

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the reasons for the incorporation of the Turks and Caicos Islands into the Bahamas in 1764 and the reasons for their separation in 1848. The union of the two archipelagos occurred around the same time as the first Windward Islands federation and was in keeping with the British government's attempt to centralize island administrations.

The incorporation was motivated by the Imperial government. However, the Bahamas government only accepted political control of the Turks and Caicos Islands in order to reap the benefits of their prolific and prosperous salt trade. As a result of the union, the Turks Islands suffered many injustices such as stringent salt ponds regulations, unfair taxation and deprivation of the revenues accrued from the salt ponds. Consequently, the islanders repeatedly petitioned for separation. This however, was not achieved until 1848 during the administration of Governor George Matthew. An enterprising man, he searched for an alternative to Turks Island and found it in Inagua which was to become the biggest salt producing island in the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition, two new industries, pineapple and sponging were introduced in the 1840s. These prompted the governor to recommend the separation which occurred in December 1848.