

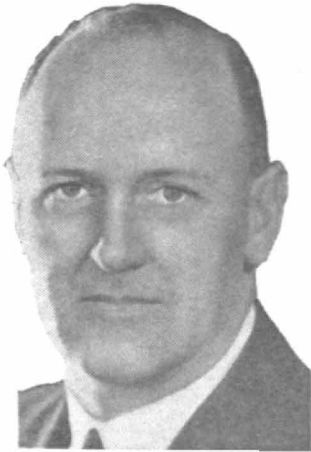
CAROONA'S PROUD RECORD

COUNTRY CENTRES VISITED

A Letter from the Superintendent

MY dear Aboriginal Friends,

Another month has passed and finds me writing my usual letter to you all. During August I have had a busy time travelling around the country visiting a number of aboriginal stations, and meeting our people. Since there are some of you who do not know much about your own people, who live in other parts of the State, I thought you might be interested if I told you something about the Settlements that I visited.



My first visit was to Caroona Station. This settlement is about nineteen miles from Quirindi, and the same distance from Werris Creek. It is one of our oldest stations, and has usually carried a population of over 200 people, although the number at present is somewhat less. Since the War this Station has been entirely rebuilt, and is now a modern, up-to-date settlement with lovely homes, School, Hall, Church, Farm buildings and other amenities.

A proud record of Caroona Station is that every family has been able to live independently of the Board's assistance throughout the past five years, and not one ration has been issued. Even the old folk are being looked after by their young able-bodied relatives, who are in good steady employment. The homes are nicely furnished; many have wireless sets and refrigerators and nice gardens have been made around the homes.

The next Station visited was Burra-bee-dee, situated six miles from Coonabarabran. Burra-bee-dee is another old settlement with a pretty setting, but unfortunately it suffers from the lack of a good water supply. Despite much money and energy spent on bores and wells, we still have to depend on house tanks. The homes on this Station are old and ramshackle, and the place has been noted for some years past as one that is to be provided with some new homes and other improvements. The Board had hoped that it would be able to make a start this year, but the shortage of Government funds has necessitated a postponement of the programme for a year or two.

Some of the Burra-bee-dee folk have lately been moving off the Station and putting up shacks for themselves on the outskirts of Coonabarabran. Some of these people could, with assistance, take their place easily in the community, but proper housing is essential. The local Council and many of the townspeople are

sympathetic and I am sure that the better class aborigines will continue to be welcomed. The less responsible aborigines who indulge in drinking and misbehaviour, however, will never be welcomed in the general community, and these people are urged to buck up and try to "make good."

"Queenie" Robinson called on me while I was in the district. She is a grand old lady who is regarded by many as the Queen of the descendants of the Kamilaroi tribe. Queenie was as cheerful as ever, and full of anecdotes of the old times at Coonabarabran. She has promised me that she will tell our local Manager the whole story of the Coonabarabran aborigines, so that we may publish it in some future issue of *Dawn*.

My third port of call on this tour was to Pilliga. Poor old Pilliga has been on the decline since the war years, and the final blow came when the flood waters descended on the Station last year. The usual sandy creek which runs through the Station became a surging torrent, and the water came right into the people's homes, in some cases undermining the foundations. Roads were washed away, fences broken down and much damage was done. The Station aborigines had already been moving away to other parts, but the flood brought the finishing touch, and Pilliga Station finally became deserted. Lately a few families have been drifting back, but the Board is now considering closing the Station and establishing the families in Pilliga township and elsewhere. Our old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Constable, who managed the Station for many years until they retired about nine years ago, have stepped into harness again and are looking after Pilliga again until the people are finally fixed up with homes.

With best wishes to you all,

Yours sincerely,



Superintendent of Aborigines Welfare.