increased beyond the capability of any one man to cope with satisfactorily even though the hours of work begin at early morning hours and extend very often into the late hours of the night. The result is that one thing has to be sacrificed for the other and very often some of the work, especially correspondence, is lagging far behind. This increase in work is, of course, expected as a result of the ever-increasing developments in the Island and the consequent increase in employment and economic development, and it is expected too, that plans will be made to cope with this increase in clerical and their work in this District, and to try to keep it up to date and to meet the demands of the various Departments of Government to which the Commissioner is responsible.

CHAPTER III.

POPULATION.

The estimated population of the District for the year, 1958 is about 6,000. This estimated total is made up as follows:

	860	Water Cay	176
West End			
Dead Man's Reef	9	Pinder's Point	340
Holmes Rock	170	Hunters	165
Eight-Mile-Rock	650	Lewis Yard	85

Smith's Point (including Mather Town, Williams and Russell Town)	165	Crabbing Bay, Rocky Creek & McClean's Town	115
Sweetings Cay	215	Freeport	650
Pelican Point	80	High Rock	300
Marco City	1,200	Free Town	120

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

There was a total of 219 Births; of these 108 were males and 111 females. There were 8 Still Births, 6 males and 2 females.

The Birth rate for the year 1958, according to the population of the

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District, was 4.2% or 42 births to every 1,000 of the population. Of the 219 births, 70 of them, or 36.5% were illegitimate.

There were 52 Deaths, including 9 [sic] Still Births, or slightly less than 1% of the population. This makes the natural increase for the year about 3.5%.

Infant Mortality.

Of the 52 Deaths recorded, 23 of them, were infants under one year of age, including the 9 Still Births.

Causes of Death.

Two persons died from drowning and one from suicide. Other causes were: hypertension, heart disease, general dilibility [sic], cancer, paralysis, premature, tuberculosis and fever.

CHAPTER IV.

HEALTH AND SANITATION.

The general health condition of the District has, again this year, been very satisfactory. Most diseases and ailments were success- [sic] treated by the District Medical Officer throughout the District, and in and around the Freeport Area and The Gap and Riding Point by the Private Medical Officer employed at Freeport.

All Public Wells were cleaned regularly throughout the District. These open wells are still the only Public water supply in many, or rather, most of the settlements. Closed wells, with hand force-pumps, were installed in Water Cay. Similar Pumps were purchased for Sweetings Cay and McCleans Town, and three of them to be installed at various points along the Main Road between High Rock and Pine Ridge, but up to the time of writing this Report funds were not available to cover the cost of installation. These pumps are proving very successful in Water Cay, and should go a long way to improve the health of the people of that settlement. It is the sincere hope of the writer that in the not very distant future we shall see the last of the open Public wells replaced with these pumps in every settlement in the District.

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The problem of malnutrition having been successfully dealt with over the past few years, it is now almost non-existent here. When a case is met with, it is more of a case of ignorance in for matters than real malnutrition. It is very pleasing indeed, to note that the supply of fresh fruits and vegetables as well as fresh milk and dairy products, is now available daily in all the settlements be- [sic] West End – Eight-Mile-Rock – Lewis Yard – Hunters and in the Freeport area, where these products were so badly needed

Tuberculosis is restricted to only a few and these patients under constant control and supervision. The eradication of the disease is believed to be only a matter of time and the proper

approach. As to Venereal Disease, only Gonorrhea is found to be of some numerical significance.

Alcoholism still remains Problem No. 1 on Grand Bahama, with no changes, except for the worse, during the year, resulting in a number of cases of Neurological and Psychiatric Disorders. The various forms of Alcoholism dealt with by The District Medical Officer during this year, and as well, in previous years, range from acute intoxication leading indirectly to death, to chronic forms of Polyneuritis, enlargement of the Liver and Mental Disorders with Delirium Tremens. The fight against this Problem, however, appears almost hopeless under existing conditions. There is no decent theatre in the District, no Clubs, no proper Library and no outlet for any interest outside of work. The more energetic and the vital the man the greater is the danger of Alcoholism. Most of the people drink not because they like it, but out of sheer boredom, and because it is the only escape into some other world and it kills the long hours of inactivity. There are many licensed premises but no recreational or welfare centres or other amenities.

Another symptom born here out of boredom is Insomnia; the demands for sleeping tablets is reported to be amazing. These demands are exceptionally high during the long nights of November to February.

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There were no epidemics reported during the year under review. A considerably small number of cases were sent to The Princess Margaret Hospital for surgical and mental care.

There were four accidental deaths in the District, two by drowning, one road accident and one by explosion of a water-heater in Marco City. The first suicide in the history of the District was committed this year.

There is one known case of Leprosy in the District; this patient refuses any contact with the outer world and lives in a rather remote settlement, Russell Town. It is the opinion of the District Medical Officer that her isolation is not necessary.

It may be of interest to note in this chapter that during the year under review, the District Medical Officer for this District, in the course of his duties travelled a total of 18,400 miles and gave 11,179 treatments and consultations to 9,544 persons.

SANITATION.

There has been little, if any, improvement in this direction and Sanitation remains one of our essential problems together with health education. An officer to direct and enforce a proper Sanitation program in some of the Communities here will be a great asset and most certainly a step in the right direction.

Garbage disposal, as can be handled with the limited funds made available, is carried out in West End only, but the results, while helpful, are far from satisfactory.

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CHAPTER V.

HOUSING.

The houses throughout the District, as pointed out in previous Report of this kind, with the exception of West End and Riding Point, are constructed principally of native stone, lime and some cement, while those constructed more recently are of concrete blocks, manufactured in the District. The houses in the Gap and Riding Point area are constructed entirely of wood and are mostly the same houses that were originally built at the lumber camp in Pine Ridge and taken by large trailers to these areas, when the Owen Illinois of the Bahamas Limited moved their point of operation for the pulpwood industry to Riding Point.

It is gratifying to report again this year that there has been quite a number of new homes and business places built and further improvements made to a number of the old ones. I am particularly

pleased to note that this is [not] limited to any one or two settlements, but in every settlement in the District, bar none, new homes are going up and the old ones are being improved. In some of the settlements the people are still sticking to the native stone-and-lime type of structure, but in most places concrete blocks, which are now easily obtained at reasonable prices, are being used extensively; in yet other settlements, wood is still the principal material used, and while this is no longer milled and sold here, it can now be purchased in the Island from dealers in building material at fairly reasonable price [sic].

These new homes and business places, are constructed mainly on separate plots and while considerable improvement in appearance is being made, there is still some disorderly pattern of over-crowding of buildings on small plots of land, but with the price of land "sky-rocketing" as it has in very recent years, this is to be expected for some time.

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Homes and business places constructed within the Freeport area, are mostly of concrete blocks; some are of wood and others of steel construction. They are all of modern designs and are well built.

There is still the problem of over-crowding of large families in small houses in some of the settlements, but this, I am afraid, will remain a problem for a long time to come. As demand for lodging, in some of these settlements, increase this problem is sure to get worse as most people will try to rent whatever space they can.

Many of the houses are from two to six rooms while in a few of them there are eight or ten rooms. An increasing number of them are equipped with modern sewage, and electricity from privately owned small generators. The houses and business places within the Freeport are all equipped with all modern conveniences and are supplied with electricity from central generating plant.

CHAPTER VI.

PRODUCTION.

Forest and Marine products are the natural resources of this District.

FOREST.

From the vast pine forest, covering more than two-thirds of area of the District, over 96,000 tons of pulpwood have been cut and exported to Jacksonville, Florida, for the manufacture of paper and paper containers in the factories of National Containers Corp., and The Owens Illinois Glass Company. The wood is cut and shipped from Riding Point, by The Owens Illinois of The Bahamas Ltd., on shallow draft barges towed by powerful ocean-going tug-boats. The total value of the over 96,000 tons of this pulpwood, exported during the year, is more than £450,000.

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The pulpwood industry is operated almost entirely by machinery, from the cutting of logs, by small power saws, to the loading of the logs onto the barges by powerful hydraulic and Diesel-powered lifters. They employ and [sic] average of 96 persons, not including Americans, weekly, and the average wage of the common labourer is £9. to £12. per week.

Adequate accommodation for all employees is provided by this Company at Riding Point and The Gap. The rate of production has somewhat exceeded their estimates and as a result this Company may be ending its operations in Grand Bahama in December of 1959, when a similar operation will begin in the Island of Abaco.

No lumber was milled or exported during this year.

MARINE PRODUCTS.

The principal Marine products are fish, conch and crawfish. Some turtles are caught and sold on the local markets, while sea-shells, corals, sea-stars and sea-fans and feathers are also gathered and sold exported to markets in the United States.

FISH.

Edible and sport fish of numerous varieties and quantities, abound in the waters of this District. Apart from the nearly two hundred pleasure boats which entered at West End during the year, 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. It is fitting, I think, to mention in this connection, the fact that there is considerable concern and objections, which have been expressed by a leading group of the inhabitants in no uncertain terms, to the type of so-called sport-fishing known as Spear-fishing. I might add too, that the natives are not alone in their objection to this type of so-called sport; more than seventy-five percent of our visitors are very much opposed to it. During the year under review, a tournament was held at West End for more than a hundred of the men and women [who] practice this of so-called sport-fishing. This lasted for only three days, but thousands of pounds fish of all kinds drifted up and down the West End harbour with the tide as it went in and out,

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and was ultimately cast upon the beach and the water-front to rot, in addition to several truck loads which were taken away by the natives and carried to other settlements and sold or given away. Some of the leading people of West End gave their trucks, without charge, to take some of this fish away, so that some use might be made of at least a small portion of the "catch".

Small groups of these men and women continue to come here each week and continue their destruction of many fish, and we are powerless to prevent them as there is no Law nor any Rule made by The Agricultural and Marine Products Board against this type of [sic] fishing for this area that I know of. However I feel that some definite step must be taken if we are going to protect our fishing grounds against the onslaught of these inconsiderate and ruthless destroyers. One step in the right direction has been taken by the new Management of The Grand Bahama Club at West End, and that is that the Convention of these "fishermen" for the year 1959, has been refused accommodation at this Club, in an effort to discourage this type of sport-fishing in this area, The Agricultural and Marine Products Board can support this commendable effort of this Club by outlawing this type of fishing within twenty miles of the shorelines of this Island.

The edible fish is caught mostly for the local market here where the demand is ever increasing, and so is 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. The methods used locally to catch the fish are hand-lines, fish-pots (fish-traps), and sometimes a net. A considerable number of smacks, some of them from the Island of Abaco, as well as small dinghy-boats are continuously engaged in this fishing business. If and when the fish is preserved, it is either salted or frozen. In spite of the fact that there is, at present, no scarcity of fish in the waters of this District, it is by no means by [the] cheapest food. This, of course, is probably true of a lot of other places.

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CONCH.

This product is not exported because it is illegal to do so. It may be beneficial however, to allow the export of the conch meat since the export of the shells is permitted. I am told by some of the fishermen, that it is the intention of the Agricultural and Marine Products Board to prohibit the export of these shells in the summer of 1959, but up to the time of the writing of this Report, no Official word or notice has reached me to this effect. This act will deal a severe blow to the people of the Eastern end of this District, who depend almost entirely upon the sale of these shells to earn a few pounds during the summer months.

Conch are still quite numerous on the banks adjoining the West, North and East sides of this

Island and the immediately adjacent Cays; in fact I would venture the opinion that the supply in these areas is inexhaustible. Like fish, and in spite of the quantities available, this food supply has also been increased in value and the price is far above that of some years ago. There was a time when this commodity was regarded as the food of the very poor, – and it has kept the wolf from many a door, – but today it is more of a delicacy, enjoyed by the rich and poor alike.

CRAWFISH.

This product may be caught and exported during the open season from 1st. January to the 15th. March of each year. After this season, the quantity that may be taken or caught is very limited, and may only be used for personal food or for bait by fishermen, however, they are not very easily found after the close of the season.

The Season for this year was not what is considered a bad one, but it seemed that the general run of the fish, especially in the West End area, was rather small, and the price asked by the fishermen was somewhat high, – or at least the buyers thought so, – The price, meanwhile, in the United States, was not the best.

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All in all, however, the Season was not considered a profitable one. These fish were exported mostly by Aircraft, thus lessening the profit of the “middle” buyers. From records available, of these fish was shipped by aircraft and 16,000 fish were shipped by boats clearing at West End.

TURTLE.

Turtles are to be found in fair quantities in the waters around the District, especially at the Eastern end, where the Green Turtle is more plentiful, and at West End, where the Logger-head, is substantially the more plentiful; the Hawksbill, is found as well at both ends of the Island. The meat of these turtles, and especially that of the Green Turtle, is readily sold on the local market here, where the demand is usually greater than the supply.

STONE-CRABS.

A delicacy of the Crab family, these are reported in increasing numbers on the banks North and East of West End, as well as at the Eastern end of the district. The capturing or taking of these crabs, for any purpose, however, is still prohibited.

AGRICULTURAL.

One sentence would suffice for comment here – the people of Grand Bahama are not agriculturally minded. Those who have been doing something in this direction are still carrying on, but with no increased enthusiasm. In some places like, Water Cay, McClean Town, Pelican Point and Sweetings Cay, they continue to cultivate small areas of general food crops, such as corn, peas, sweet potatoes, cassava, and some fruits such as avocado pears, mangoes, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes and bananas. I do not think that there has been any increase in the acreage cultivated ever that of last year, which estimated at about 200 acres, under cultivation in one way or another.

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STOCK AND POULTRY.

It is almost needless to say, again this year, that the number of cattle in the District is ever decreasing as no effort is made to either halt it or to improve or increase the stock.

Efforts in poultry on a commercial basis, on the other hand, have continued and improved and have proven rather successful. The flocks have been increased in number, the stock and yard facilities have been much improved. These flocks, however, are still not large enough to take care of all of the needs or demands; they are, however, being most helpful in meeting these demands for fresh eggs and dressed poultry, which heretofore came entirely from the United States. A

considerable quantity, of course, still come from the United States, but it is expected that in due time the entire needs of the District will be met locally.

The following is a fair estimate of what may be found in the District in the way of livestock and poultry: –

Cattle	80.
Hogs	160.
Sheep	46.
Goats	95.
Horses	2.
Chichen [sic]	10,000.

CHAPTER VII.

COMMERCE.

Approximately 16,000 crawfish, quantities of scalefish, sea-shells, sea-fans and r=feathers and coral, as well as tiny sea-shells, were exported to markets in Florida in the United States. The approximate value of this export was somewhat over £8,000. 0. 0. amount of United States dollars returned from the sale of these exports, and exchanged at this office was negligible.

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Over 96,000 tons of pulpwood was exported to Jacksonville, Florida, by Owens Illinois of The Bahamas Limited, at an approximate value of £450,000. 0. 0. This pulpwood is purchased by The National Containers Corporation and The Owens Illinois Glass Company for the manufacture of paper and paper containers and products.

Customs Duties collected on imports at West End, amounted to £19,951. 5. 3. This is substantially, – £8,149, 4. 4. to be exact, – less that the amount collected for 1957. This is partially due to the fact that the supplies, that are dutiable of course, arriving for the Freeport area, come directly through the port of Freeport, and not through West End as formerly. When the total Revenue for the District is reckoned, I am sure that the total, will far exceed that of 1957.

While some of the foods and clothing and all of the liquor are imported from or through Nassau, most of the foods and clothing and all of the fresh meats, dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, – except what is produced here, – are imported from the United States, as well as practically all of the building materials, with the exception of concrete blocks, which are now manufactured locally in this Island. These commodities and material are brought in both by aircraft and boats, entering the Port of West End.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAGES AND COST OF LIVING.

Government's basic wage for the common labourer is £1. 4. 0. Per day for men and 14/- per day for women, but in order to obtain labour in some places, it has been necessary to pay as much as 30/- per day of eight hours. Private Companies and Contractors, operating in the District, pay considerably higher wages to their casual labourers. The cutting and gathering of the pulpwood logs at Riding Point for the Owens Illinois of the Bahamas Limited, done mostly by piece-work or job, usually net the workers from per week.

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The following shows the wages that prevailed generally in the District during the year under review, except at the Guided Missile Base where wages are still the lowest: –

Common Labourers (men)	.....	3/ – to 5/ – per hour.
Common Labourers (women)	.....	1/9 – to 4/ per Hour.
Semi-skilled Labourers	.....	4/ – to 6/ – per hour.
Carpenters & Masons	.....	6/ – to 15/ per Hr.
Plumbers & Electricians	.....	8/ – to 15/ – per Hr.
Painters & Chauffeurs	.....	6/ – to 10/ – per Hr.
Domestic Workers	.....	1/9 to 4/6 – per hour.

Hours of work are generally from 7.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with one hour off for lunch, but this varies under certain circumstances, especially where the work is done by the piece or job, as in the case of employees at Riding Point and The Gap, with its Contractors who work most of the daylight hours. The employees are paid by the hour and the day is still reckoned at eight hours.

Prices have increased on all commodities and so increases the cost of living, and with the somewhat increased wage rates, one still wonders how a man can even provide the bare necessities of life for his family on £1. 4. 0., or £1 10. 0. per day. Why one good meal in any one of the restaurants, Clubs or boarding houses, cost from a minimum of 15/- to £1. 18. 6. I say without any exaggeration at all, that the cost of living in this Island equals any and exceeds many of the other Islands of the Bahamas, and a lot of other places in the world, for that matter.

CHAPTER IX.

EDUCATION AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS.

In all the largest settlements of the District, schools are established and conducted under the supervision and control of The Board of Education. There are four [?] Board schools and seven Grant-in-aid schools. They are located as follows:

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	Board,	C. Fountain & H.W. Campbell.
West End,		
Eight-Mile-Rock,	Board,	W. Ferguson.
Holmes Rock,	Board,	W. Parker.
Pine Ridge,	Board,	H.W. Campbell (closed this year)
Riding Point,	Board,	?
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,	Smith.
McLean's Town,	Board,	T. Albury
Pelican Point,	Grant-in-Aid,	L. Laing.
Free Town,	Grant-in-Aid,	C. McIntosh.

Schools are conducted as well, at Marco City in the Freeport area and at Hunters. The School at Marco City is privately run by the Grand Bahama Port Authority with an English Teacher, Brown, as Headmaster and is attended only by children of white employees and residents of the Freeport. The School in Hunters is run by The Roman Catholic Church and is open to all children. Three Catholic nuns are in charge.

The school at Pine Ridge was closed permanently as all operations in this lumber camp have ceased. The school at Smith's Point was opened at the beginning of the year with Mr. Smith a head-master, but was closed again in June when Smith resigned and joined the Customs Department in

the Freeport. The School at McLean's Town, which was closed for some months, because of the resignation of the head-master, F. Laing, was assigned a new head-teacher, T. Albury, to be opened in January of 1959. The School at West End suffered a great loss and setback with the transfer of Teacher H. W. Campbell. Whether this loss will be repaid remains to be seen.

All of these schools are reported to have been conducted satisfactorily and regularly during the year. Much is to be desired however, in most of them. Some improvements have been made in

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the seating accommodation in some of the schools, but this is still far from satisfactory. Some of the buildings are in very much need of major repairs and increased seating capacity to accommodate the ever-increasing number of children on the roll. We were very disappointed, to say the least, that none of the proposed development of our educational facilities in this District, expected in 1958, came about, and so, the many inconveniences and disadvantages, in the schools and for the children, continue to exist. In spite of all this, however, the parents of our children are very grateful to Government and the Board of Education for our schools and look forward, with anxious anticipation, to some of the proposed developments of these facilities in 1959.

WELFARE INSTITUTIONS.

Friendly and Burial Societies, including a few branches of several Secret Orders, are operating throughout the District, comprising a total membership of more than a thousand men and women and are established in every settlement in the District. These institutions are established particularly to aid the sick and bury the dead of their members. They also render assistance to families of their members whenever the need warrants it, and also contribute in one way or another to improve the social life of the communities in which they are located. The funds of these institutions are deposited, with a few exceptions, either in the Post Office Savings Bank, Barclays Bank or the Royal Bank of Canada. A few of them are in the process of constructing large buildings for recreational and business purposes.

In their small way, these institutions are doing a good job in the performance of their philanthropic duties, and many widows and orphans have been aided and relieved thereby, and many a burden lifted from the shoulders of the bereaved of their members.

Most of these Organizations are registered with Government and are operated by a Committee of Management in a very satisfactory manner.

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CHAPTER X.

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORT.

MAIL SERVICES.

The regular weekly Mail Service was performed by the Motor Vessel, Richard Campbell, during the year under review. Too often, however, this mail-vessel has proven that the needs and requirements of this District have long out-grown its capacity and type of service both in passenger and freight accommodations.

In addition to this weekly service by this mail-vessel, there was also an air-mail and small freight service between Nassau – Freeport -- West End – Bimini – Miami operated and maintained by Bahamas Airways Limited, which has been extremely helpful and appreciated.

In addition to this passenger and freight air-service, by aircraft, was operated by Mackey Airlines, a passenger and freight service, between West End – West Palm Beach – Miami – Fort Lauderdale, Florida. These services transported thousands of tourists and residents to and from this District and has proven of invaluable assistance to all. Apart from any other revenue that may have been derived from these services, the sum of £6,417. 17. 0. was collected in Departure Taxes and Passenger Ticket Taxes during this year.

242 Vessels reported, or entered, Inwards from Ports outside of the Colony of which 196 were in Ballast. 132 Vessels cleared from this Port (West End) for Ports outside the Colony. Of these 119 were in Ballast, and 13 with cargoes of Crawfish, shells, coral, seafans, etc., and some machinery and equipment returned for repairs or otherwise. Most of the vessels entering and clearing in Ballast, were sport fishermen and pleasure cruisers.

These figures do not include vessels entering and clearing at Freeport, Gold Rock Creek and Riding Point.

ROADS.

All Public Roads in the District have been maintained, including the Grand Bahama Main Road between West End and Hunters.

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Public Roads at High Rock, Rocky Creek and Water Cay were improved and extended. The main Road in Sweetings Cay was also improved and extended.

POST OFFICE.

There are five sub-post-offices in this District, located at Sweetings Cay, High Rock, Eight-Mile-Rock, and West End. These sub-post-offices, except for the one in West End, handle only mails and parcels, each of the sub-post-offices hold an imprest of stamps from the District Postmaster at West End. The sub-post-offices have been in operation for many years now. The traffic in these has increased during the year and is continually increasing; no increase, however, has been made in the salaries of the sub-postmasters during the year under review.

Although it may be throwing water on a duck's back, I wish to point out again, in this Report, the long overdue need of a sub-postoffice at Water Cay. I trust that this matter will be brought to the attention of the proper authority and arrangements for its establishment will be made in the not very distant future.

The following is a detailed statement of the financial transactions in this District Post Office for the year, 1958: –

REVENUE.

	£5,491. 16. 0.
Post Office Savings Bank Deposits	
Sale of Telegraph and Domestic Money Orders	
Orders	21,833. 8. 9.
Sale of U.K. & Jamaican Money Orders	222. 11. 4.
Sale of U.S. & Canadian Money Orders	3,847. 4. 6.
Sale of Postage Stamps	1,116. 9. 1.
Parcel Post Duties collected	396. 18. 5.
Short Paid Postage collected	3. 8. 0.
Total Revenue	£32,911. 16. 1.

EXPENDITURE.

	£6,657. 10. 9.
Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank	
Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders paid	2,566. 1. 9.
United States Money Orders paid	164. 9. 10.
British Postal Orders Paid	£ 161. 15. 4.
Total Expenditure	£9,549.17. 8.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

The three telegraph Stations in the District are located at West End, Freeport and Sweetings Cay. The Station at Freeport was removed from Pine Ridge during the year under review. These have all reported to have operated satisfactorily during the year. Overseas Telephone services are available at West End and Freeport.

The Local Telephone System, installed in 1956, has operated well, with minor repairs and upkeep, and has been of very valuable service to all within its reach.

The total Telegraph Revenue for the year, 1958, at West End, was £1,264. 16. 10. and Overseas Telephone Revenue was £1,394. 12. 3. The Local Telephone Revenue for the year was £26 16. 0. making a total of £2,686. 5. 1.

COMMUNITY RADIO.

The people of the Communities where these Radios are located are very appreciative of this service. They serve to bring invaluable information at all times but especially as during the hurricane season.

CHAPTER XI.

FINANCE.

The following is a detailed statement of Revenue and Expenditure in this District for the year, 1958.

BANK ACCOUNT.

BANK BALANCE 31/12/57. (as.shown.in.the.Cash.Book).....	£ 5,463. 11. 7.
Total Deposits during 1958	£ 44,051. 6. 1.
Total	<u>£ 49,514.17. 8.</u>

Withdrawals from Bank Account during 1958	£48,212.12. 1.
BANK BALANCE (as shown in Cash Book), 31/12/57,	1,302. 5. 7.
Total	<u>£49,514.17. 8.</u>

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<u>1958.</u>	<u>REVENUE.</u>	<u>1958.</u>
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		£ 1,993.16. 11.
Revenue & Deposits Balance 31/12/57		
Parcel Post Duties	£ 393.18. 5.	
Motor Car & Drivers Licenses	1,012. 17. 2	
Liquor Licenses	258. 0. 0.	
Shop Licenses	1. 15. 0.	
Fines & Forfeitures	723. 10. 0.	
Fees of Office	6. 19. 1.	
Royalty on Crawfish	28.18. 0.	
Telegraph Revenue	1,264.16.10.	
Overseas Telephone Revenue	1,394.12. 3.	
Local Telephone Revenue	26.16. 0.	
Passenger Ticket Taxes	1,014. 0. 0.	
Profit on Exchange	1. 9. 6.	
Import Duty & Emergency Tax	19,576.17.10	
Departure Taxes	5,376.17. 0.	
Stamp Duty (Customs)	103.11. 0.	
Music & Dancing Licenses	56.15. 0.	
Miscellaneous Cash Receipts	27. 2. 9.	

Total Revenue £31,295.15. 10.

Deposits, Etc.

£ 5, 491.16. 0.

Post Office Savings Bank Deposits	
Sale of Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders	21,833. 8. 9.
Sale of U. S. & Canadian Money Orders	3,847. 4. 6.
Sale of U. K. & Jamaican Money Orders	222.11. 6.
Sale of Postage Stamps	1,334. 5. 0.
Payment on Dinghies	289.10. 0.
Crown Land Rentals	8. 5. 0.
Conditional Sale of Crown Lands	201. 9. 0.
Out Island Court Deposits	1,322. 9. 4.
Library Subscriptions	1. 7. 9.
Remittances and sale of Drafts	4,410.17.10.
Short Paid Postage	3. 8. 0.
Customs Deposits	29. 2. 1.
Withdrawals from Bank Account	48,212,12, 1.
Total Deposits, Etc.	£86,979. 5. 10.
Grand Total	£120,208.18. 7.

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1958. EXPENDITURES. 1958.

On Account of: –

£43.15. 0.

The House of Assembly	
Customs Department	2,952.14. 1.
Judicial Department	136.12. 6.
Registrar General's Department	19. 8. 0.
Education Department	117.15. 0.[or 17/?]
Police Department	3,709.11.11.
Post Office Department (salaries)	90. 0. 0.
Prisons Department	247. 5. 0.
Telecommunications Department	601.10. 6.
Audit Department	30.12. 0.
Medical Department	901.10. 6.
Public Works, Recurrent, Out Islands	5,460. 5. 6.
Public Works, Recurrent, New Providence	80. 0. 0.
Public Works, Non Recurrent, Out Islands	23,119.19. 2.
Out Island Department	1,087. 9. 3.
Govt. Telegrams & Messages (O. I. Dept.)	118. 8.10.
Pensions & Gratuities	483.11. 6.
Immigrations Department	202.15. 0.
Agricultural & Marine Products Board	11.14. 0.
Old Age Pension	2,054. 0. 0.
Miscellaneous (Storm Relief & Bonuses	1,559.18. 0.
Total Expenditure	£44,984. 7. 10.

PAYMENTS OF DEPOSITS, Etc.:

	£ 6,657.10. 9.	
Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank		
Payment of Telegraph & Domestic M. Orders	2,566. 1. 9.	
Payment of U. S. & Canadian Postal M. Orders	144. 9.10.	
Payment of U.K. & T.I. Money Orders	161.15. 4.	
Payment of Out Island Court Deposits	1,280. 6.11.	
Family Allowances	1,986.11. 2.	
Deposits made to Bank Account	44,051. 6. 1.	
Sundry Refunds	8. 9.11.	
Bailiff Fees (Magistrate's Court)	1.14. 8.	
Libraries	43.18. 7.	[or 8d.¿]
Remittances to The Treasury	17,000. 0. 0.	
	Total	£73,922. 5. 2.
	Total Expenditure	£118,906.13. 0.
Balance Carried Forward 31/12/58		1,302. 5. 7.
	Grand Total	£120,208.18. 7.

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The Financial Statements on pages 21 to 23 do not include Telegraph Revenue, Overseas Telephone Revenue and Customs Duties, Etc., collected at Freeport and Riding Point. These are paid to and accounted for by the Collector of Revenue at Freeport.

CHAPTER XIII.

PUBLIC WORKS.

Under Head 31, Items 60 to 64 inclusive, which provides 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 £3,750. was allocated for the upkeep of Public Roads, Wells, Burial Grounds, Buildings and Landing-places. Of this amount, £3,735. 9. 0. 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 for Item 65 for the maintenance of an Electric Generator installed at West End in March of this year, to the sum of £900. Under Item 66, £150. provided for the maintenance of Electricity to Government Buildings. £363. was provided under Item 102 for wiring Government Buildings for Electricity, to install an Electric Pump at the Commissioner's Residence, to install electricity in Public Buildings and for improvements to the power house for the new Generator at West End. Under Item 103, £176 was allotted to assist in maintenance of the roads in West End, in the area near and around the Doctor's Residence and Clinic grounds. £75 under Item 104 was provided for repairs to Government Jetty at West End and under Item 105 a total of £162. 8. 6. was spent for the maintenance of Oil Navigation Lights in the District.

Under Head 33, Public Works, Non-Recurrent, Out Islands and the Out Island and General Improvement Act the sum of £39,690. was allocated for this District, which included some revetes from 1957, however, due to the shortage of time a number of grants were not broken into and the revetes of which were promised for 1959. A total of £25,642 of this

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amount was spent during the year on the following works:

1. New Government Quarters, West End.
2. Completion of Doctor's Residence & Clinic.
3. Force Pumps for Water Cay.
4. Improvement of the front Road in High Rock.
5. Bridge at Rocky Creek.
6. Road from Rocky Creek to McLeans Town Bridge.
7. Extension of main road to Sweeting's Cay.
8. Clearing New Burial Ground at Water Cay.
9. Complete installation of Electric Light Plant.
10. Extend roads at Water Cay.
11. Construct Warehouse, Sweetings Cay.
12. Repair Government Building, Sweetings Cay.
13. Repair Public Dock at West End.
14. Erecting Markers, West End.

Most of the works undertaken were completed; others were not for reasons stated in my Report in Out Island Works in this District, on the 8th., January, 1959.\

CHAPTER XIII.

JUSTICE, POLICE AND PRISONS.

JUSTICE.

Peace and good order were effectively maintained throughout the District during the year under review. 160 cases were heard including one sent to Supreme Court. The following table shows the number and nature of the various offences, persons dealt with in these cases and how they were disposed of:

Assault	6.
Abusive Language	25.
Police Cases	126.
(including Wounding, Praedial larceny and other such cases)	
Other Offences	1
Total	160.

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181 persons were involved. 143 Males and 38 Females. These Cases were disposed of as follows:

Fined	151.
Imprisoned	25.
Cautioned	9.
Bound Over	5.
Dismissed	5.
Sent to Supreme Court	1.
Others	2.

Sixty-one (61) Civil cases were heard during the year. No cases were disposed of by the Justices of the Peace. Six Inquests were held into the deaths of six persons resulting from two drownings, two traffic accidents, one suicide and from explosion of a water-heater.

POLICE.

Two to three members of the Nassau Constabulary were stationed in the Freeport Area, One at West End and another at Riding Point, making a total from four to five in the District this year. There are also, two first grade Local Constables, one at West End and the other at Eight Mile Rock and two second grade Local Constables, one at High Rock and the OTHER AT Pelican Point.

In addition to the very satisfactory and efficient services performed by the members of The Bahamas Police Force stationed in this District, and the four Local Constables, the District Constables, in most of the settlements, have been of invaluable assistance in the maintenance of Peace and good order, thus helping in the successful and peaceful administration of this District during the year under review.

The following men have been appointed s District Constables for the year 1959, in the settlements under which their names appear:

West End.

Clifford Davis.
Hiram Johnson Jr.
Bernard Hanna.
Benjiman Pinder.
Alexander Rolle.

Henderson Smith.
George Forbes.
Granville H. Garvey Sr.
Ivan Russell.
Wilbert Roberts.

Water Cay.

Walter Hield.
Locksley Hield.
Bernice Rolle.

High Rock.

Isaac Smith.
Henry Smith.
Willis Kemp.

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Hanna Hill.

Urial Smith.
Percy Barr.

Pinder's Point.

Hansel Moore.
Alphonse Cooper.
Leon Pinder.

Eight-Mile-Rock.

Albert Rolle.
Alfred Johnson.
Willard Martin.

Smith's Point.

Henry Nesbitt.
Henry Edden.

Braudie Point.

Elmore Stuart.
Arnold Martin.
Harris Russell.

Holmes Rock.

John Rolle Sr.
Horatio Stuart.
Derrisis Rolle.

McLeans Town.

Jeremiah Thomas.
Bertram Davis.
Henry Carey Jr.
William Pinder Jr.

Mather Town.

Nathaniel Mather.

Sweetings Cay.

Peter Feuster.
Wellington Bevans.
Rupert Bevans.

Hunters.

James Russell.
Roland Bevans.

Lewis Yard.

Samuel Russell.
Henry Russell.
Floyd Russell.

Sea Grape.

Arthur Martin.
Robert Bain.
Alfred James.

Free Town.

Ormond Laing.

Pelican Point.

Walter Laing.

PRISONS.

The three-cell prison at West End is in good condition but is often too small to meet the needs of this District. It is to be expected that with the increasing major developments going on in this District, that this prison must be enlarged if we are to cope with the increasing need.

The lock-up, with two cells, at Eight-Mile-Rock, is used in emergencies only, and only for over-night detentions. No prison terms are served other than in West End.

During the year 1958, 25 persons were sent to prison, 20 of whom were committed to serve sentences in the prison at Fox Hill, while the remaining 5 persons served from two weeks to 6 weeks in the prison here at West End. There were no prisoners in the gaol on the 1st., January, 1958. Three were dismissed during the year and two were serving sentences on the 31st., December, 1958. None still awaiting trial at the end of this year. The health of the prisoners was good, except for three mental cases sent to Sandilands Hospital for observation and treatment, and there were no casualties among the prisoners. The cost of feeding prisoners was slightly increased and as a result the length of sentence served in this prison was reduced from three months to six weeks.

CHAPTER XIV.

LEGISLATION.

The Old Age Pension Act of 1957 came into effect in this District in April, 1958. It is hoped that His Excellency, the Governor[sic]-in-Council will extend to this District, the new Road Traffic Act in order to more effectively control the traffic problems in this District which are becoming more and more difficult because of almost complete disregard for the present Street Traffic Regulations.

CHAPTER XV.

TAXATION.

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

CHAPTER XVI.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PAUPERISM.

Pauper rations were issued by Government, through The Princess Margaret Hospital, which included grits, flour, sugar and milk, and through The Bahamas Branch of The British Red Cross cheese and powdered milk. These were helpfully distributed to 45 paupers throughout the District. Four of these paupers died during the year and seven left the District temporarily or permanently.

RELIGION.

The systems of Religious worship followed by the people of this District are Baptist, embracing about 50% of the population, Anglican, about 30%, Roman Catholic, Brethren, Church of God and Jehovah Witnesses comprise the other 20% of the population.

VISITS BY OFFICIALS.

From the 12th. to the 14th., July of this year, this District was honoured by a three-day visit by His Excellency The Governor and Lady Arthur, accompanied by The Actg. Chief

Out Island Commissioner, Mr. D.H. Burrows, and The Representative of the District, The Honourable C.W.F. Bethell. His Excellency and Party visited Sweetings Cay, Water Cay, McLeans Town, High Rock, The Guided Missile Base at Gold Rock Creek, Freeport, Eight-Mile-Rock and West End. This was a History-making tour as no Governor, before Sir Arthur, had ever visited some of these settlements, and although it can hardly be expected twice during His Excellency's term of Office in the Colony, all of us look forward to another of these Official Visits by His Excellency and Lady Arthur.

COMMISSIONER'S VISITS.

All of the settlements of the District were visited regularly during the year. The settlements of Water Cay, Sweetings Cay and McLeans Town were visited less than the others because of the distance and the mode of travel, while others were visited weekly if the need warranted it. These visits were made chiefly to hear cases, to organize and supervise Public Works, to pay Family Allowances & Old Age Pensions and for the Registration of Voters in the three Divisions of the District.

Transportation to Water Cay must always be made by boat and to Sweetings Cay, partly by car and partly by boat.

GENERAL REMARKS.

The general outlook of prosperity in the District at the end of this year was very optimistic indeed, in spite of opinions to the contrary, the commercial development at Freeport has progressed according to plans. There has been some set-backs but apparently these have been adjusted and now the future looks very bright. Capital expenditure within this area exceeded £1, 000,000 during the year.

Owens Illinois of The Bahamas Limited continued their operations of the pulp-wood industry through the year providing employment and good wages for quite a number of persons. Unfortunately, however, this Company plans to complete its [sic] operations here during 1959 when it is expected to exhaust the timber supply in the Island and move to Abaco.

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The Grand Bahama Club at West End, continued its operation very satisfactorily and has made considerable improvements of its accommodations for visitors. More than 8,000 guests registered at this Club during the year. This operation provides continuous employment for quite a number of native men and women.

An Electric Generator, for the supply of electricity to all Government buildings in West End, was installed and began operating on the 23rd., March, of this year. This is indeed a Blessing! This generator was well maintained and is operating satisfactorily.

A total of 327 cars, 87 trucks and 25 motor cycles were licensed during the year, as compared to a total of 303 for the year 1957.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,

S.R Darville
Commissioner,
Grand Bahama.

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.