

1929-30-31.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

REPORT

ON

THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORTH
AUSTRALIA

FOR THE

YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1930.

Presented by Command ; ordered to be printed, 27th May, 1931.

[*Cost of Paper* :—Preparation, not given ; 790 copies ; approximate cost of printing and publishing, £40.]

Printed and Published for the GOVERNMENT of the COMMONWEALTH of AUSTRALIA by
H. J. GREEN, Government Printer, Canberra.

No. 216.—F.653.—PRICE 1s. 4d.

DINGO FUND.

Rewards paid for scalps amounted to £153 3s. 9d., other expenditure being £15 17s. 11d. The collections credited to the fund totalled £657 16s. 5d.

AGRICULTURE.

The Inspector reports progress in the area under cultivation for peanuts and in the methods of harvesting, although some poor yields and, in many cases, second-grade crops were the result of a very bad rainfall distribution.

FISHERIES.

Eight master pearlers, owning 32 boats, experienced a successful year. The total take of shell was 750 tons, of which 20 per cent. was discarded.

The number of Japanese, Malays and Koepangers employed in the industry was 278. The quantity of trepang shipped to the East during the year was 599 cwt., valued at £2,882, representing an increase of £1,734 in value on last year's export.

Darwin Harbour is teeming with fish, but the trade in smoked and salted fish is very small.

ABORIGINALS.

The behaviour of the aboriginal population was satisfactory, there having been a marked diminution in crime.

The Chief Protector met in conference representatives of the Pastoralists, Unions and Missions, in order to discuss matters relating to the employment of aboriginals and half-castes. A report of the conference was forwarded to the Minister for consideration.

The number of aboriginals medically examined during the year was 984. Cases requiring hospital attention were sent to the Darwin Aboriginal Hospital, where 293 were treated.

There was a marked decrease in the number of patients admitted suffering from granuloma and venereal diseases.

COURTS.

In the local court there were 362 actions, whilst those in the police court numbered 374, a decrease of 74 on last year's record number.

A review of the proceedings of the Supreme Court is contained in the Clerk's report.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE.

During the year there were nineteen new estates ; 21 estates were finalized. The number of estates current on 30th June, 1930, was 54, representing a total sum of £3,805 18s. 4d.

DARWIN GAOL AND LABOUR PRISON.

The gaoler reports no deaths and no cases of serious illness, although four inmates developed measles.

The number received in the gaol during the year was 157. The number discharged was 27, while those remaining in gaol at the end of the year numbered 50.

PUBLIC SERVICE.

The work for officers during the year was of a heavy nature, but all responded well and gave loyal service.

One resignation was received during the year.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

R. H. WEDDELL, Lt.-Col.,
Government Resident.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINALS.

EMPLOYMENT.—LICENCES, AGREEMENTS AND RECOGNIZANCES.

During the year licences to employ aboriginals were issued as follows :—

Country	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	310
Town	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	187
										—
									Total	497
										—
Licences cancelled	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3

Agreements to the number of 236 were entered into between employers and protectors of aboriginals acting on behalf of aboriginal employees. Special agreements to the number of 41 were made, and of these 34 were connected with employment of aboriginal drovers. Permission was granted to 36 persons to remove aboriginals to places beyond North Australia; 90 recognizances were entered into in respect of 85 aboriginals and five half-castes so removed.

Four half-caste girls accompanied approved employers to southern States. Special agreements governing their employment and recognizances to return them to North Australia when ordered by the Chief Protector, were required to be entered into by the employers.

Twenty applications were made for half-caste female household workers. Twelve half-caste females were placed in employment with approved employers who were required to pay wages to the credit of the employee in the Aboriginals Trust Fund. Employers were instructed to endeavour by education, precept and environment to elevate the girls to the white standard of hygiene and morality, and to make every effort by supervision and control to prevent any outside influence tending towards reversion to a lower standard.

Employment of Aboriginal Drovers.—A notice appearing in the *North Australia Government Gazette* of 25th September, 1929, stipulated the conditions under which protectors were to issue recognizances to persons removing aboriginals from the Northern Territory, or from one district to another in the Northern Territory, with droving plants. Such employers were required to enter into an agreement with each individual aboriginal employee, to pay a wage of £2 per week whilst travelling with stock and £1 per week whilst travelling with plant only. These conditions were in operation for some seven months when they were, along with the *Apprentices (Half-caste) Regulations*, suspended temporarily by direction of the Honorable the Minister. All agreements entered into were, however, to stand.

On 7th February, 1930, the *Apprentices (Half-caste) Regulations* were gazetted. The regulations, together with other proposed legislation relating to employment, were prepared on the basis of a considerable amount of data which had been carefully sifted. This legislation was framed for the purpose of assisting and encouraging the half-caste youth employed in the cattle station industry to develop into a useful citizen and to prepare him for his elevation to the white standard of living.

The regulations sought to remove certain of those influences which press such youths towards the aboriginal camps, also to improve the circumstances of the youths' upbringing, prior to attaining their majority, by adapting them to white civilization during their impressionable years.

The Chief Protector of Aboriginals invited representatives of the pastoralists, unions and missionaries to meet him in conference to discuss matters relating to the employment of aboriginal drovers, half-caste apprentices and aboriginals.

The conference was held at Darwin on the 9th, 10th and 12th of May, 1930, and the Chief Protector presided. The nine representatives (three nominees from each invited body) who attended, were men who had the benefit of many years contact with the aboriginals.

The various phases of the employment of aboriginals listed on the agenda were keenly debated. The principles embodied in certain proposed amendments to regulations were approved by unanimous vote of the conference. Important recommendations resulting from the discussion, along with the report of the conference, were forwarded to the Honorable the Minister.

A proposal for the enforcement of a liability upon employers in respect of medical attentions to aboriginal employees was also submitted.

The recommendations of the conference and the proposed amendments are expected to be finalized early in the new financial year, at which time receipt of the Minister's decision on the recommendations of the Bleakley report is also anticipated.

Two cases of exploitation of aboriginal labour were inquired into during the year.

Instructions were issued to Protectors to enforce rigidly the provisions of the Aboriginals Ordinance relating to the employment of female aboriginals.

TRUST FUND.

							£	s.	d.
Credit balance 1st July, 1929	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,183	14	11
Receipts during the year	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,868	15	2
									—
							3,052	10	1
Withdrawals during the year	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,456	9	11
									—
Balance at 1st July, 1930	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,596	0	2

Deposits and withdrawals increased considerably during the year. Action was taken to make employers honour their agreements to the aboriginal employees. One thousand one hundred and eighty-nine cash orders and 432 orders on stores for goods were issued to aboriginals in the town district of Darwin alone.

The total expenditure for the year was—

	£	s.	d.
North Australia	3,848	9	11
Southern Expenditure	388	1	1
Total	4,236	11	0

Expenditure was apportioned as follows :—

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Southern Expenditure—				388	1	1
Purchase of blankets, wire-netting for fishtraps						
North Australia—						
Rationing old and infirm aboriginals, Darwin excluded, freight and cartage charges included	1,206	5	1			
Maintenance—Rations equipment. Half-castes Home, Kahlin Compound and Native Hospital. Aged and infirm aboriginals, Darwin	1,453	3	0			
Kahlin Compound—Sanitary rates, telephone charges, and wages of aboriginal staff	462	9	11			
Hospital fees—aboriginals	165	0	0			
Defence Aboriginals, Supreme Court	181	2	8			
Fares—Sick aboriginals	191	0	1			
Meals supplied sick aboriginals	77	10	0			
Sundries, including car allowance, printing, &c.	111	19	2			
						3,848 9 11
Total						4,236 11 0

Kahlin Compound.—The cost of maintenance of the compound and kindred institutions was reduced considerably by utilizing the services of ambulatory patients. The following revenue (which does not include the sum of £165 credited to the half-caste home and the compound for clothing, fish and firewood supplied to the Aboriginal Branch), was earned :—

	£	s.	d.
Labour	96	7	8
Fish and milk	73	7	7
Firewood	108	0	0
Sustenance of aboriginals employed by Government, and feeding of aboriginal witnesses	141	19	7
Sale of bags, blankets and clothing	53	6	9
Sundries including maintenance of children (half-castes) by fathers	23	13	8
Revenue not credited	90	0	0
Total	586	15	3

The average daily number maintained at the compound and half-caste home was 208, an increase of fourteen on the figure of the preceding year. There are now 91 half-castes in the home (29 males, 62 females). Seven of this number are domiciled with their employers, who are required to comply with an exacting procedure so as to ensure that every protection is afforded to the girls whilst residing away from the home.

A new fishtrap was erected on the compound beach. Considerable quantities of fish were supplied to the compound and hospital kitchens. The erection of a new kitchen by the compound staff provided improved catering facilities for the large number of inmates. Six new huts, in which to house aboriginals employed outside the compound, were completed. All unsightly huts were demolished and occupants transferred to new buildings. Extensions and repairs were carried out to existing buildings.

The actual cost of maintenance of the institution, including the salary of the Superintendent and Matron, was £2356 or about 7d. per head per day.

Details of medical attention rendered to aboriginals, and of cases treated at the clinic and native hospital, appear in the report of the Chief Medical Officer. Aboriginals suffering from minor maladies were given local attention by Protectors and station managers. Serious and obstinate cases were sent to Darwin and admitted to the native hospital or clinic. Thirty cases were transported from Timber Creek police district alone. Supplies of drugs and medical supplies were forwarded regularly to rural treatment centres.

Aged and Infirm Aboriginals.—One hundred and fifty aged aboriginals received assistance in country districts. Blankets, rations and clothing were issued to them. Numbers of sick aboriginals were maintained at police depots for lengthy periods.

Marriage.—Permission was given by the Chief Protector for the celebration of marriage of seven female half-castes with persons other than aboriginals.

Action was taken to discourage any association which was calculated to result in or encourage marriage between coloured persons other than half-castes and female aboriginals including half-castes.

Where possible, contracting parties were requested to undergo a medical examination prior to marriage.

Legal Offences.—Details of offences committed by aboriginals during the year ended 30th June, 1930:—

	Males.	Females.	Total.
Assault	5	..	5
Drunkenness	8	2	10
Housebreaking	1	..	1
Murder	4	..	4
Opium smoking	5	2	7
Opium articles (possession of)	17	5	22
Resisting arrest	1	..	1
Unlawful possession	4	..	4
Manslaughter	3	..	3
Other offences	13	7	20
	61	16	77

The behaviour of the aboriginal population was satisfactory.

A comparison of the number of convictions recorded during the year under review with statistics of previous years discloses a marked diminution in crime perpetrated by aboriginals. No complaints other than isolated cases of interference with cattle were reported by Protectors in rural districts.

Increased police activity in conducting the campaign of suppressing the trafficking in opium and liquor amongst aboriginals met with considerable success. Several malefactors were apprehended and heavy penalties imposed. It is anticipated that such convictions will have a salutary effect, and will tend to lessen the number of offences of drunkenness and opium smoking committed by aboriginals.

Four aboriginals were found guilty of murder, the crime being the result of a tribal vendetta. The accused persons were sentenced to death. The Governor-General, acting on the recommendation of the Federal Executive Council, commuted the sentences to imprisonment for life.

Under regulations gazetted on 13th December, 1929, employers are not to permit aboriginal employees on their premises in Darwin at night without authority. Aboriginals employed in Darwin are confined to compound at night, except in certain cases. Aboriginals are to be issued general permits to be within a prohibited area. On 27th November, 1930, declarations of town and country districts respectively for the purpose of the Aboriginal Ordinance, were duly promulgated. Mataranka was declared a prohibited area on 27th September, 1929.

Two anthropologists, who visited the Territory during the year, pursued their investigations amongst the aboriginals in various country and inland centres. The Chief Protector of Aboriginals commenced a course of anthropology at the Sydney University.

Action was taken to acquaint the Honorable the Minister of all complaints received and investigations concerning ill-treatment of aboriginals. All such cases are subject to searching inquiry.

Aboriginal Population.—The total aboriginal population of North Australia including half-castes on the 30th June, 1930, was 16,064, made up of 9,008 males and 7,056 females. The arrangements in connexion with the census taken during the year were in the hands of the District Protectors of Aboriginals. The result shows little variation in the figures of the preceding year.

ABORIGINAL CENSUS.

YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE, 1930.

Summary.

District.	Full Bloods.				Half-castes.				Total.		Total.
	Adults.		Children.		Adults.		Children.		M.	F.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.			
Anthony's Lagoon	72	54	21	18	..	..	5	2	98	74	172
Borroloola	280	234	85	76	16	8	10	6	391	324	715
Brooks Creek	406	283	100	70	7	6	..	..	513	359	872
Daly River	1,835	1,003	294	193	5	2	4	5	2,138	1,203	3,341
Darwin	1,415	1,171	360	292	43	66	89	62	1,907	1,591	3,498
Katherine	80	71	22	19	12	3	..	4	114	97	211
Maranboy	105	87	30	27	..	1	..	..	135	115	250
Newcastle Waters	144	143	48	29	10	12	5	10	207	194	401
Pine Creek	65	39	6	6	8	1	2	1	81	47	128
Rankine River	43	28	10	12	3	5	6	6	62	51	113
Roper River	1,351	1,370	574	568	14	17	14	7	1,953	1,962	3,915
Timber Creek	775	473	232	163	11	3	9	3	1,027	642	1,669
Wave Hill	293	314	83	79	2	2	4	2	382	397	779
	6,864	5,270	1,865	1,552	131	126	148	108	9,008	7,056	16,064

W. L. FOTHERGILL,
Acting Chief Protector of Aboriginals.