

THE ANNUAL REPORT
OF
THE DISTRICT OF GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND
(WEST END)
THE YEAR 1967.

BY
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DISTRICT OF WEST END GRAND BAHAMA
ANNUAL REPORT 1967

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CHAPTER 1.

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT

The District of West End, 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 Warren J. Levarity, M.H.A., who took his seat as a Progressive Liberal Party member in January 1967. Interest in this election was keen and a high percentage of the electorate exercised their right to vote.

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 three local Constables at various parts of the island.

CHAPTER 11

POPULATION

The population taken at the census at the end of 1963 showed the total population from the whole of Grand Bahama to 8490. The figure now falls short of the actual population which I feel has reached approximately 30,000. This figure is arbitrary and very approximate and included a large number of non-Bahamians.

The death rate among this large population is remarkably low, being a mere 3.7 per thousand head of population; this compares most favourably with Great Britain where the rate for 1967 was 11.5 per mille. There were 86 deaths in 1967, 48 of them males and 38 of them females. Also included are the deaths of 14 children under the age of one year of whom 10 were under the age of one month. The infant mortality rate of 18.1 compared well with 28 (Glasgow) and 19 (England) per mille as did the neo-natal mortality rate of 13 per mille which is exactly the same figure as is found in England. As a matter of interest the record shows that the death rate on Grand Bahama in 1958 was 105 per mille. This fantastic figure was attained through a high accident rate in the logging industry and very poor medical facilities.

A breakdown of the causes of death is shown hereunder:

Tracheo Bronchitis	2	Diarrhoea	1
Cardio-vascular	22	Cancer	4
Diabetes	1	Debility	4
Gastro-enteritis	3	Umbilical bleeding	1

Premature birth	5	Epilepsy	1
Thyrotoxicosis	1	Asthma	1
Tetanus neonatorum	1	Unknown	9 (Autopsies)
Miscellaneous	30	(included car accidents and (other accidental deaths)	

It is of considerable interest to note that in more than 2,000 births over the last 4 years, there were no maternal deaths.

The birth rate continues to increase in pace with the population trend and in 1967 the number of births was 772 of whom 408 were males and 364 were females. These figures included 25 still births and the birth rate is at 34.5 per mille in this category in this District compared to 15.8 per mille in Glasgow, Scotland; the overall birth rate per mille is approximately twice that of Great Britain. The rate of illegitimacy maintains the high level of former years.

Tuberculosis was again present in 1967, a total of 10 cases in all being recorded. Of the ten cases, two were from Grand Bahama, two from Andros, one from Nassau, four from Haiti and one from the United States of America. 119 males and 124 females were referred to hospital in 1967; the major reasons for referral were surgical and obstetrical.

CHAPTER III
HEALTH AND SANITATION
HEALTH

Although an assistant Medical Officer has been stationed in the District, Doctor Richter, the Medical Officer, has advised me that his work is still a heavy and increasing burden despite the fact that his travelling time has been cut down; this is undoubtedly due to the rapidly increasing population.

The following table of statistics, correlated over the five years beginning 1960 is repeated in this report as follows:

	<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	21

The Medical Officer has advised me that he is no longer permitted to disclose these figures; he has informed me however that venereal disease has diminished considerably.

When one considers the sharp population rise, the control of these diseases can only be considered a remarkable achievement on the part of the Medical Department. The incidence of these diseases is not confined to any particular ethnic group but is spread evenly throughout the various sections of the community. The incidence of the diseases among males is much higher than among females.

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

Excessive drinking is no longer a luxury afforded to the financially secure members of this society; such is the prosperity in the area that this vice is now common place. This represents the District's most serious medico-social problem and has resulted in a sharp increase in mental diseases.

The rate of illegitimacy is declining; this problem is, however, 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 of 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 wordly areas of the Colny. Despite the decrease in the rate however, this problem causes considerable hardship to some unfortunates.

A successful programme of vaccination and immunisation was conducted as a preventative measure against diphtheria, polio, tetanus, whooping cough, measles and small pox and the usefulness of this was again shown in the drop in incidence of those diseases which are now almost eliminated.

In 1967 more than 1,500 children received inoculations against diphtheria, more than 1,300 against polio and 577 received anti-tetanus injections.

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. This is also illustrated in the figures showing the small death rate among babies.

A growing interest in family planning is now in evidence and this is in sharp contrast to the attitude of former years; there is no obvious religious disapproval of birth control on the island; the successful handling of this problem can be attributed only to the realistic and practical attitude evinced by the District Medical Officer.

SANITATION

There has been no improvement in the water supply systems on the island since last year.

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 press of the population explosion on the island also lends itself to the danger of diseases such as tuberculosis. So far there has been no outbreak but the danger is increasing daily with the increase in population.

A sanitary inspector has been appointed to Freeport and he spent a little time in this area. He is an excellent man well qualified for the task ahead of him and he is endeavouring to spend more time in this District.

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 last 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.

Town planning provisions have been a failure to some degree and the necessary action to alleviate this situation has been inexcusably dilatory.

CHAPTER V.

PRODUCTION

FOREST

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

MARINE

The principal marine products are fish, conchs and crawfish. Sea-shells, coral and starfish used to be gathered and sold to markets in the United States, but this has largely discontinued.

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 had increased considerably over the last two years and there is yet shortage in the supply.

It is my opinion that the present ban on the exportation of Conch could now be raised and that much of our present shortage is caused by the ever increasing demand locally.

The season for the Crawfish fishing opened on 1st. August, 1967 but the season was not good except in the Eastern part of the Island where they were abundant for a short time but as maybe expected, the demand still greatly exceeds the supply.

It is more profitable and less troublesome for the fishermen to sell their catches on the island rather to send their fish to the United States as in former years.

Very few turtles are caught in Grand Bahama now; this is largely due to the stricter control upon the capture of this marine animal.

Stone-Crabs are now in abundance in many areas around Grand Bahama; however, the taking of these crabs is still prohibited by law, and it is hoped, that this ban will soon be lifted.

The people of this District are not agriculturally minded and this industry has steadily decreased until, with the exception of one small agricultural enterprise, it is no longer of any consequence.

Poultry raising is carried on commercially to a limited degree; demand still outpaces production and most of this produce is imported.

CHAPTER VI

COMMERCE

The number of crawfish exported to the United States in 1967 was even less than 1966. As has been previously stated, local demand easily absorbs the local supply.

Customs Duties collected on imports at West End amounted to \$980,818.00. This figure was made up by the following items:

<u>DUTY</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
Alcoholic Liquors	\$ 441.40
Other Imports	626,528.77
Emergency Tax	224,744.14
Export Duty	803.20
Inland Tax Radio & T.V.	1,170.96
Inland Tax Cigarettes	7,951.88
Stamp Duty	16,886.90
Fines & Forfeiture	629.59
Departure Tax	<u>101,662.00</u>
TOTAL:	<u>\$ 980,818.00</u>

CHAPTER VII

WAGES & COST OF LIVING

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. Although common labour and artisan rates of pay are largely determined by the exigencies of the moment, note that they have increased in the last year.

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

Common Labourers (men)-----	\$1.00 to \$1.20 per hour
Common Labourers (women)-----	\$.80 to \$.90 per hour
Semi-skilled Labourers-----	\$1.25 to \$1.40 per hour
Carpenters & Masons-----	\$2.50 to \$3.00 per hour
Plumbers & Electricians-----	\$2.75 to \$4.00 per hour
Painters & Chauffeurs-----	\$1.50 to 2.50 per hour
Domestic Workers-----	\$.70 to \$1.10 per hour

Hours for 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 living in West End continues to rise and this

presents a hardship to the elderly people in the community. Whenever possible, the West End residents shop in Freeport as this is financially advantageous.

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 seven Board Schools and one Grant-in-Aid School within the District. They are located as follows:

West End.....	Board	T. Albury
Eight Mile Rock.....	Board	S. Gibbs
Holmes Rock.....	Board	W. P. Parker
Water Cay.....	Grant-in-Aid	H. Thomas
McLeans Town.....	Board	W. Farrington
High Rock.....	Board	T. Gibson
Pelican Point.....	Board	A. Laing
Sweetings Cay.....	Board	

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

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 and freight handling is poor. The Settlement of Sweetings Cay is now serviced by a separate mail boat which extends its route from Sandy Point Abaco.

Bahama Airways Limited provided a good daily service to Nassau from West End until the latter part of 1966 when this service was withdrawn. This necessitated the routing of all mail through Freeport via a bus carrier from West End. By this means, the mail service has been maintained; this method has, however, its shortcomings.

Service to West Palm Beach and Fort Lauderdale via Bahama Airways and Eastern Airlines has been good and many thousand of tourists and residents have been shuttled to and from by this means. Departure Tax of \$101,662.00 was collected during the year at West End airport; this figure was an increase over last year of approximately Eighty per cent.

ROAD TRAFFIC

Licensing of vehicles of all types was carried out throughout the year ending April 1967. In this period 788 vehicles were registered, a difference of only one from the year before.

The revenue set out hereunder was less than \$35.00 different from the year before.

REVENUE COLLECTED IN 1967.

1. Motor Vehicles.....	\$ 7,837.80
2. Drivers.....	1,777.49
3. Provisional Drivers.....	225.72
4. Public Service Venicles.....	161.16
5. Public Service Vehicle Drivers.....	100.10
6. Miscellaneous (Duplicates, Franchises, etc.,).....	218.35
	<hr/>
	\$10,320.62
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POST OFFICES

There are four Sub-Post Offices in the District, located at Eight Mile Rock, High Rock, Sweetings Cay and Smith Point. The Sub-Post Offices handle only mail 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.

The following table set out under postal revenue and postal expenditure, illustrates the business at West End during 1967.

REVENUE

Post Office Savings Bank Deposits	\$ 2605.00
Sale of Telegraph Money Orders	88913.48
Domestic Money Orders	15270.20
Sale of British Money Orders	273.08
Sale of U.S.& Canadian Money Orders	4077.32
Sale of Postage Stamps	29386.00
Sale of Jamaican Money Orders	1312.03
Parcel Postage Duty	28594.64
Short Paid Postage Collected	N I L
P.O.Box Rentals	187.01
TOTAL REVENUE	\$70,618.76

EXPENDITURE

Withdrawals Post Office Savings Bank	\$1,754.98
Telegraph & Domestic Money Orders Paid	4,488.78
U.S. Money Orders Paid (+ Canadian)	113.95
British Postal Orders Paid	57.87
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>\$6,415.58</u>

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications at West End are good owing to improvement in equipment some three years ago. Much has still to be done for the station at Sweetings Cay and Water Cay and it is hoped that the Telecommunications system will be extended into the Eight Mile Rock area. This project has been under discussion now for about three years but the project is no closer now than then.

Telegraph and Telephone revenue for 1967 was \$26,475.83.

CHAPTER X

PUBLIC WORKS.

Public works in 1967 were carried out mainly by the Ministry of Works. The principal piece of work of note was the start made on the new highway between Freeport and West End. This has been long overdue. A beginning on the Government complex at Eight Mile Rock has also been made and the writer constructed a new fire station at West End. At West End also, a new wing was added to the new school and all Government buildings have now been provided with metal shutters for hurricane protection.

The projection for 1968 is almost entirely vested in the Ministry of Works Department.

CHAPTER XI

POLICE JUSTICE AND PRISONS

POLICE

The complement of Bahamas Police at West End still remains at three, despite former assurances that this would be increases. They are, however, supplemented by an excellent police reserve and the District Constables Force which is set out hereunder. In spite of difficulties low enforcement throughout the year was good.

In addition to the regular police there is a Grade I local constable at West End and two Grand II local constables at the Eastern end of the island.

DISTRICT CONSTABLES

West End

Clifford Davis
Bernard Hanna
Alexander Rolle
George Forbes
Ivan Russell
Wilbert Roberts
Charles Grant

Holmes Rock

John Rolle Jr.,
Horatio Stuart

Bradie Point

Elmore Stuart
Arnold Martin
Harris Russell

Eight Mile Rock

Albert Rolle
Alfred Johnson
Willard Martin

Sea Grape

Robert Bain
Alfred Jones

Sweetings Cay

Peter Feaster.
Wellington Bevans
Alton Cooper

Water Cay

Walter Hield
Locksley Hield
Bernice Rolle

High Rock

Isaac Smith
Henry Smith
Willis Kemp

Hanna Hill

Ural Smith
Percy Barr

McLeans Town

Bertram Davis
Garvey Henry Jr.,
William Pinder

Pelican Point

Walter Laing

JUSTICE

Throughout 1967, there was a substantial increase in summary crime in the area and a slight increase in traffic offences; the figures on civil and matrimonial matters were almost the same as the previous year.

Summary Criminal- Total 350 : Fines - 216 : Prison - 22 :
Withdrawn- 42 : Caution - 32 : Dismissed - 14 : Bound over-
17 : Probation - 4 : Corporal Punishment - 3:

The various types of offences are detailed hereunder:

Trespassing	- 3	Threat of Harm	- 13
Obscene Language	-57	Causing Harm	- 15
Wounding	-43	Carrying Arms	- 10
Assault	-57	Resisting Arrest	- 18
Drunk & Disorderly	-21	Damage to Property	- 19
Uncontrollable Child	- 5	Fighting	- 7
Br. Immigration Act	-19	Throwing Missiles	- 13
Br. Liquor Licences Act	- 1	Gambling	- 1
Br. Dog Licensing Act	- 1	Deceit of Public Officer	- 2
Disorderly Behaviour	-42	Obstruction of Police-	3

Traffic - There were 230 traffic offences which were dealt with as follows:- Fines - 175 : Withdrawn - 24 :
Dismissed - 2 : Cautioned - 28 : Corporal Punishment - 1:

There were 66 Civil cases and 5 Matrimonial cases heard at West End during the year. A number of Indictable cases were dealt with but figures cannot be given on these as this information is

not forthcoming from the Police Department in Freeport; the method of recording this information covers the whole island of Grand Bahama and it is too extensive a task to separate the two Districts.

PRISONS

It has long been discussed that a prison on Grand Bahama was of paramount importance. This has not, however, been proceeded with.

The three cell prison at West End is literally escape proof and no escapes occurred in 1967. The two-cell lock up in Eight Mile Rock is no longer in use owing to the proximity of the accommodation in Freeport.

CHAPTER XII

LEGISLATION

There were no noteworthy changes in legislation which had a particular effect in this District.

The Town Planning Act has revealed itself to be faulty and it is literally impossible for a Commissioner to prosecute breaches of the Act and virtually illegal for him to officiate as the local Town Planning Officer. As stated previously in this report, the delay in introducing new legislation is adding considerably to the difficulty of implementing this legislation.

CHAPTER XIII

TAXATION

There is still no direct taxation here, except for Departure Tax levied on passengers from the Colony. I would again suggest to Government that serious consideration should be given to introducing the Real Property Tax which would be used to very good purpose for maintenance of the roads and upkeep of the Settlements. As in former years, I would again urge Government to consider the introduction of a toll charge on the proposed new highway; if this were in fact an established practice, enough revenue could be generated from the proposed new highway to take care of all road maintenance problems which would arise on this island.

CHAPTER XIV

MISCELLANEOUS

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 63 paupers throughout the District.

RELIGION

The majority of the Islands 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 OBSERVATION

It would appear that the unique nature of Grand Bahama is now appreciated and forward steps are being taken by Government to attempt to catch up with the mushrooming economy. Most important of all is the new highway between Freeport and West End.

There appears to be no end in sight for the development and expansion of this island and the day is foreseeable when New Providence itself might find that it occupies a secondary place to this sophisticated area of growth. The trend for generation of revenue is without precedent and my prediction of continued expansion is founded in proven fact and experience and not in ethereal optimism.



C.M. Macdonald
Commissioner
District of West End.