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NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA.

REPORT

OF

THE ADMINISTRATOR

FOR THE

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have been found in the bed of the Macarthur River, especially at one particular spot. Requests have naturally been frequently made to the Government to have the country thoroughly tested. Advantage was taken of the presence of the boring plant belonging to the Gold-fields Diamond Drilling Company in the vicinity, and the low quotation made to test the country, but so far the results are not favorable.

A number of oil licences have recently been granted on the Victoria River district. The applicants must have more information regarding favorable prospects than is available to us officially. But it is to be hoped their enterprise may be crowned with success.

Dr. Jensen's report on the mining, past, present and future, is full of interest, and it is pleasing to note that both he and Mr. Oliver view in a hopeful manner the future possibilities of the industry.

Above all we shall endeavour to prevent the inauguration of "wild-cat" companies, which especially here may do incalculable harm. It would be well if the public insisted on the full reports of the Government experts, which will always be available, being published.

ABORIGINES.

The difficult problem of the control, utilization, and advancement of the largest portion of our population—the aborigines—has received during the past year the special attention of the greatest authority on the subject, Professor Baldwin Spencer, of the Melbourne University. At the beginning of 1912 he was appointed Special Commissioner, and also that he might control the Department dealing with the natives, Chief Protector of Aborigines. He has been unremitting in his endeavours to acquire as full a knowledge as possible of the life and characteristics of the native inhabitants of the northern part of the Territory, and will, I am certain, as a result of his labours, combined with the peculiarly sympathetic nature of his temperament towards the whole subject, be able to formulate a definite policy for the future, which will meet with the approval of yourself and the community at large. It is a matter for congratulation that the Territory was able to secure the services at such a juncture of an anthropologist like Professor Spencer, who is so specially fitted to study the aboriginal problem and tender valuable advice.

GENERAL.

As regards the heads of all Departments and Civil Service proper, I have to express my gratification for their enthusiastic and loyal support and work. I would draw attention however to the urgent necessity for the Classification Ordinance being passed, and for regulations regarding all within Government employ being gazetted. At present the absence of uniformity in salaries, considering work, responsibility, and experience, is very glaring, and far from being conducive to the higher interests of the service. A definite classification scheme and definite regulations would save myself and heads of Departments much worry, and be far more satisfactory to every subordinate.

During the year there have been no labour difficulties of moment. The Government is practically the only sole continuous employer of white labour, most of the private employers using coloured labour.

Your decision to reduce the hours weekly to forty-four, and to grant an increase in wages to 25 per cent. over the Southern rates plus a further allowance to be recommended by Public Service Inspector Skewes, was generally appreciated, though it was hoped Mr. Skewes' rates would be greater than they were. You yourself drew attention to the advisability of working men in the cooler hours. Mr Skewes emphasized the point. But the men did nothing. There was some little difficulty in securing an earlier start, but this was overcome, though owing to an *impasse* regarding meals at hotels and boarding-houses, work does not yet commence so early as it should.

The Botanical Gardens, which are situated within a mile of Darwin, are being somewhat extended. The Curator, Mr. Holtze, who has been relieved of his many other onerous duties and gazetted as Government Botanist, is preparing for settlers' needs in the way of fruit and shelter trees, besides carrying out a number of small experiments and demonstrations of much interest. An improvement has been made in the drainage, which will be extended.

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE ABORIGINALS OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

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INTRODUCTION.

I left Melbourne on 25th December, 1911, arrived at Darwin on 15th January and left again on 25th December, 1912. There was a considerable amount of routine work that it was necessary to transact in Darwin and owing to the almost total lack of office accommodation, it was difficult to carry this on. As it was then the wet season I was unable at first to leave Darwin, except for a visit to Pine Creek and the adjacent mining area, but on the 5th March I went across to Melville Island to investigate the natives there returning on 26th March. An unfortunate accident made it impossible for me to walk for nearly two months, so that instead of travelling up country under climatic conditions which were then favorable, I was confined to Darwin and could only transact routine work. During May I paid a short visit to the Daly River in company with His Excellency the Administrator and also again visited Pine Creek. On 16th June I proceeded in a motor launch to the East Alligator River and spent the time until 8th August investigating the native tribes in this portion of the Territory in company with Mr. P. Cahill. I was particularly anxious to see this part of the country from the point of view of the establishment of a large native reserve.

On 8th August I came down the East Alligator, up the South Alligator River and then across country to the railway line, traversing *en route* an unoccupied aboriginal reserve that I wished to see and reached Darwin on 18th August. On 2nd September I left Darwin, accompanying the Administrator on a lengthy motor trip covering more than 1,200 miles of country. We proceeded south to Newcastle Waters, to which point I had travelled north on a previous expedition. Thence we went east across the tableland or "downs" country *via* Eva Downs, Anthony Lagoon and the McArthur River to Borroloola. From the latter we took a zig-zag course *via* the following cattle stations:—Bauhenia Downs, Tanumbirini, O. T. Lagoon, Nutwood Downs and Hodgson Downs to McMinn's Bar Station on the Roper River. During our visit to the Territory last year I had previously seen the lower part of the Roper River country from McMinn's Bar to the mouth but regretted my inability not to be able again to visit the Mission station on the Roper. We reached Katherine River telegraph station on 23rd October. This trip gave me the opportunity of visiting the stations mentioned and of observing the conditions under which the natives live in a large area of the Territory. I had previously arranged with Mr. P. Cahill to meet me with horses and impedimenta at the Roper River but owing to failure of petrol supply we were unable to reach the latter with the motor car, so I sent a messenger to him to return to the Katherine, where I awaited his arrival. From the Katherine we proceeded across country to the Flora River to investigate the natives in this part and made our way round to the head of the railway line at Pine Creek which we reached on 22nd November.

On 29th November I went across to Bathurst and Melville Islands visiting the Mission station on the former and returned to Darwin on 10th December. I should much like to have been able to investigate the southern half of the Territory but owing to the long distances to be traversed, work in Darwin and the accident which caused me to lose some two months of valuable time, this was out of the question. I have, however, traversed a considerable part of this on previous occasions and am fairly well acquainted with the conditions obtaining there, though in the region of the Macdonnell Ranges recent years have witnessed a great demoralization of the natives.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

I propose under this heading to deal with certain points of fundamental importance, chiefly in regard to the mental and moral characteristics of the aboriginals that must be understood and taken into account in the formulating of any scheme to deal with them.

Perhaps the point of most importance in regard to the aboriginal is that he is a pure nomad with no fixed abode. There is no such thing as any village or compound in which the natives live permanently in association with one another. At most they have favorite camping grounds where, under ordinary circumstances, they build rough bark or bough shelters. The latter are very fragile but it is astonishing how cleverly, though simply, the native will lean a few boughs up against one another in such a way as to make them a shade against the sun or a fairly efficient protection against wind and rain. They seem to know instinctively the right angle at which to slant the boughs so as to withstand the pressure of a strong wind. In many parts during the summer months violent monsoonal deluges have to be endured. On Melville and Bathurst Islands great use is made of sheets of stringybark which the natives strip from the trees with their tomahawks in lengths of from 6 to 10 feet by 2 or 3 feet in width. With these they build sometimes dome-shaped, at others tent-shaped mias, usually not more than at most 4 feet high. I was much struck on Melville Island with their very simple but effective contrivance of just picking up and folding a sheet of bark in two and using it as an umbrella, slanting the bark in such a way as to keep off as much of the torrents of rain as possible. I found this a very useful plan as a protection for my cameras. If they are overtaken with specially heavy rain out in the bush, away from camp, they often huddle together closely, side by side, in a line under the shelter of a few slanting sheets of bark and with a trench roughly scooped out by their hands in the best position to lead the ground water away from them. As soon as the rain ceases they pick up their belongings and march away quite cheerfully. I once saw some twenty natives quite dry under a shelter of this kind, which was not more than 4 feet high and did

Fig. 1.

not subtend more than 2 feet of ground. In parts where it is available paper-bark (the bark of *Melaleuca leucodendron*) is used, and in some respects is more efficient than stringybark, because it is very strong and, at the same time, pliable. In addition to this it is very warm, and can easily be wrapped round their bodies as they lie on the ground during the cold winter nights. Over the greater part of the Territory there are, in addition to the rains which do not seriously inconvenience the aboriginals, two main sources of discomfort. The first of these is the cold at night during, at all events, three winter months. It is a very remarkable thing that except for a small apron or tassel both men and women are stark naked. The only efficient covering of any kind is an apron made of a fold of paper bark. This is worn only on Bathurst and Melville Islands, so far as I have seen, and is held in place by the arms which these women always carry characteristically bent at the elbows, so that the latter hold the apron close against the side of the body just above the hips. It is a remarkable fact that the native, though he feels the winter cold keenly, has never realized the fact that the kangaroos and opossum that he catches and eats in plenty would provide him with a warm covering. This is due to the fact that he prefers to cook his animals in the skin, so as to keep all the juices inside and therefore the first thing he does is to put the entire animal on the fire and singe the hair off. As it is, at night time the whole family huddles together, along with the dogs, under its bough or bark shelter with sheets of paper bark under and above and around them, if they can get any, and with perhaps two or three small fires very close to them. The native firmly believes in a small fire that he can get near to, even perhaps coil round and that can be easily replenished with small sticks.

The second source of discomfort is the presence, at most times and places, of a certain number and at other times and at all places near water, of an enormous number of flies by day and exceedingly vicious mosquitoes by night. The flies do not trouble the natives so much as they do the white men; in fact, you often see the former, especially the children, with their eyes encircled with a mass of crawling flies, apparently taking no notice of them. The mosquitoes attack the natives with very serious results, spreading malarial fever, &c., amongst them. The natives do not appear to be any more immune to tropical diseases such as malarial fever than the white settlers are. I have in my possession a stick marked with more than ninety notches indicating so many deaths from what was supposed to be malarial fever in the course of two months amongst the natives of Melville Island. In many parts they build special wet-season huts, each made of a framework of branches very much like the ribs and keel of a boat upside down. These are covered all over closely with paper or stringybark and only just a small entrance left through which the natives crawl until it can hold no more and there, almost hermetically sealed, with perhaps also a smoke fire going, they huddle together all night long in a more or less hopeless attempt both to sleep and to evade the mosquitoes. If they cannot get bark their only hope is to make great smoke fires with green bushes and grass but in the real mosquito season they have at best very uncomfortable and disturbed nights and have to make up for it by sleeping in the day. To keep flies off, in some places as on the Alligator Rivers, they use sometimes bird wings and sometimes whisks made of shredded bark. In hilly districts they are a little more fortunate, because if they can get up 200 or 300 feet they are re-

Fig. 2.

lately free from the pest. Near to Oenpelli, for example, on the East Alligator River there is an isolated hill about 300 feet high. Straight up this, through the scrub, there runs a path that has been used for long years as a track to some rock shelters on the top. Every night, as soon as the sun sets, a long procession of natives winds up the hill side from the plains around the billabongs and river, the women carrying their piccaninnies and pitchis containing water and stores of lily roots, yams and other food, the men carrying their spears and clubs.

The overhanging rocks form caves with low-lying shelving roofs, blackened with the smoke of years of fires and walls decorated with quaint, conventional designs of the animals on which they feed, all crudely drawn in red and yellow ochre, white pipe clay and charcoal mixed with grease. Here they camp, free from mosquitoes, in comparative coolness, shifting from the northern to the southern face, and *vice versa*, according to the direction from which the monsoonal storms are blowing. It is only in places such as this that there may be said to be anything at all in the nature of a permanent camping place; for the most part the natives wander about the country from one feeding ground to another, according to the nature of the season.

When the time comes for the turtle to lay its eggs they go to the laying ground on some sandy beach. When the lagoons and billabongs are alive with young geese the natives are there camping close by and catching them by the score; when birds are scarce they go to the lily pools and feed on roots and stems and seeds, and in the inland, drier, parts they gather together on the larger and more permanent waterholes where fish and shellfish and birds and vegetable food can be secured longer than elsewhere. The moment the rains fall, off they scatter to take advantage of supplies that do not exist during the dry season.

Equally characteristic with this nomadic habit, in fact, intimately associated with it, is the fact that the native has no idea whatever of the cultivation of crops nor of the domestication of animals. He has never realized that, if he sowed some of the large quantities of minute grass seed that the women patiently winnow with the wind, and then grind into a muddy paste on their flat stones, he could secure a supply for the future and be, to a certain extent, independent of the season and not forced to roam about from place to place in search of food. In this respect he is far lower than the Papuan, the New Zealander or the usual African native, all of whom have reached the agricultural stage and live in villages or compounds surrounded by their crops, with a more or less permanent food supply and therefore also with time and thought to spare for other branches of work. The fact that the Australian aboriginal has never of his own initiative cultivated a cereal or attempted to domesticate any animal as a food supply is one of fundamental importance and together with his nomadic instinct makes him much more difficult to deal with than the Papuan, African or New Zealander.

It must be said, however, that when once they have been shown how to do it then they are quite competent under supervision to undertake cultivation. Doubtless as time goes by they will be able to do the work on their own initiative. There are no finer vegetables anywhere than those grown at Mr. Warrington Rogers' station on the Roper, at Hodgson Downs or at some of the telegraph stations, such as Tennant's Creek, and in each case the actual manual work of watering, &c., is largely done by the natives, of course, entirely under supervision, but still the little that the adults now do indicates that the children if trained would

probably be quite competent to do much more than their wild parents and could certainly be made to realize the importance of cultivation as they already do in other parts where they have had the chance of being trained. As it is, the aboriginal, except those that are employed by whites, lives on such wild animal and vegetable food as he can secure from day to day, roaming about the country that is regarded as being owned by the tribe of which he is a member, camping where food is plentiful and moving on to a better hunting ground when he has temporarily depleted one.

One of the most striking features of the aboriginals is the way in which they are divided into a large series of tribes, each of which speaks a distinct dialect and occupies, or is regarded as doing so, a tract of country the boundaries of which are well known to the natives. The existence of these dialects is one of the most puzzling and difficult things to understand amongst the aboriginals. In the first place, it is not at all easy in many cases to ascertain the native name of the tribe. As likely as not you will get a locality name, not the true tribal name, and when once a mistake has been made in pronunciation, or even in the actual word, and it has been repeated by white men, the aboriginals are so anxious to please and also in some respects so indifferent, that the wrong pronunciation or even word may actually be adopted by them and pass into circulation. For example the name Woolner, as it is commonly spelt, is a white man's name for a tribe that calls itself Punuurlu. It may be a native word but it has been mistakenly applied by the whites as a tribal name and has been tacitly accepted by the natives or by a large number of them.

What exactly constitutes an Australian tribe is somewhat difficult to say and the term has never, so far as I am aware, been definitely defined. It may conveniently be defined somewhat as follows:—A tribe is a group of individuals speaking a common dialect, differing in the nature of its words from that of other groups and regarded as owning a definite tract of country, the boundaries of which are known to them, and recognised by the members of other tribes. Each tribe may usually be divided into sections and the real test of whether a native is or is not a member of any particular tribe is whether, under normal conditions, he may wander freely over the country owned by that tribe. He must not trespass on the land of any other tribe, entering upon this only after he has received permission of the owners to do so. In the case even of natives belonging to different sections of a tribe there is a recognition of local ownership within the wider range of tribal ownership. No members of any one local group enter a camp of natives belonging to another local group until they have been formally invited to do so.

When important ceremonies are about to take place messengers are always sent out often to distant tribes and the etiquette observed illustrates well one aspect of aboriginal character. Each messenger is provided by some important member or recognised leader of the group that sends him out with an object, the possession of which at once indicates to all whom he meets that he is a messenger. In the southern parts of the Territory this will take the form of a sacred stick called a churingo, or popularly a bull roarer. The bearer of this is absolutely safe anywhere. On approaching a camp he sits down waiting until the local men choose to take notice of him, which may not be until after an hour or two. They all go on meanwhile quite unconcernedly as if he did not exist, and then one or two of the older men will go over to him; he will show them his credentials and

deliver his message, after which he is brought into camp, made free of the special men's camp and provided with food. This same thing goes on at every camp that he visits and exactly the same etiquette is observed when the visitors arrive at the camp from which the messenger was sent. In the northern parts, as for example, in the Alligator River district, when boys are to be initiated, they are sent out on a journey to distant camps amongst strange tribes that often lasts for months. Each of them carries a small wand and under the protection of this they travel in perfect safety. When they come to a strange camp they stand close together, leaning on their wands and singing a special corroboree song, which must be replied to by the women in camp. Fig. 3.

It is interesting to find that the natives have also as it were extended this feeling of sacredness of the persons of their own messengers to those of aboriginals who are carrying messages for white men. A letter is always spoken of as a "paper yabber" and is carried in a cleft stick so that it can be seen easily. Last year a native carried a "paper yabber" for me 90 miles in this way and they not infrequently traverse longer distances than this, the cleft stick acting as a safe passport. They look upon the "paper yabber" as a mysterious thing that is endowed with the capacity of seeing, as is well instanced by an aboriginal who abstracted a stick of tobacco from a parcel that he was carrying and was highly indignant with the "paper yabber" for telling the white man what he had done, because he had hid it in a hollow log while committing the theft, so that it should not be able to see what he was doing. Fig. 4.

A matter of very great importance in dealing with the natives is the fact that every tribe has certain definite places where important ceremonies are performed. These ceremonies are very often associated with their mythical ancestors, or they may be concerned with providing and regulating food supplies by magic. In any case their right performance is a matter of deep importance to the aboriginals and to be shut off from the spots that are especially associated with the memory of their ancestors and where from time immemorial they have performed these ceremonies, naturally causes a feeling of resentment amongst the natives. Figs. 5 and 6.

For example, there is one special rocky ledge in a shallow cave in the Waterhouse Range, right in the heart of the continent, which is associated with ceremonies of the kangaroo totem. The face of the ledge, which is about 30 feet long, is decorated with broad bands of red ochre and white gypsum, which are renewed yearly when the ceremony is performed. The upper surface is black with congealed blood, which has also run down the face in great streaks and, judging by the appearance of the rock, it must have been used for long years. One of their ancestors, who was a great old kangaroo, was killed here and turned into the stone, which also contains large numbers of young kangaroo spirits. The blood-letting and singing songs connected with the spot cause the spirits to go out and be born as kangaroos, which other natives eat. Close by, also, an old native, who explained it all to me, dug into the earth and showed me an elongate rounded stone at least a foot in diameter which is supposed to be part of the old kangaroo's tail. The kangaroo men must perform the ceremony once every year at this spot, which is called Undiara, and there are very many places with similar associations belonging to other groups of natives scattered all over Central Australia.

It is difficult to understand, unless you have lived amongst them, the large part that these ceremonies play in their life. They are quite distinct from the

ordinary corroborees that any one may see and are only performed by men out of the sight of women and young people. On one occasion, in the Warramunga, one of the Northern Territory tribes, the late Mr. Gillen and myself witnessed a continuous series lasting over three months. A remarkable thing is that in many parts they have been carried on year after year without the few white people living in the district knowing anything about them. It must be realized that their existence forms a very serious practical difficulty in connexion with any attempt, though it may be necessary to make this, to remove the aboriginals from any particular part of the country except in settled districts where they have lost all their old beliefs and, to a large extent, given up performing their old ceremonies.

Another great difficulty in dealing fairly with the aboriginals is caused by their intensely communistic habits. They have very little idea of private property. If you give a man, say, a stick of tobacco there are certain individuals, such as men who might lawfully be his fathers-in-law, to whom he is obliged by custom to give some; and even if they are not on the spot, he will immediately share it with others. Give a man a shirt in return for work that he has done for you and the chances are that you will find a friend of his, who has done nothing except ask for it, wearing it next day. On many stations and in many private houses the work is done by a few natives; but every one at hand shares in the proceeds, whether these be clothes, food or tobacco; and it never occurs to them that the lazy loafer is living at the expense of his more industrious brother.

Still another point of very great importance which must always be borne in mind in dealing with the aboriginals, is their intense belief in evil magic. In tribes inhabiting the country around the Alligator Rivers a very favorite form of magic is to get hold of some excrement, it does not matter how small a piece, of a man or woman against whom you may have a grudge, and whom you wish to injure. All you have to do is to get two or three friends to help you perform a rather elaborate ceremony out in some quiet spot, where he cannot see you, and you can easily encompass his death. The belief has one beneficial result in that the camps of these natives are much better from a sanitary point of view than in most Australian tribes, because everything is carefully buried, lest some enemy should be lurking about.

The natives have no idea of disease or pain of any kind as being due to anything but evil magic, except that which is caused by an actual accident that they can see. If a man has a headache, it is evil magic that has got inside him and he will wear, in some tribes, his wife's head rings, so that the magic may pass into them and be thrown away with them into the bush.

Anything that they do not understand they associate with evil magic. One of the most striking and characteristic examples of this that I know of is the fact that when first they came across the track of a cart they thought it was a path along which evil magic was passing and if they were obliged to cross it they jumped over it as high in the air as they could lest the magic should enter them.

Natives, also, are always most frightened of magic of another tribe or distant part and will often fix upon some man who lives 50 or 100 miles away as guilty of causing the death by evil magic of a member of their own group.

The result of all this is that there is always a feeling of mutual suspicion and distrust between members of different tribes, each of which has its own peculiar forms of magic by means of which it may encompass the death of strangers. Often

in our little camp associated with the departmental office in Darwin, we had natives of various tribes together for a few days at a time and it was very noticeable not only how they kept apart from one another but the mutual distrust with which they viewed each other. You have only to tell a native that he is the victim of evil magic and he succumbs at once and can only be cured by the exercise of counter magic. The feeling is so strong that on more than one occasion when a woman, strong in magic power, had given it out that she was using magic against some individual, it very seriously interfered with the treatment of that native under medical supervision in a hospital.

Even an aboriginal who has lived long with the whites and has lost most of his old beliefs, will still firmly retain his faith in evil magic, though he might be ashamed to own it in public. It will be readily understood, therefore, that this aspect of the native character requires very careful consideration in connexion with any attempt that might be made to segregate members of different tribes on one area.

The tribes, again, may be divided into groups, the members of each group being allied to one another in regard to their beliefs and also in the performance of special ceremonies, more especially those in regard to the initiation of the young men. For example, the native tribes on Bathurst and Melville Islands are closely allied to one another in these respects and differ markedly from all those on the mainland. The tribes on the Coburg Peninsula and in the large area drained by the East, West and South Alligator Rivers and away to the west, as far, at all events, as Point Stuart, form an allied group with marked features in common. Such, for example, as the absence of any definite class system. They differ radically both in their organization and initiation ceremonies from tribes to the south of them. So again, we have groups of tribes along the Roper and Daly and Victoria Rivers, all of which have the same fundamental organization and common initiation ceremonies, but differ radically in their class organization from groups of coastal tribes. Any segregation of the tribes, to have any chance of success, must be based upon this similarity or dissimilarity in regard to organization, customs and beliefs.

MORALITY AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE ABORIGINALS

It is not infrequently stated by white settlers that the natives have no morality. This is, of course, entirely untrue—that is, of aboriginals in their normal state, before they have been degraded by contact with a civilization that they do not understand and from which they need protection.

Their moral code is a very different one from ours and certainly permits of and sanctions, practices which, in some cases, are revolting to us, but there are others, such as their strict law in regard to what woman a particular man may or may not marry, and *vice versa*, which it is a serious mistake to interfere with until we can give them something better and something that they can understand. Of course in many cases where the tribes, as in the immediate neighbourhood of Darwin, are not only demoralized but decimated, the old rules cannot be enforced; but, except in these cases, the natives should be encouraged to adhere to them.

It may also be said, speaking generally, that the uncivilized native is honest, with probably not more exceptions than amongst whites; but that the so-called civilized aboriginal who has given up his old habits and become often a mere loafer, in many cases, is not. It is, of course, necessary to make it quite

Fig. 7.

Fig. 8.

clear to natives working on the stations, &c., that the white man's property must not be interfered with but when once he understands this and finds himself well treated in regard to food and tobacco, he rarely steals. A native left in charge of property of any kind may generally be relied upon to prevent any others from interfering with it and in camp one is accustomed to leave such things as tobacco about without fear of its being stolen.

During the whole of our expedition across Australia in 1901, so far as Mr. Gillen and myself were aware, we had nothing stolen, though the opportunities for appropriating such prized things as knives and tobacco were abundant. We sent our two boys back overland from the mouth of the Macartbur River, on the Gulf of Carpentaria, to Charlotte Waters—a journey that occupied them four months—and at the end of that time they handed over their horses and impedimenta in perfectly good order to the officer in charge of the station.

On some stations there is undoubtedly difficulty in regard to the aboriginals both harassing and killing cattle and this is a matter that is very difficult to deal with in a way that is fair to both whites and aboriginals. In many parts there is practically little trouble and it is only right to say that the personality of the white man counts for a certain amount. Some stations are, fortunately, practically free from the trouble, others are constantly suffering and the nature of the country makes it extremely difficult, in most cases, to capture the offending natives. Even when this can be done, it means an altogether disproportionate expenditure of time and money and the present system of punishment is useless either as a preventive or a corrective.

On the other hand, while it is true that, in some parts, the aboriginal gives trouble, it is equally true that, at the present day, practically all the cattle stations depend on their labour and, in fact, could not get on without it, any more than the police constables could. They do work that it would be very difficult to get white men to do and do it not only cheerfully but for a remuneration that, in many cases, makes all the difference at the present time between working the station at a profit or a loss. Out on the run the first thing that one hears, often long before daybreak, is the call to the boys to get up and go out in search of the horses. They are up without a murmur or anything to eat and off they go into the bush with bridles in their hands, often shivering, through grass and scrub heavy with dew, until, after anything up to a two or three miles trudge, they find a horse, mount him bare-back, track all the others up and bring them into camp. Then, in intervals of packing, they eat their breakfast and all day long ride behind, seeing that the pack-horses with their loads are kept on the track. When mustering they are hard at work from early morn till late evening, just as their masters are.

Some idea of how useful the natives may be made under proper guidance is afforded by one or two incidents during the recent strike in Darwin. Under the control of the Chief Protector Mr. G. W. Stretton twelve stalwart aboriginals assisted in the unloading of steamers and on another occasion when white men refused to work ten of them loaded sixty-three tons of coal into trucks outside Darwin, then came to the ship's side and unloaded half of it, the whole work being done after 3 p.m. It was a dark night and they worked on till they could work no longer, laughing and cheerful the whole time.

Apart from their usefulness, many aboriginals are possessed of qualities and perform actions that

would call for warm admiration and appreciation if exhibited or done by whites. Two or three that came under my personal notice will illustrate this. When the Administrator and myself were trying to get across from the overland telegraph line to Borroloola in a motor car, the country was so rough that our supply of petrol gave out and we simply came to a standstill. Very fortunately we had taken the precaution to have a "boy" with us. In the first place his sense of locality, as usual amongst the natives, was very wonderful. There was no track and we were running across country with the object of striking a solitary waterhole fifty miles away. To us one clump of trees was very much like every other clump standing out on the open undulating plains. All that he did was to point out the direction every now and then and, without any hesitation, he brought us through and we found ourselves on the edge of the water-hole, which was below the level of the ground, so that we could not see it until we were right on its margin.

Next day we bumped on unceasingly, crossing what is commonly known as "debill-debill" country, where the earth in dry seasons is hard and seared with cracks big enough to hold a motor car wheel and covered with a growth of coarse cane-grass, often ten feet high. The surface of the ground was thrown into an endless series of bumps, over which the car made miserable progress, while we rapidly used our supply of petrol. We had another fifty miles of trackless country to the next water-hole, but, two miles before we reached it, the petrol ran out, and we came to a dead stop. We walked on in the blazing heat to the water, which was thick and foul and had it not been for the boy the outlook would have been serious. Quite cheerfully, just as if it were part of an ordinary day's work and nothing out of the common, he took a small billy of water, just a little tea, sugar and flour, and set off on a lonely walk of forty-six miles to an outlying little station, where we hoped he would find a solitary white man living. There was no water on the track but the boy not only went through and gave our note to the white man, who immediately came to our assistance, but, without waiting for a "spell," he got a horse and rode on another fifty miles to our nearest supply of petrol that had been previously sent up country. The aboriginals often do this kind of thing without receiving, or expecting to receive, any special thanks, though, naturally, such a boy is well looked after.

Then, again, about two years ago, a boy called "Neighbour" was arrested for supposed cattle killing. Along with another native he was being brought overland to Darwin by a mounted constable. Heavy rains had fallen and they came to a swollen creek. The boys, who are perfectly at home in the water, went in first with their chains on, the constable following afterwards on horseback. The horse slipped in the stream and turned over, kicking the constable and rendering him unconscious, or at least dazed, for a short time. Neighbour, looking round, saw what had happened and without a moment's hesitation, went to the constable's assistance, winding his chains in some manner round his neck and assisted the former on to land. Nothing would have been simpler than for him to have left the constable to his fate and to have cleared away into the bush. For this action the Albert medal has been bestowed by His Majesty on Neighbour, and is now kept safely in the Aboriginal Department. Neighbour wears proudly a little bit of the ribbon on ordinary and the medal on official occasions. It would be useless to trust him with it; he is a wild native and

could easily be persuaded to part with it if once he took it away into the bush.

Quite as heroic an action was that performed by a lubra now living at Katherine Creek, where she is well looked after by the post-office officials. Years ago a party of white men went out to the west of the telegraph line. It was a dry season and word came in that they were perishing. A relief party at once set out, amongst whom was this lubra with her "boy." The original party returned in safety, but of the search party all perished of thirst except this lubra and one white man. They had no water and the heat was fierce, but, leaving the white man, who was then helpless, under the shade of a bush, she walked on alone for some twenty miles to a little water-hole, carried back enough to save the white man's life and then guided him in to the water and the nearest station.

Two years ago, a little half-caste girl, only about fifteen years of age, was walking on Darwin jetty with her mistress who accidentally tripped and fell headlong into the water between the jetty and a steamer lying alongside. It was a dark night and the Darwin jetty is very badly lighted, but without a moment's hesitation the little half-caste dived in, caught hold of her mistress and swam with her to one of the piers, where she held her until assistance came. Not only does the tide, which rises twenty-four feet in the harbor, run strongly, but there is always the chance that a stray crocodile or shark may be lurking around.

These are only three examples out of very many that could be recorded of this kind of behaviour on the part of the natives. It is only also fair to add that one could relate many equally heroic deeds done by white men and women in the Northern Territory; in fact, more heroic because such things mean more to a white man than they do to an aboriginal, but they serve to show that the latter is capable of what we regard as truly unselfish action—of disregarding his own interests, and even risking his own life to help some one else.

That is one side of the picture, but there is quite another. I have known a native who was desirous of stealing a lubra from a friend, persuade the latter, on some pretext, to climb a tree and then, as he came down, hamstringing him rapidly with a sharp stone knife on both legs. Then, leaving his friend to crawl back to his camp as best he could, he ran off with the lubra.

Figs. 9,
10, 11.

The aboriginal is, indeed, a very curious mixture; mentally, about the level of a child who has little control over his feelings and is liable to give way to violent fits of temper, during which he may very likely behave with great cruelty. He has no sense of responsibility and, except in rare cases, no initiative. His memory in many cases is wonderful so far as subjects are concerned that affect his life and mode of conduct. When once he has seen any place, or any particular natural object, he knows it for all time. If once he has heard a corroboree he knows the words and music and his memory in respect to native traditions is marvellous. It must be understood, however, that in proportion to the narrow sphere of their actions, there is as great a mental difference amongst aboriginals as amongst whites in their wider sphere. This is well recognised amongst the natives themselves. For instance, there is one man on the Alligator River whose management of the wooden trumpet used during their ceremonies is wonderfully superior to that of any one else and whose fame as a musician has spread even beyond the limits of his own tribe. Whenever he is in camp he is always requested to play. So again in the making of all their various weapons and utensils, there are always certain individuals who are noted for their ability—some in making shields, others in making knives. There was one man be-

longing to the Kakadu tribe, on the Alligator River, who was extraordinarily able in regard to remembering traditions and was recognised as a great authority on the subject of the past history of the tribe. He was relating to us a tradition of the tribe, according to which an old ancestor sent out different individuals to populate various parts of the country. There were five groups of these individuals and he was able to tell us the names, so far as we could judge, of all of them. They included those of one hundred and twenty men and women and not only did he know their names, but also the totemic group to which each belonged and their intermarriages. It was really a wonderful feat of memory and the information was evidently correct, because it fitted in with other traditions and we tested him later and found him consistent. The possessor of any particular capacity does not, except in very rare cases, secure any very direct personal gain from its exercise beyond the fact that he has a reputation for ability. Everything is communistic and even if a man is provided with an extra supply of food, or, in recent years, tobacco, in return for something he has made or done, it is usually not long before it is divided amongst his friends. There is an equal distribution of profits quite irrespective of deserts.

Lastly, there is one feature that must not be omitted and that is the aboriginal's fondness for fun and his sense of humour. Under normal conditions they are always cheerful and are constantly either corroboreeing, or playing and laughing with one another. Nothing amuses them more than an accident that puts one of their number in an undignified or uncomfortable position. If a friend tumbles over a log and gives himself a good knock, they roar with laughter at him and the chances are that he joins in. If any one comes up who did not see it happen, he will be requested to do it again for the benefit of the new arrival and, as likely as not, will repeat the performance. Years after the event happened the recital of how two of the old men of the Kakadu tribe had to run for their lives and just managed to keep ahead of two charging buffaloes and an imitation of how they ran, what they said and what they looked like, were greeted with roars of laughter and kept a camp cheerful for an hour or two. They are wonderful at mimicking anything that they think is funny and the acting of two natives, one of whom tried to show me how a former Government Resident of the Territory had behaved when he suddenly trod on a snake, and the other who, after posing a few natives for the purpose, imitated by means of three sticks for a tripod and a sheet of paper bark for a focusing cloth, the actions of a very excitable photographer whom he had watched, was wonderfully realistic.

There are said to be 20,000 aboriginals in the Territory, but on what authority this statement is made I do not know, as it is quite impossible to form any definite and reliable estimate, and the above number is a mere guess. There are great areas, as in Arafura Land, where practically no white man has been—at all events there is no settlement—and here there is any abundance of native food and the tribes wander unhampered in their native state. Judging by what I have seen and heard, I think it probable that a census would show more nearly 50,000 than 20,000. One thing is certain and that is that in all parts where they are in contact with outsiders, especially with Asiatics, they are dying out with great rapidity.

PRESENT CONDITIONS AND TREATMENT OF THE ABORIGINALS.

At the present time, the aboriginals, so far as their relationship to incoming races, European and

Asiatic, are concerned, may be divided roughly into four groups :—

- (a) Those living in and around towns (Darwin, Pine Creek, &c.) and on mining fields.
- (b) Those living on land, such as that around the Daly and Roper Rivers, where they have been to a certain extent in contact with settlers, which land will shortly be thrown open for more or less close settlement.
- (c) Those living on large pastoral areas.
- (d) Those living on wild, unoccupied land, such as the north-eastern part of the Territory, and much of the land bordering the Gulf of Carpentaria.

(a) *Aboriginals Living in Towns, &c.*

These natives have long since become degenerate and have lost all their old customs and beliefs. Many of them are employed by white residents to whom they are useful and by whom they are well treated. Since the passing of the *Aboriginals Act* 1910, no permits to employ them have been granted to Asiatics.

A petition, largely supported in Darwin, was drawn up, asking that the section of the Act prohibiting their employment by Asiatics should be amended. In regard to this, I reported as follows :—

1. There are a few Asiatic employers in Darwin and Pine Creek to whom it might be possible to grant licences, but their number is very small and they all live in localities which, in consequence of the facts referred to below, have been declared "prohibited areas" under the Act.
2. The supplying of aboriginals with opium and spirits and a wholesale prostitution of native women are common and constant practices amongst the great body of Asiatics and form the most serious evil that the Department has to contend with in the settled and more especially the mining districts.
3. The general policy of the Department in regard to Asiatics is, and always must be, that of preventing them, as far as possible, from coming into contact with the aboriginals.

The Government declined to accede to the request of the petitioners and I am more than ever convinced of the justice and wisdom of the policy of separating the aboriginals from all contact with Asiatics, though it is one which at present is extremely difficult to carry out in its entirety.

Under the *Aboriginals Ordinance* 1911, power is given to the Administrator to declare any place to be a prohibited area, within which it shall not be lawful for any aboriginal or half-caste to be or remain without the express permission of a protector or police officer.

The Chinese quarters in Darwin, Pine Creek and the more important mining areas are now declared "prohibited areas" and this restriction must be extended so as to apply to all other Chinese mining fields and quarters. The natives have been for so many years allowed to do exactly what they liked in regard to frequenting all parts that, without a much larger staff, and consequently more efficient supervision it is difficult to make sure that they do not frequent any prohibited area. The Chinese also are very astute and while undoubtedly there are not many aboriginals who venture into Chinatown in Darwin, there are amongst the lower Chinese many who find means of supplying the

aboriginals with opium out in the bush. When, however, the compound at Darwin, with its native houses, which is now in course of formation, is complete and under proper supervision, it will be more easy to deal with the aboriginals and to prevent the Asiatics from coming into contact with them under cover of night. Fig. 12.

In order to meet the cases of the few reputable white settlers who live in prohibited areas and to prevent any hardship or inconvenience in business matters, the plan has been adopted of issuing special permits in the form of brass discs that are given to employers of natives and enable the latter to enter a prohibited area when sent on business by their employers, who are responsible for the proper use of the disc.

(b) *Aboriginals Living on Lands such as Those Around the Daly and Roper Rivers, &c.*

The question of what to do with this class of natives forms a serious problem awaiting immediate solution. Up to the present time, they have been accustomed to wander freely over their old hunting grounds, where, along the banks of the rivers and in the billabongs, they can secure an ample food supply. On one or two stations, such as that of Messrs. Thomas and Roberts, on the Daly River, a certain number of them are employed and all of them have, more or less, come into contact with white men, though the great majority are still in their wild state.

With the opening up of the land, conditions will abruptly change, because it is in these parts that are suitable for farming that the land will be cut up into small blocks, each with access to water, &c. This cutting up has already taken place on the Daly, where twenty-six farms have already been taken up. In the case of great pastoral areas, it is possible for the aboriginals to be allowed to roam more or less freely, but when the land is sub-divided into comparatively small farms, then it is out of the question. The natives are being, of necessity, deprived of their natural food supply, and cannot possibly camp on the water-holes, as they have been accustomed to do. There are only two alternatives, either to allow them to wander about as outcasts, some of them doubtless working for the settlers but all of them practically dependent for their existence on promiscuous charity, or to establish a reserve for them under proper control. To be of any practical use, the reserve must be situated somewhere in their own district. To attempt to remove them to some other part and place them amongst strange natives would be futile. Fig. 13.

(c) *Aboriginals Living on Large Pastoral Areas.*

These pastoral areas, such as the Victoria River Downs, Willeroo, Messrs. Bradshaw's station, and Newcastle Waters, on the west of the telegraph line, and others such as Brunette, Corella, Eva Downs, the McArthur River Station, Nutwood Downs, Tanumbirini, Hodgeson Downs, &c., on the east, occupy great stretches of country over which the natives roam more or less freely. A limited number of them are employed on the stations, where they are well treated, and do most useful work, for which they receive food, clothes, tobacco, &c.

Though comparatively few natives are employed on any station—the numbers in constant employment varying from two or three to thirty or forty—yet there is always a native camp in the vicinity of every station, where a larger or smaller number of aboriginals is gathered together, attracted by the chance of securing food from the station. It is a constant occurrence on practically all stations where cattle are killed to distribute the offal and bones, often with plenty of meat attached to them, amongst the natives, who gather round the killing

yard like crows round a dying sheep. Everything is eaten and every bone pounded up to get at the marrow. In addition to this, there are many odd scraps distributed and the few natives who are permanently employed, unless special precautions are taken, will share what they receive with the others.

It is the natives living on some of these large pastoral areas who are troublesome in the way of cattle killing, and yet on the other hand it is not too much to say that, under present conditions, the majority of the stations are largely dependent on the work done by black "boys."

(d) *Aboriginals Living on Wild Unoccupied Land.*

Of these, practically nothing is known. At the present time, they carefully avoid coming into contact with any white man traversing the country that they occupy, such as Arafura Land, but as settlement proceeds they will gradually be drawn in to civilization.

Many of the wild tribes that live on the coast line come into contact, much to their detriment, with pearl and trepang fishers. The area of country is so great that a complete and effective patrol is at present impossible. The Department has now a small auxiliary motor boat which will be of service for this, amongst other purposes, and when the Government steamer *Stuart* is in commission, it will be possible to exercise some control over these pearl and trepang fishers who at present are free to do what they wish when they are out of sight of Darwin.

TREATMENT OF ABORIGINAL WOMEN.

This question is a very serious one, and requires careful, but, at the same time, firm, treatment. The regulations framed to deal with it must, of necessity, be definite in their nature, but they will have to be carried out with great tact on the part of the Protectors.

I have already referred to the question of the Asiatics and their wide-spread habit of prostituting the lubras. The aboriginal man's code of morality is different from that of the white man and he sees no wrong in lending his lubra. If it be within the limits of his own tribe he is ruled by definite laws defining to whom he may—in fact, sometimes must—lend her, and to whom he may not. Asiatics and Europeans stand outside the pale of these laws, and, therefore, the natives can and will lend their lubras freely to them, more especially since, in association with the Asiatics, the attraction of opium is too strong to be resisted. Nothing is more patent than the rapid degeneration of the native in contact with Chinese. The lubra ceases to bear children, abortion being undoubtedly practised in many cases, and becomes a physical wreck.

In regard to intercourse between the whites and aboriginals, there is no such physical degradation of the lubras. It must be said very frankly that the absence of any women other than aboriginals in outlying districts is the chief reason for so many complaints in regard to the prostitution of aboriginal women, and so long as the absence of white women is a feature of the Territory, so long will it be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to put an end to this serious evil.

The presence of married people and families scattered over the country would have a wonderful influence for good, and it would be of the greatest advantage if preference were given to married people amongst the settlers on the lands that will soon be thrown open and in the selection of all such officials as police officers.

It is most important that all Protectors should be married men and emphatically no one except a married man should be the Superintendent of a reserve or native station or settlement.

With this preference for married men must be associated the providing of proper quarters for the wives of officers such as do not exist at present.

The practice that now obtains only too often of a white man, such as a drover or teamster, travelling over the country in company with an aboriginal woman whom he has, perhaps, taken out of a camp, or who may have come of her own free will, together, probably, with a "boy" who is, or is supposed to be, her husband, must be stopped. At present, so long as the lubra is not taken from her own district into another, the law does not deal directly with the matter, but the Act must be amended so that this deplorable practice can be carefully controlled without inflicting hardship on either aboriginals or whites. The Protector must have power, if he thinks it advisable, to refuse to allow a lubra to accompany a white man, even if her husband, nominal or real, is going also.

Apart from this aspect of the question, the aboriginals are, I believe, with exceptions here and there, well treated by the settlers. This is certainly the case in regard to those on the great majority of the cattle runs, and also on the various police and telegraph stations.

Reference may be made here to the intermarriage of aboriginal lubras with men of other races. In past years there have been a considerable number of cases in which Asiatics and Europeans have lived with aboriginal women as their wives and though not legally married have treated them as such and have recognised their children. Under the Act no one except an aboriginal man may marry an aboriginal lubra except by special permission which should be and is only granted under very exceptional circumstances. In the cases referred to above it was an alternative between granting permission or separating the man and woman, the latter returning to the native camp with her children. In these instances the woman had become accustomed to the relative comfort of the white man's or Asiatic's camp and after many years absence had probably become quite unable and certainly unfitted to live the ordinary life in the native camp. To consign her to the latter would be a cruel thing to do and therefore in such exceptional cases permission to marry was given but, when proper provision for the aboriginals is made, such inter-racial marriages should not be permitted.

PROTECTORS, ETC.

At the present time the official staff of the Department consists of a Chief Protector, a Chief Inspector, who is also a Protector, and two other Protectors, together with a clerk. In addition to these, the officers in charge of the fourteen police stations in the Territory act as Protectors. Needless to say, the hearty co-operation of the Police Department is essential for the efficient working of the Aboriginals Act, and I am glad to have the opportunity of acknowledging the services rendered by the police officers, and especially the cordial assistance of Inspector Waters, the head of the department.

The Territory is of such great extent, and means of communication so hopelessly slow and inefficient, that it would require a very large staff of official protectors to carry on the patrolling duty which is at present necessary to insure the satisfactory working of the Act.

Some idea of the difficulties attendant upon carrying out the Act may be gathered from the fact that, in order to arrest one man who was setting it at defiance, a Protector and a police officer had each of them to traverse, along different routes, upwards of 1,000 miles of wild country.

The Act contemplates the appointment of Protectors for districts within which they shall carry out their duties. This would be a good system if it were practicable but as the Territory is only, as yet, mapped in the most vague way, while surveys are practically unknown, endless legal difficulties might ensue if each Protector were appointed for a district, the boundaries of which were not defined. For the sake of convenience the districts under the Act have been declared to be co-terminous with the Dog Districts, and each official Protector has had all districts assigned to him. This is apparently the only way out of the difficulty, but, as surveys are carried out and the land becomes settled, it will be possible to define accurately and gazette certain districts from time to time and to appoint Protectors for them.

The superintendents and officers in charge of such stations and reserves as are founded will act as Protectors and, in order to make it more practicable to carry out the provisions of the Act in remote and inaccessible parts of the Territory, I recommend that a certain number of reliable and reputable settlers and officials be appointed Honorary Protectors, with powers to be defined in the Regulations.

Amongst these Honorary Protectors I think it highly desirable to include women as well as men, as there are circumstances under which the former will be of great service, and the simple fact that there are women Protectors will probably be an important factor in regard to one aspect of the aboriginal problem to which reference has already been made. I also recommend that the official Protectors be made special constables and, with a view to checking the opium traffic, officers under the Customs Act.

I recommend that the staff of the Department should consist of individuals with the following titles :—

- (1) Chief Protector.
- (2) Official Protectors.
- (3) Superintendents of stations and reserves, who will also be Official Protectors, their wives to act as Matrons and to be also Protectors.
- (4) *Ex-officio* Protectors (Police officers in charge of stations).
- (5) Honorary Protectors.

Either before or after appointment, all Official Protectors, Superintendents and Matrons should have passed through a course of first aid to the wounded.

All Protectors and Superintendents should be married men, and, as far as possible, the same should apply in the case of the *Ex-officio* Protectors.

EMPLOYMENT.

The Act makes constant reference to the subject of employment, but the meaning of the term is nowhere defined, and requires to be made clear. It should, for example, be stated that the fact that an aboriginal is constantly on premises occupied by any individual, or is constantly in his company, shall be regarded as sufficient evidence that the aboriginal is in his employ, whether he or she is actually working for him or not.

RELATION BETWEEN ABORIGINAL AND EMPLOYER.

The Act, as it stands at present, is very unsatisfactory, in so far as, while it affords every protection to the aboriginal, it offers no remedy to the white man if the aboriginal misbehaves himself. The latter is usually under the impression that he is not under any obligation to the white man who employs him, and that, without a moment's warn-

ing, he may, for example, walk away from his post and leave his employer helpless and without any redress. Of course, in a great many cases, a native who wishes to "go bush," or gets tired of his employment, tells his employer and often provides a substitute, but this is by no means always so and you may wake up any morning to find yourself either without a boy or with a new one, who has been installed without your knowledge and will some day, with equal suddenness, disappear in his turn.

Whilst nothing like indenture would be advisable, it is necessary to have some check on the behaviour of the aboriginal and to make him feel, if possible, some little sense of responsibility. This can only be accomplished by giving an Official Protector power of summary punishment. It should be provided by regulation that any employer who has reason to complain of the behaviour of an aboriginal may lay his complaint before a Protector. If the latter, after hearing the evidence of both sides, be satisfied that the employer has just cause of complaint, he should be able to order the aboriginal to be locked up for a period not exceeding twenty-four hours. Punishment of natives to be salutary must be summary.

ISSUING OF PERMITS.

The actual issuing of permits to employ aboriginals should, I think, be left in the hands of the Official Protectors. Police Officers and Honorary Protectors should have the power to grant temporary permits, which will remain in force until either allowed or disallowed by an Official Protector. When disallowed, due notice of the same must be given, or otherwise, as distances are so great and means of communication so poor, hardship might be done to the employer. The Chief Protector should not grant permits because under the Act he constitutes a Court of Appeal.

Certain restrictions are necessary to safeguard the issue of permits. In the first place, it would be inadvisable for an Honorary Protector to grant a permit to himself, or to any one whom he employs, and, secondly, the Act must be amended so as to provide that no person who has been refused a permit by one Protector shall be able to secure one from another without the authority of the Chief Protector. Any infringement of this condition should be made an offence against the Act.

It will not infrequently be the case that the Chief Protector will be away from the office and out of reach of communication and there may be duties to perform which the Chief Protector alone may do. To provide for this contingency, the Administrator should have power to appoint any person to act as deputy for the Chief Protector, who may exercise, for the time being, similar functions to those of the Chief Protector without affecting the discharge of the same functions by the latter.

At the present time a permit allows the holder of it to employ aboriginals without any discrimination. There have not infrequently arisen cases in which it has been deemed advisable to grant permission to employ men only. Such conditional permits have been issued but are probably irregular. The plan of conditional permit is an excellent one and I recommend an amendment in the Act to deal with this.

Under present conditions the difficulty of securing labour in the Territory is so great that permits to employ aboriginals in hotels have been issued; but there can be no doubt that the Western Australian regulation of not issuing such is the right one and must be adopted as soon as practicable.

SUPPLY OF OPIUM AND SPIRITUOUS LIQUORS TO ABORIGINALS.

No reference to the question of supplying opium and spirituous liquor to aboriginals is made in the Act, but the matter is a serious one and requires special legislation.

It is quite true that it is illegal to supply opium to any one, but the fact remains that it is constantly supplied to aboriginals and it is advisable to include this as an offence against the Act with a special punishment attached to it.

I therefore recommend the addition of a section such as is now in force in Western Australia, and that the police should have instructions to enforce it rigidly.

A serious matter and one difficult to deal with is the supply of spirit to natives in buffalo hunters' camps. In some cases I have reason to believe that methylated spirits are provided. The custom of giving spirits to natives in buffalo camps was most regrettably started some years ago by one buffalo hunter, and in order to secure "boys" it has been found necessary that all should do the same, as they naturally go to the camps where they can get spirits. If none were given all camps would be on the same footing and I recommend that a special condition of being granted a licence to shoot buffaloes be that the licensee undertakes not to supply spirits to natives in his employ. The licence of any hunter guilty of infringing this condition should be immediately forfeited, as also his licence to employ natives.

MEDICAL OFFICERS, HOSPITALS, TREATMENT, ETC.

There were originally two medical officers associated entirely with the Department. Experience soon showed that this was inadvisable. The life led by the aboriginals is such that it is useless to attempt to treat them except in the very simplest way in the bush; in fact, any layman with a very slight knowledge and a few simple drugs could do all that is possible to be done for them in their camps. Any serious work can only be carried on in a properly-equipped hospital, and in many cases a native could only be detained for treatment by main force. I therefore suggested that the two medical men should be attached to the general medical staff, which would enable their services to be utilized for the benefit of whites as well as aboriginals, but that it should be understood that the services of one of them were to be especially at the call of the Aboriginal Department.

This suggestion has been adopted. I also suggested that small medicine chests containing a selected number of drugs, accompanied by a pamphlet describing as simply as possible their use, should be distributed amongst Government officials and station-holders for the benefit of white settlers and aboriginals alike.

As mentioned already, it is most advisable that, wherever possible, all future appointees to offices such as that of protector, superintendent, matron or teacher on stations and missions should have passed through a course of "first aid." Such knowledge is often very valuable in the back blocks.

In each hospital there should be special provision made for treating aboriginals apart from white patients. The services of intelligent half-castes could probably be secured as attendants. This provision need only be on a very simple scale, the wards taking the form of tents or bush shelters. The conditions in fact approximating as nearly as possible to their own native camp and open air life only under hygienic conditions.

PROVISION FOR TREATING CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

The question of how best to cope with the existence of various forms of venereal disease is one that must be seriously faced from the point of view of the welfare of both the aboriginal and white population. The native morality is such that the disease, once contracted, is bound to be widely disseminated amongst both aboriginals and white men of low morality.

In the first place as complete an examination as possible must be carried out (this is now in course of progress in the mining districts). The matter is a serious one, involving much expense, and, owing to the nature of the natives, is surrounded with great difficulties, but when it becomes practicable and the country is opened up, there will be no other course open but to follow the example of Western Australia and establish lock-hospitals for men and women to which, if necessary, they can be forcibly removed and where they can be detained until cured. The only possible situation for such hospitals is on islands, and two suitable for the purpose, one for men and one for women, could be selected in such a position that they could be under the charge of one medical officer. Special provision must be made in the Act in order to provide for the examination and removal of aboriginals to lock-hospitals.

TRIAL OF ABORIGINALS.

During the past year I have been present in court whilst natives have been tried for various offences and have been much impressed with the unfair position occupied by aboriginal prisoners as compared with white men.

A very serious difficulty arises in the case of Australian aboriginals which is not met with in dealing with other savages such as the Maories. All the latter have a language that varies but little, whereas in Australia it is extraordinary how many entirely different dialects are met with. Each tribe has a dialect of its own, with the result that no one can attempt to master them all. So far as the words are concerned there is just as much difference between those in the language of two tribes such as the Larakia at Darwin and the Worgait at Point Charles, only a few miles away across the harbor, as there is between those in the French and German languages. No ordinary person can attempt to learn more than one or two and therefore for the most part verbal communication must be carried on, and evidence in court given in a kind of pidgin-English, which is not altogether satisfactory, more especially in the case of wild natives who are in the position of either prisoners or witnesses.

It not infrequently happens that aboriginals are convicted on their own admission which they make without in the least realizing that such an admission, which may or may not be the strict truth, will send them to gaol. It is also little short of ludicrous to go into a court the day before a trial and see the farce being solemnly enacted of a barrister and constable putting a witness through his facings in the box preparatory to his appearing before the Judge next day. I am not in the least imputing any wrong motive to the constable or barrister, because I know them to be or to wish to be quite fair and I realize the difficulties of their position when they have to deal with untutored savages who must be "coached"; but there is, it must be confessed, an element of danger in such legal proceedings. It is also only right to say that in every case of an aboriginal that I have seen tried in Darwin, whether before a magistrate or a Judge and jury, justice was most decidedly tempered with mercy, but as

a safeguard I would recommend that (1) no aboriginal be allowed to plead guilty except with the consent of an official protector, and (2) no native should be convicted on evidence other than such as would serve to convict a white man accused of the same offence.

CRIMES COMMITTED BY WILD ABORIGINALS AND THE PUNISHMENT OF ABORIGINALS.

NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING AN ABORIGINAL REFORMATORY.

At the present time there are, and probably for many years to come there will be, tribes of wild natives who are not in contact with civilization. In their natural state the natives are governed by their own customs, the carrying out of which is as strictly insisted upon as is the observance of laws amongst white men. Even amongst semi-civilized natives on the outskirts of civilization their old customs carry much more weight than the laws of the white men of which indeed, beyond the fact that it is dangerous to touch the property of white men or injure the latter, they have only a very vague comprehension.

There are many deeds committed by wild natives which are crimes, and often most serious ones under our laws, but are in strict accord with their own customs and it is manifestly advisable not to interfere with their customs so long as they are dealing with fellow tribesmen. In the case of semi-civilized natives who have some knowledge, but still a very imperfect one of our laws and are as yet strongly influenced by their own customs, considerable discretion should be exercised when a deed is committed which is a crime under our laws, but is strictly in accord with their customs.

There are cases in which it may be just and at the same time expedient, because it will act as an object lesson to the natives who are coming under the influence of civilization to deal with the offender under our laws, but there are others in which it is better to take no notice and to leave the matter in the hands of the natives themselves. In many cases a friendly consultation between a protector and a police officer as to the wisest course to adopt would be advantageous.

Within the bounds of civilization there can, of course, be only one system of laws, but whilst this is so it is imperative that an important change should be made in regard to the manner of punishing natives.

The Aboriginals Act as it stands at present does not provide for any definite punishment for aboriginals other than sending them to gaol in common with other offenders. There is, fortunately, under the Aboriginals Ordinance power given to the Chief Protector to authorize a police officer to take into his custody any aboriginal or half-caste and to deal with him as he may direct. It is most advisable for the Chief Protector to have some such general power as this in order to deal with cases, for example, where a man unlawfully takes a boy or lubra away from camp. That boy or lubra can be taken charge of by the officer and restored to his camp. The power is also most useful, because it allows a native who is guilty of some offence to be held in restraint without being sent to gaol, to which, of course, he cannot be committed by the Protector but only on the order of a magistrate after trial in Court. There are many occasions on which it would be most inadvisable for a native to be committed to gaol; in fact, experience has shown that in the first place sending an aboriginal to gaol has no deterrent effect so far as crime is concerned; and, in the second,

he comes out worse than he went in. The average aboriginal thinks it no degradation or hardship to go to "Fanny Bay," the local gaol; many of them indeed regard it rather as a mark of distinction than otherwise and are proud to have been there.

Then, again, there are certain natives who without doing anything that actually renders them liable to be brought before a Court of law behave in such a way as to interfere seriously with the work of the protectors. For example, within the past few months one particular lubra who has considerable influence has been the means of decoying some of the young girls from the Roper Mission Station. This is not an offence against the law, as she did not actually remove them from the station and no prosecution could lie against her in a Court, and yet the effect in the minds of the natives of such successful defying of the authorities is very detrimental to the influence of the latter and to the welfare of the young natives.

It is essential that there should be some special reformatory institution to which aboriginals convicted of crimes, except homicide, should be committed rather than to gaol. A reformatory of this kind must be on an island in order to prevent easy escape. Here the offenders could be detained, and during their detention they should be employed in useful and profitable labour.

In addition to aboriginals committed to the reformatory on the warrant of a magistrate, the Chief Protector on a report received from the superintendent of a reserve or station, or of a protector, should be able to commit an aboriginal guilty of serious misconduct, which does not actually constitute an offence against the Act, to such a reformatory. In this case the committal should receive the approval of the Administrator, which will be quite a sufficient safeguard against any miscarriage of justice. Some such power as this in the hands of the Chief Protector is absolutely essential. I would suggest that either Field Island off the mouth of the Alligator River, or Peron Island off the mouth of the Daly be used for this purpose.

HALF-CASTES.

The question of half-castes other than the children of legally married men and women is a somewhat difficult one to deal with. In the first place, the Act requires to be amended so as to include a more clear definition of a half-caste than it now does.

It is sincerely to be hoped that, as the country becomes populated, the proportionate number will become less. The first suggestion that naturally arises is their segregation into one or two special institutions designed for their training alone. I am not, however, after much consideration, inclined to favour this proposal so far as the northern part of the Territory is concerned.

The half-castes are in a most unfortunate position. There may possibly be 100-150 of them in the northern and, approximately, the same number in the southern part, where also there are quadroons who may be regarded as belonging to the white population.

I think it may be said that though the half-castes belong neither to the aboriginal nor to the whites, yet, on the whole, they have more leaning towards the former; certainly this is the case in regard to the females. One thing is certain and that is that the white population as a whole will never mix with half-castes.

It must be remembered that they are also a very mixed group. In practically all cases, the mother is a full-blooded aboriginal, the father may be a white man, a Chinese, a Japanese, a Malay or a Filipino. The mother is of very low intellectual

grade, while the father most often belongs to the coarser and more unrefined members of higher races. The consequence of this is that the children of such parents are not likely to be, in most cases, of much greater intellectual calibre than the more intelligent natives, though, of course, there are exceptions to this.

No half-caste children should be allowed to remain in any native camp, but they should all be withdrawn and placed on stations. So far as practicable, this plan is now being adopted. In some cases, when the child is very young, it must of necessity be accompanied by its mother, but in other cases, even though it may seem cruel to separate the mother and child, it is better to do so, when the mother is living, as is usually the case, in a native camp.

In a few instances, the fathers honorably recognise their responsibility and make provision for their half-caste children. In rare cases, they are adopted and brought up by whites, but, especially so far as the girls are concerned, this experiment is fraught with danger, owing to the temperament of the half-caste and to the fact that no white men, if white women are available, will marry a half-caste aboriginal.

I have, after consideration of all the facts, come to the conclusion that, except in individual and exceptional cases, the best and kindest thing is to place them on reserves along with the natives, train them in the same schools and encourage them to marry amongst themselves. Any special cases in which a half-caste—a boy especially—shows any marked ability, can be easily provided for and he can pass on from a native to an ordinary school or to some other institution.

On the reserves the services of the more intelligent half-castes may be utilized in supervising the work of the aboriginals.

Provision could be made whereby the Administrator on the recommendation of the Chief Protector might allot special areas not exceeding, say, 150 acres to any aboriginal or half-caste who had proved himself capable of working the land for the benefit of himself and his family.

PAYMENT AND REMUNERATION OF ABORIGINALS.

This is by no means an easy matter to deal with in the Territory, nor can any fixed rules be drawn up which will apply equitably to all natives or be fair to their employers.

There are two objects to be aimed at, first, the just payment of every aboriginal for work done by him and second, the education of the aboriginal so that he shall realize the importance of saving money instead of spending it the moment he receives it.

An important factor in dealing with this question at present is the intensely communistic attitude of the aboriginal. No sooner is anything given to him than he shares it with his friends; indeed, under their normal conditions, there are certain individuals to whom he is obliged to give a share of everything that he has, and this feeling is very difficult to eradicate, with the result that one native will work hard, and others who do no work will profit by his labour.

In the case of aboriginals working for white people in settled districts, a definite wage should be paid and a portion of this handed to a Protector

for investment in the aboriginal's name. On reserves and in aboriginal institutions, conditions will vary. During the early days of the reserve or institution when, for the most part, wild aboriginals are being dealt with who have no idea of the value of money and no means of spending it, the remuneration for labour will take the form of food, clothes and tobacco. As the aboriginals become civilized, a system of payment may be adopted, but this will have to be gradually introduced.

On the large pastoral areas it is not expedient at present to enforce payment. The holders of these stations actually employ a number of aboriginals varying from three or four on smaller stations to forty or fifty on large ones, the number also varying at different times of the year, and these they feed and provide with clothes and tobacco. It is difficult to state exactly how much such an aboriginal costs to keep. In all cases, except very exceptional ones, these natives are away from settlements, and have no knowledge of, or use for money.

The managers of various typical stations on which the aboriginals are well treated courteously told me what they received. In one or two cases of men who had been with them for many years and were civilized, payment was made wholly or partly in money, but in most cases the remuneration consisted of two or three suits of clothes yearly, two or three pairs of boots, one or two blankets, one or two mosquito nets, an ample supply of meat and flour, tea, sugar, tobacco and pipes. If any "boy" should be taken into a settlement he always receives a supply of money. The estimates as to the cost of keeping an aboriginal who is in regular employment on a station varied from £1 to £2 per month.

There is one important point to be taken into account in connexion with this. The stations not only feed the aboriginals actually employed, but the supply is such that both those dependent on the working "boys" and a large number of hangers-on secure food. Also the natives are, on most stations, liberally dealt with when cattle are killed. It has been suggested that certain station-holders should be empowered, periodically, to kill cattle for the aboriginals at the expense of the Government. During ordinary seasons, in the northern part of the Territory, the natives can secure an ample supply of food and I think it both unnecessary and inadvisable, in parts where they are at liberty to wander over their hunting grounds and have access to water-holes, to adopt this plan. The result would only be to pauperize them and in these parts the best thing to do, until such time as they can be withdrawn on to reserves, is to encourage them to work for their own living, as they have done in the past. It would also inevitably lead to the Government providing food for aboriginals working on the stations.

In times when, owing to unfavorable climatic conditions, the native food supply may be precarious, it is not perhaps too much to expect that the station-holders will voluntarily, as indeed in most cases they do, supplement this by the occasional killing of cattle.

The enforcement of payment of money to aboriginals on pastoral areas would, I am convinced, be a mistake at the present time and would result in hardship to numbers who are now indirectly maintained by the stations, but who, in the event of payment by station-holders being insisted upon, would become a tax on the Government.

GENERAL POLICY IN REGARD TO ABORIGINALS.

The care of the aboriginals of the Northern Territory should be made a national responsibility and any scheme devised for the purpose of preserving and uplifting them should be under the control of the Commonwealth Government. Subsidiary efforts by various bodies will doubtless be of great assistance, but in order that the work shall be continuously and adequately carried on in all parts of the Territory, it is essential that it shall be national in character and under national control.

I have already referred to the fact that the natives so far as their present distribution is concerned, can be divided roughly into four groups. From the point of view of dealing with them, they may be divided into two main groups—(a) aboriginals living in and about townships, and employed in the latter; (b) those living more or less in their wild state, and leading a nomad existence.

(a) *Aboriginals Living in and about Townships.*

These are practically limited to those around Darwin and Pine Creek and form a very small part of the aboriginal population.

These natives have so completely lost all their old customs that there is no difficulty in gathering them together into a village or compound, as is now being done in Darwin, at a convenient distance from the town. Up to the beginning of last year there were two main native camps within the town limits of Darwin, one on the top of a cliff known as the King Camp, and the other on the beach below known as the Lamaru Camp. This division of the Larakia tribe into two such groups is of very old standing and in the choice of a new site has been recognised. There are to be two encampments one on the shore and one on the cliff above. The old ramshackle, dirty huts that the aboriginals made out of the remnants of corrugated buildings that years ago were scattered all over the township by a great cyclone, are now replaced by neat huts with walls of stringybark and roofs of iron.

Figs. 14,
15, 16.

In the compound there will be a school-house with a house for a teacher and his wife. Each native family will have its own house and there will also be separate houses for unattached men, women and visitors. The teacher will act as Superintendent of the compound and his wife as Matron.

Associated with each compound, there should be as at Darwin a garden on which employment can be found for a certain number of natives in the growing of fruit and vegetables. The whole compound must be fenced in and no one save aboriginals and officials of the Department should have access to it, except by order. Rations will be distributed to old and indigent natives, but otherwise the inhabitants should be self-supporting, as they will all be employed either in the garden or in business places or private houses.

In regard to those in employment in the garden a definite wage will be paid and the same is true of those employed in business or private houses in Darwin or Pine Creek, as the case may be. It will be necessary to fix a minimum wage and at each compound a register of aboriginals will be kept by the Superintendent and all applications to em-

ploy aboriginal labour should be made to him, and to him also all complaints by employers against aboriginals should be made.

A certain amount of the wages paid should be withheld by the employer and paid at fixed times to the Superintendent, who will place such sums to the account of the individual aboriginals in the Savings Bank.

In regard to those employed in private service in Darwin or Pine Creek, they will either be housed on their employer's premises or resident in the compound. In the former case, the accommodation provided must be approved by the Superintendent.

All aboriginals and half-castes should be either in compound or in their employer's quarters after sunset. A regulation should be passed forbidding them, except by special permit, to camp or wander about within the prescribed limits of any township between the hours of sunset and sunrise. Any aboriginal or half-caste infringing this regulation should be liable to be locked up by a police officer.

Any one, including all Government officials, bringing aboriginals or half-castes, except prisoners, into Darwin or Pine Creek, should immediately on arrival, notify a Protector or the Superintendent and should satisfy the Protector or Superintendent, as the case may be, that the accommodation provided for them is satisfactory. If he deems it desirable, the Superintendent or Protector may order them to be housed in the compound.

No native should be allowed to leave Darwin without the consent of the Superintendent or a Protector.

There is no doubt but that some of the natives, none of whom have been under any restraint up till the beginning of last year will, at first, resent any discipline, but with firm treatment this difficulty will be overcome. Natives should not be encouraged to come from outside parts into these compounds, but in view of the scarcity of labour for domestic purposes, it is probable that the numbers will have to be replenished periodically.

In consequence of the fact that the extension of the railway line from Pine Creek to Katherine Creek will soon be taken in hand, there is no need to make provision for a compound and native school at the former, which will probably become, when the line goes beyond it, merely a wayside station. On the other hand, for some time during the progress of the work, a considerable number of men employed in building the line will be located there and the aboriginals who now frequent the town and mining districts surrounding it must, as far as possible, be withdrawn on to reserves.

(b) *Aboriginals Living More or Less in Their Wild State, and Leading a Nomad Existence.*

The real problem is concerned with these who form almost the whole aboriginal population of the Territory. A considerable number of them, however, have been periodically in contact with settlements, or with isolated whites and some with Asiatics.

I have previously pointed out certain features in regard to the habits, customs and beliefs of the aboriginals that will render it a matter of some, in fact, at first, great difficulty to segregate them on reserves, but in view of the settlement of the country for which provision is now being made, there is no

other practicable policy but that of the establishment of large reserves, if the aborigines are to be preserved, and if any serious effort is to be made for their betterment.

It will not, however, be either necessary or wise to attempt to force them at present on to reserves in those large areas occupied by pastoral runs; but there are a large number, such as those in the Daly River District, and all along the line of mining townships, for whom the need of an adequate reserve on to which to withdraw them is urgent. Other reserves can be established as the need for them arises, but it is important while yet there are large areas of unoccupied land to have the fact recognised that certain areas are to be allocated for the use of the natives.

There are three essential requirements in regard to these reserves, and unless all three are complied with, they will be of little service.

(1) They must be of large size, so that different parts, if necessary, can be occupied by the members of different tribes, or groups of tribes.

(2) They must be of such a nature as to provide sufficient water and abundant native food supplies and be suitable for agricultural or pastoral work.

(3) They must be so located as to deal with groups of tribes that are allied in their customs and are more or less friendly.

A number of small reserves were created in 1892, and as a precautionary measure were re-gazetted during the year 1912. They are as follows:—

Manassie Reserve, 366 miles; Woolner Reserve, 366 miles; Larakia Reserve, 20 miles; Wangites Reserve, 388 miles; Woolwonga Reserve, 160 miles; Mallae Reserve, 100 miles; Mudburra Reserve, 579 square miles; and Mission Permit No. 2, 100 miles; Bathurst Island, or Wongoak Reserve, 786 miles. In addition to these, there is the Hermansburg Reserve in the Macdonnell Ranges.

These reserves appear to have been selected in a somewhat haphazard manner and are neither, for the most part, suitable in position nor adequate in size.

I recommend that under section 13 of the Aborigines Act they be abolished, except the Bathurst Island and Hermansburg reserves, which are both admirable ones, and others substituted for them.

The areas that I recommend for reservation have been selected because they comply, as far as possible, with the three conditions above laid down and because they will, as time passes by suffice in extent of area for the purposes of the aborigines. Their total approximate area, as now suggested, is some 7,000 square miles, the total area of the Territory being 523,620 square miles. They are located as follows, though, until the land is surveyed, it is impossible to do more than define their boundaries in the most general terms and their exact location and area must be matters for further consideration when the country is better known and opened up. Meanwhile they are intended to indicate generally what is necessary if adequate provision is to be made for the aborigines. They represent the minimum area that will be necessary for such adequate provision and include country of various classes suitable for the requirements and maintenance of the different tribes for whose occupation they are respectively intended. Their positions are approximately indicated on the accompanying map.

(1) *Alligator River Reserve*.—This which has already been constituted occupies an area of approximately 2,300 square miles in the district of the East and South Alligator Rivers.

It contains land useful for stock-raising and agricultural work, as well as great stretches of lagoons and swamp lands, where the aborigines are accustomed to secure rich supplies of game. It will serve as a reserve for a large group of tribes as far west as the Mary and Adelaide Rivers, as far south as the head of the South Alligator River, as far north as the Coburg Peninsula, and as far east as the Liverpool River. On to this reserve should also be removed, as far as possible, the aborigines that now, much to their degradation, frequent the mining centres and Chinese camps on the east side of the railway and telegraph line.

(2) *Daly River Reserve*.—There is a large number of natives along the course of the Daly River, including its two chief branches, the Flora and the Katherine. Preparations have been made to throw open land around the Daly River for farm settlements and before long the early settlers will be there. This will absolutely necessitate driving the aborigines off the country, will prevent them having access to water-holes and will effectually destroy their natural food supplies. Under no other conditions can the land be held and utilized by white settlers. Some of these aborigines, all of whom are practically in a wild state, belong to inland tribes, others to coastal tribes, and unless a reserve is founded for their occupation their position will be hopeless. It is impossible to remove them far from their own country, as this would mean extermination by hostile tribes, even supposing, which is practically impossible of accomplishment, they could be detained elsewhere.

Under these conditions, I see only two alternatives, either rapid degradation and extermination, or the formation of a local reserve, which shall be so situated as to accommodate both coastal and inland tribes.

I recommend the reservation of an area of country bounded on the west and south-west by the sea coast and the Daly River. To a certain extent it will occupy the location of the old Wangite Reserve. The two Peron Islands should also be included in this reserve, which should include approximately 700 square miles and will serve for the group of tribes on the sea coast from Point Blaze south along the coast to Port Keats, and the country inland drained by the Daly and its tributaries. On to this reserve must also be taken the natives who frequent the mining areas and Chinese quarters on the west of the line—railway and telegraph. These have, to a large extent, lost their old beliefs and customs and can be removed to the reserve without any attendant hardships. The work on this reserve will be mainly agricultural and it will have the great advantage of being within easy distance of the Government Experimental Farm.

(3) *Roper River Reserve*.—This reserve will be associated with the group of tribes occupying the large extent of country drained by the Roper River and its tributaries from McMinn's Bar to the Gulf of Carpentaria by the Limmen and Wickam Rivers, and practically the country as far south as the McArthur River.

This reserve, which will deal with a large number of tribes, both coastal and inland, must be of considerable extent, and, approximately, its boundaries should be as follow:—On the north, the Roper River; on the west, approximately, the 135th meridian, east longitude; on the east, the coast line, and should extend as far south as to take in the junction of the Limmen and Wickam Rivers. Maria Island should also be included. It will have an area of about 2,000 square miles and will be associated with two groups of tribes that differ considerably from one another in their organization, but they are already accustomed

to meeting on the border-lands of their respective territories and when the land becomes settled there will not, I think, be any serious difficulty in regard to their occupying different parts of the same reserve.

There is at present the mission station under the management of the Church of England, on the north side of the Roper. The land is, apparently, not in a very good position and it might, perhaps, be advisable to transfer the location of the station.

(4) *Bathurst Island or Wongoak Reserve*.—This has an area of approximately 786 square miles and part of it is at present held under permit for the purpose of a Roman Catholic mission station. The station is already at work and has been admirably planned and built under the superintendence of Father Gsell, who, together with the brothers and sisters with him, has already gained the confidence of many of the hitherto wild natives on both Bathurst and Melville Islands. It will serve for the considerable number of natives inhabiting these islands and, to a certain extent, at a later period, for some of the adjacent mainland natives. At present it would be futile to attempt to transfer the latter to the island, because, unless they were under the immediate personal protection of the missionaries, they would be exterminated. The head station lies at the south-east end of the island, on Apsley Strait, but it is intended, when this is in full working order, to have a second station in the north. It is highly desirable that the whole island should be permanently reserved for the use of the natives and that the missionary work should be in the hands of the society now controlling the station. With the aid of experts in agriculture and forestry the station would probably soon become self-supporting.

(5) *Groote Eyelandt*.—This has approximately the same area as Bathurst Island. At present it is practically unknown and unoccupied, so far as Europeans are concerned, but when the country in the north-east of the Territory and along the west side of the Gulf of Carpentaria becomes occupied, it will form a most useful reserve, as the aboriginals can easily be isolated on it.

(6) *Lake Woods Reserve*.—This will serve for a number of tribes in the northern central area. It should be situated in the region of Newcastle Waters, in such a position that a large permanent water-hole lies on its western boundary, in order to allow it to carry stock for the benefit of the natives.

The exact position of the reserve will be a matter for future determination, but it should contain at least 200 square miles, and it may possibly entail the resumption of country by the Government.

A reserve in this part of the Territory will be essential and will serve as a gathering ground for various central tribes in time of drought, when it may be necessary to issue rations, and also its officers will be able to exercise control over drovers and others travelling from north to south along the main route by the telegraph line.

(7) *Hermannsburg Mission Station Reserve*.—This reserve is admirably situated in the heart of the central ranges. I have previously recommended that it be resumed by the Government and placed under Government control. It is capable of being transformed into a most useful and valuable institution for the welfare of the aboriginals, and will serve as a reserve for the remnants of the southern central tribes where they can, under proper and competent control, be trained to habits of industry. The Government is already in possession of reports dealing with this station which indicate that at the

present time it is practically of little, if any, use from the point of view of the industrial training or social betterment of the natives.

Of the above seven stations the Hermannsburg has been opened more than twenty years; the Roper River station was started in 1909; the Wongoak (Bathurst Island) was opened in 1911; the Alligator River reserve was established in 1912 and the station started under the management of Superintendent Cahill; and there is now urgent need for the Daly River reserve and station. At Darwin the compound is being formed and already half the natives are shifted from their old camp into it and, close by, what should in the near future be a most flourishing garden is in existence.

CONTROL AND EQUIPMENT OF RESERVES.

Each reserve must be under the control of a Superintendent; in every case it is absolutely essential that he be a married man, whose wife will act as Matron and take a general oversight over the aboriginal women and children.

The Superintendent will be in supreme charge of the whole station and have the general direction of the work carried out. Every officer will be under his control. He must be a man capable of taking a general supervision over industrial work of various kinds and should be himself either a competent agriculturist or pastoralist, accustomed to dealing with stock, as the case may be, or experienced in some branch of industry. Considerable experience of aboriginals, though not essential, is highly desirable. On some stations, such as the Alligator, agricultural work and stock breeding will be combined; on others, such as the Daly, agricultural and industrial work will predominate; and on others, such as the Newcastle Waters, stock breeding will be the main work. Each station will have to be stocked and equipped specially, according to its needs. There must be at least two white men, accustomed to the class of work required, to assist the Superintendent, both in the actual work of the station and, as far as possible, in taking part in the industrial training of the natives, both adults and boys; and it is highly desirable that these should be married men.

An important part of the station will be the school. At first it is probable that one teacher, assisted by the matron, will suffice; but if the station be a success more will be required. It is possible that these may be recruited from amongst the more intelligent scholars—half-castes, for example. There will be two classes of scholars. First, a small number who are the children of what may be called the station natives—that is, those actually and more or less permanently, engaged on the station, living in their own houses; second, a larger number, the children of outside natives, living in camps on the reserve, but not employed at the central station. Housing provision will have to be made for these children and they will also have to be maintained and kept away from the camps as far as possible. When once the stations are in working order, the cost of maintenance should be small, except in one or two cases, such as the Lake Woods station, where it may be difficult to grow food supplies. Each station will have to be rationed with the primary essentials, such as tea, flour, tobacco, &c., and clothing for the natives, though the latter should be as simple as possible.

TRAINING IN THE SCHOOLS AND ON THE STATIONS.

The teaching in schools should be of very simple character; it should include reading, writing, the elements of arithmetic and singing. The latter can be made to be of peculiar educational value in the training of the aboriginals, owing to their universal fondness for it. In course of time each station should possess its own band.

Moral training should be given in the schools on the simplest and broadest lines possible. It is, I understand, the intention of the various churches to undertake work in connexion with the aboriginals, each church working in a certain part of the Territory. I would suggest that the efforts of the churches could be best expended and would yield most valuable results, if they were devoted to the special training and subsequent maintenance of teachers who, after passing through this training, undertook the teaching work in the schools on the stations associated with the reserves. The salary of these teachers should be the same in every school and they should undertake both the mental and the moral training of the aboriginals.

The primary object of all stations must be to train the natives in industrial habits. Until such time as they acquire these habits there is no chance whatever of raising them from their present condition.

Apart from the elementary teaching above referred to, the main training should be industrial, simple agricultural work, carpentry, &c., and work amongst stock for the boys, domestic work and gardening for the girls.

Apart from a small number of men and women who will be fairly constantly engaged on the station, a number of the older men and women will come into the stations and will be useful to a certain extent, in a spasmodic way; but to attempt to train them systematically, or to influence them seriously from a moral point of view, will be merely wasting time and energy that could with great advantage be bestowed upon younger people, especially the children.

The older natives must be kindly treated, rewarded for any work that they may do, and looked after in their old age; but it is absolutely essential that all efforts should be directed towards the training of the younger generation. The children must be withdrawn from the native camps at an early age. This will undoubtedly be a difficult matter to accomplish and will involve some amount of hardship, so far as the parents are concerned; but if once the children are allowed to reach a certain age and have become accustomed to camp life, with its degrading environment and endless roaming about in the bush, it is almost useless to try and reclaim them. On the other hand, if they are once brought at an early age into a station and become accustomed, as they soon do, to station life—provided this be made attractive—then they will gradually lose the longing for a nomad life and will, in fact, become incapable of securing their living in the bush.

The teaching and training of aboriginals requires special capacity. A desire to uplift and help them, though requisite in the teacher, is not in itself sufficient qualification for the work. If the care of the aboriginals is made a national matter, the Government providing land, equipment and either means for carrying on the various stations or subsidizing any of the latter as it does at the present

time, then it is important that no one in any capacity as teacher should be allowed to work upon the stations except with the approval of the Government. In practice I would recommend the appointment by the Government of a small committee, which must be satisfied as to the qualifications of the proposed teacher.

EXPENSES OF RESERVES, ETC.

This can only be stated very approximately. I have suggested that, at first, each reserve should be staffed with a Superintendent, whose wife will act as Matron, two white assistants and, at first, one teacher, though possibly the expenses of the teaching staff may be defrayed from other sources. The salaries, &c., may be roughly indicated as follows, the officers being supplied with ordinary rations:—

Superintendent and Matron	...	£	350
Two assistants	...	...	400
Teacher	...	...	250
Contingencies (including rations)	...	...	1,000
Total	...	...	2,000

This estimate represents the annual cost, and does not include the initial cost of buildings, of equipping the reserves, or of the purchase of stock for the same.

RESERVES AND THE LANDS ORDINANCE

Under the *Aboriginals Act 1910*, section 13, the Governor may—

- (a) Declare any Crown lands to be a reserve for aboriginals;
- (b) Alter the boundaries of any reserve;
- (c) Abolish any reserve;

and may (section 49 (k)) make regulations authorizing the entry upon such reserves by specified persons or classes of persons for specified objects.

These conditions are radically altered in the *Lands Ordinance, No. 8. 1912* in which no reference is anywhere made to the aboriginals or their relationship to the land. Under this Ordinance (Part III., Division 5, Miscellaneous Leases, section 43) the Administrator may, subject to the Ordinance and the Regulations, grant to any person a lease of any portion of Crown lands, or of any dedicated or reserved lands, for any prescribed purpose, or for any purpose approved by the Minister.

Such leases (section 44) may be granted for twenty-one years, and (section 47) may be offered for sale by public auction.

The Administrator may also (Part V., Licences, section 49) grant licences to persons to graze stock on any reserved or dedicated lands for such period not exceeding one year, as is prescribed and may (section 51) grant licences to go upon dedicated or reserved lands and take therefrom timber, &c.

From the point of view of the Aboriginal Department, it is of primary importance that the reserves should be retained for the use of the natives, with the idea of isolating them and preventing them from coming into contact with other people. In this respect it is significant to notice that amongst the first applications for land in the Northern Territory, after the publication of the *Lands Ordinance No. 3, 1912*, was one for a lease of part of the Woolner Aboriginal Reserve. This was not granted, and though it is, of course, probable that the Administrator for the time being would refuse most applications, still the fact that the Ordinance now

in force practically invites such applications is a serious matter and will always, unless the aboriginal reserves are especially safeguarded, be a source of anxiety to those who are entrusted with the work of the Aboriginal Department.

the *Aboriginals Ordinance* 1911 and if they meet with the approval of the Government I recommend that a new Act be drafted and regulations drawn up which will supersede the present Act, Ordinance and Regulations.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF THE
ABORIGINALS ACT 1910 AND THE
ABORIGINALS ORDINANCE 1911.

The suggestions made above require considerable amendment of both the *Aboriginals Act* 1910 and

W. BALDWIN SPENCER,

Special Commissioner and Chief Protector of
Aboriginals.

20th May, 1913.



Malvin Spencer, Photo

FIG. 1. — STRINGY-BARK SHELTERS ON MELVILLE ISLAND DURING THE RAIN SEASON.



Baldwin Spencer, Photo.

FIG. 2.—WET SEASON HUT TO SERVE AS A PROTECTION AGAINST RAIN AND MOSQUITOES ON THE ROPER RIVER.



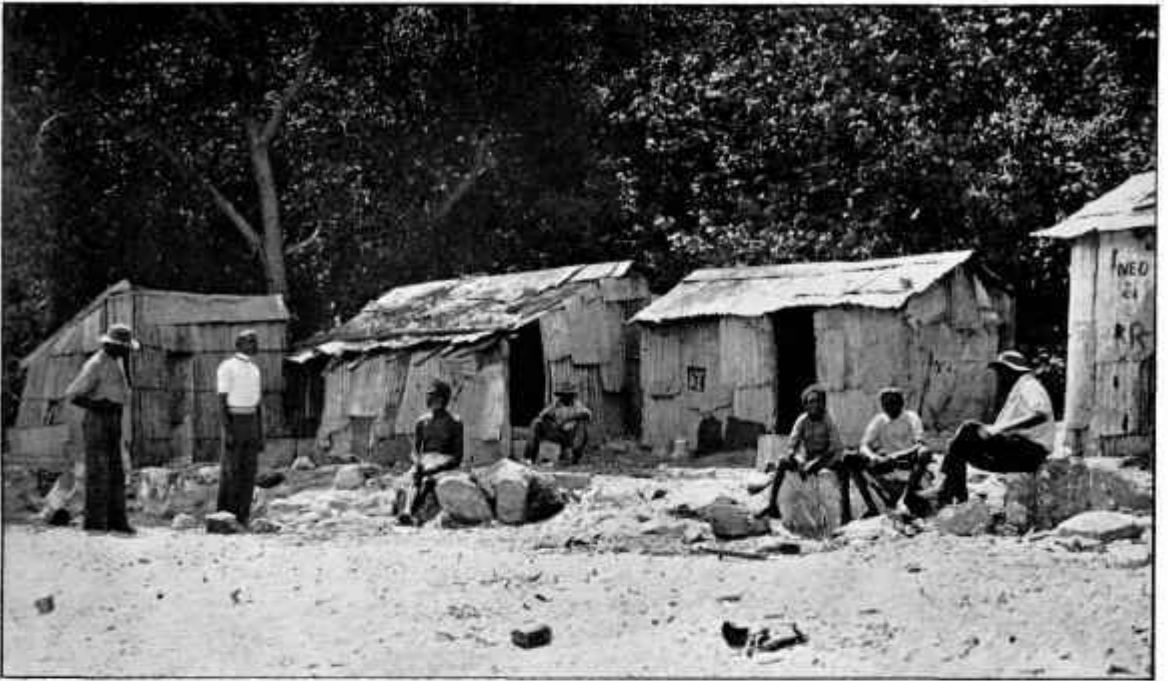
Baldwin Spencer, Photo.

FIG. 12.—CHINA TOWN. DARWIN.



Baldwin Spencer, Photo.

FIG. 13.—ABORIGINALS UNLOADING BOAT ON THE DALY RIVER.



Campbell, Photo.

FIG. 14.—OLD NATIVE CAMP ON LAMARU BEACH, DARWIN.



Campbell, Photo.

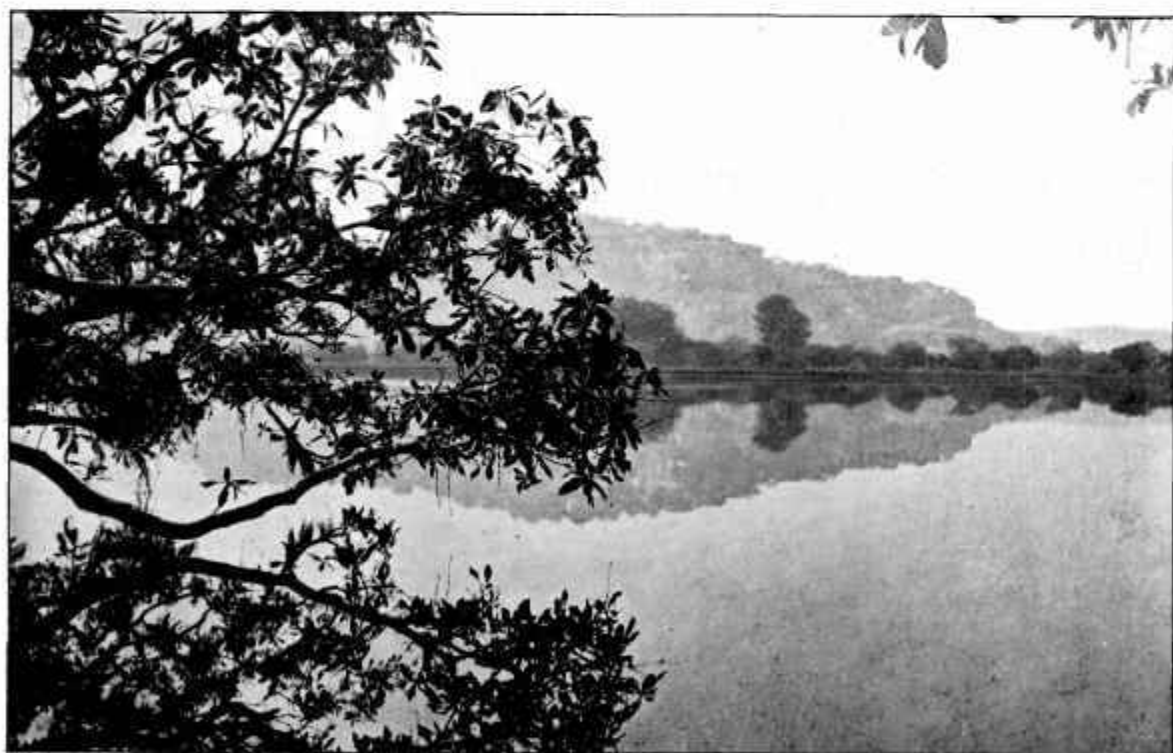
FIG. 15.—NATIVES BUILDING THEIR OWN HOUSES ON THE ABORIGINAL COMPOUND AT KALIN BEACH, OUTSIDE DARWIN.



Campbell, Photo.

FIG. 16.—ABORIGINAL GARDEN AT KALIN BEACH, OUTSIDE DARWIN.

The houses in the new compound are seen in the distance on the top of the small cliff, below which the Beach can be seen on the left. The Lamaru camp is being shifted to the latter spot.



Baldwin Spencer, Photo.

FIG. 17.—LAGOON AT OENPELLI, THE CENTRAL STATION ON THE ALLIGATOR RIVER RESERVE.



Baldwin Spencer, Photo.

FIG. 18.—BATHURST ISLAND MISSION STATION.