

THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND
(WEST END)
THE YEAR 1964

BY

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DISTRICT OF WEST END, GRAND BAHAMA

ANNUAL REPORT, 1964

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CHAPTER 1

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT

The District of Grand Bahama, which comprises and includes the main island of Grand Bahama with the exception of the area covered by the Freeport District and the adjacent Cays, including Water Cay, Sweetings Cay and others, lies on the Southern edge of the Little Bahama Bank, one hundred and forty miles West North West of New Providence and sixty miles East South East of West Palm Beach, Florida. The District is represented in the House of Assembly by the Honourable Harold DeGregory, M.H.A., who took his seat as an Independent member in November, 1962 when some 93% of an electorate of 2047 exercised their right to vote in the General Election. Early in 1964 he joined the United Bahamian Party and now he takes his seat as one of their members.

At the end of 1964 it was decided that the growth of Grand Bahama had merited an increase of representation in the House of Assembly of two members; this increase will be effective from the next General Election.

ADMINISTRATION

From November, 1963 administrative duties of the District were performed by the writer, assisted by the usual number of subordinate Officers including two Clerks, Customs and Immigration Officers at West End, three members of the Nassau Constabulary also at West End and four local Constables at various parts of the island.

CHAPTER II

POPULATION

The population taken at the census at the end of 1963 showed the total population for the whole of Grand Bahama to be 8490. This figure now falls short of the actual population which I feel has increased by more than 100% since the date of this census.

There were 63 deaths, 34 males, 29 females and in this figure was include . 19 children under the age of 1. This high rate of deaths among children is attributed mainly to the lack of proper sanitation and parental neglect.

Causes of death were mainly those induced by hypertension and circulatory failures among the adults and the main causes among the children were gastroenteritis and respiratory complaints. There were several accidental deaths in both groups and three deaths were attributed to cancer.

128 persons were sent to the Princess Margaret Hospital and the Freeport Clinic for inpatient treatment, of these were 59 males and 69 females.

There was a total of 316 births, 161 males and 155 females. Of the 316 births, there were 2 still births. Of these births, about one in every four, was illegitimate.

CHAPTER III

HEALTH AND SANITATION

HEALTH

The burden of the Medical Officer has continued to increase and it is hoped that this load will lighten when the proposed new clinic in the Eight Mile Rock area becomes a reality.

The following table of statistics has been correlated over the past five years in respect of the venereal diseases:

	<u>1960</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>
Gonorrhoea	92	83	130	366	547
Syphilis	0	0	3	12	70
Lymphangranuloma	0	0	0	2	<u>21</u>

From the foregoing it can be deduced that Gonorrhoea is no longer on the rise but, in the light of the increase of the population, has statistically diminished. The instances of Lymphangranuloma show a marked increase and it is apparent that primary syphilis is now a matter for alarming concern.

The influx of Haitians, many of whom are illegal immigrants, together with the rising trend of alcoholism, has played an important part in the increase in the venereal diseases. The social-medical problem can only be alleviated by the introduction of a realistic programme aimed at its extinction.

The rising pattern of alcoholism continues and an important factor is, paradoxically, the economic prosperity in the area.

Men and women who formerly could not indulge in any kind of excess are now in a position where they can enjoy this indulgence.

Illegitimacy is also a matter of normal acceptance in much of the community and where formerly this misfortune was much frowned on, very little stigma now attaches itself to the unwed mother on Grand Bahama. A great deal of the cause of this is unquestionably due to the excessive drinking now prevalent among young people and another factor is on account of the influx of new people from the more worldly areas of the Colony.

Nine new cases of Tuberculosis came to light in 1964; of these three were Grand Bahamians and the balance were newcomers to the island.

A successful programme of vaccination and immunisation was conducted as a preventative measure against diphtheria, polio, tetanus, whooping cough, and small pox and the usefulness of this was shown in the drop in incidence of these diseases.

Ante-natal care is accepted now largely as an integral part of child bearing with a corresponding drop in loss of life in these maternity cases and the production of healthier babies on the island.

A growing interest in family planning is now in evidence and this is in sharp contrast to the attitude of former years.

SANITATION

The water supply systems on the island are outmoded and inadequate. Spring water wells and roof-fed cisterns are the rule and toilet facilities have not increased to meet the requirements of the mushrooming population. An ever increasing danger of fecal contamination in drinking water is present with the ever present threat of disease.

Overcrowding to meet the needs of the population explosion on the island, also leads itself to the danger of diseases such as tuberculosis. So far there has been no outbreak but the danger is increasing daily.

The need for a sanitary inspector is great and in the larger settlements particularly the problem of maintaining some standard of public health can only be met by the installation of this official.

CHAPTER IV

HOUSING

Despite the number of new houses going up, the housing problem is critical. A number of jerry-built barracks blocks have been run up in the Eight Mile Rock area and exorbitant rents all over the island are the rule. The population influx is still presenting a housing problem, but this has eased considerably in the 1st year. It is pleasing to report, however, that many of the new houses are well built edifices of concrete block construction and that more imaginative and ambitious designs are being used.

The Town Planning Act which was extended to Grand Bahama in 1963 has made an important contribution to the housing standards.

CHAPTER V

PRODUCTION

FOREST

Large acreage of the vast pine forest covering most of the island's surface has been sold for various Commercial Developments, and forest products of all kinds have been discontinued.

MARINE

The principal Marine Products are fish, conchs and crawfish. Sea-shells, coral and starfish are also gathered and sold to markets in the United States.

Edible and sport fish of numerous varieties and quantities abound in the waters of this District. Thousands of visitors come by every means of transportation to take part in the sport of game fishing.

All the edible fish are sold to the local market where the demand is much greater than the supply in spite of the continued increase in the price. A number of smacks and dinghy boats are continuously engaged in this fishing business.

The export of the Conch meat was prohibited for many years and now the Banks have been closed to the export of the shells. To some this has been quite a blow, but this had to be done sooner or later in spite of the seemingly inexhaustible supply

spread over the many miles of banks, North and East of this Island. Like fish, the price of this food has increased considerably over the last two years and there is yet shortage in the supply.

Open season for the Crawfish is from the 1st of January to the 15th of March and from the 1st of October to the 31st of December of each year. It has been found that the clause in the Rules of the Agricultural and Marine Products Board which permits the taking of a certain quantity of these fish for personal use, during the closed season, has been very much abused and thousands of these fish are caught and sold as a result. If this industry is to survive at all, a more rigid application of the Rules must be made with possibly the complete exemption of this clause.

The 1963-64 season for crawfish was, if anything, worse than the previous year. Bad weather was the principle cause for the small catches. No crawfish is exported from the island as the demand made locally greatly exceeds the supply.

Such is the local demand for all marine produce that it is easier and more profitable for the fisherman to sell their catch to the hotels than it is to export it to the United States.

Turtles are caught in smaller numbers every year; the three varieties are found in limited numbers around the island and command a high price and a ready sale on the local market.

Stone-Crabs, a delicacy of the crab family, are still to be found in apparently increasing numbers on the banks, North and East of West End and on the Eastern end of the Island. The capturing or taking of these Crabs is prohibited by law.

The people of this District are not agriculturally minded and this industry has steadily decreased until it is no longer of any consequence.

POULTRY-RAISING

Poultry-raising has increased considerably and there is a large poultry farm operating commercially near the Freeport area and two others in the West End area.

Such is the ever increasing local demand, however, that it will be a long time before local production can begin to cope with it.

CHAPTER VI

COMMERCE

The number of crawfish exported to the United States in 1964 was negligible. As has been previously stated, local demand easily absorbs the local supply.

Customs Duties collected on imports at West End amounted to £327,157: 8: 1 . This figure was made up by the following items:

<u>DUTY</u>	£208,691:11: 4
Emergency Tax	74,688:17:10
Alcoholic Liquors	2,094:18: 4
Inland Tax (Cigarettes)	1,450:12: 1
Gasoline Tax	13: 9
Stamp Tax	5,285: 3: -
Radio & T. V. Tax	925: -: -
Storage Charges	-: -: -
Departure Tax	33,964: 6: -
Export Duty	4: -: 3
Fines & Forfeitures	<u>52: 5: 6</u>
TOTAL:	<u>£327,157: 8: 1</u>

CHAPTER VII
WAGES & COST OF LIVING

The level of wages has been maintained, with a few exceptions, throughout the year. Wages on the island are quite out of proportion to the scale laid down by Government and this leaves me in a poor bargaining position when competing with private employers. Common labour and artisan rates of pay are largely determined by the exigencies of the moment.

The following is the scale of wages which prevailed, generally, in the District during the year under review:

Common Labourers (men)-----	6/- to 8/-	per hour
Common Labourers (women)-----	4/- to 5/6	per hour
Semi-skilled Labourers -----	7/6 to 8/6	per hour
Carpenters & Masons -----	14/- to 16/-	per hour
Plumbers & Electricians -----	15/- to 25/-	per hour
Painters & Chauffeurs -----	9/- to 16/-	per hour
Domestic Workers -----	3/6 to 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.

The cost of food and other commodities in West End has now reached a ridiculous level and the ensuing hardship on the elderly and under-privileged people is a matter for concern.

CHAPTER VIII

EDUCATION AND WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

In all the largest settlements of the District, schools are established and conducted under the supervision of the Board of Education. There are four Board Schools and six Grant-in-Aid. These are located as follows:

West End	Board.....	L. V. Smith
Eight Mile Rock ...	Board	S. Gibbs
Holmes Rock	Board	W. P. Parker
Water Cay	Grant-in-Aid	M. Thomas
McLeans Town	Board	U. R. Patrick
High Rock	Grant-in-Aid	R. Dean
Pelican Point	Grant-in-Aid	L. Laing
Free Town	Grant-in-Aid	G. McIntosh
Sweetings Cay	Grant-in-Aid	N. Russell
Smith's Point	Grant-in-Aid	D. Smith
Lewis Yard	Board	M. Archer

All of these schools are reported to have been conducted fairly satisfactorily and regularly during the year.

WELFARE INSTITUTIONS

Friendly and Burial Societies, including a few Branches of several Secret Orders, are operating throughout the District, and comprise a total membership of several thousand men and women. They are established in just about every settlement of the District in one form or another, for the primary purpose

of aiding the sick and burying the dead of their members. Assistance is also rendered to the families of the deceased members whenever the needs warrant it. The funds of these Institutions are deposited, except in very few cases of very small groups, in one of the local Banks or in the Post Office Savings Bank. Some of these accounts are quite substantial.

CHAPTER IX

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT

MAIL SERVICE

The regular weekly mail service was performed by the motor vessel, Church Bay, and substitutes, during the year under review. This service is not good; cargoes are very often short shipped or damaged and the service, particularly to the Eastern End of the island is unreliable.

The air service supplied by Bahamas Airways Limited and Mackey Airlines has been very good. These services transported thousands of tourists and residents to and from this District and has contributed greatly to the stable economic situation existing on this Island. The sum of £33,964: 6: - was collected for Departure Taxes during the year; this represents an increase of 17 % over last year. The number of vessels entering and clearing at West End has increased during the year.

ROADS

The Grand Bahama main road is a source of constant worry and irritation to me. Original road construction was hap-hazard and constant maintenance is accordingly necessary. The road was, however, kept in passable shape throughout the year, but it is fast becoming inadequate for the flow of traffic passing over it. The construction of the proposed new highway to Freeport is of paramount importance and despite the high cost

of construction, must be put into reality if the development of this island is to continue.

Licensing of vehicles of all types was carried out daily throughout 1964 and a total of 849 vehicles were registered.

Revenue collected from various sources during the year was as set out hereunder:

REVENUE COLLECTED IN 1964

1. Motor Vehicles	£ 2,779:11:10
2. Drivers	449:10: -
3. Provisional Drivers	70:12: -
4. Public Service Vehicles	62:10: -
5. Public Service Vehicle Drivers	41:10: -
6. Miscellaneous (duplicates, Franchises, etc.,).....	£ 62:15: -
	<u>£ 3,466: 8:10</u>

POST OFFICES

There are four Sub-Post Offices in the District, located at Eight Mile Rock, High Rock, Sweetings Cay and Smiths Point. The Sub-Post Offices, handle only mails and parcels. Each of the Sub-Postmasters holds an imprest of stamps from the District Postmaster of West End. Money orders, Post Office Savings Bank accounts and all post office transactions are handled at West End; a new Post Office must be built to handle this load.

The following is a statement of the financial transactions of the District Post Office for the year:

REVENUE

Post Office Savings Bank Deposits.....	£	3,166: 7: 8
Sale of Telegraph Money Orders		43,130:16: 3
Domestic Money Orders		2,198: 4: 2
Sale of British Money Orders.		98:19: 6
Sale of U. S. & Canadian Money Orders .		1,055:14: 5
Sale of Jamaican Money Orders.		1,729:16: 8
Sale of Postage Stamps.....		3,099:13: -
Parcel Postage Duty		1,177:11: 1
Short Paid Postage collected		5: 2: 8
P. O. Box Rentals.....		55: -: -
	£	<u>55,717: 5: 5</u>

EXPENDITURE

Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank... £	2,616: 6: -
Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders Paid.	1,777: -: -
U. S. Money Orders Paid.....	69:18: 6
British Postal Orders Paid	<u>109: 4: 9</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ <u>4,572: 9: 3</u>

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

This service has improved beyond belief; new equipment was installed at West End in conjunction with the new system at Freeport with the result being efficiency and a consequent increase in revenue, when, considering the fact that this station lost its biggest account to Freeport (The Jack Tar). The stations at Sweetings Cay and Water Cay handled small traffic demands adequately but the Water Cay station was off the air on several occasions.

Telegraph and Telephone revenue for 1964 was £ 9,020: 3: 6.

CHAPTER X

PUBLIC WORKS

Recurrent votes for upkeep were, as previously, insufficient to cope with the growing demands of the area.

The only non-recurrent work of note in 1964 was the construction of the new public dock at West End and the improvement of the housing for the Customs and Immigration officials.

The financial position of the colony was such that very little money could be allocated to new non-recurrent projects in the District, but I feel that the time has now been reached when the revenue produced from this Island will more than justify special consideration for expenditure.

CHAPTER XI

JUSTICE, POLICE AND PRISONS

Peace and good order were reasonably well maintained throughout the year, despite the fact that crime is definitely on the increase. Crimes of violence increased in number as, logically, did traffic offences. 539 cases were heard, including six sent to the Supreme Court. The following shows the number and nature of the various offences dealt with and how they were disposed of: Reported and heard were:

Summary Criminal - 184 : Traffic - 236 : Indictable Criminal - 6 :
Civil - 106 : Matrimonial - 7 . In addition 4 Inquests were held.

234 of the traffic cases resulted in a conviction and of these, 131 were ~~convicted~~ fined, 1 was imprisoned, 100 were cautioned and 2 were placed on prob'n.

Of the criminal cases heard, 181 were convicted and, of these, 122 were fined, 33 were imprisoned, 12 were cautioned and 14 were placed on probation. The criminal cases were as follows :

Obscene language	- 28	Wounding	- 10
Br. Immigration Act	- 21	Insulting Language	- 3
Unlicensed dog	- 1	Predial Larceny	- 2
Throwing Missiles	- 2	Causing Harm	- 1
Carrying Arms	- 12	Disorderly Behaviour	- 19
Fighting	- 2	Stealing (Employment)	- 5
Threats of Harm	- 3	Receiving	- 5
Idle Assembly	- 4	Stealing	- 7
Unlawful Assault	- 17	Drunk & Incapable	- 4
Trespassing	- 1	Gambling	- 8
Resisting Arrest	- 8	Breach of Trust (Fraud)	- 1
Fraud (False Pretences)	- 1	Br. Ag. & Marine Prod.	- 4
Unlawful Possession	- 1	Stealing (Dwelling House)	7
Shop Breaking	- 1	Br. Firearms Act	- 3
Obstructing Police	- 1	Indecent Assault	- 1
Drunk & Disorderly	- 1		

POLICE

There are two first grade and two second grade local Constables in the District. The former stationed at West End and Eight Mile Rock and the latter at Pelican Point and High Rock.

Under the leadership of the Deputy Superintendent stationed at Freeport, the police have rendered a very fine and efficient service during the year. A special mention should be made of the District Constables who receive no salary but give invaluable assistance to the regular police in the maintenance of peace and good order.

The following men have been appointed as District Constables for the year 1964, in the various settlements under which their names appear:

WEST END

Clifford Davis
Bernard Hanna
Alexander Rolle
George Forbes
Granville Garvey, Sr.
Ivan Russell
Wilbert Roberts
Charles Grant

WATER CAY

Walter Hield
Locksley Hield
Bernice Rolle

HANNA HILL

Ural Smith
Percy Barr

HIGH ROCK

Isaac Smith
Henry Smith
Willis Kemp
Lennard Kemp

SEA GRAPE

Arthur Martin
Robert Bain
Alfred Jones

BRADIE POINT

Elmore Stuart
Arnold Martin
Harris Russell

HOLMES ROCK

John Rolle Jr.
Horatio Stuart
Derissie Rolle

SWEETINGS CAY

Peter Feaster
Wellington Bevans
Alton Cooper

PELICAN POINT

Walter Laing

EIGHT MILE ROCK

Albert Rolle
Alfred Johnson
Willard Martin

McLEANS TOWN

Bertram Davis
Henry Carey Jr.
William Pinder

PRISONS

The three-cell prisons at West End proved to be lacking both in accommodations and security. Special steps had to be taken to render the prison escape proof after its weaknesses was demonstrated by the escape of two prisoners.

At present all prisoners have to be transported from all over the Island to West End which is at one extremity of the Island. The unfortunate situation that exists is that due to the lack of accommodations, the Magistrate cannot sentence persons to prison, although they may well deserve imprisonment.

There is a two-cell-lockup at Eight Mile Rock, but this is used only for overnight purposes. During the year 33 persons were committed to the West End prison.

CHAPTER XII

LEGISLATION

Numerous changes in legislation were made under the new Constitution but nothing of note was directed particularly to Grand Bahama.

CHAPTER XIII

TAXATION

There is still no direct taxation here, except for Departure Tax levied on passengers from the Colony. I would suggest to Government that serious consideration should be given to introducing the Real Property Tax which could be used to very good purpose for maintenance of the roads and upkeep of the settlements. A thought worthy of consideration would be to make the new main road, if it becomes a reality, a toll road whose revenue would go towards its maintenance.

CHAPTER XIV

MISCELLANEOUS

His excellency, Sir Ralph Gray, K.C.M.G.O.B.E., visited Grand Bahama and spent two days touring this District and one day at Freeport.

PAUPERS

Pauper rations were issued by Government via Relieving Officer of the Princess Margaret Hospital. The rations consisted of grits, flour, sugar and canned milk. These rations were distributed to approximately 61 paupers throughout the District.

RELIGION

The majority of the Island's population are Baptists which accounts for approximately 50% of the people. The Anglican Church accounts for about 30%, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Brethren, Church of God, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah Witnesses and a few other unidentified religions make up the remaining 20%.

COMMISSIONER'S VISITS

Regular visits were made throughout the District on an average of every two months.

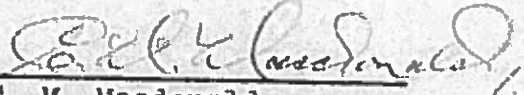
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Prosperity is very evident in this District. The commercial and industrial development at Freeport have boomed and this prosperity has reflected itself on this District. The Jack Tar Hotel's programme of expansion has continued and all of the available labour from West End to Eight Mile Rock has been absorbed.

The marina and the hotel proper have expanded with the consequent result of employing more local people. This hotel can take more than 1000 and is rated as the most successful in the Caribbean.

Motor vehicles pour steadily in to the island and this has an all around effect on the increase in licences, accidents, police work, court cases and road wear and tear. A new highway on the island is a must and to offset some of the cost, the Nassau rates for vehicles and drivers could be imposed. The revenue from this District and Freeport more than justifies the initial expenditure on this much needed improvement. As previously mentioned, if made a toll road, this road would soon pay for itself with the levy exacted on the heavy traffic passing over it.

It must be stressed here in closing that the present government building at West End is a disgrace and should be replaced or rehabilitated at the earliest opportunity.


C. M. Macdonald
Commissioner,
District of West End