

A carpenter tries to fix a house whose roof was torn off during strong winds of Hurricane Kate.



Hon. Robert Hall

Gov't. estimates damages to be about \$1 million

GOVERNMENT has estimated damage wrought by Hurricane Kate to be in the vicinity of half a million dollars, said Deputy Chief Minister Robert Hall last week to the *News* after he and other top government officials had carried out surveys on all the islands.

He said that the main damage seemed to have been caused to electricity poles and lines, although some 75 houses in Bottle Creek have been damaged and a number of boats wrecked.

He noted that government buildings sustained minimal damage and preparations had been taken to secure these before the hurricane came.

But in response to the complaints of some Islanders that they had not been given sufficient warning, he said: "I guess because we have not had a hurricane for some time, people have developed a lax attitude."

The last hurricane here, which left much destruction in its path, was Donna, who stormed these islands in 1960. Since then a few have come close, but at the crucial moment always veered away.

In 1979, Hurricane David headed for these islands from Haiti but when it got to the North of Haiti it veered westwards. Just a few months ago Hurricane Gloria which left a scene of vast devastation in Florida barely by-passed these islands.

Another official when told that some Islanders were unhappy about the short warning they said they received pointed out that they should have made preparations long before since everyone is kept aware of the fact that the hurricane season is from June to early December, and a hurricane can be expected any time during this period.

But one of the peeved Is-

landers who made the complaint said he was unaware a hurricane was brewing until Sunday afternoon.

Another said somebody "should be hung for the lack of warning." One woman noted she was aware the hurricane would pose a danger here days before because she monitored the news from several radio stations including Nassau.

The Disaster Preparedness Department, however, noted that Radio Turks and Caicos had been broadcasting the news about the hurricane from Saturday afternoon and that the radio was on the following night until midnight to give updates on the situation.

The department also explained that there was no meteorological station here which meant that they had to depend on Nassau for news and could not officially release any information until it was obtained from Nassau.

The department also spoke of the neglectful attitude of some who never even bothered to purchase shutters even though they knew the hurricane season was on. Deputy Chief Minister Hall has noted that the Hurricane Relief Fund will be set in motion and assistance given to "victims." He added that an immediate relief would be the channelling of food supplies to farmers in North Caicos.

After Hurricane Kate Electricity Dept. has things under control

THE Electricity Department has the situation under control and at the moment has been able to restore 95 p.c. of the power on all the islands, said Manager John Backhouse, speaking to the News last week, one week after Hurricane Kate had blown her way through these islands.

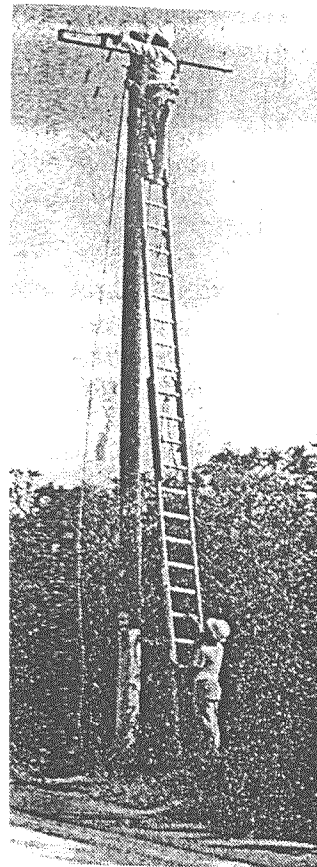
The Manager said that the worse damage was wrought on Grand Turk, where Kate knocked down 26 poles, damaged 25 distribution lines, thus affecting 40 services. He also expressed his understanding that the electricity service on Provo suffered extensive damage but after noting that it was privately-operated said that he could not speak for the company in question.

Manager Backhouse had much praise for his men who

worked around the clock and also for assistance rendered by PPC Ltd. noting that because of such co-ordination his department was able to restore power to the essential services (hospital, police, government and supermarkets) within 28 hours.

He said: "We were only able to restore supply so quickly through the valiant efforts of the Electrical Department's line crew who worked 18 hours continuously for seven days, supported by the PPC's line crew and many other members of the community who provided man-power, building materials and tractors and other vehicles at immediate notice."

He noted that South Caicos, Middle Caicos, North Caicos and Salt Cay were able to restore supply themselves under the direction of



Electrical linesmen repair a pole after damages of Hurricane Kate.

their respective District Commissioners.

Referring to what might have been a major incident — the fire at the power house — had it not been quickly brought under control, Backhouse noted that this was caused by overloading of the temporary circuits due to the start-up currents of fridges, freezers and possibly air conditioners. The fire took place a few nights after the hurricane and traversed these islands.

Backhouse said that as a result of the fire, transformers were burnt and three had to be replaced, but the department installed six transformers because it could only find half the sizes of the ones required.

Backhouse also expressed gratitude to the utilities division which was able to supply on demand the necessary equipment required by the power house to do its job of restoration.

He noted that by this Friday, power should be restored everywhere.

Hurricane victims soon to get relief

CHIEF Secretary Ron Pin-cott last week told the *News* that a committee has been organised to give relief to hurricane victims, but noted that they would have to work out the terms of such assistance, adding that the guidelines would revolve around village type houses, fishing boats and crops which suffered damage.

He said that surveys to assess the damage were being made and that they just do not have enough information to state the extent of the damage.

Deputy Chief Minister Robert Hall also speaking to the *News* on the situation stated that hopefully by last weekend, they should have begun to give some form of assistance to those most in need of immediate relief.

Hurricane Kate came blowing into these islands three Sundays ago, leaving in its path tangled electricity poles, damaged roofs, yachts and boats and fallen trees

The most damage in terms of dwelling houses was suffered on Bottle Creek where

some 75 houses were said to be damaged with 30 families being homeless

Farmers in North and Middle Caicos who were expecting a good crop because of the unusual incessant rains during the past few months had their hopes shattered, when Hurricane Kate came this way. Most of them now have no crops to reap.

Hotel roofs in Provo according to reports suffered extensive damage while in Grand Turk, the main damage was to electricity poles.

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