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ANNUAL REPORT

HIGH ROCK GRAND BAHAMA.

BY

R. JAMES McPHEE

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER.

1969

INDEX

TO ANNUAL REPORT

ON

THE DISTRICT OF HIGH ROCK

FOR THE YEAR 1969.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

On Monday 31st. March 1969, the writer landed at Freeport's International Airport where he was met by Commissioner K. P. Spencer who on the following day began a pre-arranged tour of the High Rock District saying goodbye to his friends whilst the writer ventured out in forming fresh acquaintances in a strange land.

On Friday 4th April 1969, just before closing time R. J. McPhee/District Commissioner officially took over as head of the administration of Government of the High Rock District.

During the greater part of the year, the Commissioner who resides at High Rock, was aided in various phases of local administration by the lone Justice of the Peace at Sweetings Cay, two Local Constables, two Local Boards of works, one office clerk and eight district constables.

Law and order were satisfactorily maintained throughout the District during the year.

GEOGRAPHICAL LAYOUT:

The High Rock District stretches a distance of thirty seven miles on the Eastern tip of Grand Bahama lying precisely between 26 to 27 degrees North Latitude and 77.5 to 78.5 degrees West Longitude. This district is typical of most other out island Districts lined with beautiful cays and intricate sounds, and to its eastern tip it is considered one of the most scenic areas of the Bahamian Archipelago.

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The entire island of Grand Bahama is very flat with its highest elevation found in the High Rock District, and suffice it to say that it is from this source that the settlement of High Rock thus the District of High Rock received its name.

There are several small boat harbours in the District, but no safe shelter due to the many shallow reefs and banks running almost parallel to the coast line.

The latest Census figures totalling 1520 in population are scattered in the Communities from Freetown to the West to Sweetings Cay in the East.

Due to the proximity of the entire island to the North West Providence Channel, it is very common to experience much unpleasant and cold weather during the period from November to February when the temperature drops to a very low 47° Fahrenheit. For the year under review, the maximum temperature recorded was 93°F and a minimum 47°.

TOURISM:

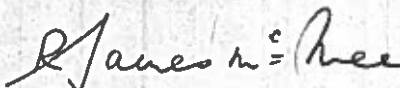
The tourist industry in the High Rock District has improved tremendously over the period under review - this of course mostly on week-ends when many outsiders chose to sail or fly in at Deep Water Cay and Sweetings Cay north for a rather quiet moment rather than remaining in Freeport where the environment differs.

Tourist accommodation can be readily had at the two Centres above and presently discussions are now a-foot to improve the situation tremendously over the next year.

Generally, the High Rock District made strides and improvements during the year under review, despite existing road conditions in the area; however, it is most pleasing to note that work has commenced on the main road connecting High Rock with Freeport and it is expected soon that emphasis will be placed on the road between Pelican Point and McLeans Town.

On behalf of the inhabitants of the High Rock District, the writer wishes to express his sincere thanks and appreciation to Government for the various sums of money allocated and appropriated for Public Works during the year.

He submits humble apologies for any short comings in this report, and sincerely hope that it conveys to Government a crystal ball view of the conditions during 1969.


R. James McPhee
District Commissioner.

CHAPTER 1

Population

The last official Census figures in the district showed the distribution of population as follows:

<u>Settlement</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Free Town	50	65	115
Sweetings Cay	180	150	330
McLeans Town	102	130	232
Pelican Point	70	63	133
Bevans Town	30	25	55
High Rock	300	320	620
Totals:	732	753	1485.

Due to the fast growth of Freeport, a good many of the former residents of this District migrated thereto.

During the year under review, a total of 22 births and 3 deaths were recorded.

Momentarily, Government is considering an update Census of Population - Census date April 7th. 1970 and it is quite likely, by virtue of the continuous migration to Freeport as well as other islands of the Bahamas, compared with the birth rate and other new comers the new Census figure could be much the same.

CHAPTER 11

Public Works & Utilities

(a) Public Works.

During the year all Public Works were carried out under the supervision of the District Commissioner, Ministry of Works Representatives in Freeport and the two Local Board of Works in High Rock and Sweetings Cay.

The following works were undertaken in the High Rock District and some of which were completed at the end of the year under review:

Projects:	Place	Allocated	Expenditure	Bal.
1. Construction Roads (Concrete)	Sweetings Cay	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00	Nil
2. Construction Cell (Lockup)	Sweetings Cay	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	Nil
3. Construction Bridge	Sweetings Cay	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,999.10	90¢
4. Construction Public Toilet	Free Town	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	Nil
5. Construction Wall & Levelling Cemetery	High Rock	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	Nil
6. Complete Wall at Gov. Compound	High Rock	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00	Nil
7. Renovate Gov. Clinic	McLeans Town	\$ 4,650.00	\$ 4,650.00	Nil
8. Public Toilet	McLeans Town	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00	Nil
9. Public Toilet	Pelican Point	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	Nil
10. Settlement Road	High Rock	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,990.46	9.54

11. Approach Rd.	Pel. & McTown	\$10,000.00	\$ 9,999.57	43¢
12. Generator Hse. Teacher's Cot.	McLeans Town	\$ 5,805.35	\$ 5,525.35	280.00
13. Generator Hse Teacher's Cot.	Pelican Point	\$ 4,900.00	\$ 4,655.00	245.00
14. Settlement Rds.	H.Rock to McTn.	\$49,866.00	\$49,866.00	Nil
15. Repairs to Gov. Bldgs.	High Rock	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 3,998.33	1.67
16. Repairs to Roads	Sweetings Cay	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	Nil
17. Walls	McLeans Town	\$ 600.00	\$ 600.00	Nil
18. Renovations Teacher's Cot.	McLeans Town	\$ 700.00	\$ 700.00	Nil
19. Trench Cesspool	Sweetings Cay	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 500.00	500.00
20. Installation Pitcher Pump	Freetown & H.R.	\$ 750.00	\$ 750.00	Nil

The above projects were those for which funds were specially allocated from the various Ministries - mostly Ministry of Works.

Not to mention the many and various other jobs throughout the District, all public yards, building and roads were either monthly or quarterly maintained during the year under review.

Under the term of "General Upkeep" for the entire District, a total of four thousand one hundred dollars paid for the minor jobs here and there not listed.

The following is a breakdown on Government yards and buildings as accounted for under General Upkeep.

High Rock:

Government Bldgs.	9
Cemetery	1
Government Yards	2.

Free Town:	
Government Buildings	3
Cemetery	1
Pelican Point:	
Government Buildings	5
Cemetery	1
Government Yards	2
McLeans Town:	
Government Buildings	7
Cemetery	1
Government Yard	2
Sweatings Cay:	
Government Buildings	3
Cemetery	1

ROADS

In the High Rock District there is approximately 30 miles of Public road stretching from Free Town to McLeans Town. About 21 miles of this road is asphalted and partially maintained by the United Air Force Missile Base.

During the year under review the condition of the road had degraded to such a state that on recommendations to Ministry of Works in Freeport, Four thousand two hundred dollars were spent in an effort to keep the whole area from falling through.

PARKS & RECREATION GROUNDS

There are no parks or recreation grounds in the District; but plans are presently afoot to construct several playfields through the area.

These are likely to be constructed when funds are available, near the existing School-Grounds.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

As shown in the previous table, there are twenty seven Government buildings throughout the District. At the end of the year under review, these were all in good shape, having had minor repairs and paintings done to several of them.

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WHARVES

There are two docks in the district, one at Sweetings Cay and the other at McLeans Town. Both considered to be small, are extensively used by fishing boats and visiting yachts to the Eastern end of the island.

Minor repairs were put in hand to upkeep these structures which are so important to the livelihood of many inhabitants in this area.

(b) PUBLIC UTILITIES

Water

Public and private wells are the main sources of water supplies in High Rock District.

During the year several pumps were installed in an effort to minimize contamination of this supply.

In the settlements of Sweetings Cay and McLeans Town, fresh water is a bit scarce. It is the intention of Government to set up a pipe - water system in these areas shortly.

Electricity

Though for some time there had been some talk on this heading, no city current has been installed but, in all settlements there are a number of privately owned generators. Most of the Government cottages are supplied with electricity from generators.

Garbage Collection

This subject had for some time been a thorn in the Government Administration here due to its late implementation.

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It is supervised by the Board of Works under the direct guidance of the Commissioner, whose responsibility it is through Government, for making payments.

As far as is possible drums are supplied to each householder - these are placed by the road side, filled from day to day with garbage and -collected weekly by a truck.

The system is presently under control and suffice it to say that this was much long over due in a growing District as this one.

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COMMUNICATIONS

There is no Port of Entry in the High Rock District. Foreign vessels do enter occasionally at the Gold Rock Creek Harbour where it is processed and entered by a Customs officer who travels from Freeport.

The mailboat services to the District were satisfactorily performed by the M. V. Noel Roberts and the M. V. Captain Dean.

Daily mail service between the East End of Grand Bahama and Nassau Via Freeport was efficiently manned with Local Const. Stanford Laing performing the duty as mail carrier.

The Branch of the Post Office here at High Rock efficiently manned by Postal Clerk Eula Rolle, also played its part in serving well the residents of East End Grand Bahama.

With the office also catering to all postal financial transaction, it serves as a nucleus for daily business as such.

Tabulation in connexion with above are as follows:

RECEIPTS

(a) Sale of Domestic Money Orders	\$ 9008.96
(b) Sale of Telegraph Money Orders	\$ 4004.78
(c) Sale of U. S. Money Orders	\$ 1566.11
(d) Sale of Jamaican Money orders	\$ 177.21
(e) Sale of British Money Orders	\$ 15.34
(f) Post office Savings Bank Deposits	\$ 2225.00
(g) Parcel post duties collected	\$ 22.38
(h) Deposits for sale of stamps	\$ 86.00
(i) Adjustment of Postal Draft No. 13	\$ 10.00
Total:	\$17155.78

PAYMENTS

(a) Domestic Money Orders	\$ 20.93
(b) U. S. Money Orders	\$ 70.50
(c) British Money Orders	\$ 12.55
(d) Post Office Savings Bank withdrawals	\$2032.00
	Total: \$2135.98

TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH

There is one Radio telephone station in the High Rock District centred at the settlement of High Rock and provides ready telephone communication between Grand Bahama and the outside world.

A Telegraph station is set up at Sweetings Cay, virtually the distance of approximately 30 miles from Headquarters and serves that community or settlement only by telegraph messages.

The majority of the inhabitants possess radios and display keen interest in programmes over the Local station ZNS as well as stations in the U. S. A.

CHAPTER IV

JUSTICE, POLICE & PRISON SERVICES

Law and order were satisfactorily maintained in the High Rock District during the year 1969.

A total of 58 cases were tried summarily in the District Magistrate's Court during the year. Of these 39 were criminals 16 were traffic and 3 were civil cases.

These cases were dealt with as under:

(a) Criminal & Traffic Cases.

Type of Cases	Fined	Bound over	Cautioned	Total
Traffic cases	16	0	0	16
Criminal cases	32	4	3	39
Totals:	48	4	3	55

Queen's fines collected amounted to --- B\$ 1,336.42

(b) Civil Cases.

Judgement in favour of Plaintiff:	3
Judgement in favour of Defendant:	0
Total:	3

Civil claims awarded totalled: \$228.80

The following is a list of J. P. and Local Constables District Const. in the High Rock District:

High Rock - Ezekiel Pinder - District Constable

David Kemp - Local Constable

Bevans Town-James Ingraham - District Constable

Free Town - Lincoln Cooper - District Constable

McLeans Tn.-Jacob Russell - District Constable

Pelican Pt.- Stanford Laing- Local Constable

Sweetings Cay - Herman Russell - District Constable

- Ronald Bevans - District Constable

- Alton Cooper -J. P..

The above listed persons were always willing to assist the lone

Police officer, L/Cpl. 148 Rolle who manned policing in the District, though living in Freeport and travelling to High Rock daily.

Whenever the situation required more help, the Freeport Constabulary were always called in to investigate matters.

FIRE SERVICE

There is no organized fire service in the High Rock District but in the event of a fire, apart from the community help, assistance can always be received from the U. S. Missile Base where there is a U. S. Government fire station.

If and when the situation warrants additional help, the Freeport Fire station is summoned to the call.

CHAPTER-V

SOCIAL SERVICES

EDUCATION: Statistics

<u>School</u>	<u>Roll</u>	<u>Head</u>	<u>Asst.</u>	<u>U.T.</u>	<u>SAT.</u>	<u>Total</u>
High Rock	205	R. Deane	2	-	5	8
Freetown	29	C. McIntosh	-	-	1	2
Pelican Pt.	55	B. Laing	-	-	1	2
McLeans Tn.	75	C. Wiggins	-	-	3	4
Sweetings Cay	77	C. Bethell	-	-	3	4
Total:	441	5	2	0	13	20

1. STAFF CHANGES:

Mr. Charles Farrington headteacher for three years and a half of McLeans Town School, was transferred to Burnt Rock, Andros. He was succeeded at McLeans Town by Mr. Clarence Wiggins who formerly headed the primary school at Behring Point Andros.

Mr. Charles Farrington's last days at McLeans Town were marred by bitter disputes with members of the local community.

Among subordinate staff, were the usual resignations brought about when staff members found more lucrative employment in private enterprises.

2. STAFF:

The difficulties experienced in securing suitable living accommodation has in the past limited the numbers of Trained experienced Teachers that could be posted in the district. With the construction of additional Ministry of Education Cottages in the district more trained teachers may be posted to schools in the district.

3. CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION

Grand Bahama was organized as an educational district and separated from the West Bahama District which has headquarters in Fresh Creek, Andros. Headquarters for the newly organized district of Grand Bahama was set up in Freeport. This arrangement should allow for closer supervision and readier solution to local problems. Mr. Harold Poitier, District Education Officer took up duties in Freeport on July 2nd 1969.

4. FURTHER TRAINING:

One member of staff, MR. Everette Archer, was admitted to the Teachers Training College Nassau, where he is following the Two-Year Course.

5. PUPILS

There has been a noticeable drift back to their home town schools of pupils who had some time in the past gone off to Freeport where they obtained places at Hawksbill School.

Some pupils go off to Freeport High or Catholic High with the hope of improving their academic standards.

The students are all faced with the difficulty of securing suitable and adequate living accommodations with relatives-others with concerned friends.

Some students prefer to commute to Freeport from their home settlements.

6. FURTHER DEVELOPMENT:

There is urgent need for additional class-room space at Sweetings Cay and McLeans Town.

At Sweetings Cay the older pupils are accommodated in two very small rooms, rooms which originally were used as store room, library and headteacher's office.

At McLeans Town the infant department is accommodated in a small room originally used as headteacher's Office.

It is hoped that in the near future adequate additional class-rooms will be provided at both Sweetings Cay and McLeans Town.

7. SCHOLARSHIPS AND EXAMINATIONS:

Thomas Franklyn of Pelican Point School, successfully wrote the Common Entrance Examinations and obtained a place at St. Augustine College— 16 students from High Rock school were successful in, at least one subject in the B. J. C. Examinations.

8. NEW BUILDING:

At the new Freetown village the school is conducted in a building which also serves as society hall and church meeting place. The present arrangement for the joint use of this building will continue until the construction of the New Freetown Primary School. This school is to be built on a three acre site donated by Mr. Wallace Groves who also gave a generous gift of \$75,000 which is to cover the cost of a new school and teacher's cottage.

9. MUSIC FESTIVAL:

In the annual Music Festival competition High Rock School entered and again as in former years gave a good account of itself. In thier continuing effort to improve their standards this school successfully accumulated sufficient funds for the purchase of a piano. The Ministry of Education encouraged the effort by making a contribution equal to 50% of the value of the piano.

10. SPORTS:

In the annual Grand Bahama School Sports meet the school which enter the competition recorded satisfactory results.

In school Volley Ball Competition, High Rock School retained the Island Championship.

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11. VISITORS:

Among visitors to the District were....

The Minister of Education, Hon. Cocil Wallace-Whitfield
Permanent Secretary, Sir Brian Marwick
Asst./Directors Mr. L. Morgan and Mrs. E. Minaya
Director of Education Mr. R.W. Ferguson & Mrs. Ferguson
Chief Out Island Commissioner Mr, V. Knowles , B. E. M.,
Mr. David Williams, Advisor on Technical Education.

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS:

Fraternal Organizations in the District consist of five burial societies and one Elk Lodge. Many of the inhabitants are members of the Masonic and Eastern Star Temple in the Freeport and Eight Mile Rock area.

Serving the spiritual needs of the people of High Rock District, in each settlement there are churches of either one of the following denominations: Anglican, Baptist or Church of God (Pentecostal).

MEDICAL SERVICES:

There is one clinic in the entire District. This clinic situate in McLeans Town with a resident nurse, feeds out locally for medicare to the residents of Sweetings Cay and McLeans Town.

Dr. John Clement, medical officer (Government) for the Grand Bahama District makes periodic visits to the East End, conducting clinic at Freetown and High Rock on the same day and at Pelican Point and McLeans Town on other days.

Suffice it to say that this community is in dire need of a resident nurse; but with no accommodation available, the situation seem likely to remain unchanged.

In general 1969 was a good year for health in the High Rock District and conditions are improving and should continue so to do in the years lying ahead.

SOCIAL SECURITY:

During the year under review a total of \$10,608 was paid to the aged persons in the district as pension under the Old Age Pension Act.

At the end of the year under review there were 68 persons list as pensioners as compared to 69 previously.

The following show the monthly expenditure for old age pension for the 12 months under review:

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF O. A. PENSIONERS</u>	<u>TOTAL AMOUNT PAID</u>
January	68	\$ 884.00
February	68	\$ 884.00
March	68	\$ 884.00
April	68	\$ 884.00
May	68	\$ 884.00
June	68	\$ 884.00
July	68	\$ 884.00
August	68	\$ 884.00
September	68	\$ 884.00
October	68	\$ 884.00
November	68	\$ 884.00
December	68	\$ 884.00

Grand Total Amount paid during '69. \$ 10608.00

<u>SETTLEMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL NO. OF PENSIONERS</u>	<u>TO Dec. 31st 1969.</u>
High Rock & Freetown	30	
Polican Point & McLeans Town	17	
Sweetings Cay	21	
		Total: 68

HOUSING & TOWN PLANNING

The implementation of The Town Planning Act in the District proved to be very successful.

It encouraged many of the residents to upgrade the standards of their buildings to a more modern styles.

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CHAPTER VI

CURRENCY & BANKING

There are no banks in the High Rock District but due to the daily transport service between Freeport and this area, most inhabitants take advantage of the many banks and other financial institutions in the Freeport area.

The District Post Office Savings Bank, situated in the Commissioner's Office Building at High Rock provides most valuable for the residents of East End, Grand Bahama.

The total deposits during the year under review amounted to \$2,225.00 while withdrawal amounted to \$2,032.00.

CHAPTER VII

COMMERCE

Although there is no port of entry in the High Rock District, much trade import - export is carried on by residents locally through the Freeport area.

With several local stores in the district the following are imported either through agents in Freeport or directly from the U. S. A. and the U. K. :-

Foodstuffs; footwear, household effects, clothing, liquor tobacco moter-vehicles etc.

Even in the Building Industry a few of the Local Contractors import most of their own building materials, as it is often considered generally to be more reasonable in this manner.

Exports included crawfish, scale fish and conchs.

Catching and exporting the crawfish deserves special mention for it has been proven during the year under review, that although the season for the catch lasts only six months approximately, the fishermen receive tremendous financial benefits therefrom.

CHAPTER VIII

PUBLIC FINANCE & TAXATION

Number of Documents Processed 1 - 1 - 69 to 31 - 12 - 69

Month	Receipt	Expenditure	Total.
January	32	27	59
February	31	27	58
March	22	45	67
April	29	33	62
May	31	36	67
June	33	37	70
July	27	35	62
August	31	38	69
September	26	46	72
October	24	47	71
November	27	34	61
December	21	49	70
Total	334	454	828

Revenue:

Generally, revenue from the District is very small, compared to expenditure. Most revenue is obtained from sale of Licences, Queen's fine, Post Office Savings Bank Deposits and sale of Money Orders.

Remittances to the Treasury is usually in the form of cheques-exchanged for cash from the safe.

The following shows a breakdown on the above.

Deposit Accounts:

Sale of Domestic Money Orders.	\$ 9,008.96
Sale of Telegraph Money Orders.	\$ 4,004.78
Sale of Jamaican Money Orders.	\$ 177.21
Sale of Canadian Money Orders.	\$ - -
Sale of U. S. Money Orders	\$ 1,566.11
Post Office Savings Bank Deposits,	\$ 2,225.00
Parcel Post Duties	\$ 22.38
Sale of Stamps	\$ 86.00
Deposits for Dinghy Accounts	\$ 35.00
Total:	\$17,125.44

Amount Collected on Licences & Fines:

January	\$ 242.00
February	\$ 60.73
March	\$ 7.86
April	\$ 206.93
May	\$ 333.18
June	\$ 245.45
July	\$ 406.86
August	\$ 173.59
September	\$ 42.88
October	71.14
November	\$ 372.75
December	\$ 50.18
Total:	\$2213.55

The following shows Remittances from Public Treasury in Freeport to meet required expenditure during the year under review:

February	\$ 5,000.00
March	\$ 5,000.00
April	\$ 11,000.00
June	\$ 6,400.00
August	\$ 6,000.00
September	\$ 6,000.00
October	\$ 5,000.00
November	\$ 3,500.00
December	<u>\$ 11,000.00</u>
Total:	\$58 ,900.00

CHAPTER IX

PRODUCTION:

(a) Fishing

Fishes are plentiful in the waters around the district and undoubtedly considered the most lucrative employment locally.

(b) Agriculture

A small group of the inhabitants of the district till the soil and the little peas, corn or other farm produce grown, suffices only local consumption.

The land in the entire district is of course arable, and it is saddening to report that though some of the residents seemed vigorous to do a little farming, there is no response from request for even financial assistance in getting started on farming commercially.

(c) Stock & Poultry

There is little evidence of live stock in this District; but with poultry farm just outside the area, midway to Freeport some of the local residents take special advantages in travelling by car and obtaining fresh supplies of eggs and chickens almost daily.

Under the foregoing circumstances the less fortunate - those who are unable to travel by cars, are thus able to make purchases at reasonable rates.

GENERAL REMARKS

Looking back over the accomplishments for the year under review, it may well serve to conclude that the year was a most prosperous one.

All went quiet by with no major crime or disturbances.

Visits to the District were made by:

The Hon. Prime Minister, L. O. Pindling,

The Hon. Minister for works (now Minister of Tourism),

The Permenent Secretary, Local Government Division,

The Permenent Secretary, Ministry of Works,

The Permenent Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs,

The Deputy Director, Ministry of Works,

The Chief Out Island Commissioner,

The Director of Education, and several other officers from various Ministries.

Each official visitor through the medium of his good office, played important roles in making smooth the Administration of the High Rock District, during the year under review.

To mention last but not to make his visit the least, the Representative for the area, Mr. Maurice Moore made frequent visits to the district and has always played his part in assisting where possible in the smooth running of administration in the High Rock District.

R. James McPhee

R. James McPhee
District Commissioner.